Population, education and sustainable development: A review of pertinent programmes

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2. Review of programmes that promote universal access to education **(including CSE)**

3. Review of international quality assurance programmes

4. Review of programmes that promote adult learning and life long learning

Introduction

- Universal equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education is central to achievement of SDG4 (sustainable population development)

- This sentiment is expressed in global, regional and national development frameworks (e.g. AADPD and the Montevideo Consensus which among other things call for).

- Formulation of policies to take advantage of the unique opportunities provided by the demographic dividend that include coordinated investments in education, health and the creation of decent work;

- Universal access to affordable quality, comprehensive education and skills development, including retention and completion, in a safe and participatory environment, at all levels of education as well as free elementary education, to adequately respond to labour market needs;

- Adoption and implementation of relevant comprehensive sexuality education programmes, both in and out of school, that are linked to sexual and reproductive health services, with the active involvement of parents, community, traditional, religious and opinion leaders; and young people themselves;

Interventions for Improving Access to Education and Learning Outcomes

Child-centred interventions - target children directly, focusing on improving their ability to benefit from schooling or their incentives and motivation for investing time and resources in their own education. Interventions include:

School feeding programmes - e.g. Zero Hunger initiative, **Brazil** links a school feeding programme and advocacy for local farmers to grow more nutritious foods, whereby 30% of all purchases for school feeding come from smallholder agriculture.

School-based health programs – e.g. a **Kenya's** school based de-worming initiative which gives millions of Kenyan children a worm-free childhood, with lifelong benefits for their health and livelihoods.

Merit based scholarships – *e.g.* aim to improve learning outcomes by rewarding high performing students with scholarships to continue their study. E.g, an intervention in **Kenya** provided scholarships to girls who performed well in their 6th grade exams. The programme awarded the top 15 per cent of students in the grade with a grant to cover school fees for two years, and also a cash sum which was to be used for school supplies, thereby intending to provide the girls with an incentive to perform well in school.

Household level interventions - aim to reduce or remove financial household level barriers to education; provide incentives and motivation for households to invest time and resources in the education of their children. Interventions include:

> ***Interventions reducing costs:*** Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs) and Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs).

> ***Interventions providing information to parents -*** aim to improve schooling outcomes by changing parents' behaviour in some way. The information may detail the performance of children, for instance through the provision of report cards. It may also include information about the overall performance of the school so that parents may question the results and demand better performance from teachers. Dissemination of information about the economic benefits of schooling typically involves providing information to either parents or the students about the future potential returns to schooling.

School level interventions – take place at the school aim to improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment. They include interventions providing physical or human resource inputs, or that change how teaching is delivered, or how schools are managed.

Investing in teachers by employing, training and retaining teachers can allow schools to reduce class sizes, improve the quality of instruction and offer more targeted tuition for children that are falling behind. In **India**, one intervention provided training for secondary   school graduates to teach students in government schools who were lagging behind their peers in the core competencies (Banerjee et al., 2007).

Pedagogy interventions - include all those that aim to adapt or improve educational content or the methods by which it is taught, including curriculum reforms, innovative or specialised methods such as computer-assisted learning or multi-grade teaching.

New schools & infrastructure interventions

Interventions providing materials - such as books, chalkboards, computers with appropriate software or other classroom equipment. E.g, the School Assistance Program (SAP) funded by the **Dutch non-profit organisation** International Christelijk Steunfonds (ICS), provided English, Maths and Science text books to primary school children in **Kenya**

System-level interventions - include school-based management interventions, community based monitoring interventions, public private partnerships and private provision of schooling.

Summary of Interventions for Improving Access to Education and learning outcomes

Systematic reviews of 238 studies conducted in 52 LMICS suggest that:

Increasing participation

- *Cash transfer programmes* have the most substantial and consistent beneficial effects on school participation.

- Other interventions that may be promising for improving school participation outcomes include *community-based monitoring, low-cost private schools, new schools and infrastructure and school feeding*.

Improving learning outcomes

- *Structured pedagogy programmes have the largest and most consistent positive average effects on learning outcomes.* These interventions typically include development of new content focused on a particular topic, materials for students and teachers, and short-term training courses for teachers in delivering the new content.

- Other interventions that may be promising for improving learning outcomes include *merit-based scholarships, school feeding, extra time in school and remedial education.*
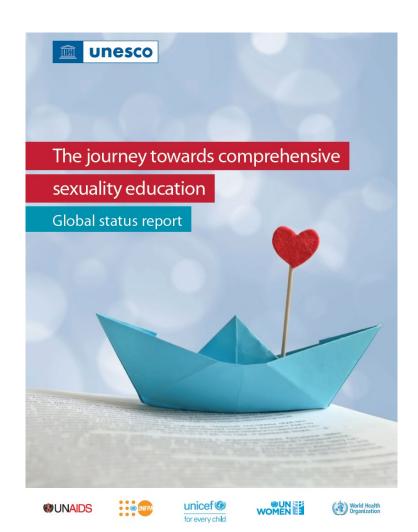
Comprehensive sexuality education

CSE - is a rights-based and gender-transformative approach, whether in school or outside of school.

- **It is most effective when taught over several years by integrating age-appropriate information that accounts for the developing capacities of young people.**

- CSE is a key component of UNFPA strategy for empowering young people to shape the lives they want.

- UNFPA works with governments and partners to develop and implement comprehensive sexuality education programmes that meet international technical standards.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

- The latest report on CSE implementation presents **23 country case studies** from across all regions of the world

Interventions for quality assurance

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

- **An integral part of the right to education is ensuring that education is of sufficient quality to lead to relevant, equitable and effective learning outcomes at all levels and in all settings**.

- Quality education necessitates, at a minimum, that **learners develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills** as building blocks for further learning, as well as higher-order skills.

- This requires relevant teaching and learning methods and content that meet the needs of all learners, taught by well-qualified, trained, adequately remunerated and motivated teachers, using appropriate pedagogical approaches and supported by appropriate information and communication technology (ICT), as well as the creation of safe, healthy, gender-responsive, inclusive and adequately resourced environments that facilitate learning.

- PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges.

Adult education and life long learning

Adult education and life long learning

o The idea of lifelong learning is deeply rooted in all cultures. It is becoming increasingly relevant in today's fast-changing world, where social, economic and political norms are constantly being redefined.

o Studies have shown that lifelong learners are better equipped to adapt to changes in their environments.

o Lifelong learning and the learning society therefore have a vital role to play in empowering citizens and effecting a transition to sustainable societies.

o To **complement and supplement formal schooling**, broad and flexible lifelong learning opportunities should be provided through non-formal pathways with adequate resources and mechanisms and through stimulating informal learning, including through use of ICT.

The ASEAN Lifelong Learning Agenda

- The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELLL) **launched an online portal on 6 March 2017 to share good practice and disseminate relevant information related to lifelong learning in the region**. www.SEA-LLLportal.org.

- The portal **provides easy access to best practices, articles, studies, reports and statistics in the area of lifelong learning,** thereby providing a base for informed decision-making and improving equity and quality in the development of policies and programmes.

- The portal **also functions as a virtual space for discussions and mutual learning:** through its forum, policy-makers, researchers, scholars, experts and practitioners can discuss current issues, theories and practices relevant to enhancing lifelong learning in South-East Asia.

Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) of non-formal and informal learning – a pillar for any lifelong learning policy

- **UNSECO RVA country profiles** https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/recognition-validation-accreditation/rva-country-profiles

    - South Africa developed a *National Policy of Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in 2013.*

    - The policy is used as a key mechanism for **redressing past injustices** by recognizing knowledge, skills and competences gained through experience and practical workplace learning.

    - The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) describes RPL as principles and processes through which prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development

    - Within this context, RPL is a key feature for ensuring an inclusive, democratic education and training system and lifelong learning culture in South Africa.

"Recognition of prior learning" as a driver of opportunity in RSA

- As part of the education and training system, **RPL plays an important role in increasing employability, reskilling and bridging the inequality divide in South Africa**.

- SAQA identifies two components of RPL: (1) access and (2) credit (SAQA, 2013).

> *Access* refers to alternative access routes into learning programmes that offer registered qualifications or part-qualifications. It increases opportunities for learners who do not meet formal entry requirements.

> *Credit* refers to credits awarded, leading to a registered qualification.

Challenges and solutions to successful RPL implementation in RSA

- The barriers to the implementation of RPL are both *conceptual* and *practical*.

    Conceptual barriers refer to **society's understanding of what knowledge is and which knowledge counts** (perceived value of workplace knowledge versus academic knowledge), power relationships associated with disciplines (academic and vocational) and their boundaries, and the false notion that one RPL size fits all.

    Consistent advocacy and organisational development needed to overcome these barriers, as is ongoing support to encourage RPL within organizations.

    Practical barriers - main barrier is funding.

Solution(s)

- Ministry of Higher Education and Training published a national strategy for the wide-scale implementation of RPL (South Africa, 2016).
- The strategy proposes legislation for and establishing a national RPL coordinating and sustainable funding mechanism for RPL implementation.
- Ministry also engaging in a national drive to workshop all interested parties to guide the establishment of RPL centres.
- SAQA continues to advocate for the implementation of RPL with the relevant stakeholders

UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities

- While national governments are largely responsible for creating strategies for building learning societies, **lasting change requires commitment at the local level.**

  UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities is an international policy-oriented network providing inspiration, know-how and best practice https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities

  Supports the achievement of all 17 SDGs), in particular SDG 4('Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all') and SDG 11 ('Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable').

  Supports and improves the practice of lifelong learning in the world's cities by promoting policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities; forging links; fostering partnerships; providing capacity development; and developing instruments to encourage and recognize progress made in building learning cities.