Overview of the innovation

This project sought to improve community engagement in the management of school resources with the long term aim of improving the quality of primary and lower secondary education. Parent Teacher Committees (PTCs) were trained in planning and the management of school resources, with a specific focus on (i) roles and responsibilities of PTCs, (ii) strategic planning and (iii) annual planning. The project supported the establishment of school audit committees in schools where these did not exist and built the capacity of its members to monitor resources and spending of the school.

Another support mechanism of this project focused on parental engagement in the life of the school and the education of their children. A community engagement initiative supported parents to make school and community level government officials more accountable for education delivery. The concept of ‘accountability week’ was introduced, when parents visited the classroom, observed lessons and discussed with teachers; and when a wide range of school stakeholders engaged in creative awareness raising activities (e.g. through drama and role play).

The project trained 280 Parent Teacher Association members and 70 head teachers. The total project budget was GBP 490,492.

Grant Recipient:
The project was implemented by Transparency International Rwanda (TI-Rw).

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What makes it innovative?
The project was innovative in its aim to use a Quantitative Service Delivery Survey (QSDS) instrument to generate an evidence base for school financial management, and to introduce performance based incentives for improved community participation and quality in the management of school.

Relevance to education priorities:
Main Theme: Accountability and Empowerment;
The project was closely aligned to the ESSP and its focus on developing more effective delivery of education services through better management of school financial resources.

Project Learning (activity/output to outcomes level)
(These points relate almost entirely to the Grant Recipients’ perception of the success of the project as no evaluation data are presented)

- The community engagement component and the ‘accountability week’ encouraged positive behaviour from parents but it seemed to be very much about ‘educating parents’ and raising awareness about ‘student behaviour’. There may be a need for a stronger emphasis on the potential need for teachers and schools to do things differently in terms of catering better to the needs of students and their parents (rather than only expecting change from parents and students).
- The training component is a useful intervention to strengthen community management of the school, and created a good forum to enhance communications and joint planning between
parents, schools and local government officials. At the same time, it seemed more about filling a gap in current service provision than being innovative in terms of its methodology.

• Over time the pilot project seems to have broadened its scope from a strict focus on management of school resources to various aspects of wider community engagement which was a positive step in the direction of school based management seen in other countries.

• TI-Rw demonstrated the value of good PR and media engagement to positively present the project to the public.

**Project outcomes and reflection on monitoring and evaluation**

The report submitted was not appropriate as an outcome report, and only provided an overall ranking of schools on scores from a questionnaire at the end-line. The questionnaire itself has no demonstrable validity or reliability and no data were provided to arrive at the scores and hence the ranking. The outcomes set out for the project at inception were not reported upon so no conclusions can be drawn about the impact of it, though claims are made about a great improvement in school management and parental involvement.
Conditions for success
The future of this intervention will need to be in the systemic adoption of the training and support mechanisms, which will need commitment, capacity and resources from REB as well as buy-in and support by DEOs, SEOs and head teachers. As the training provided by TI-Rw strongly supports the implementation of existing laws, opportunities for scale up through the government system are certainly there, provided that budget is available. With regard to this, a more cost-effective support system will need to be identified.

Scale up and sustainability considerations
The package that was tested in the pilot includes straightforward training activities plus the ‘accountability week’, which was added later during implementation with agreement from the Fund Manager. Although costs per school seem relatively high, the model can be replicated in other schools (TI-Rw identified 30 new schools for this replication to take place), especially by initially using actors who have already gone through the pilot experience.

However, there are some questions as to which ‘model’ is being scaled. The accountability week, which was only added to the pilot at a relatively late stage, seems to have become the core of the model, without much clarity about the actual impact of this component, although it is suggested that it has increased parental involvement in school management and the education of their children. At the same time the school governance training does not seem to have disappeared, but remains without any further analysis in the scale-up document. It is thus unclear what the exact scale up package will entail. Also, the process of upscaling is not sufficiently discussed: there are two options provided, with Option 1 suggesting to move to 30 additional schools, and Option 2 proposing staying in the pilot schools and encouraging a more natural spread to surrounding schools through the existing schools (but again unclear about how this should happen).

Finally, the discussion of sustainability is the weakest part of the scale-up document. The TI-Rw document is written as a continuation of a TI-Rw project. TI-Rw staff will take MINEDUC/REB staff with them on the work they will do, but there is no vision for a change in roles and a handing over process, or dealing with the accompanying capacity building and institutional strengthening issues. There is no focus on the process to cover all 30 Districts, nor on an ongoing support model after all Districts have been covered. It just seems a Project Phase 2 to be implemented in a limited number of additional schools.
**Cost Considerations**
The economic analysis is clear in the sense that it provides a budget for the next phase. The problem is that it is just a next phase of the project, without any idea of the potential costs to MINEDUC if/when MINEDUC takes over (in fact there is no attention to handing over to MINEDUC in the document). There is no clarity on costs in relation to outcomes or costs of alternative scenarios.

Another issue is that the magnitude of the programme funding required is still considerable even unit costs are lower when compared to the pilot. The proposed budget of GBP 383,034 will reach only 30 additional schools over 2 years. If costs were calculated to reach all 30 districts on the basis of this, it would seem impossible for the Ministry to absorb.

**Immediate Next Steps**
- TI-Rw and REB to discuss ways in which the training for PTC and audit committees can be scaled up and sustained as part of REB’s work on effective school management. The school leadership and management unit in REB should take the lead.
- TI-Rw can provide technical support to REB, but should gradually move away from its current direct implementation role.
- The accountability week is a good and engaging concept, which can be adopted by REB, and which can relatively easily be organised by the schools themselves. TI-Rw may want to publish a guidance document that can help schools to organise their own ‘Accountability Week’.

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