

Aide Memoire
Education for All 2004-09
2nd Consultative Meeting
5-7 December 2005

Background

1. In 2003, His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) adopted the 'Education for All National Plan of Action 2002-2015. Through a wide consultation with stakeholders at national, regional, district and sub-district levels, the Ministry of Education and Sports developed a strategic document referred to as the Core Document for Education for All 2004-09 (EFA 2004-09). International development partners appraised and accepted the strategic plan as a key policy document for guiding progress towards the EFA goals.
2. Implementation of EFA 2004-09 began July 16, 2004.
3. The HMG/N plan for EFA 04-09 draws upon the six policy goals of the Dakar Framework of Action and strives to ensure access and equity, enhance quality and relevance as well as improving efficiency and institutional capacity of primary education. With regard to children, the plan highlights that each child has a right to receive education of good quality and that Nepal has fully adopted the obligation to ensure that no child is denied such education. Decentralization and social inclusion are thus the two major strategies for implementation of the Education for All 04-09 programme, emphasizing provision of quality education to all children with special focus on girls and children from disadvantaged communities.
4. The second consultation between all partners to EFA 2004-09 took place in Kathmandu to discuss overall progress for the previous fiscal year and make an initial indication of funding to be provided for the following fiscal year on December 5-7, 2005. The consultation included submission of documents and discussion among partners, among others a report on the Status Report, the Flash Report I and II, as well as a Technical Review (TR) report. Participants in the consultation are recorded in Annex A.
5. The consultation programme included meetings between partners at Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and Department of Education (DoE) based on presentations and discussion of a range of documentation as well as a high-level meeting with representatives of the National Planning Commission. The programme for the consultation is annexed as Annex B.
6. Partner representatives undertook field trips, visiting schools and interacting with teachers, students and community stakeholders as well as MoES officials in preparation for the consultation meeting.
7. This Aide Memoire was drafted and agreed to by JFA partners and other EFA stakeholders.

EFA Status Report and Progress

8. DoE gave a presentation on EFA progress of the first year of the implementation. The presentation included reporting on the follow-up to recommendations made in the EFA review Aide Memoire of April 2005.
9. As an expenditure level of 93% was achieved in the fiscal year 2004/05, DoE noted the overall implementation of EFA activities as satisfactory in this respect.
10. The meeting noted variances in data on comparable subjects. Variances were found to be especially with regard to unit costs and scholarships. This was not adequately explained in the presentation. Further, the follow-up to the Aide Memoire of April 2005 was found to be too selective, e.g. paragraph 39 from the EFA review Aide Memoire of April 2005 concerning the status and follow-up of the two annual reports from the office of the Auditor General that will need to be followed up. . For these reasons, it was difficult to provide comments on the Status Report and the presentation. It is recommended that in future meetings MoES clearly presents progress against key EFA indicators and previous Aide Memoires.
11. It was noted that future presentations should concentrate on the broad trends of key indicators. Contributions from non-pooling donors will need to be included in future presentations. Technical support and simplifying mechanisms for collecting and reporting of data could improve consistency and compatibility of reports.
12. The progress of the Vulnerable Communities Development Plan was not discussed in depth. It was agreed that key stakeholders will meet to find a way forward after this Consultative meeting.
13. MoES gave a short presentation with respect to the conflict response. Given the importance of this crucial issue will be returned to in January 2006, when the conflict consultancy gets underway.
14. The UN system reported on on-going co-operation in 2005. The meeting was reminded of the Global 2008 EFA Mid-Term assessment and an appeal was made to ensure support and preparation for Nepal to participate actively in the process.
15. Inputs from the INGO focal point suggested increasing the engagement by NGO/CBOs with the EFA implementation. A request was made for more inclusion in core EFA processes at all levels.
16. Partners raised the issue of the misuse of vehicles procured for the education programme for security related duties. The MoES/DoE confirmed that vehicles procured for education must be used only by this sector. Responding to partner concern, the MoES undertook to bring to the attention of the concerned authorities all such instances that are brought to its notice. The meeting was reminded by the recent HMG/N commitment to be guided by the basic operating guidelines

Flash Reports

17. Flash Survey I and II were presented. Flash Survey I recorded the status at the beginning of the school year 2005, whereas Flash II recorded the situation at the end of school year 2004.
18. Based on an 83% response rate, Flash I noted a positive increase in enrolment. Grade One has seen a 21% increase in enrolment. The share of girls is encouraging. Slight improvement in the internal efficiency was noted. DoE announced that the Flash data will support considerations on how to improve retention rates as well as reducing class sizes, particularly in Grade One. Increasing the number of female teachers was highlighted as an area for priority.
19. Addressing some of the limitations in the statistical systems, the DoE highlighted the need for capacity building activities at the school level, at the Resource Centre levels as well as at the district level, including reducing the volume of data needed. Capacity building should focus on general information and awareness as well as standardising recording, compilation and submission of data.
20. The consultation appreciated the efforts that went into to collection of data from a large number of schools and the 11% progress in enrolment. It was stressed that non-reporting by schools that receive grants needs be addressed. DoE was encouraged to adjust figures in all reports to full census levels and ensure data collection from all schools, including looking into reasons why schools do not report. Partners appreciated suggestions for further development of the collection and processing of data and would like to see them reflected in the up-coming ASIP and activity planning. The consultation recommended that the DoE focuses on processing and analysis of data, especially with regard to educational planning at school, district and central levels. In this context, an increase in staffing of the EMIS section in DoE was considered urgent.
21. In spite of various initiatives taken to ensure timely delivery of textbooks the chances of meeting the goal using the current mechanism of supply through Janak Education Materials Centre, a state owned enterprise, remain slim. There is an urgent need for opening supply of textbook to the private sector in line with policies articulated in the Sector Business Plan and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (10th Plan). It was agreed that the Government will take steps to ensure that textbooks are available for the academic year 2006/07 by distributing camera ready copies of textbooks to private publishers and subject to approval by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) subsequently allow the private sector to publish the textbooks. At the same time, adequate steps will be taken to ensure that textbooks will be available in remote areas.
22. The need to simplify data collection for Flash, the volume of questionnaires, and the distinction between EMIS and Flash as well as the requirement to develop electronic reporting was discussed. Applying specific criteria for collection and disaggregation of data was suggested as a way to standardise collection and processing. While simplifying data collection, sticking to international standards for the global EFA reporting was considered pertinent. NPC noted the progress made in terms of monitoring of education sector activities through Flash Surveys and that EMIS, the Demographic Health Survey and the Nepal Living Standard Survey are the basis for Government planning. However, NPC also stressed the need for continued improvement of the quality of monitoring, timely reporting and use for future educational planning.

23. Partners will forward comments on the Flash Reports to the focal point by 16 December 2005. Based on the comments, a Technical Group will be formed to further contribute the Flash Survey collection, process, analysis and reporting.

Technical Review and Formative Research

24. The Technical Review team leader presented the findings and recommendations of the draft TR that independently has verified progress of EFA and SESP. Based on a sample survey of 1,000 schools and analysis of Government documents, the TR verified a significant increase in Grade One enrolment, a positive development of participation of girls and the existence of School Management Committees in almost all schools.
25. The TR also highlighted a range of activities where efforts do not bring the desired impact, are not complying with various guidelines and regulations or where planning and implemented activities reflect a mismatch between policies and available resources.
26. To continue further institutional capacity building, DoE will engage in dialogue with the TR team, developing responses and corrective measures that could be included in the upcoming ASIP and annual work plan and budget, if feasible. The draft Technical Report will be finalised taking into account observations made during the meeting. The Government and development partners will agree on the modifications to be made in implementation of EFA recommendation contained in the Technical Report.
27. A presentation was given on the main findings and recommendations of the Formative Research Programme and its impact on the educational planning and policies of the MoES. Partners welcomed the recommendations and findings, but commented that the research topics need to be more closely aligned with EFA themes and processes.

ASIP for the fiscal year 2006/07

28. DoE gave a presentation on the process of and preparation for developing an Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP) for the fiscal year 2006/07. The process involves several consultations with NPC and MoF and runs until beginning of June 2006. Reference was made to the recent review of the Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) where regular consultations with NPC and MOF on planning and budgeting were agreed to.
29. The ASIP template will be shared with partners for their possible comments. It was reminded that the Aide Memoire of EFA review in April 2005 (paragraph 15) specifies issues to be included in the template.
30. DoE presented an overview of the budget for the fiscal year 2006/07 and non-submission of the Financial Management Report (FMR) for the third trimester of the fiscal year 2005, the consolidated FMR for fiscal year 2005 which will constitute unaudited EFA accounts. The request to JFA partners is for \$40 million. The JFA partners stated that due to late submission of reports, a financial indication for the fiscal year 2006/07 could not be given at the time of the consultation. JFA partners will consult further with DoE to address this issue in January 2006.

31. Partners noted that the proposed drawdown of donor funding for 2006/07 will leave a substantial funding gap for the last year of EFA. Partners should explore options for supplementary funding, inter alia by joining the Fast track Initiative.
32. In order to increase accountability, it was recommended that planning in districts and at central level specifies annual targets for results and links these to budgets. Incremental budgeting will not facilitate mainstreaming of children that has come to Grade One this fiscal year. An adequate number of teachers and grants to aided as well as unaided schools should be given priority in the ASIP. A strategy to train more teachers should be prepared for the coming fiscal year. Provided there is a clear and comprehensive plan, additional resources could then be explored. Planning in 2006 should bring all partners on board and preposition resources before the enrolment campaigns.
33. NPC stressed the need for a co-ordinated response to the increase in enrolment, included funding of schools. A cautious approach to provide additional assistance to finance teacher salaries was mentioned, taking into account the issue of sustainability
34. MoES shared initial experiences with regard to the Education Sector Business Plan, a forward looking and thematically organised document that is being revised annually. The Business Plan draws on experiences from implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and provides inputs for possible adjustments of sector/sub-sector policies and strategies.
35. The business plan will be revised by an MoES committee within the coming period of time. Intentions are to update interventions and create a higher degree of alignment between core activities and the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Monitoring of education activities will more consistently be brought into the Poverty Monitoring and Analysis System (PMAS) of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
36. The strategy for social inclusion, including girls and disadvantaged communities should be prominently reflected in future business plans. The meeting was reminded that the Gender Audit report made specific recommendations for addressing girls' education. Gender mainstreaming will be an agenda item at the EFA review in May.
37. With reference to the recent earthquake in Pakistan, a review of capacity and provisions for ensuring earthquake safety of schools will be undertaken. The review will refer to the recently published OECD guideline on earthquake safety assessments.
38. It was recommended that future business plans be firmly founded on the EFA National Plan, the EFA 2004-09 policies and strategies as well as reflecting cross sectoral and cross cutting priorities. The business plan should be the framework for ASIP and the annual work plan and budget. This should ensure that the ASIP becomes more consistent and firmly inserted into the NPC framework.
39. The NPC vice chairperson noted that education is considered a lead sector in terms of donor harmonisation and aid effectiveness. The partnership in the education sector and the Education Sector Business Plan will serve as a model for development assistance to other Government sectors. NPC informed that a draft Education Sector Business Plan will be shared with partners shortly.

40. The MoES informed on preparations for an integrated school sector approach to develop effective schools. The meeting further recommended that MoES/DOE use participatory methodologies to develop a set of basic minimum standards for effective schools.

Next steps

41. The meeting appreciated an UNICEF announcement that it intends to begin negotiation with the HMG/N to join the Joint Financing Arrangement with part of its education funds from the fiscal year 2006/07.

42. The purpose of the December meeting will need to be clarified and agreed, based on the understanding that it is a consultative process as opposed to the EFA review in April/May. The clarification should be in line with the specifications mentioned in the Joint Financing Arrangement

43. The EFA review is scheduled to take place in Kathmandu from 3-5 May 2006. The review will be connected to the SESP review.

44. Supporting documentation for the EFA review will be presented to the joint meeting between the MoES and the Local Donor Group in March 2006 and final versions forwarded to partners on the 19 April 2006. A joint planning of review activities will be carried out in an upcoming meeting between the Local Donor Group and the MoES.

45. After consultation with partners, final terms of reference and a review programme will be forwarded to partners no later than one month before the review.

Attachments

Revised TOR and program

List of participants

List of documents submitted