

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE NOTE 1

EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

1. Topic Overview

Education sector analysis (ESA) is critically important for the preparation of strong education sector strategies and plans. It provides the evidence basis for policy dialogue and the analysis of policy options to inform decisions. This guidance note is a practical overview of how ESAs are carried out, their purposes and content. It also highlights key issues for EU staff engagement in these important exercises.

Education systems are complex, composed of many inter-related functions, a range of actors within government with different roles and responsibilities and other partners.ⁱ This complexity can make it difficult to agree on shared objectives and establish priorities. It also makes it difficult to agree on changes and reforms, particularly in a financially constrained context, and it can get in the way of the management and implementation of programmes.

A good ESA helps build common understanding and should tell a clear and compelling story about what an education system is (or is not) achieving, the challenges it is facing, and who is (or is not) benefiting. As part of this, it should provide information and analysis on the financing and governance of the sector, and the capacity of the administration at central and sub-national levels. An ESA should provide an evidence basis for decisions about how best to ensure equitable access to education and to improve both service delivery and learning outcomes.

ESAs have gone through a considerable evolution over the past two decades. Perhaps the most notable change is that of ownership. Once the traditional domain of donors and UN agencies, ESAs are now increasingly prepared by ministries of education, with the support of development partners (technical and financial) if needed. ESAs are conducted as a first step in the process to develop an education sector plan (ESP) and are discussed in sector coordination forums in this context.

Summary

- ESA make a key contribution to the preparation of sector plans, decision making and policy dialogue.
- The breadth and depth of ESA may vary depending on context. This paper identifies comprehensive and more rapid / focused ESA.
- ESA typically covers context, access, internal and external efficiency, cost and financing, quality, capacity, governance, and equity.
- There are methodological guidelines available for the preparation of ESA, as well as a range of studies and tools.
- ESA should be government led, not donor driven. However, EU Delegations can contribute through policy dialogue and coordination, funding specific studies and related capacity development.
- An ESA and related work on sector plans is a crucial entry point for policy dialogue and consensus building.

What is an Education Sector Analysis?

ESAs vary in scope depending on the specific country context and the objective of the analysis. In broad terms, two main kinds of ESA are undertaken depending on the country context. In countries that are not facing specific difficulties of fragility or crisis, a 'comprehensive' ESA can be undertaken. In specific contexts of crisis (e.g. conflict or natural disaster) or fragility, more rapid and focused analysis may be undertaken, notably to prepare a transitional education plan (TEP) and analyse the education situation and its needs, to inform humanitarian interventions. The scope of the ESA will also depend on the availability of data and time available.

Comprehensive ESA

Comprehensive ESA is generally undertaken to initiate the preparation process of ESPs. These are typically sector-wide assessments, undertaken by governments, in most cases with technical support, in order to identify trends, challenges and bottlenecks, which will serve as a basis to establish policy priorities. Such ESAs include the Education Country Status Reports that have been prepared in more than 40 countries.ⁱⁱ

i See Part 1, Chapter 2.

ii Generally conducted with support from the UNESCO-IIEP Pôle de Dakar (called RESEN in French : Rapport sur l'état du système éducatif national) in Africa.

More limited and rapid analyses

- **Emergency and conflict contexts:** In these contexts, two steps generally take place. Firstly, a rapid analysis. During or immediately after a crisis, there is a need for partners to quickly gather data and provide analysis of the situation for short-term response. Secondly, there is generally a Joint Education Needs Assessment, which may contribute to an annual multi-sector humanitarian needs assessment. These inform the Humanitarian Needs plan (or Refugee Response Plan).
- Education situation analysis **may be prepared for transition** after the emergency phase, and is often prepared in specific contexts of fragility or crisisⁱⁱⁱ. A situation analysis may be more narrow in scope, focused on specific sub-sectors, to inform the preparation of a TEP^{iv}. This may be done under some pressure of time, but as a first step towards establishing more comprehensive sector analysis and sector plan when conditions allow, but serves the purpose of building consensus, prioritizing and coordinating the available resources and support. Education situation analysis may give less time for capacity development, and for the use of a participatory approach.

What should be covered in an ESA?

ESAs provide a wide range of information. Although the scope may vary, a comprehensive ESA typically covers all sub-sectors including Early Childhood Education and Tertiary Education and ideally includes the following themes:

- **Context:** demographic, humanitarian and social environments of schooling. Macro-economic and public finance contexts. Specific risks or vulnerabilities associated with the environment (e.g. extreme weather) could also be part of this analysis as appropriate.
- **Access:** who is out of school, who gets to school and who stays in school and what are the underlying barriers to access.
- **Internal efficiency:** the relationship between the inputs and outputs of an education system; an internally efficient system has very low dropout and repetition rates.
- **Costs and Financing:** public and household/private spending on education, including external funding, the recurrent costs and capital costs (e.g. for infrastructure), how spending reveals system-wide priorities, and who is bearing the cost.
- **Quality:** how the education system produces learning through managing teachers and other resources and regularly assesses learning outcomes,

and how it uses the information from learning assessments to inform pedagogy improvements and other measures.

- **Capacity and Management/Governance:** whether the system at its various levels (usually central, district and schools) has the capacity and the appropriate management systems to achieve its objectives and at what pace.
- **External Efficiency:** preparing graduates for employment and understanding the economic and social impact of education. The benefits to individuals and society that are derived from the investments in education.
- **Equity:** understanding who, which groups and geographical areas are disadvantaged in terms of access and learning, and how the distribution of resources impacts on this. This analysis will depend on the data, whether it is complete, and sufficiently disaggregated.

An analysis of the quality and effectiveness of external support should also be considered: whether external support is aligned with sector priorities, uses country systems, involves significant transaction costs and is predictable over the medium term.

More details for each of the themes and guidance can be found in the Education Sector Analysis Guidelines prepared by UNESCO-IIEP, UNICEF, World Bank & Global Partnership for Education (GPE)^v, it should, however, be noted that, depending on the context, additional areas or themes might be covered or expanded as considered necessary.

Where a transitional education plan (TEP) is being developed, analysis may be more restricted and focused (for instance limited to a few sub-sectors), but it should still be based on evidence, and provide an analysis of the performance of and challenges faced by the education system. Data and evidence gaps should be noted, so they can be addressed during the implementation period of the TEP. To the extent possible, this analysis should aim to cover similar areas to those in the ESA set out above, even if the analysis will not be as comprehensive.

In such contexts, it is critical to assess disparities in resourcing and provision and, where appropriate, the effects of crisis (e.g. conflict and natural disaster) on education. This might require specific responses to address psychosocial needs (of children and teachers) or school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) linked to school attendance. The conflict analysis will

iii In practice it can sometimes also be the option chosen due to the need for a rapid analysis in a specific context (due to time and/or data constraints for instance).

iv <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-transitional-education-plan-preparation>

v UNESCO-IIEP, UNICEF, World Bank & Global Partnership for Education, Education Sector Analysis Guidelines: Sector-Wide Analysis, With Emphasis on Primary and Secondary Education, Vol. 1, 2014 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000230532>, and Education Sector Analysis Guidelines: Sub-Sector Specific Analyses, Vol. 2, 2014 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000230533>

also help ensure that the TEP is aligned to Conflict Sensitive Education (CSE) principles. This analysis should also enable short-term planning for safe, possibly temporary, learning spaces and the medium-term planning for access to resilient infrastructure.

A good ESA will take into account the factors beyond the education sector that impact schooling, such as HIV/AIDS, diseases, parasite burden, malnutrition, infant mortality, security and child protection issues, lack of electricity and transport, and extreme weather and environmental damage.

What tools and resources can be used for an ESA?

There is a wide range of guidelines, analytical tools and studies available to support and inform an ESA, as well as transitional situation analyses and rapid assessments.^{vi} These include:

- Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines, in two volumes (with a third in preparation), which have been jointly produced by UNESCO-IIEP, UNICEF, World Bank & GPE in 2014. These guidelines provide comprehensive and detailed guidance on different analyses that should be conducted.
- Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation^{vii}, prepared by IIEP-UNESCO and GPE in 2016, includes guidance on the preparation of education situation analysis in fragile or crisis contexts.
- Education in Emergencies in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations^{viii} provides guidance on humanitarian needs assessments. This includes guidance on EU priorities for support through humanitarian funding and considerations in working across the humanitarian-development nexus across EU funding instruments.
- The Joint Education Needs Assessment (JENA) Toolkit^{ix} (which includes a Rapid JENA for sudden onset emergencies) developed by the Global Education Cluster and the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook^x are key tools for planning in emergency and for crisis response.

- Education financing studies: in many contexts, studies will already have been done or can be supported to contribute to ESA, for instance public expenditure reviews (PER) to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of education expenditures and/or public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS) to follow the flow of funds to schools and other institutions.
- Studies on marginalisation in education: for example, in many countries, UNICEF has undertaken analysis of children out-of-school or at risk of dropping out. Specific studies may have been conducted on language issues, disability, environmental vulnerability or other barriers to participation and learning.
- The World Bank's SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results)^{xi} includes a number of tools which focus on policy in specific sub-sectors (e.g. early childhood education) or themes (e.g. teachers, ICT). More recently, the World Bank has been conducting analysis based on Service Delivery Indicators^{xii}, in a limited number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. These give a rich source of data on policy implementation challenges at school level.
- Institutional/capacity assessments, including needs assessments, functional analysis and political economy analysis. This is particularly important for the implementation of education reforms and during a process of decentralisation, where there are changes around roles, responsibilities and accountability arrangements.

An ESA will rely on the availability of good quality, reliable data. For the education sector, the key national data source will be the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and population data (recognising that the quality of data can be poor, which will skew results of analysis). Other sources include national statistics data, administrative datasets from the Ministry of Education (MoE), household surveys and labour force surveys, National Learning Assessments and other assessments such as EGRA / EGMA, PISA and TIMSS^{xiii}. Data on learning outcomes are still not widely available in many countries or are not giving a complete picture. Where this is the case, data on reading may be used as a proxy for missing data on other forms of learning. Other quantitative and qualitative studies may also contribute, including programme or project evaluations.

vi Other Practical Guidance Notes in this series give further advice on tools for specific issues, including assessment, teacher policy, education finance, indicators/results monitoring.

vii UNESCO-IIEP & Global Partnership for Education, Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation, 2016 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244900>

viii European Commission Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, DG ECHO Thematic Policy Document No: 10 – Education in Emergencies in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations, March 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/eie_in_humanitarian_assistance.pdf

ix Global Education Cluster, The Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit, 2010, http://educationcluster.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Ed_NA_Toolkit_Final.pdf

x Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, 2010 <https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards>

xi World Bank, Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), <http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm>

xii World Bank, Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) initiative. <https://www.sdiindicators.org/>

xiii See Practical Guidance Note 11: Learning Assessment

2. Key Issues

EU Delegation (EUD) staff do not need to become experts on all technical aspects of ESA, but will need to draw on and engage with this analysis as a basis for EU support. The ESA will inform the strategic choices being made as the government develops or reviews its ESP. The process of ESA is an important entry point and basis for policy dialogue, as partners discuss the emerging issues or highlight key unanswered questions and challenges. A sound ESA, backing the ESP, is therefore an essential starting point for the EU and other partners to formulate support, justifying the targeting of key groups, priority programmes or aspects of system strengthening, and to ensure the selection of appropriate funding modalities, indicators and tranche release mechanisms.

How can EU Delegation staff support and participate in ESA?

The EUD should be an active member of the local education group (LEG) or relevant sector coordination mechanism and, where appropriate, associated working groups.^{xiv} In this way, the EU works closely with other development partners and the MoE. Through this policy dialogue, and the provision of financial/technical support, the EU can contribute to the ESA process in a number of ways:

- **Sector coordination/dialogue:**
 - Work with government and partners to develop and agree the terms of reference, scope of the analysis, organisation and management of the team and possible areas of support.^{xv}
 - Identify studies that could feed into the ESA.
 - Encourage good planning, allowing sufficient time for the ESA so that it can properly inform a good quality TEP or ESP.
 - Promote the preparation of a situation analysis and possibly a more comprehensive ESA if time allows, in contexts of fragility or crisis.
 - Help to ensure ownership by government, promoting alignment of the DPs programming to the timeline and the participation of all stakeholders in the sector.
- **Funding research/studies:** The GPE provides grants to countries to support the development of the ESPs, which include the preparation of the ESA as a first step. As an active member of the LEG, the EU could agree to finance supplementary analysis that might be needed as part of the ESA. This is an

important opportunity for in-depth engagement with the MoE and development partners. The ESA should be discussed in the LEG, with an agreed division of labour among partners, if it is agreed with the MoE that some areas indeed require support.

- **Capacity development for ESA:** ESAs are themselves a direct form of capacity development, if conducted in a participatory manner to ensure a shared understanding and subsequent use of the information gained through the exercise. The EU and others can provide technical assistance to support this process, working with technical departments of the relevant ministries (or universities and research institutions) to conduct analysis and studies. Quite specific expertise, in terms of data analysis and reporting, is likely to be needed for the ESA. If not already in place, support to the development and strengthening of the EMIS, learning assessment and other data should be considered as part of medium to longer-term support. It might be useful to promote awareness in areas such as the assessment of environmental and climate change issues, and their impact on education access and retention.
- **Policy dialogue:** Use the ESA process as an entry point to dialogue about evidence and priorities for policy and ESP preparation. Specific issues will be highly context dependent, but are likely to include: equity issues; the availability of data for the most vulnerable groups; education financing budget allocations; the availability of financial data at different levels and across sub-sectors; the availability and use of learning assessments and data, and its integration within EMIS.

While EU Delegation staff may not be part of teams conducting this analysis, any such opportunity to be involved, for instance in specific working groups, may provide an entry point to technical dialogue and partnership building.^{xvi} Once the ESA has been completed, it will form the basis for the preparation of ESPs and EU/development partners support. It should however be reviewed and updated as part of the on-going sector dialogue and review process.

^{xiv} See Practical Guidance Note 5: Education sector coordination and policy dialogue

^{xv} Terms of Reference for ESA vary, and specific expertise will depend on context, and availability of skills within government. Areas of expertise needed may include education financing / economics, quantitative / education statistical analysis, education M&E, qualitative research, sub-sectoral and education equity and country expertise.

^{xvi} Opportunities created by joint programming processes with the EU Member States should be utilised to the maximum here.

3. Case Study

Source	Carlos-Javier Medrano-Adan, EU Delegation to Central African Republic
Programme	<p>The EU is supporting education in Central African Republic (CAR) through:</p> <p>Budget support State Building Contract (SBC) which has a focus on the education sector with 4 indicators for education governance, financing, access and quality;</p> <p>The programme “Retablissement des services sociaux de base en Education” with UNICEF, which has a focus on rehabilitation of schools, teacher training, capacity development of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MEPS), protection and emergency measures.</p> <p>Technical assistance to the MEPS: capacity development for human resources management, support to the revision of the organigram, support to the coordination mechanisms, to the monitoring of the SBC indicators, etc.</p> <p>ECHO support to the National Strategy of Education in Emergency.</p> <p>Being the lead DP in the education sector</p> <p>Its support through GPE Programmes</p>
Context and challenges	<p>CAR has been in a state of almost permanent internal conflict since 2013, with a succession of governments, military coups and rebellions. By 2017, there were over 600,000 internally displaced persons and over 500,000 refugees living in neighbouring countries. This situation has left children extremely vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and to a severe lack of access to good quality education in much of the country. One child in two suffers from stunted growth due to lack of nutrition. The country has been ranked lowest or second-lowest among all countries on the UNDP Human Development Index since 2015.</p> <p>Education currently receives about 14% of total state budget allocations and education spending is unevenly distributed across the country, both because of continuing conflict in some interior regions and because of long-term structural imbalances favouring the capital region. An estimated 60% of teachers in the country are hired by parents’ committees, but this varies from around 10% in the capital city to about 80% in the northern region of the country. The student-teacher ratio is among the highest in the world, averaging about 100:1. Many classes have over 200 students and some over 300. Almost all schools run double shifts because of a lack of classroom space.</p> <p>The European Union serves as lead donor to the education sector in CAR. Along with other partners, including the World Bank, UNICEF, GPE and AFD, it was hampered in its efforts to provide well-targeted financial support by a lack of information, particularly for schools outside the capital region. Following elections in 2016, and the adoption by the government of the ‘Plan de Relèvement et de Consolidation de la Paix (RCPCA),’ an opportunity was seen to develop a new education sector plan that would be developed in that broader national framework, to follow up on the ongoing (2018-19) transitional plan under implementation. It was agreed with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education that an Education Sector Analysis would be carried out as the basis for the new education sector plan.</p>
Action taken	<p>Donors agreed to provide support for preparation of the ESA. Given the urgent need for sectoral support, an accelerated process was agreed by which to carry out the analysis, organised in four parts: i) background and context, ii) impact of the crises and evaluation of existing programmes, iii) access to education by sub-sector, and iv) internal and external financing by sub-sector. The collection of baseline data was constrained by continuing unrest in parts of the country; analysis was further limited by overall institutional weaknesses and the lack of a reliable database for analysis of trends over time. The analysis was conducted by a national team, with technical support by the UNESCO-IIEP Pôle de Dakar, as well as UNESCO and UNICEF. The DPs active in the sector provided support to the process, notably through monthly meetings of the LEG, that is co-Chaired by the EUD as lead of the DPs in education sector. The EU, through the financing of a UNICEF programme, financed studies, notably on teachers, that fed into the ESA. It also supported capacity development of the MoE during the process both through the UNICEF programme, and also through its technical assistance team supporting the ministry.</p> <p>An inter-ministerial task force was created to steer the process, with representation of two ministries in charge of education, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Civil Service, as well as an umbrella group representing education-focused NGOs (CCIONCA) and representatives of the main development partners working in the sector.</p>
Impact	<p>The Education Sector Analysis has led to a more nuanced, evidence-based and shared understanding of the performance of and challenges facing the education sector. The ESA has promoted joint work and increased communication, notably between the ministries involved in education, through the set-up of the inter-ministerial task force. Coordination between the DPs and with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MEPS) was also reinforced during the process.</p> <p>Preparation of an Education Sector Plan is underway, scheduled for completion in December 2019. The ESA has however already supported the mobilisation of additional financing to the sector as it complemented the ongoing education transition plan, demonstrated the ongoing efforts to reinforce the sector strategy, and the government priority on education. It supported the preparation of the emergency strategy for education, implemented through the Multiannual resilience programme in education (MYRP) which is financed by Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and several other Development Partners. It has also supported the preparation and adoption of the EU budget support SBC which has education as a focus area. This SBC includes targets aimed at supporting the formal adoption of the Transition Education Plan, the increase of education share of the national budget, girls (6-11 years) access to school, and to ensure that the annual exams are organised on time and for the whole country. These targets could notably be formulated based on the information provided by the ESA.</p>

Lessons learned	<p>The creation of an inter-ministerial task force for the ESA resulted in high level champions for educational reform, and greater understanding of education sector challenges by the ministries involved in education personnel; more involvement of the sub-national level would have been beneficial.</p> <p>The accelerated analysis resulted in a significant increase in more reliable data and supported the mobilisation of badly-needed donor funding for the sector to support areas in urgent need of support (such as school rehabilitation, teachers, pupil's material, etc.), this analysis of the situation increased the confidence in the efforts made by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MEPS).</p> <p>Trade-offs in preparing the ESA have affected subsequent donor-supported programmes: a better understanding of management and infrastructure challenges generated by the conflict context has led to a range of initiatives to build emergency school structures, train teachers and lower class sizes; however a more limited attention to classroom-level interactions (in part due to a lack of assessments of learning outcomes) has led to limited support for efforts to improve the quality of student learning.</p>
Further information	<p>Analyse du secteur de l'éducation de la République centrafricaine, Pour une politique de reconstruction du système éducatif, République centrafricaine, UNESCO-IIEP Pole de Dakar, UNICEF, 2018 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366412</p>

4. References and Further Reading

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