

**Report on the Development of Education in
Ethiopia to the UNESCO Forty-seventh session
of the International Conference on Education
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Introduction

It is now more than 100 years since modern education was introduced in Ethiopia. At the time education focused mainly on giving communication skills and the rudiments that were necessary to run a modern bureaucracy. Later on, after the Second World War, efforts were made to give priority to education and many schools and higher learning institutions were operational. The main purpose at this time was to produce teachers and administrators that serve the state machinery.

Following this some technical and professional training centers were established in order to contribute to the modern economy. During these years student enrollment increased significantly. However, the overall enrollment ratio at all levels is one of the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa.

During this period, a very small section has individually benefited from the educational system, the vast majority has no access due to the inequitable distribution and even the few number of schools were found in the urban areas.

The Present Government of Ethiopia has placed great

importance on education and recognized it as an essential component for development needs of the society. However, education can not play this role unless it is of highest quality, and unless it is relevant to the development needs. Assuming this, we have formulated the 1994 Education policy that envisages:

“bringing up citizens endowed with a human outlook, country wide responsibility and democratic values having developed the necessary productive, creative and appreciative capacity in order to participate fruitfully in development and the utilization of resources and environment at large”.

Accordingly, for the successful implementation of the policy and its strategies a five-year Education sector development programme (ESDP I) was initiated, prepared and implemented between 1997-2002. ESDPI has aimed to improve quality of education, expand access with special emphasis on primary education in rural areas as well as the promotion of education for girls.

The ESDP II has also been prepared as a continuation of ESDP I for the period 2003-2005 with the aim to ensure quality education in a sustainable manner. We have set the year 2015 as our goal for achieving good quality primary Education. In this regard we renewed our commitment during the World Education Forum in April 2000 in Dakar. We have also made EFA our major component in our ESDP II and addressed the goals and strategies set in Dakar Framework for Action.

At present Ethiopia is undergoing a major transition in its educational system. In view of the fact that Ethiopia is suffering from numerous problems resulting from economic undevelopment, the need to focus on educational as well as civil service reform is unprecedented to promote the quality of education in order to achieve the millennium development goals and reduce poverty.

Primary Education

Coverage of primary education as measured by enrollment in grades 1-8 expanded rapidly, at an average annual rate of growth of 11.3% during 1998/99-2002/03. Improvements in access and coverage of primary education were achieved with greater movement towards equity. Gender and rural-urban disparities were reduced. The problem of out of school children especially in those pastoralist and semi-agriculturist regions is being minimized through an alternative mode of delivery suited to the socio-economic and cultural realities of the regions. The program helps not only the reduction of disparities among the regions but also the realization of the country's commitment of universalizing of primary education by the year 2015.

Curriculum reform was undertaken at the primary levels according to the goals of the Education and Training policy. The major area of emphasis of the reform was to develop curriculum materials that would improve the problem-solving capacity of the students and to make them more productive members of the society as well as civic education is also introduced to the curriculum.

Besides, formative and summative evaluations were conducted that helped improve the quality of the curriculum materials and the effective use of the program subsequently.

The secondary first cycle (9-10) is made to expand in line with the high coverage observed in the primary education and the directions set for the economic development of the country. As the content of education at this level is to prepare citizens for various training programs and subsequent learning, considerable attention is given to its qualities. On top of this, evaluative study is conducted on the relevance and quality of the curriculum materials and the effectiveness of the cycles as a whole.

Secondary school second cycle (11-12) is also made to expand on the basis of the intake capacity of higher educational institutions. As the cycle's program is preparatory to higher education, additional subjects that are prerequisites for areas of specialization are included. This also will broaden the choices of fields that students can pursue.

With the objective of upgrading the quality and relevance of primary and secondary education some additional important measures have been taken. To this effect, in order to address the growing needs and demands of the society relevant and valuable information was gathered from the community, students, teachers, concerned professionals, and other stakeholders through different discussion forums.

The primary level (1-8) curriculum was evaluated by external evaluators to keep its standard. Accordingly, the syllabi for primary grades (1-8) and first cycle secondary grades (7-10) has been revised and endorsed by the respective subject teachers and curriculum experts. The syllabus revision was enriched by incorporating contents that reflect the new government strategies on rural development, values and ideals that help produce ethically good citizens and HIV/AIDS conscious individuals.

English Language improvement programme

The Ministry of Education devised a strategy to improve the level of English of teachers in public schools and teacher education Institutes. (TEI's).

An important initial activity of the programme was the training of Ethiopian facilitators' key English Language trainers. The 97 KELT's went on to lead about 200-hour Language improvement courses for over 1,600 teachers across the country. Since this pilot Phase, the cascade model has so far enabled more than 22,000 teachers to have further training.

Technical Vocational Education

Ethiopia needs skilled manpower for rapid development and growth. It is a clear fact that the presence of properly trained and skilled manpower is one of the most important assets and

prerequisites of social and economic development. Technical and vocational training programs are critical in the development of a sustainable manpower resource, to supply the skilled workforce for the production and service section of the economy as well as an expansion of opportunity for self-employment.

Though, the introduction of technical and vocational training the Ethiopian education system dated back to more than 50 years. The development of the sub-sector in the past was slow and not up to the desired level and quality owing to failure to give proper place and emphasis where there was no policy support.

The new education and training policy gives special attention to TVET by providing broad and multi level foundations. Presently TVET is divided into training for agriculture, health and teacher training. Serious attention is given to industrial, commercial and skill training's as well as training manpower for the development program that the country needs. Trainees are also encouraged through entrepreneur education to create jobs for themselves.

Hence, due attention is given to the organization and management of the sub-sector, curriculum and educational materials development, teachers training, the expansion/establishment and building the capacity of institutions, provide quality assurance and accreditation provision and supply of education facilities, technology, books, vehicles and materials as well as involving the private sector.

In 2001-2002 54,026 trainees took part in the newly designed TVET program (10+1 and 10+2 level in 24 non-agricultural fields) at 123 public and 19 non-public training centers.

Information Communication Technology is introduced in the education system to strengthen the expansion of quality education. The introduction of ICT is done phase by phase starting at the secondary level followed by the primary and then ultimately at all levels. At present for the secondary level (9-12) multi-faceted programs and major preparations have been underway to reach the goal of implementing ICT in the education sector and improve the quality of education.

The main activities that are accomplished in the project includes, production of Educational TV programs, installation of satellite receiving devices known as plasma display panels (PDPs) in every classroom at secondary level, establishing a computer network system, and install generators in schools which have no electricity, installation of satellite TV programs transmission system at the center Education Media Agency (EMA) and organizing adequate trainings to teachers, media heads and school directors so as to enhance the practical and effective utilization of the program. Currently, 2,978 television programs are ready for use. About 458 secondary grades (9-12) will be beneficiaries of the first Phase of the ICT project. In the globalized world Information Communication technology is vital. In doing so, we are trying to:

- Present abstract concepts in a simplified manner.
- Transmit uniform education to many students found in different places at the same time.
- Enable students to have access to model and competent teachers.
- Demonstrate laboratory equipment found in one place

(classroom) to other learning classrooms.

In view of this, six subjects have already been selected to be aired via satellite. The subjects are: English, mathematics, physics chemistry, biology and civics and ethical education. These academic subjects, above all others, are the bases and bridges for higher education, teacher education and for technical and vocational education and training programmes. The contents of the television lessons are all in all based on the curriculum. They strictly follow the formal syllabus and cross check the learning and teaching materials to present every lesson under each chapter by television.

Most high schools in our country used ICT's to teach such practical subjects like physics, chemistry and biology theoretically without adequate support with experiments. This was due to high scarcity of laboratory equipment and chemicals. Now it is possible to present by television demonstration experiments that teachers are unable to exhibit in classrooms and help teachers and students. In this respect, broadcasting television programs in every school from a center using satellite technology is indispensable to improve the quality of education.

Teacher Education

According to the Ethiopian education standard, the first cycle (1-4) primary education requires teachers with minimum qualification of Teacher Training institute (TTI) certificate. Similarly, Teacher

Training College's diplomas are required for the second cycle (5-8) teachers. The minimum qualification required to teach at secondary level is first degree.

At national level, in 2002/03 97.1% of first cycle primary school (grade 1-4) teachers are certified, while in the second cycle (grade 5-8) only 30.9% are certified. Currently about 21,400 primary school teachers are enrolled in the diploma program through distance education to upgrade their level of qualification from certificate to diploma level. These teachers are expected to improve the situation in the second cycle primary after the completion of their study. By the same way, only 39.0% of the teachers who have been serving in secondary schools are qualified for the level. To improve this situation, currently 5,716 teachers, who have diploma and teach in secondary schools, are enrolled in summer undergraduate degree programs.

Since the training of qualified teachers has to go hand in hand with the expansion of education establishing new teacher training colleges and upgrading the ones that already exist is underway. In order to improve the quality of education emphasis is given to improve not only the academic qualifications, but also the methodological approaches and ethical values of the teaching staff.

Under Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program new curriculum materials for TTIs, TTCs and University Faculty of Education have been developed and put into practice. The materials are made to emphasize active learning by way of modular approach. Together with this the development of the teaching skills of teacher trainers is also underway through a higher diploma program which

enables them to go along with the newly developed materials and approaches.

A program of continuous professional Development (CPD) is also designed and is ready to put into practice where by teachers update themselves with new outlooks, approaches and policy directions.

A guide and strategy is prepared that enables teachers holding a license to join or stay in the profession. Licensing or relicensing will only be possible if a teacher has successfully completed the CPD program.

An induction material for new teachers after pre-service training and for mentors is developed to help them acquaint themselves with the general principles and ethics of the profession. In general we think teacher education reform greatly contributes to quality of education.

Distance education covers primary, secondary education and teachers' training programs of the TTIs and TTCs. It also covers a wider audience including teachers and those who are unable to attend both formal schooling and training. Therefore, it promotes formal and non-formal as well as teacher education programs.

Higher Education

The Ministry of Education is the Federal institution mandated

for oversight and regulatory provision of the higher education sector. Ethiopian higher education has been started a little over 50 years ago. Currently the number of universities has increased from 2 to 8 across the country. There are few other higher institutions run under the private sector. The annual intake rate has also increased approximately from 3,500 to 30,000 of which 20% of the number represent private institutions.

The Ethiopian education policy requires higher education at diploma, degree and graduate level to be practice oriented, enabling students to become problem solving professional leaders in their fields of study and in overall societal needs. With the provision of the policy, and strategy, the government and the higher education community have concerted effort to design detailed strategies outlining the reform and the future directions of higher education.

Major efforts were accomplished in this sub-sector that focuses on providing relevant education and increasing the capacity to make it commensurate with the country's trained manpower needs both in quantity and quality.

In view of this the Ethiopian higher education reform anticipates the establishment of quality and Relevance Assurance Agency in accordance with higher education Proclamation in order to develop standards and evaluate institutions to maintain quality and relevance.

Another critical reform activity is the curricula review. Emphasis is given to the urgent need to revise and adapt the curricula to meet national, social, economic, cultural and geographical as well as global circumstances.

The reform has also stipulated a “block grant” budgeting system for institutions of higher education. On the other hand, building capacity of leaders and managers through training and experience sharing, decentralization, and autonomy of decision making mainly administrative and financial have become strategic issues of the reform.

Accountability mechanisms are put in place to evaluate the system, leaders and managers, the teaching staff etc. on a regular basis (at least twice a year) based on the implementation of planned activities and attainments of set goals as per the mission.

Moreover efforts are under way to increase the number of trained ICT professionals in Ethiopia. These include, vocational training programs offered by various institutions as well as public and private colleges. University level degree programs are being initiated in computer science, soft and hardware engineering and programming network management, design and support of management information system.

It is understood that producing qualified manpower in sufficient number in order to meet the needs of the economy at all levels, requires the maintenance of greater vertical integration among the programs ranging from, technical and vocational, secondary and all levels of higher education. The need to maintain an efficient vertical integration between different sectors of education to meet economic development needs compels further expansion of the higher education in terms of its intake capacity and diversity of the programs offered.

Similarly, the need for provision of skills to widen the economic opportunities for increasing number of graduates of primary and secondary school demands the expansion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and programs. Without such expansions, the nation cannot benefit fully from the investments in primary and secondary education.

Gender cross-cutting issues

Girls' education is one of the fundamental pillars for ensuring sustainable economic development, democratic participation and poverty reduction. In this connection, the Ethiopian government has given more attention to girl's education. In 2003-2004 due to the favorable policy environment the gross enrolment of female students at primary level is 59% and secondary 1st cycle (9-10) is about 37% and at the preparatory level (11-12) is 29% in technical & vocational education and training institutions is 49% and 25.2% in higher education.

This time the focus is not on more but completion and performance which is very important. Locally relevant measures are initiated to prevent social and cultural barriers to the education of girls to this end. Community leaders and members of women's groups are oriented to great awareness on the importance of education of girls, and to bring about changes in attitudes, values and practices at the family and community level. The *wereda*, *kebele* and Education boards, parents and teachers associations at school

level are among the organs that have played a great role.

The greater gender sensitive curriculum is also contributing to the appropriate learning environment, gender mainstreaming guideline for primary level, affirmative action policies and strategies for female teachers, female students, female supervisors, campaign for enhancing girls education, training for parents-teacher associations, managers and students themselves are the major accomplishments.

Moreover, effort has been taken to increase the number of female teachers, head teachers and managers for role models in order to inspire girls to help them successfully complete their education. Besides, other important practices to be mentioned are guidance and counseling services, encouragement to non-traditional vocational technical fields in the TVET as well as different affirmative action etc.

Civic education cross-cutting issues

The Ministry of education in its quest to further strengthen the development of democratic culture among the youth and the public at large has been working hard to make civics education effective to which end it has taken different measures. In 2002 it established the Department of Civics and Ethical Education with an objective to come up with the revised curriculum of civics and ethical education. The department decided to base the new civics and ethical education on social values that are thought to be instrumental to rightly mould

the personality of the youngsters in the school. Initially the department identified around ninety (90) values but through combining the similar ones it eventually came up with eleven values.

These are:

1. Building Democratic systems
2. The Rule of Law
3. Equality
4. Justice
5. Patriotism
6. Responsibility
7. Industriousness
8. Self-reliance
9. Saving
10. Active Community Participation
11. The Pursuit of Wisdom

After these values were identified, flowcharts and syllabi had been organized for each of the grade levels on the basis of which student's textbooks were developed. These textbooks were prepared having in mind a student centered approach where the learners are expected to make maximum participation in the teaching-learning process. To warrant teachers' acceptance of the new civics and ethical education and create consensus, workshops were organized by the department where teachers and educational personnel from the regions as well as those whom are considered to be stakeholders from the federal offices had the opportunity to participate. The feedback of the workshop had enabled the department to finalize the student textbooks with modest quality after which they were published and distributed to the various regions of the country.

HIV/AIDS and Education cross-cutting theme

The demand, supply and quality of education is highly affected by HIV/AIDS particularly in relation to teachers and students. Hence there is some effort made to keep teachers and students informed about this pandemic and to have life skills learning opportunities to reduce their vulnerability and to enable them to avoid risking behaviors as HIV/AIDS education is integrated in all subjects and for all grade levels. Other strategies of disseminating information is through the various extra-curricular activities including the anti HIV/AIDS clubs, mini media programs in schools, radio and TV programs were produced and broadcasted.

Supplementary materials, reference books, posters, leaflets etc. are prepared in different languages and are distributed to schools. NGOs working on HIV/AIDS are encouraged to use the schools as centers of interventions and entry point to prevent HIV infection among young people. To make the intervention systematic and sustainable and to follow up, the authority task forces at MOE, REB and Wereda level are also formed.

Community participation

It is well realized that the goal of education cannot be achieved through the limited resources of the government alone. Community participation is one of the strategies that shall be promoted to achieve the goals set in education. Hence conducive situations were

created for the community to work in close cooperation with schools. In this regard, school and district boards and parent teacher association are set up where civic associations, teachers, parents, community leaders, woman's association are members.

As a result, a sense of ownership is observed and there are strong evidences from current practices that communities are actively participating in the management and administration of schools. Different sub-committees are also established in many regional states to follow up the education of girls, reduce dropout's rates, and minimize disciplinary problems. Committees also provide direct financial assistance in the construction of additional classrooms, support to school maintenance, mobilize parents to increase enrolment of girls, supervise school construction etc.

Non-government organization

Non-government organizations and the private sector also have great role to play in the provision of education at all levels of the education echelon in addition to their financial, material and technical support to the ESDP. Representatives of donors and non-government organizations are working with the Education Sector Development Program central steering committee and a body is set up to oversee, coordinate and facilitate the implementation process of the program.

Highlights

- Curriculum revision is under gone with continues evaluative studies
- teacher education system overhaul (pre-service and in service program)
- the use of ICTs for secondary schools
- higher education reform
- New program for pastoralist education.
- English language improvement program
- Technical Vocational Education and Training reform
- Skill upgrading for technical vocational teachers
- Civic and Ethical education is incorporated in the curriculum (Primary, Secondary)
- Gender strategic plan at all levels
- Inclusion of HIV/AIDS concept in the curriculum

Conclusion

Although, with immense potential and possibilities we are underdeveloped in competitiveness in this era of globalization and knowledge society. Education is most appropriate to guide the future of our development. National capacity building, sustainable development and poverty reduction endeavor is therefore our priority. Besides, education has a unique role to play in these respect as per the challenging requirements of the society and the country at large. However, there is a long way to go in order to nurture, develop and revitalize our education system.

As indicated in the paper UNESCO's great idea of attaining quality education for all youth still remains a challenge. Providing technical vocational education is only one step to alleviating the problem while absorbing the graduates either by providing opportunities or them finding self employment.

At the same time we have also to work more to utilize the output of researches to solve our societal problems in order to achieve development needs. In this connection Higher Education needs to be strengthened and assists the development endeavors.

Hence, we need international assistance, and with the help of the international community and a strong commitment to foster a new program of integration and collaboration with the government, Ethiopia can improve its educational system and achieve quality education for all young people while at the same time strengthening peace and International understanding in the 21st century.