

Executive Summary

This Report aims at presenting the results of the external evaluation of Project Education for All (Escola+), developed in São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) with the support of the Portuguese Co-operation, between March 2009 and August 2013.

The afore mentioned evaluation concerns the Education sector-secondary education level, focusing 4 key axes: schools network improved and strengthened; teachers' technical skills improved; improvement of school management; education system adapted to the country's needs; and the interconnections between them, since the Project was evaluated on the whole and as a whole.

Methodology

The Preliminary Report was prepared in 2 stages:

-In Portugal, through: (i) analysis of the documentation supplied by IMVF and of other documents relevant to the purpose of this process; (ii) interviews with stakeholders, namely from Camões - Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua (CICL), Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF) and members of the so called GAPE+ (Group of Portuguese experts in curriculum development and technical/professional education); (iii) teachers of The Higher School of Education and Social Sciences(ESECS) – Leiria Polytechnic Institute (IPL), responsible for different training courses in STP.

The Preliminary Report was then presented and discussed with the stakeholders.

-In STP, through data collection, using different tools, from different sources, which were later analysed, interpreted and triangulated.

We consider as main constraints the following: (i) poor organization of the documentation supplied, which hindered its consultation and analysis; (ii) difficulty in contacting some of the persons of interest involved in the Project; (iii) the fact that the pupils' assessment from the school year 2012-2013 couldn't be supplied in time; (iv) the short time frame for this evaluation.

Conclusions according to the evaluation criteria

Relevance

As a positive contribution to this criterion, we can highlight the following aspects:

- Wide scope of the intervention, focusing the key axes of the secondary education already mentioned.
- Improvement of the teaching of the Portuguese language, through the reinforcement of the level of secondary education.
- Methodology of intervention adopted by the Portuguese co-operation, therefore contributing with a body of educational, legislative, administrative, training and logistic initiatives, thus ensuring ownership and the sustainability of the education system.
- Broad rehabilitation of Liceu Nacional's facilities and some repair works in other secondary schools' facilities, provision of pedagogical equipment and coordination of means and training resources, in partnership with bodies and organizations outside the education system. Financial constraints impeded repair works on the whole of secondary schools, as foreseen.
- The pedagogic modernization of teaching methods and the strengthening of the technical/professional education (promoting employability) and its articulation with a more academic path of secondary education.
- The successful training of secondary education teachers (courses taught by teachers of ESECS of IPL).
- Training system adapted to the country's needs, integrating technological knowledge and operational competences, satisfying society's requirements/expectations.
- School environment fostering a good interpersonal relationship among administration staff, teachers and pupils.
- Activities that came up to the needs of the teachers, who adhered to them, being perceived as interesting and relevant.

Effectiveness

The following aspects gave a positive contribution to this criterion:

- The rehabilitation of the school network and the provision of equipment, although incomplete, give way to a better teaching practice of the theoretical and practical subjects.
- Updated curricula and programmes well designed. However, it is necessary to promote a closer articulation with primary education.
- Adaptation of textbooks for pupils.
- Creation of legislation, in the frame of the curricular reform, namely the one aiming to improve the pupils' assessment and support for teachers, thereby ensuring appropriation of the innovations introduced in the system. However, the still high rate teacher/pupil puts at risk the application of the theoretic principles of the evaluation system.
- The activities organized by the Project contributed to the reinforcement of the capacities of the teachers, that participated in the training courses. Various constraints hindered the preparation of a detailed document with the characterization of the secondary education level in STP. However, it was prepared and made public the Intervention Operational Plan, guiding document of the development of the Project, which was validated by the MEC. Financial constraints prevented also the expansion of the technical/professional education, as advisable, whereas only 1,6% of the pupils of the secondary education attended this path in the school year 2012/2013.

Efficiency

It was not possible to assess if the resources were used at the lowest cost, because we don't have information about similar projects developed recently in STP that may be used as reference. So, we opted to evaluate if the available resources were used adequately, having impact in the outcomes.

In what regards the human resources, we consider that they were sufficient in number and quality. Nevertheless, there were areas that required resources with more specialized training, such as the development of programmes, adaptation of textbooks for pupils and teacher training.

As to material resources, the office for the Project's National Coordination was rented and the vehicles necessary to visit schools were bought. However, the costs could have been minimized if the National Coordination could have made use of a public building.

Though there were some omissions, it was made an effort to provide schools with facilities and consumable materials for:(i) the administrative area,(ii) the teaching of new subjects introduced by the curriculum reform;(iii) the printing of the adapted textbooks, utilizing with efficiency the budget at disposal.

As to the financial resources, the Project was totally financed by IPAD and apparently there were no delays that could have affected the development of the various activities.

Some of the options are debatable, however, namely in what concerns the concentration of funds in the rehabilitation of Liceu Nacional, to the detriment of other schools.

In the costs proposal some factors that were not taken into consideration, e.g. the demographic growth with impact in the number of pupils having access to secondary education and, consequently, increased the necessity for human and material resources.

For lack of financial resources, the textbooks for pupils were substituted by booklets, prepared and printed in the different schools, that we consider to have been an efficient option.

Effects and impact

- Global improvement of the conditions for the development of secondary education.
- Setting-up of a Resource and Training Center (KE MESE), reinforcing the training activities and the participation of teachers in its own training process.
- Contribution to the strengthening of the Portuguese language in the education system of STP, in particular in the secondary education level and with respect to the beneficiaries of the Project.
- Improvement of the employability of young people, through education more oriented to the active professional life.

- Interventions in the frame of teacher training that reinforced their skills. However, it was not implemented, as planned, a continuous teacher training system, with regard to other skills, besides the operational ones.
- Increased autonomy of schools, fostering a better adaption to their realities and needs, as a result of the approval and implementation of a new model of decentralized school management.
- Reinforcement of the school managers' competences and skills in management, as a result of the legislation created and training.
- Training courses for secondary education inspectors, providing effective instruments for the evaluation of the education system and the evaluation of teachers' performance. However and until the approval of the Secondary Education Inspectorate Ruling, the future inspectors can't take office. The non-regulation of the Continuous Teacher Training Rules had also a negative impact in the teachers' professional development, namely in what regards salary rise and progression in the career and in the objective of attracting new teachers.
- Potentially, Education for All has the conditions to have an important impact in STP. However, this impact depends upon the project continuity and its ownership by the official structures of the country.

Sustainability

From early on, the stakeholders endeavoured to guarantee the sustainability of the Project, in particular: (i) taking in account the creation and reinforcement of the capacity of local institutions; (ii) complying with the procedures and regulations of the STP education system, striving for its development and looking for the ownership of the process by STP and (iii) the involvement of the teachers of STP. The sustainability has not been entirely achieved yet and thus we recognize the need for a 2nd phase of the Project.

Visibility

Visibility was taken into consideration and promoted by different ways and in different moments of the Project's implementation.

Coordination and complementarity

Both in the Project's design and in the Intervention Operational Plan is mentioned: (i) the coordination effort on part of IMVF and the necessary coordination with IPAD, the Embassy of Portugal and the MEC; (ii) the need to implement the Project, in partnership with MEC, that has to coordinate the different activities, thus guaranteeing its institutional sustainability; (iii) the articulation with other education levels; (iv) the intention of integrating other donors' activities.

However, endogenous and exogenous factors related to these criteria, e.g. delay in the Project approval, a clear definition of the responsibilities of the different stakeholders, influenced, in a negative way, the present and the following criteria.

Internal and external coherence of the policy of the Portuguese Co-operation in this country/sector

Being funded by IPAD, in the conception of the project are reflected and taken into consideration, objectives and commitments set by international organizations, e.g. UN, EU, OCDE, namely ownership, harmonization, rationalization of aid.

Thus, it was envisaged that the Project could imprint a change in the approach of the Portuguese Co-operation in supporting this sector and the level of secondary education, considered a priority and structural by the two countries. However, some of the several constraints already mentioned, ended up having a negative impact in this criterion.

Added value of the Portuguese Co-operation in the sector/specific context

It was a positive contribution to this criterion, that the Project, having in view the priorities set by both countries, strived to develop the intervention with a view to improve secondary education, staking on technical/professional education and strengthening and consolidating the Portuguese language as an instrument of cooperation.

However, financial constraints had a less positive impact in the priority of improving results through a greater coordination and complementarity and of channeling aid through bilateral and, if possible, bi-multilateral, e.g. to improve the conditions of the school network and the rehabilitation of schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations should be taken into account, by both the PT authorities and the STP authorities, in the preparation, negotiation and implementation of a 2nd phase of the Project Education for All. This phase, after being duly evaluated, should draw forth the ownership by MEC, which has not been achieved yet, thus ensuring the sustainability of the Project.

To the Portuguese Co-operation

- The PT authorities should pursue the support to secondary education, thereby contributing to strengthen and to consolidate the Portuguese language, as an instrument of cooperation, through the financing of a second phase of the project, which is now being evaluated.
- Due to the wide scope of the Project Education for All, we recommend a rigorous definition of the sectors that will be financed by Portugal and of those that will be financed by other donors.
- The PT authorities should maintain the level of support to the improvement of secondary education in STP, giving priority to the consolidation of the curriculum reform and to the development of teachers' professional capacities.
- In this context, the PT authorities should consider the possibility of selecting, by tender, a Portuguese Higher School of Education, to devise and assist the intervention of the Portuguese teachers in the education system of STP.
- The PT authorities should maintain the support to the improvement of the conditions of maintenance of the facilities and equipment of KE MESE and to the updating of its library.
- The PT authorities should maintain the institutional support to the ISP of STP, in what concerns the post-graduation of teachers with undergraduate degree in the areas where there is shortage of qualified teachers.
- The PT authorities should reinforce the process of decentralized management and of school autonomy, promoting the training of school managers without specific training and the training of administrative staff in priority areas, namely legislation, the use of information and communication technologies, accountancy and of the auxiliary staff

training (e.g. competences in pupils' supervision and school maintenance).

- The PT authorities should maintain the support to the expansion of the technical/professional education and its dissemination to other schools, diversifying the courses according to the national and local needs, thus promoting the employability of the pupils, on completion of secondary education and the development of the economy of STP.
- The PT authorities should strengthen the CICL leadership, as the coordinating central body of the Portuguese Co-operation, promoting the desirable articulation between the Portuguese institutions that develop activities in other education levels, the training of MEC's technicians, etc.
- The PT authorities should cooperate with the STP authorities in the articulation of the Portuguese Co-operation interventions with donors in the education sector and others.
- The PT authorities should include the Risk analysis in the design of the 2nd phase of Education for All and in the interventions of the Project, as a way to increase the quality of the aid.
- The PT authorities should implement a closer and more effective monitoring of the contribution of the Portuguese Co-operation to the DMG in STP, namely those with impact in education.
- The PT authorities should take always into account, in the Education sector, the need to adapt the interventions to the country's realities and needs.

Recommendations to the STP Authorities

- The STP authorities should promote a closer involvement and articulation of the different interventions of the Portuguese Co-operation, either in programming or in implementing phases of the projects, thus enhancing the ownership and their sustainability.
- The STP authorities should implement the new National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, thereby allowing international donors to outline their cooperation strategies, e.g. in the education sector and in gender equality.
- The STP authorities should promote the gender equality in what concerns the school

administration and management.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education of STP

The MEC should:

- Be more involved in the approval, publication and regulation of the necessary legislation to the sector, condition *sine qua non* to the effectiveness of Projects. In this regard, we reinforce the importance of the following legislation: Teaching Career Rules, Continuous Teacher Training Rules, Secondary Education Inspectorate and the Ruling of the Organization and Administration of Schools.
- Promote the institutional collaboration of the structures and technicians of the MEC, in particular the Sector of Methodology, in articulation with the level of basic education and in the activities relevant to the implementation of the education reform and to the support to teachers and schools.
- Promote a closer articulation between all the education levels, allowing for synergies between the different donors.
- Analyse and reorganize the school network, in a dynamic way, according to the realities and the present and future needs, taking into account the demographic perspectives and the regional development.
- Create the conditions so that the teacher/pupil ratio doesn't exceed the maximum of 40 pupils per class.
- Promote the expansion of the technical/professional education and its dissemination to other schools, diversifying the courses according to the national and regional needs, thus promoting the employability of the pupils on completion of secondary education and the development of the economy of STP. To this end it's necessary to prepare and approve the suitable legislation.
- Supply pedagogic and didactic resources, adapted to the school conditions and the realities of STP, as an instrument to improve the quality of education.
- Promote the progressive up-dating of the programmes and support texts for the pupils, with recourse to the data gathered along the project.
- Bestow financial autonomy appropriate to the real situation of each school, to make for urgent needs, e.g. equipment maintenance and the purchase of consumable

materials and products.

- Endeavour to recruit school supporting staff with skills in pupils' supervision and facilities maintenance.
- Encourage pupils and their families to take interest and to engage in the maintenance and preservation of secondary schools facilities.
- Take advantage of the new Vocational Training Centers, without detriment of their original role, to set up platforms for advanced training for secondary school pupils.

Recommendations to the Portuguese Co-operation and to the Authorities of STP

These authorities should:

- Promote the harmonization and articulation between different sectors, e.g. Education, Health and Labour.
- Take into account the Decisions approved/adopted in the VII Meeting of the CPLP Ministers of Education, namely those highlighting the importance of the development of technical and professional competences, *via* the Technical Professional Education.
- Maintain the level of support to the strengthening and renovation of the school network: construction of new schools, supplying water and improving the sanitary facilities in all schools as well as the study and social areas, the access and means of transportation to schools. For that purpose, the Portuguese Co-operation should cooperate with the MEC, in finding ways of channeling funds from different donors.
- Prepare a detailed document with the characterization of the secondary education level, updating some of the data gathered by the evaluation of the Project Education for All and other complementary and representative of the country's reality.
- Prepare an Intervention Operational Plan for the next four years to guarantee the continuity of the work developed and the sustainability of the innovations introduced in the secondary education.
- Promote, in the course of two years, the evaluation of the new curriculum and of the adapted textbooks for pupils, by means of a questionnaire addressed to managers, teachers of different education levels, pupils and parents.
- Promote a closer articulation between a possible 2nd phase of the Project and the structures of MEC, so that, in the course of four years, ownership of the work

developed until then will have been achieved and the STP authorities will be able to guarantee its continuity.

