

Original Paper

Key Characterizes of Education Sector Development Program for Quality Improvement of Primary and Secondary Schools in Ethiopia

Jember, Solomon Tadele¹ & Alemayehu, Zelalem Desta²

¹ Lecturer at Dire Dawa University, Collage of Social Science and Humanity

² PhD candidate at Addis Ababa University, Department of Amharic Language, Literature and Folklore

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Abstract

The Ethiopian government prioritizes education because it believes it is important for reducing poverty and developing the country. The education system has four levels: pre-primary, primary, secondary, and higher education. Pre-primary education is for children aged 4-6, primary education is for children aged 7-14, secondary education is for children aged 15-18, and higher education is for students of all ages. The preparation process for the Ethiopian Social Development Plan (ESDP) was flexible and adapted to the specific context. This approach was a major factor in the success of the process. Therefore, this study does not provide a one-size-fits-all template for preparing other ESDPs, but instead highlights the general principles and issues that are important to consider. Expansion is a central and outstanding feature of the many changes that have characterized the Ethiopian education system at all levels. This trend is likely to continue, as evidenced by the Education Sector Development Program. Primary and secondary education research and policy studies are too numerous to list. The MOE's management capacity can be evaluated by relevance (participatory planning), efficiency, and effectiveness.

Keywords

education sector development program, quality improvement, primary and secondary schools, education

Introduction

The Government of Ethiopia recognizes the importance of education in reducing poverty and developing society, and therefore prioritizes the education sector. The education system in Ethiopia consists of four levels: pre-primary, primary, secondary, and higher education. Pre-primary education is for children aged 4-6, primary education is for children aged 7-14, secondary education is for children aged 15-18, and higher education is for students of all ages (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017). Countries around the world are working to improve their education systems so that all students can reach their full potential. The Government of Ethiopia recognizes the importance of education in reducing poverty and developing society, and therefore prioritizes the education sector (MoE, 2015).

In order to promote the high-quality development of school education, in addition to improving the quality of teachers, in Ethiopia have carried out a series of projects, from the aspect of promoting school informatizations construction, creating orderly learning atmosphere, improving school because of diverse reasons, Education Sector Development Programme I, II, III, IV, V and VI are developed. But in this section we will discuss ESDP III, IV, and V. In 1997, the Ethiopian government launched the first five-year Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-I) as part of its 20-year education sector indicative plan. The main goals of ESDP are to improve the quality, relevance, efficiency, and equity of education, and to expand access to education, with a special focus on primary education in rural and underserved areas, as well as the promotion of education for girls (MoE, 2010; MoE, 2015; Habte, 2020).

ESDP, according to EAS (2012), was primarily designed with a purpose to implement the Education and Training Policy of the country in five-year rolling phases. Each of the phases focused on the following: ESDP I: improving quality, equity, relevance and efficiency of primary education. ESDP II: improving curriculum by introducing Civics and Ethics education, expanding the opportunities for enrolment in primary education and building the capacity of the educational system. ESDP III: reinforcing Civics and Ethics education, attaining Universal Primary Education (UPE), and narrowing the gap of disadvantaged groups (gender, regions, settlements, such as pastoralists etc.). ESDP IV: addressing the current (five) challenges of education. Two of the challenges to be addressed include (1) improving quality of education through improving student achievement and (2) creating a good work environment by improving and building the capacity of educational administrators (MoE, 2015). The preparation process in Ethiopia was flexible and took into account the specific context. We believe that this approach was a major factor in the success of the process. Therefore, this study does not aim to provide a one-size-fits-all template for preparing other ESDPs. Instead, it highlights the general principles and issues that are important to consider.

1. Education Sector Development Program III (ESDP-III)

1.1 Project Overview

The first ESDP (1997/1998 to 2001/2002) derived its goals and strategies directly from the Education and Training Policy. Subsequently the Government developed a second comprehensive Five-Year Education Program (2000/2001 to 2004/2005) to align it with the five-year term of the government. This covered the last two years of ESDP-I and three years beyond. Therefore ESDP II deliberately had only a three-year span (2002/2003 to 2004/2005), so that ESDP III will be synchronized with the Government's five-year planning cycle (**MoE, 2005**).

Expansion is a central and outstanding feature of the many changes that have characterized the Ethiopian education system at all levels. This trend is likely to continue, as evidenced by the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-III). The ESDP-III, which spans the years from 2005-2011, aspires to achieve the following expansion goals:

- Increase the net enrollment rate in secondary education to 50%.
- Reduce the gender gap in education by half.
- Increase the number of teachers by 50%.
- Improve the quality of education by providing better training for teachers and by developing more relevant and effective curriculum materials.

According to MoE (2005) the overall Goals of ESDP-III for general education;

- Having recognized the vision of the Ethiopian Government and the vision and mission of the Education Sector, and the role of education in poverty reduction, the following major goals are identified.
- To produce responsible and competent citizens
- To increase access to educational opportunities at primary level, to achieve UPE by the year 2015.
- To improve the quality of education,
- To enhance efficiency and use resources wisely.
- To address equity issues by narrowing the gap between male and female, among regions and rural and urban areas,
- To provide increased access to Adult and Non-Formal Education in order to combat the problem of adult illiteracy.
- To increase access to quality secondary education based on the demand of the economy for trained human power at middle and higher level and the intake capacity at the tertiary level.

The ESDP-III is a major step forward in the Ethiopian government's efforts to improve education for all. The program has already made significant progress, and it is expected to have a major impact on the country's future. The expansion of education in Ethiopia has been driven by a number of factors,

including the government's commitment to education, the increasing demand for education, and the availability of donor funding. The expansion of education has had a number of positive benefits, including increased literacy rates, improved employment opportunities, and reduced poverty. However, the expansion of education has also faced some challenges, such as the shortage of teachers, the lack of school facilities, and the high dropout rate. The Ethiopian government is committed to addressing these challenges and to ensuring that all children have access to quality education (MoE, 2005).

1.2 Process and Execution

As the priority issues of education strategies, the GTP states the initiative of providing fair and accessible quality formal education is to be continued and consolidated. The current gender disparity will be eliminated by the end of plan period. The education strategy for children with special needs will be fully implemented to meet the needs of this group. Also, an important priority will be given to improve and ensure the quality and efficiency of education at all levels (MOFED, 2010).

The other two pool-fund programs in Ethiopia's education sector are: The Education Pool Fund and The Protection of Basic Services Program (PBS). The Education Pool Fund provides funding for basic education programs, such as early childhood education and primary education. The PBS provides funding for programs that protect basic services, such as education, health, and water, during times of crisis (MoE, 2005).

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) is a 20-year plan that translates the 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP) into action. It is a sector-wide approach that encompasses all education and training programs in Ethiopia, from pre-primary to tertiary education. The ESDP is set through a consultative process that involves stakeholders from all levels of government and society. It calls for a sustained public investment program through the mobilization of national and international resources (MoE, 2010; MoE, 2017; Hailu, 2018).

The main goal of the ESDP is to ensure equitable access to quality primary education for all children by 2015. The plan also gives particular attention to the education of girls and children from pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communicative (MoE, 2006). To achieve rapid and sustainable development, the Ethiopian government needs to extend quality and relevant primary education to all school-age children. And also need to expand standardized education and training programs at all levels. This can be done by increasing the involvement of different stakeholders, such as the community, private investors, and NGOs.

1.3 Effectiveness and Output

The number of research and policy studies on general primary and secondary education available to national and regional planners is too large to list in this document. The management capacity of the MOE can be evaluated as relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness. Relevance: The MOE has a participatory planning process that involves various stakeholders in the ESDP planning process. This is a

positive step, as it ensures that the plans are aligned with the needs of the stakeholders. Efficiency: The MOE has not yet established clear procedures and regulations for the WEO and Zone Education Office. This could lead to confusion and inefficiency in the management of the education sector. Effectiveness: The MOE has not allocated enough budgets to the education sector, and student learning achievement has deteriorated. This suggests that the MOE is not effective in managing the education sector. Overall, the management capacity of the MOE can be concluded as relatively low. The MOE needs to improve its commitment, efficiency, and effectiveness in order to better manage the education sector (MoE, 2005). In 1997, Ethiopia introduced the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) to translate the government's far-reaching education policy and strategy into action. The ESDP has been implemented in three phases: ESDP I (1997-2005), ESDP II (2005-2010), and ESDP III (2010-2015). During this time, Ethiopia made significant progress in expanding access to education, with the net enrolment rate in primary education increasing from 47% in 1997 to 89% in 2015. This progress was supported by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which Ethiopia achieved in 2015 (MoE, 2005; MoE, 2010; MoE, 2015).

2. Education Sector Development Program IV (ESDP-IV)

2.1 Project Overview

ESDP IV, for general education, the main goals are to improve access to quality basic education in order to make sure that all children, youngsters and adults, with particular emphasis on females, acquire the competencies, skills, values and attitudes enabling them to participate fully in the social, economic and political development of Ethiopia and to sustain equitable access to quality secondary education services as the basis and bridge to the demand of the economy for middle level and higher level human resources and also foresees a major program in adult education (MoE, 2010).

According to MoE (2010) the main challenges which ESDP IV will address are as follows:

- A strong improvement in student achievement through a consistent focus on the enhancement of the teaching/learning process and the transformation of the school into a motivational and child-friendly learning environment.
- The development of programs which help attract the unreached and the disadvantaged into school and ensure that they complete primary education.
- A renewal of adult education with a specific focus on Functional Adult Literacy. The number of illiterates has remained high and, for reasons of justice as well as economic and social development, efforts need to be strengthened to build partnerships against illiteracy.
- The strengthening of the capacity for knowledge creation, in particular in the domain of science and technology, through an expansion of access to TVET and to higher education without sacrificing quality.

- Further improvement of the effectiveness of the educational administration at all levels, through capacity development and the creation of motivational work environments.

ESDP IV focuses on priority programs which help overcome these challenges. These are organized partly by sub-sector (general education, TVET and higher education) and partly by priority theme (quality, equity and improved management). Specific programs are developed for crosscutting issues (MoE, 2010).

The ESDP IV is a comprehensive plan that addresses the challenges facing the education sector in Ethiopia. By focusing on priority programs and crosscutting issues, the plan aims to improve the quality, equity, and management of education in the country (MoE, 2010).

The priority themes of ESDP IV are quality, equity, and improved management. Quality refers to the standards of education. Equity refers to ensuring that all children have equal access to education, regardless of their background. Improved management refers to making the education system more efficient and effective. Crosscutting issues are issues that cut across all sectors of education. They include gender equality, disability, and climate change (MoE, 2010).

The ultimate objective of ESDP V is to improve the attainment and learning outcomes for all students. This means that the plan aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, have the opportunity to learn and achieve their full potential. Strategies are designed and selected to improve the learning opportunities for children, youth and adults. This means that the plan will identify and implement specific interventions that are likely to have a positive impact on student learning. These interventions could include providing more teachers, improving the quality of teaching, or making textbooks more accessible. The design of ESDP V is intended to cascade down into regional and local annual work plans. This means that the plan will be implemented at the regional and local levels, with each region and locality developing its own specific work plan to achieve the goals of the plan (MoE, 2005; MoE, 2010; MoE, 2015).

2.2 Process and Execution

The Education and Training Policy (ETP), enacted in 1994, is the foundation of the Ethiopian education sector reform. The Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) was subsequently developed to implement the ETP. The ESDP was the first in a series of ESDPs that have been updated over the past 20 years. The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) is a national development plan for Ethiopia for the years 2010/2011 to 2014/2015. The GTP aims to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and to become a middle-income country by 2020-2023. The Education Sector Development Programme IV (ESDP-IV) is a development program that is part of the GTP. The ESDP-IV focuses on improving the quality of education, especially by implementing the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) components that started in 2008 (MoE, 2015).

Supervisory authority is the Ministry of Education, which formulates national plan, frameworks and guidelines. Regarding programme planning, implementation and monitoring, however, it is delegated to 9 regions and 2 city councils (MoE, 2010). The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) has one of its main objectives to expand and improve the quality of education in Ethiopia. To achieve this, the Education Sector Development Program IV (ESDP-IV) was developed. The goal of ESDP-IV is to produce Citizens who are democratic, efficient and effective, knowledgeable, inspired, and creative. These citizens will contribute to the realization of Ethiopia's vision of becoming a middle-income economy (MOFED, 2010).

2.3 Effectiveness and Output

The Education Sector Development Plan IV (ESDP-IV) prioritizes improving access and quality in education. However, many of the related policies focus on institutional and quantitative measures, and do not adequately address the need to improve teachers' quality, mindset, and pedagogy. Additionally, there is no concrete policy on how to connect the new curriculum to pre-service training, in-service training, the examination system, and classroom evaluation systems and practices (Hailu, 2018). The donor cooperation in Ethiopia's education sector can be divided into two types: Financial support donors: These donors provide financial resources to support the government's education programs. The main financial support donors in Ethiopia are the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland. Technical assistance donors: These donors provide expertise and support to help the government improve its education system. The main technical assistance donors in Ethiopia are USAID, UNICEF, UNESCO, and JICA. There is no trend of drastically shifting aid from technical assistance to financial support. In recent years, the main donors have continued to provide a mix of financial and technical assistance.

The main goals and some key outcomes for the three sub-sectors are as follows. For general education, the main goals are to improve access to quality basic education in order to make sure that all children, youngsters and adults, with particular emphasis on females, acquire the competencies, skills, values and attitudes enabling them to participate fully in the social, economic and political development of Ethiopia and to sustain equitable access to quality secondary education services as the basis and bridge to the demand of the economy for middle level and higher level human resources. ESDP IV also foresees a major program in adult education (MoE, 2010).

The feedback on the ESDP preparation process was overwhelmingly positive, with few critical comments. However, there were some issues that remained unresolved throughout the process. In hindsight, these issues could have been addressed differently. It is worth noting that some progress has been made on these issues during the implementation of the ESDP. The first annual review cycle is underway, and it has provided a valuable forum for partners to discuss capacity issues and other constraints faced in implementation. While the preparation phase is over, the improvement process continues as an essential part of the ESDP. Educational establishments should produce well-rounded,

competent, disciplined, and educated individuals by incorporating civic and ethical education into their curriculums and by hiring trained, competent, and committed teachers. Take affirmative actions to insure equity of female participation, pastoral and agro-pastoral and those with special needs in all education and training programs and increase their role and participation in development (MOFED, 2010).

Ineffective project management and execution have also led to underspending in civil engineering and procurement. One of the main reasons for this is the high turnover of skilled professionals. When experienced staff leave, they are often replaced by less qualified individuals who lack the necessary knowledge and skills. This can lead to delays, cost overruns, and other problems (Yihdego, 2017). The rapid expansion of primary education services in Ethiopia has had a positive impact on access to education. However, this has also had a negative impact on quality, as resources have been stretched thin. As a result, suboptimal learning outcomes and slow development of foundational and transferable skills remain a significant concern. To address these challenges, the Ethiopian government needs to invest in improving the quality of education. This includes providing more resources for schools, training teachers, and developing more relevant and up-to-date curriculum. The government also needs to take steps to promote equity and inclusion in education (UNICEF, 2020).

There are a number of things that can be done to address the lack of qualified teachers. One is to increase the salaries and improve the working conditions for teachers. Another is to invest in teacher education and professional development programs. Additionally, it is important to make teaching a more attractive career by providing better support and resources for teachers (Tuli & Tynjala, 2015).

The lack of planning and management skills at the lower levels of education (e.g., woredas) is a major obstacle to achieving the goals of primary education. These lower levels lack the skills to collect, analyze, and interpret education data, which is essential for planning and managing education programs effectively. The education sector is challenged by having to provide for both school-age children and older children who missed out on schooling due to lack of access (Jiru, 2020; Yihdego, 2017).

3. Education Sector Development Program V (ESDP-V)

3.1 Project Overview

According to Jiru (2020) during the preparation of the ESDP, a significant amount of analytical work was conducted by consultants (both Ethiopian and foreign) on various aspects of implementation arrangements in the context of a sector-wide program. This work helped to clarify the available options for designing the functions of the GOE and ESDP bodies responsible for monitoring and ongoing development of the program; for harmonizing periodic reporting; and for reporting on external funds. Much of this analysis was pioneering work, and it has led to a better understanding of the complexity of the issues involved.

The ultimate goal of ESDP V is to improve the learning outcomes of all students. To achieve this, the plan will design and select strategies to improve learning opportunities for children, youth, and adults. These strategies will be cascaded down into regional and local annual work plans. The specific goals and objectives of these plans will be derived from the broad goals and objectives of ESDP V. Ultimately, all efforts combined will affect the learning outcomes of students (MoE, 2015).

The Program Development Objective (PDO) of GEQIP-V is to improve the internal efficiency, equity, and quality of the Ethiopian general education. Within the selected programs and crosscutting issues of ESDP V, and with improved student learning as the core objective, GEQIP-E is designed to focus on the following four main Results Areas:

- (1) Improving internal efficiency
- (2) Improving equitable access
- (3) Improving quality, and
- (4) System strengthening for planning, policy formulation and reform.

The Education and Training Policy of 1994 was the basis for the first four Education Sector Development Programmes (ESDPs). ESDP V, which was implemented from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020, was the fifth and final ESDP (MoE, 2015). The ultimate goal of ESDP V is to improve the learning outcomes of all students. To achieve this, the plan will design and select strategies to improve learning opportunities for children, youth, and adults. These strategies will be cascaded down into regional and local annual work plans. The specific goals and objectives of these plans will be derived from the broad goals and objectives of ESDP V. Ultimately, all efforts combined will affect the learning outcomes of students. ESDP V, without evaluation of the 2007 blueprint, planned to transform teaching into a profession of choice. The policy document stated that applicants would have access to motivating career development opportunities from the time of their application (MoE, 2015). Nonetheless, neither implementation strategies nor action plans were introduced to transform the teaching profession (Habte, 2020).

3.2 Process and Execution

The Education and Training Policy (ETP), enacted in 1994, is the foundation of the Ethiopian education sector reform. The Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) was subsequently developed to implement the ETP. The ESDP was the first in a series of ESDPs that have been updated over the past 20 years. The Ethiopian education system has been very dynamic over recent years, with a series of large-scale education program interventions (Araya et al., 2023).

The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) is a national development plan for Ethiopia for the years 2010/2011 to 2014/2015. The GTP aims to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and to become a middle-income country by 2020-2023. The Education Sector Development Programme IV (ESDP-IV) is a development program that is part of the GTP. The ESDP-IV focuses on

improving the quality of education, especially by implementing the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) components that started in 2008 (MoE, 2010; MoE, 2015).

Supervisory authority is the Ministry of Education, which formulates national plan, frameworks and guidelines. Regarding programme planning, implementation and monitoring, however, it is delegated to 9 regions and 2 city councils (MoE, 2015). The most contentious issue throughout the preparation process was implementation, especially financing. In hindsight, the consultants and donor representatives unanimously agree that these issues should have been addressed more comprehensively and earlier. They also suggested that the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the Ministry of Economic Development and Planning (MEDAC) should have been involved from the beginning. However, this is a post-hoc analysis, and these problems were only gradually realized during the preparation process.

According to MoE (2015) the cost of implementing ESDP V depends on the following factors:

- Policy objectives. The cost of implementing ESDP V will depend on the specific policy objectives that are set, such as increasing the number of students enrolled in school or improving the quality of education.
- Assumptions about resource use. The cost of implementing ESDP V will also depend on the assumptions that are made about how resources will be used, such as the number of students per classroom or the number of textbooks per student.
- Assumptions about the cost of specific items. The cost of implementing ESDP V will also depend on the assumptions that are made about the cost of specific items, such as salaries or the price of textbooks.
- The description of the priority programs in ESDP V has mentioned the various targets that are being set. Based on these targets, a full cost estimate has been made for ESDP V, by sub-sector and by category of spending.

In order to improve internal efficiency, equity, and quality, the current education system should be further strengthened with greater emphasis on accountability mechanisms and management systems, while promoting horizontal and vertical coordination. The limited information flow across directorates within the MoE impedes collaborative activities among national learning assessment, curriculum and textbook development, and teacher development (MoE, 2005; MoE, 2010; MoE, 2015).

In addition, critical to improvement in student learning outcomes at school level is regular diagnostic classroom assessment on students' learning progress and provision of feedback to students. School Improvement (Take affirmative action to ensure equal participation of women, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, and people with special needs in all education and training programs. This will increase their role and participation in development (World Bank, 2017).

3.3 Effectiveness and Output

The General Education Quality Improvement Program for Equity (GEQIP-V) focuses on four key areas to improve the Ethiopian general education sub-sector, which includes early childhood, primary, and secondary education. These areas are. Internal efficiency: Reducing grade repetition and dropout rates, especially in the early grades. Equity: Increasing access to general education for all children, especially girls, children with special needs, and those in rural and marginalized areas (Asseffa, 2022). Improving teaching practices and learning environments to ensure that all children are learning. Strengthening the planning, policy formulation, and reform of the education system to ensure that it is sustainable and equitable (Seyoum & Basha, 2017).

This Program Operations Manual with “the POM” to make it more concise. Intended to make it clear that the POM is not a mandatory document, but rather a guide. Agreed with the Project Appraisal Document with “in accordance with the Project Appraisal Document” to make it more clear that the POM is based on the PAD. The Ministry of Education believe that GEQIP-E will help establish a results-based culture to improve the delivery of general education in Ethiopia with improved equity, efficiency and quality (MoE, 2010; MoE, 2017).

The relatively big contributors to Ethiopia’s education sector are: The World Bank, The European Commission (EC, UNICEF, DFID (UK’s Department for International Development), and USAID. Currently, the main pool-fund program in Ethiopia’s education sector is the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP). GEQIP is a multi-donor program that provides funding for a range of education initiatives, including teacher training, curriculum development, and school infrastructure. The implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (IM&E) framework for ESDP V specifies the roles and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the plan, as well as the tools and methods that will be used to monitor and evaluate its progress (Ambelu et al., 2019). The framework covers a number of agencies, including the Ministry of Education, Regional Education Bureaus (REBs), and woreda education offices. Each agency has both accountability and improvement functions. The IM & E framework is designed to support all agencies in making informed decisions about how to adjust the activities and strategies of ESDP V as needed. At a higher level, the findings of the IM & E process can inform adjustments to the strategic direction of the education system as a whole (MoE, 2015).

Monitoring is specifically required on a regular basis against the objectives, outputs and activities in ESDP V. This framework is based on clear expectations of performance and a set of linked implementation, monitoring and evaluation exercises. KPIs have been identified in ESDP V to monitor progress of priority outcomes at the system level. These indicators focus on participation, equity, quality and learning outcomes, in line with the priorities of the education and training system in Ethiopia (MoE, 2015).

Although efforts have been made to improve access to quality education, more needs to be done to keep up with the rapid increase in enrollment. It is important to monitor the potential trade-offs between quality and quantity, as we strive to expand educational opportunities. We must improve the quality of education in order to increase graduation rates, create a supportive environment for teachers, and maintain parental trust in the school system. To achieve this, we need to make urgent improvements in the areas of non-salary recurrent school budgets, student-section ratios, student-teacher ratios, textbook availability, and supervision of the teaching-learning process (Scheicher, 2011).

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