

PROGRAMME OUTLINE AND THEORY OF CHANGE

Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards

Background

The **Basic Standards and Minimum Requirements (BRMS)** framework is a government programme that responds to the problem of poor quality of primary education in Uganda, as evidenced by high drop-out rates and poor grade completion. The effectiveness of BRMS depends on the capacity of the primary education system to implement the framework. The system works as follows:

- ➔ There are 23 teacher colleges that have an outreach function. Teacher colleges with outreach functions have coordinating centre tutors (CCTs) with each one having 12-41 CCTs. A number of schools are attached to a CCT (but this number is unknown).
- ➔ There are approximately 534 CCTs expected to visit every school once a term, provide feedback and continuous professional training to teachers. In practice they tend to collect data and distribute posters and other materials.
- ➔ Through this chain the countries 18,000 primary schools (reporting in EMIS) are provided technical support to improve the quality of education and teaching.
- ➔ There is one district education officer (DEO) for each district who is not heavily involved in technical quality of schools. They may be involved in planning. DEOs manage the teacher deployment and teachers.
- ➔ School inspectors in principle should be inspecting schools and providing feedback to CCTs in the provision of professional development.

UNICEF programme and the Theory of Change

UNICEF is supporting the effective implementation of the BRMS, through implementing a two-year mentoring and coaching programme to improve CCT performance in 2012 and 2013. By attaching experienced mentors to CCTs the quality and motivation of CCTS will improve. This will in turn improve knowledge and practices of teachers and educational outcomes. Specifically:

- ➔ There were 15 international and two national mentors assigned to 15 of the 22 Teacher colleges at the beginning of the programme. As of October 2013, there are 11 international and two national mentors. The mentors work with CCTs to improve the way they conduct inspections and provide support to schools and teachers.
- ➔ There were 352 CCTs reached at the programme's peak that provided support to schools and teachers.
- ➔ Each CCT selects 10 schools to focus mentoring on. These are advised to be neither the highest or lowest performing schools. The choice is left with the CCTs. Support to these schools is provided both directly by CCTs and through joint training by mentors. Implementation of the programme is flexible to the CCTs and mentors.
- ➔ Through this chain about 3,000 primary schools in the country are provided technical support to improve the quality of education and teaching. Positive and externalities to non-selected schools are hoped for, but negative externalities (reduced focus of CCTs) is possible.

- ➔ In initial programme design inspectors were going to be included in the programme and improve the linkage between CCTs and inspectors. This has proven practically not effective in most cases.

Key assumptions and existing evidence

1. That pre-service training is not considered a practical alternative. This is as the timeframes are very large (given working with flow of new teachers as opposed to stock of existing teachers). Accordingly fundraising for pre-service training is not practical.
2. That mentoring in the programme is effective in improving CCT quality.
3. That mentoring is more effective (that is cost for improvement) than other methods such as workshops.
4. That improvement in CCT quality has a direct impact teacher performance.
5. That engaging CCTs is more effective in improving than working with inspectors.
6. Improved teacher practice improves learning outcomes.
7. That focussing on 10 schools per CCT does not have significantly adverse outcomes to non selected schools in their areas (and may have positive outcomes).

Expected outcomes and metrics of the programme

Key expected outcomes in the duration of the programme include:

- ➔ That CCTs provide stronger professional development and support to schools, moving away from an inspection and dissemination of materials model. (No clearer metrics exist).
- ➔ Teacher quality improves (currently no clear metrics).

In the longer term

- ➔ Test results improve and completion rises.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation should include the following questions:

- Assess the implementation of the programme with respect to its initial goals.
- Validation or otherwise of key assumptions. Where possible this can use existing international and national evidence, otherwise through primary research including suggestion and assessment of metrics. Key assumptions to be directly tested are likely to be around effectiveness in improving CCT quality, and subsequent improvement of teacher quality.
- Where assumptions are not validated, clear assessment of reasons including bottlenecks and how/if they can be overcome.
- Conclusions, including suggestions for adjusting/ scaling up/next step of the programmes. Including further evaluation questions.

Evaluability considerations

- ➔ A baseline of the programme was conducted. Its utility for this evaluation should be assessed.
- ➔ The roll out of the programme included CCTs focussing on 10 schools within their jurisdiction. This might provide an interesting control group.
- ➔ The teacher colleges (and CCTs) were not selected randomly. As such comparisons with non selected teachers colleges (and CCTs) are unlikely to be helpful.