



**Independent
Commission
for Aid Impact**

ICAI Follow up - DFID's Education Programme in Three East African Countries

1. We assessed DFID's spending on education in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania. We found that DFID had succeeded in boosting enrolment substantially but that there had been a lack of attention to learning outcomes and to the trade-off between increasing access and ensuring quality. As a result, a large majority of children were failing to achieve basic literacy and numeracy.
2. We recommended that DFID should revise its 2010 education strategy, with learning outcomes at the centre. DFID has decided to postpone this until post-2015 goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals are decided, which we agree is a sensible approach to reduce the risk of a mismatch between the strategy and the new goals. DFID is instead planning to publish a position paper shortly, which, we understand, will set out a revised approach to improving the quality of education and make a contribution to the thinking about future global education objectives.
3. The other recommendations were designed to improve learning in specific ways through: introducing a results focus into national funding for districts and schools through results-based aid; continuing to expand support for communities to monitor and promote education; and strengthening DFID's capacity-building support for Ministries of Education. DFID has implemented these recommendations on a country-by-country basis, which is appropriate considering the different country contexts. In Tanzania, DFID has been able to make good progress on its projects, assisted by a renewed focus on education by the Government.
4. We found in our report that DFID Tanzania is working through CSOs on community monitoring. This includes working with Uwezo, which monitors basic competencies in literacy, in a model which is now being replicated elsewhere in Africa. In Rwanda and Ethiopia, where a CSO-based approach would be less straightforward to implement, DFID has pushed the agenda of improved monitoring and accountability largely through government programmes, for example by encouraging more frequent and publicly available Government reading and arithmetic assessments and by strengthening parent-teacher associations. This is positive progress and we would encourage DFID to explore further creative ways to engage communities.
5. DFID partially accepted our recommendation regarding the building of capacity within Ministries of Education. It agreed that it would offer technical assistance and respond to all reasonable requests. This has led to different engagement in the three countries ranging from a continuation of a technical support programme in Ethiopia, to a three-year Capacity Development Plan (2012-15) targeting the Ministry of Education, agencies and decentralised

levels in Rwanda, to DFID Tanzania supporting the government's 'Big Results Now' initiative, which replicates a Malaysian approach including 'problem-solving policy labs' and 'super delivery units'.

6. DFID rejected our recommendation to revise its pilots on results-based aid, arguing that this would be poor value for money. In fact, two out of three country pilots continued to develop in line with our recommendations, identifying the need to address specific challenges further down the delivery chain.

7. More widely, DFID education advisors who have been part of different ICAI reviews recently met to share experiences. We welcome this and encourage DFID to draw lessons from different approaches to results-based aid, capacity-building and community monitoring, considering how to apply best practice and address challenges. We look forward to the publication of a new DFID education strategy in due course – whatever the post-MDG goals agreed, we continue to believe that a focus on learning outcomes in DFID's education programmes and strategy is vital.