APPRAISAL REPORT

OF THE EDUCATION STRATEGIC SECTOR PLAN

IN PUNTLAND STATE OF SOMALIA

2017-2021

Recommendation: the Education Strategic Sector Plan 2017-2021

in Puntland State of Somalia is ready for endorsement by the Education Sector Committee.

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Commissioned by Save the Children on behalf of the Education Sector Committee in Puntland

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1. Introduction

More than two decades of conflict have devastated the education systems in the different regions of Somalia (Puntland, Somaliland and South/Central Somalia). Despite some positive developments in the last few years, education indicators are extremely low in all of them. For example, the net enrolment rate in primary education in Puntland is 47.8% - 52.7% for boys and 42.7% for girls[1]. High dropout rates, low gender parity, very low enrolment rates in secondary education, and overall low quality education shape a school environment with many challenges but also many opportunities.

Somalia joined the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in 2012 as a federal state, and has received grants for the three regions (Somaliland, Puntland and South/Central Somalia) for a total of $14.5 million. Puntland, established in 1998 as an autonomous state in Somalia, has received a grant of $2.1 million from the GPE for the period 2013-2016, managed by UNICEF as the Grant Agent. This grant was intended to contribute to improving the Ministry of Education's capacity to deliver quality education for all, through two main activities: 1) Payment of teachers' salaries and 2) Training and deployment of female teachers to pastoralist areas. Somalia as a whole is presently eligible for an additional allocation of US$33.1 million for a second grant phase.

The Government of Puntland put together a first Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), which covered the whole education sector for the period 2012-2016. The three priorities were 1) primary education (quality education (8 grades) for all children), 2) teacher education (competent, well-motivated, qualified and certified), and 3) non-formal education/TVET (literacy + skills for employment). In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) of Puntland, together with education partners, elaborated a new Education Sector Strategic Plan for the period 2017-2021, to be endorsed by the Education Sector Committee. As a first step, an appraisal of the Plan must be conducted. The appraisal of both the ESSP and the Action Plan is part of the GPE Quality Assurance Review, and it is done by an independent consultant in order to assess, among other criteria, the soundness, relevance, feasibility, equity, and efficiency of the Education Sector Strategic Plan.

In the case of Puntland, in principle, the situation was not ideal, as the Government/Education Sector Committee (ESC) were in a rush to submit a grant to the GPE in March (with the documentation to be submitted at the end of December). Thus, the ESSP, the appraisal and the application grant were developed simultaneously, by different international consultants in collaboration with the MoEHE and education partners (coordinated by Save the Children for the ESSP development and the appraisal, and UNICEF for the grant application). However, it turned out to be a very interesting process as I had the chance to focus not only on the Plan itself but also in the process of its development. The field visit in Garowe occurred from December 13 to 21.

[1] Source: Statistics Yearbook 2013-2014, Puntland Ministry of Education

2. Context

Since its self-declared semi-autonomy in 1998, Puntland has lived a relatively peaceful situation, with some low-intensity conflicts. However, potential security threats and instability have been at the core of the policies of the Government of Puntland, which spend some 30% of the national budget on defence.

Puntland, and Somalia as a whole, continues to be one the poorest countries in the world, with a position 165 out of the 170 countries at the 2010 global Human Development Report (UNPD). The GDP is extremely low (around $2 billion) and therefore the national budget as well ($70 million). Regarding the education sector, Puntland faces important challenges on access, quality, equity and management. The GER is 57.9% in primary education and 12.6% in secondary education (school year 2015/2016). Barely 27% of the teachers are trained and there is a systemic lack of textbooks, libraries, laboratories, etc. Equity issues in Puntland are mainly related to gender (only 44% of students in primary education are girls, with a Gender Parity Index stagnant around 0.80 for the last years, while the average in Sub-Saharan Africa is 0.93), pastoralists (around 60% of the population, but mostly illiterate), and children with special needs (broadly neglected). Regarding the education management, a positive element is that all education subsectors are integrated in a single ministry: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education. However, the capacities of this Ministry are weak, especially regarding the number of staff (60 at the central level), the insufficient decentralisation, the lack of qualified staff at regional and district level, and the deficient M&E systems, among other challenges.

3. Methodology

The purpose of the appraisal phase, or independent assessment, is to assist education stakeholders in appraising the soundness, relevance, and coherence that form the credibility of ESSP´s.

Because of the timing described above, this appraisal report can be seen as a collaborative part of the ESSP preparation. Thus, it is kind of a formative assessment in which some of my previous observations were incorporated to the Plan after in-depth discussions with the consultant, Save the Children and MoEHE directors. However, to respect the main purpose of the appraisal, this report focused on the final version received on February 2.

The approach used for this appraisal tried to integrate some of the **learning experiences** during the peer-learning and training programme, organized by GPE and IIEP/UNESCO in July 2016 in Paris. Some of the key messages in that meeting were “context is all”, “process is more important that product”, “capacity development is critical”.

The methodology to collect the necessary information for the appraisal included:

- **Desk Review**: this appraisal includes an analysis of the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) and other relevant documents related to the education sector in Puntland (see references on annex 3).
- **Meetings, Consultations, and Interviews** with Puntland authorities and education partners in Garowe, Puntland. A list of the people/organisations interviewed can be found in annex 2.
- **Field visits** to better understand the context and the potential limitations of implementing the ESSP. A list of the educational centres visited can be found in annex 2.
- **Analysis of the ESSP, M&E Framework, and Activity Plan and Costings**, using the GPE Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal, and the GPE Appraisal Matrix (used as a checklist at the end of the appraisal process, as a quality assurance tool to ensure all pertinent questions were addressed in the analysis). It is agreed at the GPE that the appraisal guidelines must be sensitive to the context. In a situation of extreme vulnerability, extremely poor education indicators, scarce resources, and a flagrant lack of capacities, I felt the need to focus on a few aspects of the guidelines that can have more impact in the near future. Thus, I have adapted the tool to the context by applying greater weighting to certain criteria, leaving out some of them that were not as relevant in the particular context of Puntland, namely, several questions on "Evidence-based education sector analysis", "Soundness of the Action Plan", "Change strategies", and the "Robustness and relevance of the strategies".

Unfortunately, a validation workshop couldn't be organised as the ESSP was not yet finalized when I left Puntland.

In the initial Expression of Interest sent for this consultancy, we anticipated the following **challenges**, which proved to be right:

1. We acknowledge the importance of the process of elaborating the ESSP, not only the final product.
2. Availability of data: in fragile and conflict-affected countries it is very often the case that data availability and reliability is limited. We will triangulate the information collected in the field as much as possible.
3. Fragile states often suffer from a significant deficit in terms of technical and institutional capacities. The final report will include specific recommendations on how to improve these capacities, as needed.
4. Overall, it is essential to recognize that the QAR process must be a formative assessment, and therefore a learning process for all the stakeholders involved in the education sector in Puntland.

4. The consultation process to elaborate the ESSP

The MoEHE commissioned Carfax Projects to elaborate the ESA and ESSP, with the technical and financial support of Save the Children and the Global Partnership for Education. The ESA started in March, and it was decided to collect primary data through a survey to 94 education institutions and 2,527 people (students, out-of-school children, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders), as reliable secondary data were not available.

The elaboration of the ESSP started in July and it involved a wide consultation process with MoEHE officials and directors, who wrote extensive comments in several moments of the process. Regional Education Officers (REO) and Department Education Officers (DEO) participated through meetings. The MoEHE confirmed that communities and teachers did not participated in the process. Education partners participated in Education Sector Committees (ESC) meetings (chaired by the MoEHE and co-chaired by UNICEF) and interviews with Carfax consultants. A simple template was given to the education partners to provide comments to the ESSP. However, according to different informants, the second version of the ESSP (October) was the last version distributed among education partners (a new version was distributed to education partners in Garowe at the end of December).

The minutes of the ESC meeting held on November 16, 2016, pointed out the "lack of feedback from the ESC members regarding the developing process of ESSP document." The education partners were also late providing to the consultants the information on their contributions to the education sector through projects.

Sven Baeten, focal point for Puntland at the GPE Secretariat in Washington, DC, proposed "to leverage the technical capacities that exists within the ESC, by setting up working groups which would work directly with the consultants in order to strengthen the technical content and coherence of the document". This never happened and only in the ESC meeting on December 14th, UNICEF (co-chair) proposed to create those groups to follow up the implementation of the new ESSP. This proposal is not included in the ESSP though.

Donors are not present in Puntland and most of them (European Union, USAID, World Bank, and DFID) are in Nairobi. They have been informed about the ESSP process but their contributions to the document were scarce. However, it is important to have the donors on board as, ideally, they will align their programmes and contributions with the ESSP. Save the Children had an active participation, both from the office in Garowe and the office in Nairobi. UNICEF, co-chair of the ESC, has been very active in the process of elaboration of the ESSP, participating in meetings, and providing comments to the documents. The ESC did not complete the pre-check (appraisal) readiness matrix as included at the GPE Appraisal guidelines. The GPE Secretariat in Washington provided comments to the first versions of the Plan.

Overall, the MoEHE seems to be satisfied with Carfax on the ESA, but not so much on the ESSP, as they consider that their comments were repeatedly not taken into consideration. There were

some confusion and uneasiness because Carfax consultants were working from a distance for several months. A consultant spent more than 2 weeks in country in December but the MoEHE was still not satisfied.

The elaboration of the ESSP has been longer than expected, as a final version was supposed to be presented for discussion at the Joint Review of the Education Sector (JRES) in November. It seems that delays were due to lack of financial data from MoEHE and partners, and because of the back and forth in the rounds of comments. A meeting was hold on December 21 between SC, the DG, Directors and myself to design a roadmap to finalise the ESSP. A list of 11 areas of discussion and action was agreed and sent to Carfax Projects in order to improve a Plan that everybody considered not finalized.

At my request, the last version (available) of the ESSP was sent to the education partners on the week of December 22nd. A "final" version of the ESSP was received on January 16. Unfortunately, eight out of the eleven proposed actions were not incorporated in the final document (and still approved by the MoEHE), and therefore I proposed the MoEHE to produce a new version. The MoEHE and Save the Children reworked the document and send a version considered final on February 2.

5. Technical Appraisal: analysis of the Criteria

This section will follow the 5 criteria of the GPE Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. As mentioned above, these criteria have been adapted to the context of Puntland.

5.1. Leadership and Participation

Leadership and Ownership

When the ESSP was almost final on the third week of December, the Director General (DG) at the MoEHE was still expressing concerns about the ownership of the Plan by the Ministry, worried also that some partners had taken "the driver seat" in the implementation of education projects. The MoEHE is aware of their institutional and financial weaknesses, but they have the will to lead the education sector. However, the process to elaborate the ESSP was technically led by external consultants, and several directors at the MoEHE declared to have the feeling that their comments were repeatedly not reflected in the new versions of the document. Moreover, the ministry must be the one "talking" in the document. However, until the last version, the language of the Plan was not appropriate for a policy document, for a strategic plan that will be signed by the Minister of Education, with references to the Government as a third party. This was corrected in the last version. The MoEHE declared that the final version "reflects the ownership, direction and aspiration of the MOEHE and the Puntland State of Somalia."

Education policies must be designed in broader institutional frameworks. The last version of the ESSP includes a vision, a mission, and guiding principles. There is no reference to other important policy documents, such as the Constitution[2], and the Puntland Education Policy Paper. This PEPP (2012) included a vision, a mission, educational goals, and references (lost in the new ESSP) to education as "a basic human right and a life-long process" and "a gender sensitive national education policy". The DG at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation declared to have had a broad participation in the process, making sure the ESSP was framed by the National Development Plan. The final version of the ESSP includes a sole reference to the NDP at the beginning of the document. The Sustainable Development Goals are not mentioned in the Plan (the Millennium Development Goals were mentioned in the previous Plan 2012-2016).

Participatory process

As mentioned above, a wide consultation process was carried out by Carfax Projects, with the participation of all the departments of the MoEHE (at central, regional, and district level). The DG highlighted the high level of commitment of the MoEHE in this process. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and Ministry of Finance were also involved[3]. Communities were not involved in the process, which is a lost opportunity to integrate an important stakeholder in the education sector, especially in a country where most of the national resources in the education sector are coming from communities (up to 86%)[4]. Teachers were not included either. Education Partners, including NGOs, participated through the ESC in an irregular manner. Donors, in the distance, had a scarce participation.

Several key informants informed that they were too many people involved in the elaboration of the ESSP, with several consultants involved. This process was specially complicated when they were working from a distance.

As mentioned, the Plan was discussed at the ESC in October, but it was not formally presented and discussed with stakeholders before final submission for appraisal.

Capacity Development

The consultants worked in close collaboration with the MoEHE and ESC. However, as the consultants were in charge of the writing at all times, the support provided by the MoEHE and partners was more in the form of comments, in a kind of reactive approach. Priorities, scenarios, alternative strategies, were barely discussed between the consultants and the MoEHE. It seems that a capacity development approach was not included in the process.

[2] Article 23 of the Puntland Constitution says that education is compulsory but not free.

[3] Given the confusion in the financial figures at the ESSP, we have legitimate doubts that the Ministry of Finance was substantially involved in the process.

[4] The use of the term "private sector contributions" in the ESSP is misleading in the context of Puntland, as the figures refer mostly to community-based schools, not to for-profit private schools.

5.2. Soundness and Relevance

Evidence-based education sector analysis

Data in Puntland are scarce and often not reliable. Therefore, the consultants decided to obtain primary data through an Education Sector Analysis. However, the ESA is not reflecting the reality of the education sector in Puntland. The document itself compares the obtained figures with some existing data and the disparities are often so big that precautions are advised in their use for planning purposes. For instance, at the ESA, education data on rural area are often better than in urban areas, which does not correspond to the reality, as declared by MoEHE staff. Most of the ESA information included in successive versions of the ESSP were not relevant. As recognised by Carfax consultants, the samples were small, often not representative, and they encounter problems with enumerators. These references were deleted in the last version.

Puntland is not a place where many organisations are developing studies in the education sector. In the literature review done for this report, we couldn't find many studies or analysis that could be used to prepare the plan.

Despite the lack of reliable data and evidence, the ESA address all areas of access, efficiency, participation, equity, quality, and management. The analysis of costs and financing remains quite superficial, also at the ESSP.

Relevance of policies and programmes

The ESA shows a country with the lowest rate of education enrolment in the continent, very low quality of the teaching provided to children and youth, the marginalisation of large groups of population, and a deficient management system at the Ministerial level. The four priorities of the ESSP include most of these issues, offering a range of strategies to reduce the gaps, improve the teaching and learning, and develop capacities at the institutional level. However, in a country with a GER of 57.9% in primary education and 12.6% in secondary education, according to the strategies and activities proposed, access did not appear as one of the main priorities of the government until the very last version of the ESSP.

Most of the strategies proposed are relatively simple, already put in place in Puntland to some extent, and in general adapted to the scarcity of resources. However, the elaboration of the ESSP did not include the discussion about different scenarios nor different strategies to face the main challenges of the education sector in Puntland. The four priorities were not discussed at the MoEHE nor with partners during the elaboration of the ESSP, but decided by the MoEHE on the last stage of the process. Having said that, the four priorities are well set up despite some flash of ambition when the document read "the Ministry will adopt and implement new,

flexible, and innovative approaches." Unfortunately, there are not many new or innovative approaches in the document, totally understandable considering the context.

Regarding the sub-sectoral policies, most of them were elaborated in the last two years (e.g. pastoralist, ECE, SNE, NFE), and they are just pending of validation. However, beyond the existence of policies, the real step to move forward is the enforcement of the policies

Soundness of the financial framework

The Puntland Education Policy Paper (2012) mentioned that "it is the responsibility of the government to provide free education to her people," and to do so, "at least 15% of Puntland's budget will have to be invested in education in the next 10 years." This was considered a condition "to be accepted as the leader and overseer of education standards in Puntland." According to the ESSP, the national budget allocated to education has been progressively increasing, from 3.18% in 2011[5], 3.5% in 2012, to 6.8% in 2016.

The **plan costing** is the weakest part of the ESSP. The "complete activity plan costings" on the excel file includes a calculation by the unit costs, but the totals do not match with the figures at the ESSP. For instance, the total for primary education in 2017 at the ESSP is $30,088,737, but in the excel budget the total is $28,558,737. For ABE&NFE, the ESSP includes a budget of $3.8M in 2017, but the budget in excel, calculated by unit costs, is only $2.5M. Both documents lack a good explanation about the process to reach those figures. On the main document, table 48 includes some figures for Management and Administration that are ten times higher than the figures on the table in the appendix.

The **source of the information** is not always clear. Despite the decision made by the DG to take the figures from the National Budget, the plan still uses data provided by the Directorate of Administration and Finance at the MoEHE.

There is a **lack of correspondence between the policy priority areas and the budget**. For instance, for TVET, the document reads "The MoEHE will expand provision of TVET, skills and technical education to reach a bigger proportion of youth (15-24)," but some relevant activities, such as the hiring of teachers, the establishment of TVET centres, or teacher training do not have any budgetary allocation. The MoEHE relies on education partners to fund the expansion of education in general, and the provision of TVET in particular. Therefore, the statement on the ESSP is misleading. We can find a similar pattern on primary education, where the training of female teachers or the grants have no budget. Some of these activities are not even mentioned in the budget. In secondary education, as important as equity seems to be among the four priorities of the ESSP, the allocation of resources to rural areas, girls, and other disadvantaged groups, is zero. Ironically, there is a note saying "this activity overlaps

[5] On table 42, percentages for 2010, 2013 and 2015 are miscalculated. Using the amounts on table 42, the percentage for 2010 is not 2% but 3.5%; for 2013 it is not 3.5% but 3% and for 2015 it is not 7% but 6.7%.

substantially with primary education". The budget for this activity on primary education is also zero.

During the elaboration of the ESSP, there was some (unsolved) **confusion on the financial data**. The consultants used figures given by the MoEHE´s Director of Administration and Finance. However, as these figures were not consistent with the National Budget approved by Parliament, the DG agreed in a meeting to use the official figures of the National Budget. However, the figures shown at the Financial Plan do not correspond to the figures approved by the Parliament of Puntland. Please see table below.

Comparison between financial figures at the National Budget approved by the Parliament and at ESSP

Source: National Budget approved by Parliament

	2015	2016	2017
National Budget Amount	63,400,000	70,000,000	67,200,000
Education Budget	3,500,000	3,624,000	4,704,000
Education as Percentage of National Budget	5.52%	5.18%	7.00%

Source: MoEHE and ESSP

	2015	2016	2017
National Budget Amount	60,182,157	N/A	70,196,468
Education Budget	4,020,953	N/A	5,264,735
Education as Percentage of National Budget	6.68%	N/A	7.50%

This difference in the figures will alter the entire projection for 2018-2021.

Moreover, figures for 2014 and 2016 are missing on tables 42 and 43 without any explanation. It is noticeable that the budget for 2014 is not available even in the National Budget documents. As I could learn in a conversation with the DG, this is because there were Elections in January 2014, and the budget was not approved until April. Thus, it is not comparable with other years and therefore not included in official statistics nor in the ESSP.

Regardless of the **source**, and despite the increase proposed by the Government (the projections in the new ESSP include an annual increase of 1% until 2021, up to 11%), the budget allocated to education is still very far from the 20% recommended by UNESCO. With such a low starting point, a 1% annual increase does not show a great commitment from the government, especially considering that the overall national budget is expected to growth some 8% per year. However, because of that overall high growth rate, an increase of 1% in the share of the national budget, implies annual increases in education of 15% to 30% over the period of implementation of the ESSP, placing a considerable pressure on the Directorate of Administration and Finance to be able to absorb these funds with very limited capacities at the Ministry at central and decentralized levels.

An added issue, remarked by the Directors at the MoEHE is that very often the approved budget is not executed[6], both because of reductions operated by the government in the middle of the year if there is a security emergency, and because the lack of capacity of the Ministry. Regarding the education budget allocated to primary education, the percentage for grades 1-8 is 48% and "According to MOE&HE reports, grade 1-6 percentage comprises 45%" (footnote #8).

Soundness of the action plan

An action plan is intended to complete the ESSP, offering specific and relevant information about the activities to be carried out in the first three years of the implementation of the Plan. The "Activity Plan" for the Puntland ESSP is presented in a separate document, where not all the activities are included, and where they are not in the same order as in the main document. There is no explanation about the reason for this change. There are two columns ("Start date" and "End date") that would be more visual in a Gantt Chart. The Activity Plan was not done in a participatory process with MoEHE officials and education partners, but by the consultants.

The Activity Plan does not include the source of the resources for each activity. However, it seems clear that activities related to construction, or to improve the capacities of the MoEHE will need to come from education partners, as the MoEHE does not have resources to be spent on those chapters.

The Carfax consultants and the MoEHE received examples from other GPE countries, but they were not followed and the result is a poor activity plan. Overall, the activity plan could be improved so it can become a more useful tool for the planners and decision makers at the MoEHE.

[6] According to the Director of Finances, the level of implementation of the budget was 64% in 2015, due mainly to low capacity and the impossibility to react in time to the uncertainties of disbursement by the Ministry of Finance and education partners.

5.3. Equity, Efficiency and Learning

Robustness and relevance of the strategies

Robust and relevant strategies must be based on reliable data, which unfortunately are not available in Puntland. At the same, there is an understandable rush to accelerate the progress in access, quality, equity and management. However, ambition must go hand in hand with realism.

As mentioned above, the priorities expressed by the Directors during the interviews in Garowe were not always included in the ESSP. For instance, there is now a unified curriculum in primary education, with syllabus being distributed to the teachers. However, there are no textbooks nor training planned on the new curriculum yet. As important as this activity seems to be to achieve the quality (and as a consequence likely the access as well), none of those activities are included in the Plan. Teacher training is included in primary education (activity 11) but there is no mention to the unified curriculum.

Another main priority of the current government is to increase access and quality of education. Some interesting strategies/activities are proposed in Primary education: the construction of 75 schools, the recruitment of female teachers (without specifying the amount though), the training of 1,160 teachers per year, and the implementation of a partnership growth in the education sector. However, these activities seem insufficient to attain the objective of a GER of 70% by 2021. The MoEHE also relies on raising awareness and a higher number of scholarships (provided mostly by international partners) to increase access, but those are clearly insufficient to increase the GER. The strategies to increase secondary GER from 12.6% to 24% seem well oriented but also insufficient to fill that gap.

The Director of the Gender Unit pointed out that Gender Parity will be achieved in 2021 in primary and secondary education. However, the ESSP intends to achieve full gender parity only in primary education (the current male-female enrolment is 56%-44%), and to reduce it in secondary education to 15%. Some proposed strategies, such as recruiting female teachers or school feeding programmes can contribute to achieve that objective, but we couldn't find a specific strategy oriented to reduce that gap. Some focused strategies are proposed to reduce the gender gap in secondary education (Girl Friendly Spaces, and targeted allocations). An effective strategy, such as the increase of awareness in communities on the importance of education and especially girls' education, is not included in the ESSP.

The Puntland Second Five-Year Development Plan 2014-2018 says "One of the EFA goals obligates the government to expand and enhance comprehensive Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes that are essential for basic education. Currently, there are no public early childhood centres and it is a priority for MoE establishing ECE centre in each village is vital."

However, the current ESSP includes a budget zero for ECE. The Government of Puntland must define their priorities in the education sector, and should be consequent and put in place all the available measures to achieve those priorities.

The section on Education in Emergencies was strengthened in the final versions, including references to the Education Cluster and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, and some interesting proposals referred to improve the planning, coordination and quality of the interventions in Education in Emergencies. However, Education in Emergencies is considered a cross-cutting thematic area, and we think it should be a sub-sector.

Capacity building is one of the main priorities of this ESSP, and the different subsectors include a calculation on the Capacity Building Costs (only for 3 years in most of the cases, following the activity plan). However, the figures on the ESSP and on the Activity Plan do not match.

Results framework

Despite the recommendation done during my discussions in Garowe, a results framework was not included in the ESSP. As a consequence, this powerful tool was not used during the elaboration of the ESSP to orientate strategic discussions with MoEHE and education partners. Please see recommendation on section 7.

5.4. Coherence

Coherence among strategies, programmes, and interventions

Considering the lack of reliable data in many subsectors, and the limited validity of the ESA, the policy priorities and activities are based on a weak empirical evidence.

The structure to present the challenges, policy priorities, and activities throughout the sub-sectors, was improved through the different versions of the ESSP. The structure in the final version is simple but logical and clear, despite the lack of a results framework as mentioned above. Moreover, there are links between some of the policy priorities, e.g. re: the strategies selected to approach the deficits in education on pastoralist areas, or the reinforcement of capacities at the MoEHE.

Unfortunately, the challenges faced by Puntland are so many, that even if all the strategies and activities are put in place during the next 5 years, is unlikely that many targets will be achieved. For instance, MoEHE directors recognised that it is unlikely that a GER of 70% will be achieved in 2021. Other targets that are difficult to achieve are related to education in rural areas, gender parity, and SNE children.

As mentioned above, the coherence is lost in the activity plan, where activities appear in a different order than in the main document, or they just disappeared, with no explanation.

Comprehensive costing aligned with the budget

As mentioned above, the costing of the plan is the weakest part of this ESSP. In several subsectors, there is a misalignment between the proposed interventions and the budget. According to the costing of the plan, the government will spend on ECE $40,000 in 2017, $0 in 2018 and $0 in 2019. On TVET, $15,000, $61,800 and $63,654 respectively. The same misalignments happened already in the ESSP 2012-2016. NFE and TVET were among the three priorities of the Plan, but the budget in 2015 for those subsectors were $92,000 and $40,000[7]. Despite the will expressed by the MoEHE to "de-projectise" the education sector[8], in the new Plan the government continues to rely on the education partners for entire subsectors, mainly ECE and TVET. However, there is not a clear explanation on the project.

The presentation of the two budgets (one calculating the gap through a unit-cost method and another one related to the expected expenses of the MoEHE+Donors) is not clearly explained. The figures on table 43 at the main document and the figures on the excel sheet are substantially different. (Please see recommendation on section 7).

In general, due to the lack of resources in country, most of the strategies/activities are not sufficiently funded. As mentioned above, some targets will not be reached because this scarcity.

Moreover, any annual increase agreed by the Government should not be lineal, as some subsectors have been underserved for years, if not decades, and also because the GoP must show commitment with their declared priorities, and the amount of expenses allocated to each subsector is a good indicator of that commitment.

5.5. Feasibility, Implementability and Monitorability

Financial feasibility

As mentioned above, the figures are so different depending on the document (main document or activity plan), that this appraisal cannot set up a conclusion regarding the funding gap. (please see recommendation on section 7).

Moreover, according to several key informants, the financial management in Puntland lacks predictability as the GoP gives absolute priority to security issues (threats in the borders from neighbours and in some areas from Al-Shabab). Therefore, the estimated budget for the MoEHE is not predictable nor reliable, and, as it happened in the past, the MoEHE could get less funds than budgeted.

[7] The 2016 JRES pointed out that "Very little attention is given to SNE, ECD, NFE and TVET."
[8] This was mentioned already at the ESSP 2012-2016, page 22.

Regarding the **absorptive capacity**, the discussions with the MoEHE turned around the increase of 1% approved by the government for the next 5 years. The MoEHE officials declared that this increase should not be a problem from a management point of view. The Director of Administration and Finance declared that the Ministry has the capacity to disburse higher levels of funds. The MoEHE nor the consultant seem not to have considered that this 1% implies actual annual growth rates in education of 15% to 30%. We have some reasonable doubts that the MoEHE will be able to efficiently manage these growth rates.

Regarding the **external financial support**, several development partners declared that they will align their financial support with ESSP priorities, but the Plan does not provide details (and donors were not available for our interviews). The donors and NGO contributions are detailed on table 48. On a very optimistic estimation (lineal annual increases of 15% throughout the entire period), the gap could be almost covered by 2021. In all fairness, we don't think that this calculation respond to the reality of the aid in the next 5 years in Puntland.

System capacity

As recognised by all the stakeholders and MoEHE officials, the capacities of the Ministry are very limited. It has barely 60 staff at the central level, and most of the staff at the decentralised levels are not qualified. Some education partners, including the GPE, have provided incentives to some key staff, but without a capacity development plan. There is no reference in the Plan to the different existing capacities on each department. For instance, the Department of Examinations is fully staffed and have received significant support from donors, while the Departments of Formal Education and Non-Formal Education are understaffed and cannot in anyway fulfil their mandates.

The activity #15 on the Management and Administration section includes a Capacity Assessment of MoEHE staff, including decentralised levels, to be done on years 2-5 of the Plan, without any specific activity included. That Capacity Assessment is more than needed, but regardless of its outcomes, the Plan could already propose more specific activities such as: internal and external training, recruitment of highly qualified staff, support of consultants, etc.

The decentralised levels are considered as very relevant by MoEHE officials, but the needs at the central level are large, and the Plan does not make any reference about which resources will be distributed to the regions and districts.

The Plan includes a "partnership growth programme, led by the MoEHE, seeking to coordinate government, community, NGO, and NSA structures to promote growth in the education sector" with some pilot activities oriented to pastoralist population. There are no specific details about how that partnership will channel significant funds to the education system.

Governance and accountability

The previous ESSP (2012-2016) was very ambitious, including for instance a GER of 100% by 2015, but most of the indicators were not achieved (see table below for a detailed analysis).

Table: ESSP 2012-2016: Indicator Analysis

Subsector	Achieved	Partially	Not achieved	No data
Early Childhood Education			7	
Primary	3	1	11	
Alternative Basic Education	1		4	1
Non-Formal Education	1	2	8	1
Secondary	2	1	8	
TVET	2	2	6	
Higher Education	2	1	3	
Teacher Training	0		5	1
Examinations	3		1	
Management Capacities	2	1	6	
Teaching & Learning Materials	0		3	
Special Needs Education	0		1	
TOTAL	**16**	**8**	**63**	**3**

It is remarkable that the higher proportion of indicators not achieved is precisely in the three priorities signalled in the ESSP 2012-2016: Primary, Teacher Training, TVET and NFE.

This example illustrates the importance of the government to remain responsible and accountable for the priorities, strategies, costs and indicators included in the new ESSP. A balance is needed between what is realistic and a commitment to strategic change.

Regarding **governance and accountability** mechanisms at the ESSP 2017-2021, the document does not include a communication strategy nor plans to increase the involvement of stakeholders below the national level. The Partnership growth programme could be an opportunity to put in place mechanisms to improve the coordination with communities or to receive feedback from them. There is also a provision of grants to schools through the Community Education Committees (CEC), crucial mechanism to increase enrolment as they raise awareness in the communities, mobilize resources, and to improve quality as they recruit teachers, maintain school infrastructures, and intervene in conflict resolution. Even in public schools, the CEC has a fundamental role of mobilising parents to pay fees, and also participating in the recruitment of teachers

To our surprise, the last version of the ESSP did not include several references to independent evaluations that appeared in previous versions. This could compromise the **transparency** of the monitoring and evaluation of the ESSP.

Risks to implementation and the mitigation of risks

Risk and constraints faced by the education sector are well identified, but in several cases mitigation measures are not included or are vague. In a country that faces multiple security threats, and that spend 30% of the budget on defence, the ESSP does not make any reference to security issues threatening the education sector. The risks are not presented in the plan in a user-friendly way. (please see recommendation on section 7).

Robustness of the monitoring and evaluation framework

According to several key informants, the MoEHE relies on partners to do the supervision of schools, because of the lack of resources and the lack of qualified personnel at the decentralised levels. The new ESSP provides some improvements in the M&E capacities of the Ministry and a quite strong M&E framework (integrated in the main document).

In terms of the monitoring and evaluation systems at the MoEHE, we have the impression, after the interviews in Garowe, that there is a disconnect between the MoEHE departments. As an example, the Director of QAS declared that data was collected in schools, and the information consolidated by the REOs in regional reports, which were sent to him in Garowe. But when asked about the use of those reports, he just responded that they were given to the DG, not seeming to have a particular interest in the use of the results by other directorates to inform the changes in education policies.

Overall, the Plan contains relevant indicators that correspond well to the strategies to be implemented. However, outcome indicators and output indicators are mixed and not identified as such (separate them is a good practice for the M&E processes). Most indicators are correctly defined on primary education, the subsector with more information. It is important to signal that in the final ESSP most of the indicators are operational (clearly defined, quantified, and measurable), so the MoEHE staff will be able to monitor the Plan despite their lack of sufficient capacities. However, we can still find some confusion among activities and indicators, e.g. on page 55 the activity is “ABE enrolment increases by 40%” and on page 59 the indicator is exactly the same. This indicator is correct. The activity should refer to the ways to increase the enrolment, e.g. building more ABE schools (already mentioned in activity 2) or as said on activity 6: “30,000 pastoralist children enrolled in primary/ABE schools in Puntland”.

6. Conclusions

The MoEHE has a great interest in improving the low access and quality of education in Puntland, and they have committed to the recent planning efforts. The Ministry has the feeling that international partners are running the education sector, and it wants to lay down the

foundations to change this situation. In that regard, the process to elaborate the new ESSP seems like a partially missed opportunity. The process was technically led and the ESSP written by a consultancy firm, the budget increase agreed by the GoP is limited, and there was not a capacity development process.

However, in some aspects, the ESSP 2017-2021 means a clear improvement regarding the previous ESSP 2012-2016. It is more elaborated in terms of priorities/strategies/activities, and more realistic in its targets. Relevant strategies are included in the new ESSP but often not accompanied by a budget, nor by a structure capable to put them into place.

We all expect that Puntland will have by 2021 a more robust education system, offering equal opportunities to all children to access a quality education regardless their ethnicity, gender, social class, economic situation, or disabilities. This wish could be a reality if the MoEHE manages to ensure an efficient use of the resources (internal and external) and a good coordination between the MoEHE and the education partners.

7. Recommendations

Main recommendation: the ESSP is ready for endorsement by the Education Sector Committee.

Other recommendations:

1. At the macro level, it is recommended to link the ESSP to global education goals, such as the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and in particular SDG #4.

2. We recommend the MoEHE to set up a clear plan to validate, disseminate and enforce all the **sub-sectoral policies**.

3. The implementation and monitoring of the ESSP will be reinforced with a **Results Framework**, indicating in a table the objectives (called in the Plan "policy priorities"), the indicators, the means of verification ("data sources"), and the activities.

4. All the elements of the **document "M&E framework"** are already included in the main document of the ESSP. Therefore, there is no need to have a separate document. We recommend to just disregard the document "M&E Framework".
5. The **Activity Plan** must be consistent with the main document of the ESSP. It must include all the activities described on the main document, and the financial figures should match. We recommend a more visual format (following other GPE countries, e.g. Ethiopia), making sure that the figures match.

6. We recommend to have a more inclusive approach regarding the **role of communities** in providing education services, especially in rural communities.

7. **Financial aspects**:
    - We recommend, for sake of consistency inside the Government of Puntland and as agreed with the DG, to use the figures of the National Budgets approved by the Parliament, and not those of the MoEHE.
    - The budgets on the ESSP and on the Activity Plan are calculated in a different way, and there is not a sufficient explanation to understand the rationale and the differences. We recommend to the MoEHE to double check the figures and ad a note explaining the methods of calculation and the reasons for the divergence.
    - The ESSP sets up some priorities in the different sub-sectors. However, the budget does not match with those priorities as explained in this report. We recommend to double check the figures, modify the priorities, or explain why there is a disconnect (related to the fact that the government is relying on external partners).
    - If the MoEHE wants to significantly improve education indicators in rural areas (pastoralist population), these areas should receive more than proportional funds to their population, as they are disadvantaged groups.
    - In principle, following the UNESCO recommendations, we would recommend the Government to do a more important financial effort in education. If the expected annual growth is 8%, it doesn´t seem sufficient to increase the education budget by only 1%. However, as showed above, the annual increase of the education budget is 15-30% and therefore, given the lack of capacities at the MoEHE, a higher growth rate could imply difficulties in terms of absorptive capacity. We recommend the MoEHE and education partners to make a reflection on this regard.

8. **Risks** would be better presented in a table like this, so mitigation measures are clearer:

Area	**Risk**	**Mitigation measure**
Resources and capacity concerns		
Access and equity concerns		
Political concerns		
Etc.		

9. **Education in Emergencies** is not a cross-cutting thematic area, but a subsector itself. We recommend to treat it as such.

10. The document requires some **editing**, especially on the table of contents, sub-sections numbering, and fonts. For sake of clarity for planners, it would be important to make sure that all the activities include a brief description.

Final Note

As a lesson learned from this process, I do think that the Global Partnership for Education should encourage governments and education partners to be more involved in the elaboration of the Education Sector Plans, not leaving the leadership to external consultants. Terms of Reference must be very specific in terms of giving the leadership to the Ministry of Education, ensuring local ownership, and a broad meaningful consultation process.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Acronyms.
- Annex 2: List of people interviewed.
- Annex 3: List of documents reviewed.

Annex 1: Acronyms

ABE	Alternative Basic Education
CEC	Community Education Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department For International Development
DG	Director General
EC	European Commission
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESC	Education Sector Committee
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoP	Government of Puntland
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HE	Higher Education
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
JRES	Joint Review of the Education Sector
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSA	Non-State Actors
PEPP	Puntland Education Policy Paper
REO	Regional Education Office
SNE	Special Needs Education
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Annex 2: List of People interviewed.

- Puntland Ministry of Education and Higher Education:
    - Director General.
    - Director of Policy and Planning.
    - Director of Quality Assurance and Standards.
    - Director of Formal Education.
    - Director of Non-Formal Education.
    - Director of Examinations.
    - Education Management and Information System.
    - Director of Administration and Finance.
    - Director of Gender Unit.
- Puntland Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation: Director General.
- Puntland Ministry of Finance: Accountant General.
- Burtinle Primary School: Head teacher and CEC.
- Darwish Primary School, Garowe: Head teacher and CEC.
- Garowe TVET Center: Director.
- Garowe Teacher Education College: Director.
- Education Sector Committee (chaired by DG of MoEHE and co-chaired by UNICEF).
- NGOs:
    - Save the Children: Education Programme Manager, Project Manager-GPE, Deputy Country Director.
    - NRC: Education Programme Manager.
    - ADRA: Program Coordinator.
    - CARE: Senior Project Officer, Education Programme Manager, Project Officer
- UNICEF: Education Officers

Annex 3: List of documents reviewed.

- **Global Partnership for Education**

    - GPE's work in conflict-affected and fragile countries, Policy Brief, 2016.
    - Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation, 2016.
    - Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation, 2015.
    - Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal, 2015.
    - Strategic Plan 2016-2020: Improving Learning and Equity through stronger education systems, 2015.
    - Country-level process guide: a step-by-step guide to GPE membership, grant procedures, and education sector coordination, 2015.
    - GPE Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected States, 2013.
    - Equity and Inclusion in Education: A Guide to Support Education Sector Plan Preparation, Revision, and Appraisal, 2010.

- **Government of Puntland**

    - Puntland Second Five-Year Developmental Plan 2014-2018, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2013.
    - Puntland Education Policy Paper, 2012.
    - Puntland Education Act, 2011.

- **Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Puntland**

    - Puntland Education Sector Strategic Plan 2017-2021, 2017 (including M&E Framework and Activity Plan and Costing).
    - Puntland Education Sector Analysis, 2016
    - Education Statistics Yearbook 2015-2016 (EMIS), 2016.
    - Higher education policy, 2014.
    - GPE Programme Document 2013-2016, 2103.
    - Puntland Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2016, 2012.