

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE NOTE 5

SECTOR COORDINATION AND POLICY DIALOGUE

1. Topic Overview

Since the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)ⁱ, the EU and other partners have made global commitments to ensure and improve the effectiveness of development support to partner countries by implementing the five aid effectiveness principlesⁱⁱ ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results and mutual accountability.

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation consolidated the principles agreed at Paris and Accra, introducing a stronger focus on inclusiveness. Four effectiveness principles, applicable to all forms of development cooperation, were agreed: ownership of development priorities by developing countries, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, transparency and accountability to each other.ⁱⁱⁱ The EU has made a specific commitment to increase aid effectiveness, including through joint programming to strengthen coherence, transparency, predictability and visibility of EU external assistance.

Within the education sector, efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of development for increased access to school and improved learning have led to the emergence of country, regional, and global coordination mechanisms. These include Local Education Groups (LEG) at country level and coordination platforms at the global level by initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) or Education Cannot Wait (ECW). These aim to reduce fragmentation and duplication of support where resources are limited, and to provide forums for policy dialogue on the challenges faced by the sector, and on the policies and strategies to address them. These forums are key to ensure the alignment of external support to the partner countries' education strategic plans. This is particularly important

Summary

Country level coordination mechanisms in education, primarily Local Education Groups (LEG) provide a platform for dialogue on sector challenges, policy and strategy and serve to reduce fragmentation of aid to the sector.

Key features of sector coordination include i) a well organised process led by government, ii) inclusive participation, iii) alignment around a sector plan, iv) cross sectoral coordination, v) two way information sharing, vi) monitoring of performance.

Contexts of crisis pose specific challenges, including possible limited capacity for coordination, or working with government administrations. In emergencies coordination is led by UN agencies and sector clusters. Efforts are made to bridge humanitarian and development responses.

EUDs should plan and remain active in policy dialogue through the programming cycle, understand the sector context, define objectives for the dialogue, and ensure staff skills and resources are in place.

and challenging in fragile contexts and during crises (e.g. conflict and extreme weather events), with the simultaneous provision of aid by different humanitarian and development agencies, and the possible lack of a strategic plan for the sector.

Since 2015, there has been more focus on education on the global development agenda. This has been reflected in the creation of new global initiatives which aim to raise additional resources for education. Despite the positive implications for the sector, this proliferation of initiatives risks additional fragmentation, competition for funding and transaction costs for partner countries. In this context, well-managed country-level coordination is even more important.

This Practical Guidance Note (PGN) focuses on coordination and policy dialogue at country level. For the EU, policy dialogue is a central element of its contribution to the sector.

i The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>
 ii The EU approach to development effectiveness https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/eu-approach-aid-effectiveness_en
 iii Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, *Nairobi Outcome Document*, 2016 <http://effectivecooperation.org/our-work/the-nairobi-outcome-document/>

Education sector coordination mechanisms and process

The coordination process at the country level is the responsibility of the ministry of education, who can set up a Local Education Group (LEG) to facilitate the process. Although the specific composition, title and working arrangements of LEGs may vary from country to country, their function and procedures are similar. The LEGs should be led by government (usually the ministry of education) and include a range of government representatives, donors and development agencies, teachers' organisations, civil society organisations, and private education providers. The detailed roles and responsibilities of the LEG are usually developed in a shared document (e.g. terms of reference), which will include the frequency of meetings, secretariat arrangements, working groups, and reporting processes. Coordination mechanisms in crisis and fragile contexts are often initiated by the Global Education Cluster, by UNHCR (if a refugee response) or by other humanitarian agencies, and not by national education ministries. In such contexts, it is important to encourage and support coordination with relevant education ministries and participation in the LEG.

LEGs play an important role in ensuring that all parties are fully informed of progress and challenges in the sector, and that they share information about ongoing interventions and possible evaluations or studies in the sector. Education Sector Plans (ESP) serve as the basis for planning and dialogue about sector priorities and reforms, and the alignment of external support.

Development partners active in education may establish an additional coordination group (e.g. for donors, multilateral and bilateral agencies and CSOs). Additional forums for coordination might also be in place, for instance between CSOs working in education. These coordination mechanisms aim at information sharing to promote a common understanding of sector challenges, an analysis of lessons learned and day-to-day coordination of interventions or alignment of approaches. These meetings help harmonise specific contributions and policy dialogue in regular LEG meetings, joint sector reviews and other ad hoc meetings.

Partner countries should convene and chair meetings of the LEGs, which are often co-chaired, on a rotating basis, by a member of the development partners group, chosen by consensus. Other members, including civil society organisations and other non-governmental organisations, have a role to ensure that representative voices are a part of education sector plan development, implementation and monitoring. Sub-national representation of the ministries in charge of education can also be involved and bring useful elements regarding policy implementation.

Important features of sector coordination include:

- **A well-organised process:** Usually organised around a LEG, chaired by the senior management of the ministry and sometimes co-chaired by a donor representative (on a rotating basis). Where appropriate, working groups can be set up to focus on specific themes and/or sub-sectors (e.g. teacher education, M&E, early childhood education, adult education, out-of-school youth) and report to the LEG. Central sector coordination may be complemented by provincial or regional coordination mechanisms that mirror the organisation set at central level.
- **Inclusive participation:** The Ministry of Education leads the process, ensuring representation from other ministries, development partners (including donors and civil society) and other stakeholders, such as teacher unions. A good process gives a voice to these stakeholders in the policy-making process and in the development and implementation of the sector plan. EU policy dialogue with government may need to encourage more inclusive approaches, and inclusion of all stakeholders may require capacity development to ensure their participation and to leverage their contribution. Community-based organisations may have crucial experience regarding the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised students, and of the effective implementation of national policies. Their participation in national coordination and dialogue may be promoted through financial/technical support to representative civil society organisations with effective networks. For skills development and transition to employment, the private sector should be properly engaged.
- **Alignment around a sector plan and strategy:** The core business of sector coordination should be to support the sector plan and its implementation, through prioritised strategies, work plans, budget and M&E systems. A credible sector plan is an essential basis for implementation plans and results frameworks. It should provide a medium to long-term vision and objectives, and identify priorities, strategies and key target groups. This engagement with sector planning should involve the analysis and response to capacity development needs and skills gaps at all levels of the system (central to school level), and the coordination of responses including training/support programmes and overall financing. Education ministries and other agencies may need capacity development support to lead and participate in sector coordination and dialogue, including strategic planning and the management and use of data/evidence.
- **Cross sectoral coordination:** Forums can offer opportunities to coordinate more closely with agencies, ministries and stakeholders from other sectors (that affect education) so they can contribute to policy development and implementation. For

example, linking with health officials and actors on issues around nutrition and provision of early childhood development, or working across government on environmental and climate change education and responding to the impact of natural resources degradation, extreme weather and natural disasters on schools.

- **Information sharing for more efficient support:** Sharing of information helps reduce fragmentation and duplication in the programming of external support and promotes the development of a common base of evidence to underpin dialogue. Information sharing should ensure a two-way flow of communications between government and development partners, on specific analysis and research, the identification of information gaps and agreement on actions to remedy these. Open debate on challenges and lessons learned from evaluations and reviews, and where appropriate international evidence and research, should contribute to more evidence-based policy and decision making.
- **Monitoring of sector performance:** Joint monitoring, using the partner country's own monitoring system whenever possible, should systematically review progress in achieving results set out as sector/sub-sector objectives and targets in the ESP result framework. As part of this, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can cover the contribution of partners to sector achievements. Joint sector review may be organised, supporting the government annual reviews of the sector.^{iv}

Coordination in fragile and crisis contexts

In contexts affected by crisis, sector strategies, to which external support could be aligned, may no longer be relevant or even available. The capacity (and potentially political will) of key sector agencies to undertake coordination and dialogue efforts may be constrained. Challenges include the risk to programme delivery and providers on the ground, and the difficulty of providing substantive support through the government administration. It is important to provide support as soon as possible while having a medium to long-term vision, especially bearing in mind the protracted nature of many crises and the impact this has on access to, and the quality of, education.

Coordination mechanisms are in place for emergency contexts, under the leadership of UN agencies and sector clusters in the framework of humanitarian interventions, including for education in emergencies. At the global level, UNICEF and Save the Children lead the Education Cluster. However, these mechanisms

are not focused on the medium to longer-term development of the education system. The ECW initiative aims to support the bridging of humanitarian and development interventions in education. A good example of this is the coordinated humanitarian and development response to the refugee crisis in Uganda, which operates through the government-led Refugee Education Response Plan. ECW finances education in emergencies and interventions aimed at strengthening the resilience of the education system in place. The EU has made a renewed commitment to education in emergencies and protracted crises^v. This includes ensuring the necessary coordination between humanitarian aid and development support, building resilience and providing support for the education system, and ensuring the maintenance and strengthening of local capacities.

Global-level coordination in education

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is entrusted with the coordination and follow-up of SDG4 and other education-related targets on the global agenda. Its primary objective is to harmonise and strengthen support to countries and their partners for the realisation of the global education goals and targets. The Steering Committee for SDG4 is composed of member countries, the World Education Forum 2015 convening agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, ILO, the World Bank), GPE, the OECD, regional organisations, teacher organisations, civil society networks, the private sector, foundations and youth organisations.

Global initiatives in education such as the GPE or ECW are important promoters of coordination in education both at country level and internationally, providing important platforms for global dialogue on education. Nevertheless, there is not currently one comprehensive global platform providing leadership for a more effective advocacy and coordination of aid to education.

The EU is part of the GPE Board of Directors and of the High-Level Steering Group of the ECW. It is also a member of committees and working groups that have been set to discuss specific themes. The EU contributes financially to these two global initiatives.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

GPE is a multi-stakeholder partnership of developing countries, donors, international organisations, civil society, teacher organisations, the private sector and private foundations. The GPE relies, at the country level, on an inclusive local education coordination

^{iv} See PGN 3: Measuring Results in Education for more on M&E systems and use of results frameworks.

^v European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises*, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/Communication_on_Education_in_Emergencies_and_Protracted_Crises.pdf

group and a coordinating agency and grant agent. It focuses support on well-articulated sector plans, and to supporting governments to improve equity and learning by strengthening their education systems. The LEG has a central role in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the GPE-funded programmes.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW)

ECW was established at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 as a flexible funding mechanism to support education in emergencies and protracted crises. It encourages close collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, with various instruments of funding. The Fund's strategic direction is agreed in an inclusive High-Level Steering Group, which comprises representatives from donors and from crisis-affected countries, partner organisations including multilateral agencies, NGOs, the private sector and private foundations.

The International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd)

IFFEd aims to generate \$10 billion in additional resources for education in lower-middle-income countries committed to investing in education. The Facility was initially proposed in 2016 by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, an initiative that comprised of more than 25 world leaders from civil society, business, philanthropy, and government. Since 2017, the Commission has been working with partners, including the EU, to develop IFFEd.

The Education Commission and the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment

The Education Commission^{vi} and the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment^{vii} have come together to establish a USD 1 billion Education Outcomes Fund (EOF) for Africa and the Middle East. The EOF is currently under development. It proposes to fund non-state actors, supporting both ancillary services and core provision of private education, initially in eight potential pilot countries^{viii}, where there is a clear demand from Government.

Other international forums such as the G7 or the G20 can have education working groups set up to build a shared understanding and evidence on specific issues. There are also a number of regional forums playing an important coordinating role such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

There is some global debate around how this international architecture can best serve the needs of countries, limiting fragmentation, ensuring funds are targeting countries most in need, and addressing areas (such as early childhood development, out-of-school children) which have not been given sufficient attention. The existence of well-functioning sector coordination and policy dialogue processes at country level is necessary to optimise support from global funding mechanisms. Global initiatives should take care to support these processes and avoid establishing parallel mechanisms.

Policy dialogue: what is it and what does it focus on?

Policy dialogue makes a central contribution in development cooperation in education, and in the sector coordination outlined above. The coordination process is generally structured around the ESP – its preparation, implementation and M&E. This coordination requires open dialogue between partners to identify and agree on challenges, assess the available evidence, discuss policy options and the strategies, programmes and budget needed to implement them. In this context, dialogue can focus on specific strategies (e.g. for expanding access to pre-school or secondary education, improving the quality of teaching), as well as broader areas that are key for the education system (e.g. sector budgeting and financing, capacity for the implementation of the strategy, and the sector results framework and monitoring). Individual donor agencies may decide to focus their contribution to the dialogue on their area of expertise and/or specific areas of cooperation in the sector.

The preparation of the ESP is an iterative process. The guidelines prepared by GPE and UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) propose a seven-step process.^{ix} The process is led by the government, but ongoing consultations should be foreseen throughout the process with different groups with varying interests and contributions. Table 1 below sets out the seven steps and some of the ways policy dialogue and coordination can contribute.

vi Chaired by Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education

vii Chaired by Sir Ronald Cohen, co-founder of Apax Partners and 'the godfather of impact investing' (Dr Karboul)

viii Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia

ix Global Partnership for Education & UNESCO IIEP, *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation*, 2015 <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation>

TABLE 1: ESP PREPARATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SECTOR POLICY DIALOGUE AND COORDINATION

7 steps for preparation of an Education Sector Plan	Policy dialogue and coordination
Step 1: Education sector analysis – including existing policies, cost and finance, system performance, capacity, and external support (volume and effectiveness).	Contributing studies and assessing the availability of good data and evidence. Dialogue on sector analysis, identifying the key challenges and bottlenecks.
Step 2: Policy formulation – setting priorities and defining key strategies.	Coordinated technical dialogue and support, including within specific working groups, can help decision makers translate priorities into strategies and targets.
Step 3: Programme design – clearly defined goal, targets, objectives, outcomes and indicators, based on a theory of change that includes a causal chain, showing how interventions lead to outcomes.	Draw on experience of different partners, including those working in specific sub-sectors and at delivery level, with marginalised groups. Target setting needs to take into consideration past trends in implementing programmes and capacities, which can be an area of dialogue and possible agreement on capacity development needs for the ESP implementation.
Step 4: Costing of the ESP – based on estimates of enrolments, and human and physical resources needed for the implementation of the priority programmes identified.	Discussion on scenarios, linked to policy options. Provide information on external funding, to enable dialogue about gaps. Ministry of finance plays a key role, links to annual or medium-term budget process.
Step 5: Action (implementation) plan – specific period of implementation of the ESP (ideally aligned to the MTEF and/or annual budget).	Involve partners in specific areas / sub-sectors. Realistic plans, identify those responsible in education administration. Sources of known (external) funding.
Step 6: Implementation arrangement and capacities – identifying who is responsible for the plan and for specific programmes. Consider and assess sector capacities.	Role for partners to support development of implementation capacity and align resources to support national systems. Discussed at national and/or sub-national coordination forums.
Step 7: Monitoring and evaluation – activities include routine monitoring, periodic reviews, reporting, annual reviews and evaluations (usually at mid term and at the end of the plan).	Data quality, timeliness and coverage. A results framework, with indicators (disaggregated by geography/sex/specific groups), baselines and targets. This is a basis for external support and dialogue, and an opportunity to identify challenges and remedial actions. Results and progress are discussed with stakeholders at joint reviews and evaluations.

In contexts of crisis, this kind of sector planning (and associated coordination and dialogue) is unlikely to be in place. Instead, short-term planning is framed within Humanitarian (or Refugee) Response Plans. However, inclusive coordination mechanisms and education transition plans can bridge the gap between initial humanitarian support to an approach aiming at reinforcing the existing education system and capacities for achieving medium to long-term objectives. An important step towards ensuring access to quality education during crises is emergency preparedness planning. This involves creating a contingency plan and mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and conflict sensitivity into national ESPs. Resilience should be a central principle in the delivery of programmes, contributing to reduce losses and disruption of education services when disaster strikes. The ECW Multi-Year Resilience Window funds programmes which support the development of joint assessments and efforts to bridge humanitarian and development interventions in education.

2. Key issues

The EU recognises the need for government leadership and ownership of the policy process and any associated coordination and dialogue with its partners. However, at country levels EU Delegations need to engage with a clear understanding of the sector and objectives for dialogue and technical support.

EU policy dialogue in education

Policy dialogue and engagement in sector coordination forums should be a core contribution from EU education programmes, within the intervention logic of budget support^x but also for projects and technical cooperation. This is how the EU ensures that funding and technical support contributes to education system strengthening and addresses sector priorities, and can leverage its support to contribute to policy, reform strategies and implementation to achieve results.

The EU Budget Support Guidelines draw a distinction between political and policy dialogue. EU political dialogue takes place based on legal or political commitments and covers all EU external policies, not only development policies. Policy dialogue, the focus of this note, is more concerned with EU cooperation in support to sector policy and strategy. Importantly, there are times when this sector policy dialogue involves political dimensions, for example when considering the implications of policy and resource allocation decisions for minority groups, and links to broader democratic governance and human rights. Some of these issues may be addressed in high-level

^x European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, Tools and Methods Series Guideline No: 7 – Budget Support Guidelines, 2017 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/budget-support-guidelines_en. These guidelines include a specific Annex on Policy Dialogue in the Context of Budget Support.

dialogue forums, outside of the sector.^{xi} Policy dialogue should be a collaborative and coordinated effort between the various EU instruments, particularly in emergency and protracted crises, where a wide range of instruments might be involved.

The Budget Support Guidelines distinguish between this kind of high-level dialogue, and operational and strategic dialogue. The dialogue in the education sector is mainly at the operational (e.g. with technical staff in the ministry of education, and specific working groups) and strategic levels (e.g. LEG meetings and annual sector reviews). Policy dialogue is a continuous process, working across these various levels, and taking place both in formal and informal settings. While policy dialogue is central to the intervention logic of budget support to the sector, it should be equally important in contexts where the EU works through other project-based modalities. This should ensure the effectiveness and relevance of all support provided, drawing from the experience of project implementation and contributing to the broader enabling environment.

The focus of EU policy dialogue, the definition of the EU's objectives within this sector dialogue, may largely be linked to specific areas of intervention and related indicators. However, it should also engage at a broader level. Where sector budget support is provided, one of the four eligibility criteria for support is the existence and effective implementation of a credible sector policy or strategy (i.e. in most cases an ESP). Dialogue therefore needs to remain engaged with this more broadly. This requires engagement in the established forums. This sector dialogue should be complemented if necessary (especially in countries with budget support programmes) with additional formal bilateral meetings. These should take place at least once a year, during the preparation of the payment file, complemented with more technical dialogue as needed.

The EU should be an active and informed participant in sectoral policy-making processes, going beyond process issues to engage on education sector policy, priorities and strategies. The basis for the positions put forward by the EU should be how, in the particular country context, to best and most appropriately achieve SDG4 and ensure that no one is left behind. Country-based analysis and policy-related research is essential for evidence-based policy making and should be undertaken as a joint endeavour with government and other partners.

Policy dialogue within the EU programming cycle

Policy dialogue and engagement in sector coordination should take place at all steps of the programme cycle:

- **Identification phase:** an important opportunity for in-depth dialogue on the education sector strategy, financing, monitoring and capacity development and complementarities with other DPs' support. The dialogue at this stage may include cross-cutting issues such as gender equity in education, the implementation of a rights-based approach, or climate change and environmental mainstreaming. At this stage, the credibility of the education sector policy will be assessed as an eligibility criteria for budget support, but also to inform how programmes financed through other modalities can best contribute.
- **Formulation phase:** intervention/programme design will involve defining objectives, specific conditions and expected results. The dialogue at this stage will be focused on the areas of support for the programme or project, but should capture other areas of the education system that are relevant to reform implementation, even if not a direct area of EU support. These may include PFM in education or information management / M&E (e.g. EMIS, learning assessment). For budget support programmes, some key policy dialogue targets should be set, and a rolling plan for dialogue can be established, which should be updated during the implementation phase. Challenges, in terms of monitoring capacity, should be identified during the design of the intervention, with proposed activities to address identified weaknesses.
- **Implementation phase:** should provide opportunities to regularly discuss the implementation of the sector strategy, budget, and priority programmes. The monitoring and reporting system put in place by the ministries in charge of the education sector should track progress and results, and to inform the necessary adjustments if required. Parallel monitoring systems should be avoided, and where existing systems are weak, support to the strengthening of the EMIS system, national learning assessments and programme monitoring at central and sub-national/school levels should be considered. This should include data comprehensiveness and quality, covering access, equity and quality of education, with the necessary level of disaggregation.
- **Evaluation:** the findings from EU programme and project evaluations should be shared with government and other partners through sector coordination mechanisms to inform policy dialogue on the sector strategy and implementation.

^{xi} Important to note that a joint policy dialogue (EU and Member States) in the framework of a joint programming process or document is a source of increased leverage in discussions with national authorities.

EU Delegation role in policy dialogue and coordination

The management and focus of policy dialogue by EUDs will vary across different country and sector contexts, from situations of crisis to more stable environments, and in the use of different support modalities. However, the four steps set out in the Budget Support Guidelines (guidance summarised and adapted here for education sector) provide a useful basis to plan and manage the process in any context:

1) Analysis and understanding of country / sector

context: EUD staff should develop and maintain a good understanding of the sector context and performance, the main challenges faced, and the content of the ESP. As part of this, the EUD should understand the roles and responsibilities of key actors and the political economy of the education sector. This should include the key ministry departments and other government entities in charge of policy, and for delivering education at the sub-national level (especially where there is a decentralisation process in place). For example, how funds are managed, the provision of support and oversight of the schools, and the capacity for this. This should also include gaining a broad understanding of the actors working in the sector and establishing working relationships with them. Regarding civil society, it should be known if there are umbrella organisations for the education sector and how CSOs contribute to education coordination and policy dialogue. Stakeholders who participate in sector policy dialogue may include those with vested interests (e.g. educators, religious leaders, media representatives, civil society groups, private sector leaders and parents) and technical experts in specific policy areas (e.g. researchers, NGO representatives and academics). It is also important to identify and understand the functioning of the different coordination forums and mechanisms in place. Also, whenever possible, the EUD should explore synergies with EU Member States in this respect, especially as part of a joint programming process.

2) Precise definition of policy dialogue objectives:

the objectives may vary according to the programming cycle, as set out above. Across this cycle, specific areas of focus may include the policy dialogue and coordination process itself. For example, strengthening the existing formal sector coordination structures (or establishing them where they are not in place), their inclusiveness and the way they operate. This includes the revision of ToR to suggest more frequent or effective meetings, reporting and joint annual reviews of performance, or the creation of specific working groups. Other dialogue objectives will focus on specific areas of policy or system strengthening. These will vary greatly according to

the context, but could include such issues as the level of financing to the sector, the expansion of early childhood education, deployment of qualified teachers to underserved areas. Setting specific objectives of this kind requires some prioritisation and some thought about realistic timeframes.

3) Setting up and resourcing the dialogue: to meet dialogue objectives, EUDs need to consider the right entry points, and the implications for technical and senior management staff (at operational, strategic and high-level forums). Policy dialogue can be perceived by partners as a transaction cost, particularly where the dialogue is not seen as bringing added value. This requires EUD staff to have an in-depth understanding of the sector in the country context and to contribute expertise to discuss policy options. This expertise can be both in-house and through the financing of studies or technical support. Policy dialogue should be based on important principles such as ownership, partnership building and collaboration, and requires 'soft' skills related to communication, information sharing, transparency and building trust. These relationships are also built on active engagement over time, contributing in ways that build credibility as a partner.

EUDs can and should, whenever possible, agree to play a role in leading the DPs' education group and/or the co-chairing of the Local Education Group. In some cases the EU is acting as the Coordinating Agency for GPE support. Where in-house capacity is limited, this can be complemented by technical assistance and secretariat support. Another contribution can be the financing of specific technical studies (i.e. contributing to plan development or review), including on sector financing, capacity, or specific policy areas related to equity and quality of education. Time should be invested to work closely with EU member states and other DPs active in the sector, including CSOs. In crisis and fragile contexts, EUDs should engage with humanitarian actors, looking for opportunities (e.g. linked to ECW) to coordinate interventions and dialogue on challenges and priorities for medium-term support.

4) Recording and reporting: given the fluid nature of policy dialogue, guidance is in place for internal recording and reporting on the policy dialogue process. This ensures EUDs can learn over time, and contribute to the evaluation of what works.

3. Case Studies

Lao PDR

Source	Chindavanh Vongsaly, Programme Manager, Education, EU Delegation Lao PDR.
Programme	<p>The EU is supporting the education sector in Lao PDR through several interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A budget support programme (Sector Reform Contract), the <i>Basic Education Support Programme in Lao PDR</i>, which is complemented by a delegated agreement with UNICEF (starting in 2019) that will provide complementary support focusing on capacity development in the areas of education management at provincial and district levels; data management and analysis including M&E; Pedagogical mentoring and support to primary and lower secondary teachers. - <i>The Basic Education quality and access programme (BEQUAL)</i>, implemented through a multidonor trust fund funded by the EU and Australia, in partnership and under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, and involving implementing partners such as CSOs. - EU Technical assistance support in priority areas of reform and change management such as quality assurance, EMIS and in strengthening capacities in planning and financing of the sector at national and subnational levels. - Through the GPE, which is also implementing an education programme in Lao PDR.
Context and challenges	<p>The Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) in Lao PDR is led by the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES) and co-chaired by the EU and the Government of Australia. Other members include relevant ministries, development partners (DPs) including multilateral and bilateral agencies and donors, CSOs representatives and provincial representatives.</p> <p>It is the primary platform for coordination and dialogue between the government and development partners and an important forum for the dialogue on the education reform agenda. The coordination structure in education includes the ESWG, six Focal Groups, covering specific sub-sectors as well as Education Management and Administration (including planning, finance and M&E) and Research.</p> <p>The ESWG meetings are organised at three levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive – Meets at least once a year and is Chaired by the Minister of Education and by the Ambassadors of the EU and Australia 2. Technical – Meets every 6 months and chaired by the Deputy Minister and Heads of Cooperation of EU and Australia. Involves substantive technical dialogue on reforms and policies implementations. Policy priorities are agreed and kept for subsequent meetings to ensure follow-up. 3. Focal groups – Meet on quarterly basis and are chaired by the Director General of the Departments and co-chaired by education managers of DPs and CSOs. <p>Joint Sector Reviews (JSR) take place twice a year. One challenge is ownership and leadership of this mechanism by the MoES and its ability to reinforce existing national sector review mechanisms. Another is the potential lack of follow-up on the JSR recommendations, especially at sub-national level.</p> <p>DPs also meet every two months to share information and prepare contributions to ESWG.</p>
Action taken	<p>Several important steps were taken in the last few years to reinforce the coordination in the education sector. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A change from project-based dialogue to a dialogue on policies, budgets and priority reforms of the Ministry of Education and Sport. This change was supported by the introduction of the joint preparation of an annual agenda and work plan for the work of the ESWG and FGs, with related discussions on sector challenges and policy priorities. The EUD encouraged and contributed to this change. This was an important step in preparing for the policy dialogue needed for the design and implementation of the EU Sector Reform Contract that started in 2018. - Support for the MoES to encourage the participation of other relevant ministries such as the Ministries of Finance, Investment, Home Affairs and Health in the ESWG. This encouraged inter-ministerial coordination, communication and exchanges on the education policies and reforms. Current discussions for instance on the critical issue of teacher allocations, which is an area of reform supported by the EU Budget Support, have promoted and strengthened the dialogue between the MoES and the Ministry of Home Affairs. - Support to promote more dialogue with the sub-national level who have a key role in policy implementation. They also bring important experience to policy and reform, and contribute to evidence-based discussions on disparities, and on interventions related to equity, which is one of the focus area of EU support to education in Lao PDR. - Encourage MoES' ownership and leadership of the JSR, as well as work on JSR effective contribution to the MoES annual report on the performance of the sector. This includes the issue of imbalanced distribution of resources; tracking and reporting the performance at the district level; and using the sub-national education performance indicators and targets to determine resource allocation to provincial and district levels. - Reorganisation of the Focal Groups structure. The revised structure of the Focal Groups better aligns to the revised structure of MoES in 2018, which should help to facilitate better policy discussions across different sub-sectors.

Impact	<p>These joint actions are leading to a well-functioning mechanism. The ESWG is seen as one of the best functioning sector coordination groups between the Government and partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is supporting the MoES in the implementation of its Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP), allowing for an inclusive and open dialogue on key reforms and priorities for the sector. • It is facilitating the alignment of DPs support to the ESDP, and coordination of the support. • The MoES and DPs have gradually built a shared understanding of sector challenges and DPs have a good understanding of the MoES ESDP so they can more easily align the support to it. <p>The MTR, concluded in 2018, has set clear milestones for addressing the inequities in access to quality of education, in particular among non-Lao speaking children. Five themes were adopted at the ESWG executive level following the MTR, defining the work-plan and dialogue agenda of ESWG 2019-2020.</p> <p>The transparency of policy implementation results and the openness to discussions on the difficulties the ministry faces is a major outcome of the MTR process.</p>
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual planning of the key priority themes for ESWG meetings and dialogue is important. The themes selected should be highly relevant and given priority in MoES sector reform agenda. - DP meetings should be well prepared in order to be effective. The preparation is done through the bi-monthly informal DPs meeting and the ESWG secretariat meeting. Policy briefs are jointly prepared for Heads of Cooperation and Ambassadors and pre-meetings between chair and co-chairs are organised to agree on the lines to take before the actual meetings. This is also assessed as useful in the preparation of the ESWG meetings. - Sensitive issues can be a challenge in policy dialogue. These include volunteer teachers and teacher re/deployment, a priority area in the ESWG agenda for 2019. The MoES was encouraged to involve sub-national level given their important role, especially in the framework of decentralisation, on the implementation of this type of reform. This proved to be a useful process. - The EUD's co-Chair role has helped the ESWG secretariat engage in policy issues and ensured that the information regarding the implementation of the GPE is shared and discussed at the ESWG.
Further information	https://rtm.org.la/sector-working-groups/education/

Haiti

Source	Judith Johannes, Programme Manager, Education, EU Delegation Haiti.
Programme	<p>The EU is supporting the education sector in Haiti through several interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A budget support programme (State Building Contract), the <i>Programme Haïtien d'Appui à la Réforme de l'Etat (SBC-II (2018 – 2021))</i>, which includes education a main area of support, strengthening the education system (e.g. planning, budgeting and PFM), and capacity development for the deconcentration process. To achieve this, the budget support is complemented by delegated agreements with AECID, Expertise France and IIEP. - Through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which is preparing an education programme for Haiti.
Context and challenges	<p>The context in Haiti is assessed as fragile, characterised by political instability, and at risk for environment and climate change related disasters. Poverty reduction has been very slow, and important inequalities persist, with demand for better access to quality basic social services.</p> <p>Haiti has benefitted from substantial international funding following the devastating earthquake in 2010. The education sector suffered great loss with an estimated 4,000 schools damaged or destroyed, 1500 teachers killed, and education interrupted for 2.5 million children. Development partners, including CSOs, supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) in ensuring the continuity of education services. The MoE is now strengthening the education system, including its oversight of private/non-state service provision, which represent more than 80% of primary schools.</p> <p>The EU has supported the education sector through budget support (State Building Contract) since 2015; initially the aims were to achieve an increase of the spending on school inputs (school meals, capital investment, teacher quality). EU support now focuses on the capacity of the MoE to operate the school system in order for school inputs to be effective. As part of this, with AECID the EU is also supporting a university cooperation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic with the establishment of a centre of expertise in early grade reading.</p> <p>The MoE is currently finalising the preparation of its next 10 year education strategic plan, with external support from the DPs. Significant joint efforts have been mobilised to support the MoE to conduct an education sector analysis, to ensure the credibility and feasibility of the plan, aligning the national vision and objectives with the level of available resources and implementation capacities. The plan will have a focus on improving governance capacities.</p> <p>The EU has been the lead DP in education since mid-2018, leading the Local Education Group (LEG). UNICEF is ensuring the Secretariat of the LEG. The EU is in this DP Lead capacity the Coordinating Agency for GPE. While foreseen in the previous education strategic plan, the LEG in Haiti has so far not been led by the Ministry of Education.</p>

Action taken	<p>Several important steps were taken in the last year to reinforce the coordination in the education sector, to support the Ministry during the period of the preparation of the next education sector plan (ESP). These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of Terms of Reference for the LEG, and the organisation of regular meetings, with an agenda going beyond information sharing and the introduction of the rotation of DPs coordination lead. This resulted in the agreement on the EU taking the lead for a period of 2 years. - Support to the MoE's engagement and effective participation in the LEG, and a dialogue on the possibility for the MoE to become the Chair of the LEG. - The preparation of the new ESP is an opportunity to discuss the new partnership framework for its implementation, and to promote effective leadership of the MoE on the coordination of DP support. - The preparation of the ESP has involved the coordination of all DP efforts to support the MoE on key areas of work such as the Education Sector Analysis. DPs are jointly supporting the MoE finalisation of the plan, with the provision of joint comments on the successive versions, and the financing of external support when needed for background work or facilitation of the process. The MoE, GPE and several DPs (EU, UNICEF WB and UNESCO) have agreed a roadmap to finalise the ESP, in time to have access to GPE funding. - EU BS indicators supported the process, with targets for the preparation of the ESA, an education Public Expenditure Tracking Survey, and other studies (e.g. organisational audit) needed for the preparation and implementation of the new plan. This support was complemented with the financing of TA support and trainings when required. - CSOs are now represented in the LEG, with the participation of the Cadre de Liaison Inter Organisations (CLIO). - The participation of other relevant Ministries and the private sector in the LEG is also under discussion. - The preparation of the ESP was a good opportunity to encourage more dialogue and coordination with/at sub-national level. Deconcentration is major area of reform, and the implementation of ESP will require capacity development at sub-national level.
Impact	<p>It is too early to report impact, however, the LEG mechanisms are progressively reinforced and functioning well, with systematic participation of the MoE (and its potential leadership), and of the main DPs active in the sector in regular meetings. There is discussion on the participation of other actors, (e.g. other ministries and the private sector). The actions taken jointly with the MoE and the DPs are already having a positive impact in terms of coordination of support to the MoE, including the preparation of its ESP, which should contribute to the quality of the plan.</p>
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ESA preparation process has helped to build agreement on the main sector challenges and the policy priorities proposed by the MoE. This work promoted dialogue, including on the limitations of available data, an opportunity to support the MoE in developing its EMIS and assessment systems, and on important equity issues in terms of access and quality. - The reinforcement of the coordination mechanisms is a gradual process, the agenda of the LEG is key to renew interest and participation. - Important capacities are needed for DPs coordination, both from the MoE and the lead DP side, especially at key moments (e.g. preparation of an ESP). The availability of TA support, and the possibility to finance specific studies, reinforced the contribution of the EUD to the process. The presence of UNICEF as Secretariat of the LEG is greatly appreciated in helping with the preparation of the LEGs meetings. - The importance of the MoE lead of the LEG to ensure a well-coordinated DP support to the education system, and the possible support needed to ensure this effective leadership. Dialogue is ongoing on the leadership of LEG by the MoE, which involves ensuring that there is confidence from the MoE in the added value of this coordination forum. - A challenge in the policy dialogue can be the sensitivity of the issues to be discussed in the LEG. The leadership of the MoE is crucial to ensure a quality dialogue, for instance on the financing (both national and external) of the sector. It was important that the PETS was undertaken under the leadership of the MoE, particularly for the dialogue on the findings and the follow up on the recommendations. - The importance, especially in a fragile context, to reach out to all relevant stakeholders (in this case to the private sector, and to other sectors such as disaster risk reduction, health/nutrition, etc.) to further reinforce the relevance of the LEG work for the sector.
Further information	<p> https://www.lenouvelliste.com/article/182892/les-dde-vecteurs-de-changement-du-systeme-educatif-haitien https://rezonodwes.com/2019/06/26/le-ministere-de-leducation-nationale-boucle-la-premiere-phase-de-revision-du-plan-decennal-deducation-et-de-formation/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nSPqoiXONI https://enews.natcom.com.ht/haiti-menfp-administration-vers-un-manuel-de-procedures-pour-une-meilleure-gouvernance-economique-et-financiere.html https://hpnhaiti.com/nouvelles/index.php/societe/54-education/5628-rationaliser-les-depenses-publiques-en-education-et-ameliorer-l-efficacite-interne-et-externe-du-systeme-educatif https://lenouvelliste.com/article/204328/le-menfp-oeuvre-a-la-finalisation-du-plan-decennal-deducation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF5LEHPKN4U&t=9s </p>

4. References and Further Reading

Global education resources:

Global Partnership for Education resources on planning, sector reviews:

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/practical-guide-effective-joint-sector-reviews-education-sector>

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

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Global Partnership for Education & UNESCO IIEP, *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation*, 2015 <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation>

EU resources on aid effectiveness and policy dialogue:

European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, “Annex 13 on Policy Dialogue”, Tools and Methods Series No: 7 – Budget Support Guidelines, 2017 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/budget-support-guidelines_en

European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, The EU approach to development effectiveness, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/eu-approach-aid-effectiveness_en