External Evaluation of the Pôle de Dakar

C2G Conseil

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Mandate: relevant

- Educational sector analysis in sub-Saharan African countries (CSR/RESENe, ++):
  - Assist in the drafting of sector strategies in the region;
  - Provide technical support to the national teams responsible for their drafting;
  - Gather and process data for comparative analyses of African education policies.
3 main activities

1) Direct technical assistance for countries
   – Advice/support for sector analyses, financial simulations, national strategies & programme documents, as well as other programme and monitoring tools;
   – the CSRs (Country Status Reports; RESEN in French) account for most of this activity: 18 Francophone, 5 Anglophone; 2 Lusophone reports in 24 countries (several updates)
     • Often in collaboration with World Bank, UNICEF or other agencies
     • They constitute much of the analytical work underlying the “credible plans” required for FTI/GPE funding
2) Indirect support aimed at spreading the culture of the economic analysis of educational systems by training managers and decision makers in technical and leadership positions: training, through the PSGSE (sector policy and education system management) programme
   - Begun in 2007; 121 trainees from 16 countries

3) Production of statistical and analytical work related to the monitoring of EFA (“Dakar +5, +6, +7”), plus thematic studies
Methodology

• Documentation
• Direct interviews (n = 125)
• 3 case studies (Bénin, Mauritania, Sénégal)
• 3 questionnaires
  – former PSGSE students (n=121 from 11 countries + UN agencies & NGOs; 66% responded)
  – policy-makers (n=65 in 13 countries; 29% responded)
  – technicians involved in CSRs (n=119 in 20 countries; 25% responded)
Effective

• Pôle has met expectations; broad satisfaction with its activities/outputs
  – 28 sector analyses (TTISSA included)
  – 23 simulation models
  – 32 technical notes
  – 6 regional reports
  – Training (4 cohorts, 121 graduates, cooperation with UCAD)
Apparently efficient

• Difficult to assess (lack of clear standards; Pôle has internal analytics for this only since 2012)
• Average cost of CSR+model = $215,000
• Estimate of efficiency improving: we estimate a 25% efficiency gain between 2001-04 & 2009-12.
Impact

First, the counterfactual question: What if there were no Pôle?

– Would the analytical work underlying the “credible plans” submitted to FTI/GPE have been of sufficient quality? ➔ implications for FTI/GPE

– What would country capacities for CSRs be without the training program?

– Who would have done it?
  • The Senegal case & the question of substitution.

– Would it have been done “on time”?

– Would the plans have been as credible?
Impact of CSRs + simulation model

• Interviews with PTF ➔ clear impact
• Interviews with country decision makers ➔ high level of appreciation & sense of ownership
• Overall, highly appreciated
• BUT, is it sustainable without continual support from the Pôle?
Limits of CSRs & role of Pôle

• Thanks to training program, increasing country capacities for CSR & models (Best case: Mauritania)
• Absence of the 2 huge “black boxes”: the learning process (schools, classrooms) & implementation/service delivery (institutional capacities)
• Implementation capacities: a major issue, often neglected
• Are CSRs too standardized?
• Same level of analysis to all sub-sectors
• Overly academic (mostly, a communication issue)
• Overly donor-driven?
• Participation in joint reviews?
• Take local knowledge into account
Recommendations on role of Pôle

• Decide on degree of focus: limited to economic analysis or expanded to other areas
  – Institutional capacities (service delivery)
  – Learning assessments/quality (PASEC, SACMEQ)

• Implications of increased country capacities for CSRs
  – Pôle could provide advice & scientific legitimation
Impact of training program

• Greatly appreciated by participants & by UCAD

• Contribution to UCAD institutional development

• BUT, impact on country capacity to produce CSR is variable, depending on country-specific institutional factors
Recommendation for sustainability: Learning by doing

• No CSR without tight links to training
• Reduce age at entry (current average = 48)
• Admit candidates with guarantee of participation in national CSR teams ➔ articulate country cohort admissions with CSRs
• Only do CSR where there is a critical mass of trained staff
• Improve tutoring
• Masters II
• Expand program to Gambia, Cape Verde, Morocco ➔ development of critical mass of capabilities for sector analysis
Governance & management

• Reasonably effective
  – Recommendation: greater functional autonomy for Pôle is essential

• Steering committee was effective, but composed only of upstream stakeholders
  – Recommendations: (i) include “clients” as well as agencies; (ii) Scientific committee
Recommendations

• Preferred option: remain within UNESCO, but with clear understandings (MoU) of functional autonomy

• Status similar to that of GMR or of ADEA when it was within IIIEP (pay attention to all the details)
  – Coordinate with IIIEP, UIS & with relevant academic institutions
The future

- EFA post 2015 remains to be defined
- Avoid policy myopia: ensure the country-specificity of sector analysis ➔ ownership
- Sector analysis group, such as the Pôle makes sense & contains real value added, but only if its work is intimately linked to strategies for capacity development
Recommendations

• Need to decide if
  – Pôle sticks to its “core business” (economic analysis, PSGSE) ➔ easier, straightforward, little adaptation
  – moves to broader approaches to sector analysis ➔ more difficult, doable, requires intellectual & organizational adaptability

• Pôle’s work should become capacity development-driven at least as much as it has been donor-driven

• Broader disciplinary perspectives

• Identify preconditions for successful (capacity development) Pôle work

• Capitalize on Pôle’s proximity to the field

• Bring local knowledge into the processes
Policy is as implementation does

*If you want to go fast, you go alone. If you want to go far, you go together*