

Supplementary Information: Inclusion and Equity Scoping Study¹

1. Introduction

Under the direction of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), and through financial support from the EFA-FTI EPDF, a scoping study of inclusion and equity in the 9-year basic education sector (P1 through S3) is currently being conducted in Rwanda. The study is being carried out by a 2-person team of international and national consultants under the guidance of a Equity and Inclusion Joint Technical Working Group² (TWG) coordinated by UNICEF and DfID.

The immediate near-term purpose of the study is to feed into the Joint Review of the Education Sector for further discussion and debate and refinement of the National Implementation Plan and M&E Framework. Depending on the significance and implications of the study's conclusions, and the availability of further funding, a fuller more in-depth analysis may be mounted in late 2010-early 2011. The current study will not produce costed action plans; further analysis undertaken could aim to do so.

As a scoping exercise, the study aims to begin a process of examining policy assumptions, confirming progress on targets and deepening general understanding with respect to the ability of children and youth to access and achieve a comprehensive and good quality basic education. It focuses on the two core undertakings of the Government and its partners in the 2010-2015 ESSP:

- a) enabling the approximately 5% of children estimated not yet enrolling in school to do so, through measures to increase classroom construction, extend tuition-free basic education from six to nine years, mobilize support to children with disabilities and to ECCD, and stabilize the incomes of high poverty households through VUP; and
- b) enabling those children who do enrol, but who are realizing poor learning outcomes and are at risk of dropping out before completion because of various exclusionary pressures in and outside the school³, to attend regularly and to engage fully and equitably in the learning process.

Field data and analysis from the study will attempt to identify interventions and factors that appear to be contributing to, or impeding, full inclusion and equity in both of these undertakings; and, based on conclusions reached from the analysis, the study will suggest issues warranting further exploration and action. Based on the inception data, these will most likely be in areas such as needs assessment and targeting, coordination within and between responsibility centres, and awareness raising and capacity development at the level of policy, strategic planning and practice.

2. Analytical Framework

Inclusion and equity are dimensions of EFA well documented in international development best practice experience and research. It is important, however, that the scoping study ground all of this in the specific realities of the Rwandan socio-economic, political and cultural context, including the experience of the conflict and on-going efforts by the

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² Members include MINEDUC, development partners and NGOs

³ The completion rate as of 2009 data was estimated at 75%, a significant improvement over the 53% of the year earlier, but still well short of the country's EFA and MDG targets.

Government, cooperatively with development partners, to create an internally peaceful, integrated and economically sustainable state.

It will do this both by drawing on the analyses of national policies and strategic plans, case studies, monitoring reports and evaluations, as well as through the initial inception interviews and, ultimately, fieldwork in the provinces to identify patterns of vulnerability among Rwandan children; the nature of exclusionary pressures they are facing in accessing, participating in and learning from school; and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at overcoming these pressures and enabling their inclusion and equity in the system.

Broad national level data on education efficiency will be collected from existing data sets of the Department of Planning in MINEDUC and analyzed for indications of inclusionary trends. These will be “tested” through analyses of micro-level statistics in the schools visited. A small sample size (see below) will *not* allow these data to be generalized beyond those schools, but any potential challenges to the quite strong national numbers will be highlighted as areas where more systematic, in-depth attention to “vulnerability pockets” may be warranted.

However, the majority of data collected will be qualitative, based on perceptions, judgements and experience of relevant stakeholders. The analysis at each of the sample sites will serve, in effect, as a limited case study of the status of inclusion and equity in that setting. While again not generalizable to the country as a whole, the situation of children in these four cases and lessons drawn from them should provide a foundation for raising questions and suggesting issues for the wider whole.

Specific themes will be explored in terms of *implications for strengthening and impeding inclusion and equity*. To the extent they are evident in the data, trends, patterns and causes of educational advantage and disadvantage will be discussed. The themes have been drawn both from the “expressions of intent” reflected in policy and strategic plans, and from issues raised by government officers, development partners and NGOs interviewed during the inception phase⁴. These will be adapted and elaborated during the course of the 5-weeks of fieldwork, but key among them will be the following:

- Emerging impacts of the new 9-year “fast track” innovations: shift to English as the language of instruction in early grades, introduction of double-shifting, reduction in curriculum subjects and teacher specialization.
- The situation of girls in terms of learning outcomes, exam performance and readiness to access post-basic education programmes, correlated in particular with cultural barriers, the gender-sensitivity of school learning environments and effectiveness of interventions to raise awareness and provide incentives.
- Knowledge, capacities and support of primary and lower secondary teachers in learner-centred pedagogy, classroom management and student assessment.
- The dimensions of the child-friendly school, especially as these are being applied with respect to teaching practices, provision of safe, secure and protective school environments and participation by students and the community in school management⁵.

⁴ Reference is also made to the UNESCO “Equity and Inclusion in Education” tool, selection of items determined both by their relevance to the Rwandan context and to the resources and time available.

⁵ The study recognizes that curriculum content and teaching-learning approaches are also key to determining the extent to which classrooms are environments of inclusion and equity. However, time and resources do not allow for the kind of in-depth analysis required to make an informed comment

- Quality, completeness and use of inclusion-focused data, especially through EMIS, as the base of evidence-based decision-making at school, system and policy levels.
- Relevance and accuracy of the processes and categories used to identify, target and monitor OVC/SNE children and youth with respect both to their initial access and to their subsequent retention, progression and learning outcomes.
- The inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, and processes for accommodating them through training of teachers, provision of back-stopping through resource centres and creating accessible school infrastructure.
- Implications of replacing the Catch-Up programme with more formal TVET provision for students who have dropped out.
- Influence of the VUP-Umurenge social protection programme on the ability and willingness of the most vulnerable families to send and maintain their children - especially girls and children with disabilities - in school.

3. Data Collection Methods and Sources

Some descriptive statistical analysis will be done for national and school data. School-level statistics, however, will be used in part to indicate the situation of the children concerned with respect to access and learning, but also as a means of assessing the extent to which the school is keeping track of vulnerable children. The majority of data collection and analysis, however, will be through qualitative, constant comparative methods: of semi-structured, open-ended interview questions and observations, and with one set of findings informing the questions and themes of the next.

There will be three broad sources of data:

a) *Communities and Schools* In consultation with MINEDUC, it was decided that a sample of four sectors, one from each province⁶, would be selected randomly⁷. Although not large enough to be statistically generalizable, the selection process is intended to allow the analysis to reflect at least to some degree the “general” situation in Rwanda, as opposed to a purposive focus on areas or groups expected to show higher rates of exclusion e.g. high poverty areas, communities recognized as having large numbers of working or homeless children.

3-4 days will be spent in each site, interviews and focus group discussions focused on the thematic areas discussed above and with as many key informants as available, extended as appropriate but including:

- District education officers
- Sector social affairs officers
- ECD centres where functioning

on these. In general, and to the extent curriculum issues are raised in the fieldwork, however, they will be addressed in the analysis and recommendations.

⁶ Kigali is not involved for reasons of time; a complex urban setting being much more labour intensive than a smaller rural one. However, note is made that other studies of inclusion are or will be conducted in the metropolitan area and these can serve to complement this current study.

⁷ The names of three sectors from each province, written on slips of paper, will be drawn. Final selection will be made solely on the basis of distance, toward keeping travel time at a minimum.

- child/youth-related social programmes for those out of school, those with disabilities, working children
- community-based family and child support groups e.g. Ubudehe groups, community diocesan associations
- fathers, mothers and primary care givers (separately as appropriate), especially any participating in the VUP or with children with disabilities
- primary and lower secondary schools, with an emphasis on 9-year basic education schools⁸ and, where available, school “clusters” (toward assessing their potential as mechanisms for promoting inclusion: a 9-year school linked to several 6-year schools; ancillary resource support to children with disabilities; opportunities for teacher-teacher professional exchange, especially related to CFS etc).

In each school, key informants will include:

- Head Teacher and Prefect of Discipline (where available)
- Teachers (m/f)
- Students (boys and girls together from P4 - 6; separately from S1-3)
- PTA committee members (m/f)

In each school also, time will be allocated to observations in 1-2 classrooms and of the overall sense of the inclusiveness of the school environment. At all field sites, particular attention will be given to seeking opinions and experiences of children/youth themselves, both those in school and those outside the system⁹.

b) *Policy-related activity*

Parallel to the randomly-selected site visits, it was agreed with MINEDUC that data would be collected from and about those interventions and issues of particular policy priority with respect to inclusion and equity. Based on the initial 2-week inception mission, these include gender equality, particularly with respect to girls’ retention and learning performance; mainstreaming of children with disabilities; access and alternative learning provision for children on the street and working children; inclusion of children in high-poverty areas; risk of marginalization among returnee (former refugee) children/youth.

For this reason, efforts will be made in the course of the site visits and in the final (5th) week of data collection to locate and gather information on the experience of disability centres, street children’s support groups, parents and children receiving VUP transfers, initiatives in support of girls (e.g. Imbutu, FAWE); programmes in support of children affected by HIV/AIDS.

c) *System Efficiency Data* The most recent statistical data will be gathered through the Department of Planning in MINEDUC aimed at analyzing changes and trends in enrolment, retention, progression, absenteeism, PTR etc; disaggregated where possible by sex, age, grade, poverty quintile and location.

4. Study Schedule

- August 23rd - September 4th

⁸ In consultation with MINEDUC, it was decided that upper Secondary schools would not be included in this study; that the priority was to focus on inclusion policy impact and targets from P1-S3, while acknowledging major challenges remain for S4-S6.

⁹ In all cases, standards of ethical research practice will be applied e.g. seeking informed consent, maintaining respondents’ anonymity. This will be especially true for children, for interviews with whom permission of supervisors will be obtained.

Inception mission by the international consultant; joined by the local consultant in the 2nd week.

- September 7th - October 8th

Fieldwork conducted by the local consultant: sector site visits in four provinces, focused data collection in specific “thematic” sites and collection/organizing of statistical data from MINEDUC. Home-based analysis by the international consultant of inception interview and documentary data; on-going feedback and guidance to the local consultant based on provision of rolling field analyses; completion of the analysis and initial drafting of the overall synthesis.

- October 10th - 16th

Preliminary report presented by the consultant team to the TWG and MINEDUC Steering Group; report presentation and discussion at the JRES (October 13th).

- October 18th – 22nd

Preparation of the final report by the international consultant, incorporating all feedback.