IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING NEEDS A CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

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Between ideals and outcomes...
A Familiar Message...

“Change in education is easy to propose, hard to implement, and extraordinarily difficult to sustain”

Post 2015 Agenda

• EfA (more access to education) as unfinished business
• More focus on *quality* of learning
• Quality is fuzzy concept
• Curricular thinking helps in clarifying and addressing quality issues
• Curriculum is multidimensional concept:
  – Levels
  – Representations
  – Components
  – Actors
Curriculum:  
Plan for Learning  (in many languages)
Levels of Curriculum (Development)

- **SUPRA**: international, comparative
  (e.g. MDG/SDG; European Framework of Reference for Languages)

- **MACRO**: national (system) frameworks
  (e.g. syllabi, core objectives, attainment targets, standards)

- **MESO**: school
  (school-specific curriculum)

- **MICRO**: classroom, group, teacher
  (textbook, course, instructional materials)

- **NANO**: learner, individual
  (personal curriculum)
Curriculum Representations

• **INTENDED**
  – ideal
  – formal / written

• **IMPLEMENTED**
  – perceived
  – operational / in action

• **ATTAINED**
  – experienced
  – learned
Consistency among curriculum components: *SPIDER's WEB*
Rationale/Mission/Vision

• What competencies (knowledge + skills + attitudes) are of most worth (for future of learners)?
• Mixture of 3xS
  – Subject
  – Society
  – Student
• Or: relative emphases on learning for
  – Further studies and work
  – Participation in society
  – Personal development
• Relevance discourse at every level!
Deliberations...
No curriculum change without teacher development

- Teacher are key
- Teacher learning is most effective when:
  - connected to lessons
  - embedded in own practice
  - teacher learn and develop together
  - and have sufficient time and space
- Potential of active, investigative roles for teachers through:
  - Teacher Design Teams
  - Professional Learning Communities
  - Lesson Studies
  - Action Research
- At school level: need for shared vision & responsibility for learning of pupils and teachers
- Schools as learning organisations, within a supportive environment and active school leaders
Wishes for vision on future-oriented curriculum

• Balance between three perspectives
• Feasibility (within timeframes and task of schools)
• Coherence (vertical and horizontal)
• Space for diversity (for choices of schools, teachers, learners and parents)
• No detailed, prescribed 'national curriculum' with heavy accountability
Successful change benefits from a combined approach

**Steering from the top**
(e.g. national educational policies, directions)

**Support and pressure from aside**
(e.g. networks, teacher education)

**Building-up from the bottom**
(teacher and school involvement)
More Criteria for Quality of Curriculum

- **Relevance** of aims and content (in view of preparing for further studies and work; preparation for society; personal development)

- **Consistency**
- **Practicality**
- **Effectiveness**
- **Scalability and Sustainability**
Recommendations

1. Curriculum clarity through coherent frameworks, but with strong curricular awareness, agency and expertise of schools and teachers

2. Frameworks based upon broadly discussed and justified overall vision on the what & why of learning

3. Need for choices and flexibility for schools, teachers ('differentiation') and students ('personalization')
Continued

4. Assessment should follow curriculum: more valid, more flexible, more formative

5. Many digital opportunities around, but major efforts needed to realize potential added value

6. Major investments in curricular professional development: in pre- and inservice; individuals and teams; school leaders and teachers; and for other education development actors.
We all need curricular thinking!
THANK YOU

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