



Ushirika wa Maendeleo ya Elimu Barani Afrika
الرابطة لأجل تطوير التربية في إفريقيا
Association for the Development of Education in Africa
Association pour le développement de l'éducation en Afrique
Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Educação em África

**Triennale de l'éducation et formation en Afrique
(Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, February 12-17 2012)**

**Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for
sustainable development in Africa: How to design and
implement an effective response by education and
training systems**

Sub-theme 1

**Common core skills for lifelong
learning and sustainable
development in Africa**

**Status of BEAP Implementation: Responding to the
Kigali Call for Action – case studies from 3 countries**

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Working Document

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Document 1.3.08

• Original Version in English

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
BEAP	Basic Education in Africa Programme
BREDA	Regional Bureau for Education in Africa
CCM	Coordinating Committee Meeting
EFA	Education for All
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
IBE	International Bureau of Education
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOBSE	Ministry of Basic Secondary Education
NAT	National Achievement Test
NATCOM	National Commission for UNESCO
OUT	Open University of Tanzania
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TIE	Tanzania Institute of Education
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

1. ABSTRACT

1. Over the past two decades, global partnerships mechanisms like EFA and FTI, among others, have contributed tremendously towards getting millions of children around the world enrolled in school. Despite the considerable success realised by many African countries towards the attainment of the EFA goals, it is noted that millions of children are still outside of the formal education system. In addition, of those that enrol some will drop out, others will repeat and many will finish six years of primary education without acquiring the basic skills to continue learning or join the labour market (see GMR, 2009; 2010; 2011).

2. Concerns over the low quality and utility of education as well as the nagging issues of access, equity and inclusiveness of the education systems, expressed at different international and regional consultations on education, culminated in the declaration of the regional high-level workshop on extending basic education in Africa held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2007 called the “Kigali Call for Action”. In the call for action, a framework (BEAP) was developed to guide African countries in undertaking comprehensive and holistic basic education reforms, creating an organic link between basic and post-basic education as well as provides a space for diverse partners to contribute towards the reforms. BEAP is essentially an instrument to implement the Kigali Call for Action.

3. Some African countries have adopted BEAP-type basic education system reforms before and since Kigali using various stated priorities including access and equity, quality, curriculum and teacher training. An increasing number of countries have expressed the desire to undertake basic education system reforms but unable to do so due to a number of challenges including financial and capacity limitations as well as insufficient understanding of the operationalisation of BEAP on the ground.

4. Consequently, UNESCO commissioned the preparation of case studies on BEAP implementation to share at the ADEA Triennale. The case studies present experiences from three (3) countries that have adopted BEAP and are in the process of operationalising it. While it is too early to expect the impacts of BEAP-type reforms, there are experiences in reforming basic education systems from the case study countries that could be useful to share with other countries that may be planning to undertake such reforms.

5. The synthesis of the BEAP experience in the case study countries is contained in Section 5 of this paper preceded by a highlight of key features of the BEAP and its relation to the Kigali Call for Action (Section 4). The lessons learned and key messages coming out of the case studies are presented in Section 6.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

6. Since the development of the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) framework at the conclusion of the high-level workshop on the extension of basic education in Africa held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2007, a lot has taken place with regard to supporting/accompanying countries in reforming their education systems using the BEAP framework.

7. The policy and philosophy underlying BEAP as a response to the Kigali Call for Action has been understood and accepted by many Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. One of the main obstacles for countries wishing to embark on BEAP-type reforms of basic education has been how to implement or begin the reforms. Other questions relate to infrastructure to cater for the projected increase in number of children requiring school places, how or where to secure financing, address curricular issues, especially competency-based curriculum; teacher training and management, and a variety of other important questions.

8. Since the launch of BEAP as a pilot first in The Gambia in 2008, UNESCO and its partners have worked extensively with countries on the continent to launch the BEAP and initiate or guide the education system reforms. These include The Gambia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Djibouti, Seychelles, Mauritius, Mali and Rwanda.

9. The ADEA Triennale provides an opportunity for countries that have started implementing BEAP to share their experiences with partners and other countries wishing to undertake basic education reforms. In this regard, three (3) countries, Rwanda, The Gambia and Mali were identified to prepare case studies of the implementation of BEAP for the purpose of sharing the experience with other countries at the Triennale.

10. The key results expected from the BEAP case studies is improved understanding of the education reforms being implemented and more countries subsequently mustering the courage and political will to undertake the urgent reform of African education systems.

2. Contexts in the case study countries

11. The countries of on which the case studies on the implementation of the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) are focused, are all developing nations generally characterised by high levels of poverty and illiteracy, significant numbers of out of school children, low quality of education and consequently, low human development. Indeed, according to the 2011 Human Development Report (HDR), all four counties are categorised under low human development with indices (HDI) ranging between 0.429 (Rwanda) to 0.359 (Mali) and HDI ranking of between 166 and 175 out of 187 countries.

12. A closer examination of education-specific indicators such as access, including enrolment, transition both inter-class and from lower to secondary, school life expectancy, and teacher-pupil ratio, have improved significantly in the case study countries and the continent overall over the past decade and half (GMR, 2009, 2010, 2011). It is important to note however, that this regional progress hides significant disparities within and between countries implying that access (and equity) continues to be an issue.

13. The provision of quality education still remains a major challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa (Gakusi, 2010; GMR 2011). Students are acquiring basic skills at levels below what is expected. Indeed, the GMR 2011 underlines the very low quality of education in many countries with millions of children coming out of primary school with skills levels in reading, writing and numeracy which are far below expected levels.

3. Implementing the Basic Education in Africa Programme

14. The Basic Education in Africa Programme promotes an expanded vision of quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) followed by quality and relevant basic education of 9-10 years for all students, focusing on skills and competencies as learning processes and outcomes, attitudes and values that prepare learners for lifelong learning and the world of work.

15. In 2008, BEAP was piloted in The Gambia, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda serving as observers. Between 2008 and 2011, several other countries across the continent have launched BEAP using different entry points, or have been sensitised at a BEAP launch in preparation for their launch.

16. Typically a BEAP launch is concluded with the preparation of a national BEAP Road Map consisting of the country's educational challenges, proposed solutions and time-frame. The national BEAP roadmap guides the national actions. Countries establish a national technical committee to manage the reforms and serve as a link between country and partners in the reforms.

4. The BEAP Case Studies

17. The case studies seek to show the potential of the BEAP framework in serving as a vehicle for educational reforms in a variety of contexts to bring about an education system that will produce learners with critical basic skills and competencies for life and for the work place. These are skills and competencies that will enable school graduates to continue to learn, to live with other people and contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities and countries.

18. Through the Ministries of Education of the case study countries and with support from National Commission for UNESCO Offices and UNESCO Field Offices, Country Teams were established in the case study countries and consultants hired to undertake the studies. The case studies presented here were produced by the consultants guided by the National Teams.

5. Methodology of the case studies

19. The methodology adopted for the case studies were similar in that it consisted of desk research on the reform process and in-depth interviews. In reviewing the literature, the consultants consulted key national/strategic documents stipulating the long-term vision of the country, relevant legal and policy instruments – laws, Acts and education policies, national basic education curricula, education statistics, as well as documents on BEAP, including the BEAP Policy Paper, BEAP Information Note (2008) and the National BEAP Road Map, among others.

20. The desk review was complemented by in-depth interviews with senior policy-makers, curriculum developers, teacher trainers and specialists in examinations and quality assurance, teacher unions and other stakeholders to determine their reflections on the reforms both in terms of process and product.

6. Results of the Case Studies

21. The key messages coming out of the case studies are as follows:

Key messages

- Strong leadership and political will are essential ingredients in the successful implementation of the extended basic education of 9 years. They are critical in maintaining focus and endurance.
- Partnerships, both national/local and international are critical in securing the technical, financial and physical means to embark on the reform.
- Education policy-makers, managers and technicians must “*think outside the square*”, or “*think unconventionally*” in addressing the issue of school infrastructure/classroom space or curriculum.

- Building in or integrating reform into education sector programme or strategic plan is crucial for funding and sustainability.
- Capacity building in a range of areas is essential to support the reform exercise: building the capacity of education sector personnel – curriculum developers, quality assurance and examinations specialists, teacher trainers, planners, system managers and school heads.

7. Conclusion

7.1 What have we really learned?

22. It has been demonstrated that the BEAP as a framework for reforming education system or elements of the system works.

23. It has also been learnt that strong leadership and political will, capacity building, unconventional mindset, framing the reform within the broader education sector programme and partnerships are essential ingredients or are a necessary condition for the successful undertaking of education system reform using the BEAP framework.

7.2 Can strategies used be adapted by other countries?

24. Strategies and process adopted by the case study countries could be adapted by other countries. The BEAP framework itself is a flexible instrument allowing thinking and action to begin with any component of the education system.

7.3 What kind of support to provide countries both implementing and yet to implement BEAP?

25. Capacity building: It came out quite clearly during the implementation of BEAP in the four case study countries confirmed by the case studies that at national level, there is a dearth of expertise in curriculum as well as in planning, management and monitoring and evaluation. Countries therefore need assistance in building capacity of education personnel in these areas. The UNESCO initiated Postgraduate Diploma in Curriculum Design & Development is in support of the building of capacity in curriculum issues.

26. Similarly, technical and financial support is necessary. Technical assistance in the form of specialists is needed to support the reforms while sector capacity is built. Financial assistance within the framework of the sector investment programme could also be very useful.

7.4 How do we proceed with secondary education?

27. The senior secondary school level will soon receive the increased numbers of graduates of the 9-year basic education cycle, it is therefore important to prepare secondary education for the new type of student.

28. Education Ministry officials and partners should be thinking to extend BEAP to the final three years of secondary education, continue to reinforce the concept of lifelong learning and emphasise skills and competencies as well as attitudes and values. Given that some of the first cohorts of the 9-year basic education cycle are graduating in 2012 in Rwanda, it should be helpful to define core learning areas for economic and social development.

3. INTRODUCTION

29. Within the framework of the general theme of the ADEA Triennale, *Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for sustainable development in Africa: How to design and implement an effective response by education and training systems*, and under the sub-theme, *Common core skills for lifelong learning and sustainable development in Africa*, a number of case studies were prepared on the implementation of the Basic Education Africa Programme (BEAP) in four countries, namely, Rwanda, The Gambia, Mali and Ethiopia for the purpose of sharing at the Triennale.

30. It will be recalled that in response to the basic education challenges on the continent, the high-level regional workshop on Extending Basic Education in Africa (Kigali, 2007), informed by outcomes of international and regional meetings, including the Seminar on Reforming Secondary Education in Africa organised by UNESCO (Addis Ababa, 2005) and by the World Bank (Accra, 2007), had recommended that basic education be extended (to 9 or 10 years of uninterrupted education) and that the curriculum be re-examined with a view to providing the basic skills necessary for life-long learning through a holistic, integrated and inclusive competency-based spiral curriculum framework. The recommendations of the Kigali workshop were enshrined in the declaration referred to as the “Kigali Call for Action”. A framework, the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) was developed as an instrument to implement the Kigali Call for Action.

31. The reforms of African basic education systems along the lines proposed in the BEAP framework is believed to enable children to acquire the critical basic skills, namely, communication, language and literacy skills, basic cognitive skills, personal development and life skills and basic workplace skills, that could be built on for lifelong learning and sustainable development. In this regard, the UNESCO network of Bureaus and offices have since 2008 worked with countries that initiated education reforms, providing technical support and building capacity for a variety of education personnel.

32. This paper provides a synthesis of the case studies on the experiences of the countries with regard to how BEAP was implemented at country level in terms of the process, entry point, operationalisation, strengths and challenges, as well as lessons learned and key messages. Given that several countries have indicated interest in undertaking reforms within the framework of BEAP but are confronted by financial and capacity challenges, among others, it could be interesting/useful to learn how countries have or are addressing issues such as adjustments to the organisational structure of education systems (to cater for the 9 uninterrupted years), additional classroom space, curriculum development, especially competency-based, teaching and learning, assessment of learning outcomes, teacher training and financing

33. Synthesis of the implementation of the BEAP in the case study countries is contained in Section 5 of this paper preceded by a highlight of key features of the BEAP and its relation to the Kigali Call for Action (Section 4). The lessons learned and key messages coming out of the case studies are presented in Section 6.

34. While it is too early to expect concrete outcomes from the implementation of the BEAP, which essentially began in 2008, the objective of this paper is to synthesize the experiences of countries in implementing the BEAP framework to tease out some lessons and key messages that could be shared.

4. THE BASIC EDUCATION IN AFRICA PROGRAMME

35. This section traces the link between the Kigali Call for Action and BEAP and highlights the principles and main features of BEAP framework. The section also covers briefly the organisation of the case studies.

4.1. The Kigali Call for Action

36. In response to the basic education challenges on the continent, the high-level regional workshop on Extending Basic Education in Africa (Kigali, 2007), informed by outcomes of international and regional meetings, including the Seminar on Reforming Secondary Education in Africa organised by UNESCO (Addis Ababa, 2005) and by the World Bank (Accra, 2007), had recommended that basic education be extended (to 9 or 10 years of uninterrupted education) and that the curriculum be re-examined with a view to providing the basic skills necessary for life-long learning through a holistic, integrated and inclusive competency-based spiral curriculum framework. The recommendations were enshrined in the declaration referred to as the “Kigali Call for Action” (attached as Annex to the BEAP Information Note in Annex 1).

37. An outline of a framework was developed to serve as an instrument to implement the Kigali Call for Action. The framework is referred to as the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP). The Call for Action provides an indication of not only the nature of and approach to basic education reforms, but also outlines the roles of various actors in the reforms including national governments, UNESCO and other UN agencies, ADEA, financial partners like the World Bank and African Development Bank as well as civil society organisations in the reforms.

38. It had been recognised that introducing basic education of a minimum of 9 years, that is holistic, inclusive, coherent and seamless, and giving priority to the preparation of clear policies and national plans towards its implementation is considered urgent for the achievement of EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNESCO, 2008).

4.2. The Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP)

39. The Basic Education in Africa Programme is a UNESCO-backed effort to promote an expanded vision of quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) followed by quality and relevant basic education of 9-10 years for all students, focusing on skills and competencies as learning processes and outcomes, attitudes and values that prepare learners for the subsequent levels of education and the world of work.

40. In this regard, BEAP seeks to provide a framework for enhancing comprehensive approaches in basic education reform aiming at improving quality, relevance and equity in education through increasing the responsiveness of education to the expectations and diverse needs of learners and society. It is thus seen as an instrument to implement the Kigali Call for Action.

41. The key principles underlying basic education as envisioned in the Basic Education in Africa Programme include the ‘right to education’ (including the right to complete the entire cycle); lifelong and life-wide learning; inclusive education including equity; the centrality of quality and relevance; emphasis on skills and competencies as learning processes and outcomes; the democratisation of access and participation in education, as well as of participation in decision-making; modes of delivery (right from early childhood); and taking a holistic approach to basic education development (see BEAP Policy Paper). BEAP is conceived as an overarching approach to foster those principles

throughout all levels of education systems to facilitate an integrated and holistic approach to the achievement of all EFA goals.

42. In practice, during and immediately following a launch, countries together with partners identify the challenges to the education system that are preventing it from enrolling and keeping all children in school, achieving quality education and improving the relevance of education to the learners and society. Countries determine how to go about addressing the challenges, the areas to start with (“entry point”) and timeframe for the activities. Such a document constitutes the national BEAP roadmap which will guide the national actions. Countries establish a national technical committee to manage the reforms and serve as a link between country and partners in the reforms.

43. Between 2008 and 2011, in addition to the pilot country, The Gambia, several other African countries have launched BEAP or have been sensitised at a BEAP launch where they served as observers. The UNESCO network of specialised Bureaus and offices has been working since 2008 with a number of countries that initiated education reforms, providing technical support and building capacity for a variety of education personnel.

44. While it is too early to talk about the impacts of the BEAP-type reforms on learning outcomes, there are interesting lessons to learn from the experiences of the countries that have initiated education reforms using the BEAP framework.

4.3. The BEAP case studies

45. The policy and philosophy underlying BEAP as an instrument of the Kigali Call for Action as well as the need for reform of basic education systems have been understood and accepted by many Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. One of the main obstacles for these countries wishing to embark on BEAP-guided reforms has been how to implement or begin the reforms. Others questions relate to infrastructure to cater for the projected increase in number of children; financing; curricular issues, especially competency-based curriculum; teacher training and management; and a variety of other important questions. As BEAP has been implemented in a number of countries, the ADEA Triennale provides an opportunity to share experiences in implementing BEAP with partners and other countries wishing to undertake basic education reforms.

46. In this regard, three case studies from Rwanda, The Gambia and Mali have been commissioned by UNESCO to be prepared and shared at the ADEA Triennale. The case studies seek to show the potential of the BEAP framework in serving as a vehicle for educational reform in a variety of contexts to bring about an education system that will produce learners with the critical basic skills and competencies for lifelong learning and for the work place. The key results expected from the BEAP case studies is improved understanding of the reforms being implemented. As a result, the implementation process, operationalisation, lessons learned and key messages derived from the implementation of BEAP are important.

4.3.1. Preparation of the case studies

47. The preparation of the case studies on the implementation of BEAP was contracted to national consultants in each country in consultation with the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for UNESCO in the respective countries. The consultants were supplied clear terms of reference to undertake the studies on basic education system reform using the BEAP framework. The consultants produced the case studies with the guidance of country teams. This report is a synthesis of the case studies.

4.3.2. Methodology of the case studies

48. The methodology adopted for the case studies was similar in that it included desk research on the reform process and in-depth interviews. In reviewing the literature the consultants consulted key national/strategic documents stipulating the long-term vision of the country such as Vision 2020 for The Gambia and Rwanda, relevant legal and policy instruments – laws, Acts and education policies, national basic education curricula, education statistics, as well as documents on BEAP, including the BEAP Policy Paper, BEAP Information Note (2008) and the National BEAP Road Map, among others.

49. The desk review was complemented by in-depth interviews with senior policy-makers, curriculum developers, teacher trainers and specialists in examinations and quality assurance, teacher unions, education NGOs and other stakeholders. The purpose of the interviews was to determine their reflections on the reforms both in terms of process and product.

4.3.3. Limitations of the study

50. Among the limitations of the case studies cited by the consultants included the limited time available for the study as well as the small number of the officials interviewed as a result of inaccessibility of some officials both in Mali and The Gambia due to other official engagements.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE BASIC EDUCATION IN AFRICA PROGRAMME

51. This section explores the implementation of BEAP in The Gambia, Rwanda and Mali. It highlights the experiences derived in terms of the interpretation of BEAP in the country context, the process and entry point, operationalisation of the reform and lessons learned.

5.1. THE GAMBIA

5.1.1. Interpretation of BEAP in country context

52. By 2007, using the BEAP concept, The Gambia had completed phasing in extended basic education of 9 uninterrupted years throughout the country, addressed the issue of classroom space - providing every Grade 6 child a place in Grade 7 - and the issue of teachers. It is to be noted that Gambia had started the gradual phasing out of the Grade 6 selection examinations to allow smooth transition to lower secondary school as far back as the year 2000.

53. The rationale for choosing curriculum development as a point of entry is that the country lacked an integrated framework for teaching and learning that embraces all aspects of an expanded basic education. If a seamless holistic expanded basic education program is to be achieved, the most logical starting point is the elaboration of a curriculum framework that is quality-oriented, inclusive, learner-focused and relevant for both the developmental needs of the learner and society.

54. The introduction of BEAP in 2008 therefore, offered the country an opportunity to revise its basic education curriculum away from its current fragmented and examinations orientation to one geared towards developing basic life skills and competencies, knowledge and attitudes that will enable Gambian children to continue to learn throughout their lives, to learn to do things and to learn to live and work with other people.

5.1.2. Process and entry point

55. The process of implementing BEAP in The Gambia within the framework of the Kigali Call was triggered by the visit of a team from UNESCO to hold an inception meeting on the BEAP Framework for reforming basic education with the officials of the Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education (MOBSE). As the country had made tremendous progress in access earlier, the preoccupation of the team at MOBSE was on improving quality of education which it was agreed has a lot to do with learning outcomes and the curriculum. As the curriculum was compartmentalised according to system cycles and examination-oriented, it was agreed to develop a new competency-oriented curriculum framework linking early childhood care and education (ECCE) to primary and lower secondary, that would guide the development of subject curricula.

56. A BEAP technical team was immediately constituted headed by the Deputy Permanent Secretary (Programmes) to guide the curriculum framework development process. This involved engaging stakeholders and partners in consultations to identify main areas for basic education reform, discuss strategies and develop a road map for the development of a national curriculum framework for basic

education of 9 years uninterrupted and determine capacity building activities necessary to prepare and implement the curriculum framework.

57. A national stakeholder consultation on the basic education curriculum was held April 2008 attended by a range of national stakeholders and development partners, including UNESCO-BREDA and IBE. This consultation reviewed developments and challenges in basic education in The Gambia; agreed on the components to be given priority in the country's reform programme; defined actions to be carried out and resources to be mobilised; agreed on curriculum development and capacity building as the focus of BEAP implementation in the country, and developed a draft 'roadmap' for the implementation of the BEAP reforms.

58. Targeted workshops were held for selected teachers, parents, students, education officials, teacher union officials, curriculum developers, subject panelists and teacher-trainers to discuss and analyze the basic education curriculum using SWOT to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the development of a national curriculum framework. In order to deepen the understanding of BEAP and prepare for the development of the curriculum framework, The BEAP technical committee organised capacity development activities at country level to improve the understanding of BEAP and curriculum framework and develop the skills needed for producing the framework. The technical committee identified a Core Team to work on the preparation of the curriculum framework.

5.1.3. Operationalisation of the national curriculum framework development process

59. Having decided that the BEAP effort will focus on curriculum framework and building the capacity of key personnel, the following steps were taken:

- Identification of priority areas for the curriculum frame for basic education: The technical team facilitated the conduct of a SWOT exercise on the current curriculum by five groups of stakeholders, (Grade 9 students, employers, secondary school teachers, parents and tertiary education level personnel (higher education and TVET) to use the results to develop the initial draft of the national curriculum framework.
- Building the capacity of key personnel involved in the curriculum framework preparation including curriculum developers, quality assurance and assessment specialists and teacher educators in curriculum development and design including competency-based curriculum development – at an intensive 2-week workshop at the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) (June-July 2009).
- Development of a zero draft of the curriculum framework for basic education: The drafting of the framework was done by various stakeholder groups who analyzed documents and collected data on skill gaps, and held meetings/workshops to discuss the structure, format and content of the framework.
- Validation of zero draft of framework: The zero draft was validated at four different levels to afford it a thorough review and approval of stakeholder groups. At one level validation is done by the Coordinating Committee Meetings¹ of MoBSE; another (social validation) with a

¹ The Coordinating Committee Meetings (CCM), chaired by the Permanent Secretary is the programme implementation arm of the MOBSE consisting of Directors (headquarters and regional) and in-country development partners including UNICEF, World Bank office, NATCOM and VSO. The team meets once every

larger groups of stakeholders including all categories of teachers, parents, PTAs and education officials to review the draft; a technical validation with curriculum specialists from UNESCO- BRED A and UNESCO-IBE; and finally by MOBSE Senior Management Team².

- Members of the core team worked on elaborating the curriculum framework. On completion of the first draft of the curriculum framework, it was circulated widely and comments were received from stakeholders and partners including UNESCO (BRED A & IBE). Inputs were incorporated into a final draft.

60. The new curriculum framework, which is made up of six chapters, aims to ensure the foundations for appropriate responses to recent challenges in the provision of quality and relevant content, as well as to promote the success of all learners during the learning process, including those with special needs. It stresses the development of values, attitudes and skills which will enable young Gambians to make use of their acquired knowledge in varying life situations, and provides for ensuring the coordination, coherence and continuity of the learning process across different grades, key stages of the curriculum and formal, non-formal and informal levels of education in The Gambia. It also defines the expected educational achievement for learners, which are competencies and skills development. The instructional materials needed and which should be developed for teaching and learning at all the levels of the expanded basic cycle, from early childhood to lower secondary (Grade 7-9), namely, syllabi, teachers' guide, textbooks and other supplementary teaching and learning resources, are also outlined in the framework.

61. In addition to earlier capacity building efforts targeting key personnel, two other officials from the Curriculum Research, Evaluation and Development Directorate of MOBSE have enrolled on the recently launched Post-graduate Diploma in Curriculum Design & Development accredited by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) and offered by the Open University of Tanzania in collaboration with the Tanzanian Institute of Education.

62. For financing, it was possible to fit the preparation of the curriculum framework into the country's education sector programme which World Bank Fast Track Initiative (FTI) is supporting. Funds for local workshops, meetings, printing of the curriculum framework and associated costs were drawn from the programme budget line on improving quality of education.

63. One of the strengths that the curriculum framework preparation enjoyed was the continued focus of MOBSE (especially the Permanent Secretary) on the curriculum framework, according the activity a high priority level in timely allocation of resources and personnel.

64. The dearth of capacity in curriculum development at national level in The Gambia was a real challenge. However, this was detected early and capacity was developed at the level of the Ministry and the teacher training college. In addition, system managers need capacity building in policy analysis, management, planning and monitoring and evaluation.

two months in the six (6) education regions in the country by turn to review programme implementation, challenges and propose solutions.

² The Senior Management Team (SMT), chaired by the Honourable Minister of Basic & Secondary Education and consisting of Directors at the central level only is the policy review and development arm of the Ministry and reviews programme implementation and addresses any policy implications of solutions to implementation challenges proposed by the CCM. SMT meets once every two months supplemented by weekly review meetings.

5.1.4. Lessons Learned

65. Given that over the past two years, The Gambia has been able to use the BEAP framework and support from partners to develop and produced the national curriculum framework, we can learn that firstly, political will, commitment and focus are critical in the success of the curriculum framework development activity.

66. Secondly, capacity building in a range of areas is essential to support the reform exercise. For instance, building the capacity of education sector personnel especially curriculum developers, quality assurance and examinations specialists, teacher trainers, planners, system managers and school heads.

Thirdly, technical and financial assistance is essential for success in effecting education system reforms.

5.2 RWANDA

5.2.1. Interpretation of BEAP in country context

67. An analysis of the Rwandan society and the kind of citizen the people want to develop for the future, coupled with the country's commitment to meeting its international obligations with regards to attaining the EFA and MDG goals before 2015, convinced the leadership to re-examine its education system. The holding of the high-level regional workshop on education in Rwanda from which emanated the Kigali Call for Action, focused thoughts and provided a framework (BEAP) for reforming basic education to increase access and equity and improve quality and relevance of education.

68. BEAP is understood as an extension of basic education to a minimum of 9 years (6 years primary and 3 years lower secondary) which would allow the country to accelerate the attainment of the EFA goals. It was realised also that this has implications for school infrastructure, curriculum, teacher training and management, teaching & learning materials, examinations & assessment and financing of the reforms.

69. The main objective for the implementation of the extended basic education of 9 years was to contribute to the acceleration of universal education of all children up to the sixth year of primary education and create conditions for access to lower secondary education for all children that complete primary school. It is expected that the reforms would permit children to overcome barriers of gender, poverty and other obstacles to complete a quality basic education of 9 years.

70. Since the Kigali high-level workshop of 2007, Rwanda had proceeded to revise its education policy and legal instruments to extend basic education to 9 years of uninterrupted educational engagement. In so doing, abolished the selective examination at the end of the primary cycle, built classrooms and revised the curriculum. How did the country address the issue of classroom space/infrastructure in the lower secondary school; what about the issue of teachers, teaching and learning materials, the questions of curriculum and financing?

5.2.2. Process and entry point

71. The aim of the reform was to accelerate the attainment of EFA by extending basic education and removing obstacles that hinder access and undermine quality of education. The process in the Rwanda case involved 6 main steps, not necessarily in the order listed - preparing a policy and programme to provide free basic education of 9 years; mobilisation of the population and focusing efforts towards the reform; classroom construction; development of the new curriculum & printing of textbooks; mobilisation and training of teachers on the new curriculum; and addressing the issue of financing.

5.2.3. Operationalisation of the reforms

72. A political pledge by the Rwandan Head of State to provide free basic education of 9 years triggered the implementation of BEAP and provided further impetus to the country's drive to achieve the EFA and MDG goals. The pledge gave rise to the declaration of "*Programme d'Education de base de 9 ans*" which is free and compulsory and provided the bedrock of a very robust mobilisation of all segments of Rwandan society including communities, security and defence personnel, engineers, architects and other professionals.

73. The revised national school map identified areas of the country where the demand for education is very high and classroom construction was informed by this map. Government adopted a two-pronged approach to the provision of classroom space by rationalising the use of existing classroom stocks while building additional classrooms or schools. In collaboration with district authorities, government identified 523 existing primary schools in which it progressively introduced a common core curriculum (*tronc commun*).

74. Mobilisation of the whole population and adoption of a policy referred to as "*method non-conventionnelle de construction des infrastructure*" requiring every citizen of 18 years and above to be involved in the construction of school classrooms and other school infrastructure. This policy turned out to be very effective in addressing the issue of additional classroom space. . Using this method, the country was able to construct 6008 classrooms and 15,000 toilets in just two years. From 2003 to 2011, up to 923 new *Groupes Scolaires* using the common core curriculum have been created and because of this, all Grade 6 graduates were readily received in the first year of the common core curriculum in lower secondary school.

75. The new *common core curriculum* is competency-based and child-centred in all subjects linking the primary and lower secondary curricula using the spiral model. The number of subjects taught was reduced from ten (10) subjects to four (4) for the first three years, 12 subjects to 5 for the second three years and from 13 to ten (10) for three years of lower secondary. Teachers now specialise in the various disciplines departing from the practice of classroom teachers teaching every subject. In order to improve understanding and strengthen the knowledge base of children, the language of instruction for the first three years of 'primary' schooling was changed to a local language, *Kinyarwanda*.

76. The engagement of local private printers in the preparation and publishing of *textbooks* and guaranteeing business for up to five years reportedly lowered cost compared to purchasing them overseas. Engagement of the local publishers, decentralisation of textbook procurement to district and school level and the introduction of a robust computerised monitoring system at the central level

together not only addressed the production of the teaching and learning materials, but also their timely distribution to schools.

77. In Rwanda, *financing* of the reform was by government, communities and partners through capitation grants in which government provides communities with 3500 Rwandese Francs per child per year for classroom rehabilitation, teaching & learning and capacity building of teachers. Parents are expected to cover transport and school lunch.

78. As a result of the success of implementation the 9-year uninterrupted basic education in Rwanda, government has decided to extend basic education to 12 years. The thinking is to move 40 percent of students after basic education, to technical and vocational education and training to raise the status of TVET and attract strong students that could be employed immediately after graduation to show the utility of TVET.

79. The major strengths from which the implementation of BEAP benefitted in Rwanda included the presence of tremendous political will and strong national leadership with high capacity to mobilise the population. To this will be added the readiness of policy-makers and education system managers to “think outside the square” in addressing challenges.

5.2.4. Lessons Learned

80. In terms of lessons learned, three key lessons are immediately apparent from the Rwanda experience. First, strong and committed leadership is instrumental to the success of the reforms. The reform of the basic education system using the BEAP framework has advanced in Rwanda where the first graduates of the extended basic education will complete the cycle in 2012. This was to a large extent due to the commitment and focus of the leadership which permeated the whole government machinery.

81. Second, given the success of the classroom construction programme which used a non-conventional method, it could be learned that “*thinking outside the square*” can address some of our challenges.

82. Third, community mobilisation and participation in various aspects of the reforms, including, classroom construction and their modest contribution to the cost of education (transport & school lunch) confirms the important roles the population/communities could play in any national endeavour.

5.3. MALI

5.3.1. Interpretation of BEAP in country context

83. In Mali, BEAP is understood as a vehicle to improve national literacy levels by increasing access to and improving the quality of basic education. Mali had by the dawn of the twenty-first century taken the policy decision to adopt the BEAP concept and had put in place the legal framework and policies to extend basic education to 9 – 10 years of uninterrupted engagement of the child. From this country, it could be useful to learn how it addressed the attendant issues of abolishing the selection examination at the end of the primary cycle, teachers, teaching and learning materials, assessment of student competencies and financing.

5.3.2. Process and entry point

84. The process of introducing extended basic education in Mali was also similar to the other countries in that regardless of entry point, the introduction of an extended basic education of 9 years requires a legal framework to legalise the shift, establishment of a technical team to lead the process, consultations with diverse range of stakeholders, revision of curriculum towards competency-based approaches, teacher training, classroom construction and resource mobilisation/financing. The entry point in the case of Mali was the Increase access and quality through adoption for 9 years of uninterrupted basic Education (*Enseignement fondamental*)

85. The process of implementation of the extended basic in Mali also included amending the legal instruments Loi No. 99/046 of 1999 to incorporate “*Loi d’Orientation sur l’Education*” to provide the legal basis for the reform and the establishment of a technical committee under the authority of the Prime Minister to lead the reform. Three rounds of consultations were held with all stakeholders in education including communities, *parents d’élèves*, school management committees, elected officials, teachers and other education officials. Following the consultations, the propositions were analysed and a synthesis document derived which was validated during the third round of consultations before submission to government for adoption.

86. A communication strategy targeted at partners was developed and executed to mobilise them. A basic education (*L’enseignement fondamental*) curriculum oriented towards competency-based was developed using the participative model involving Ministry of Education officials – basic (*fundamental*) education teachers; other teachers; school heads, teachers unions, technical partners and elected officials. Following preparation of the curriculum, teachers were trained in competency-based approaches and specialised to enable them teach from the first year to final year of the extended basic education of 9 years. Additional classrooms were constructed with support from technical and financial partners.

5.3.3 Operationalisation of extended basic education in Mali

87. In operationalisation of the extended basic education of 9 years, government amended and passed the Loi No. 99/046 of 1999 to incorporate “*Loi d’Orientation sur l’Education*” under Article 34 stipulating that “*L’enseignement fondamental est un bloc unique de 9 ans*” – with school entry age at 6 years. The amended law was passed by the National Assembly on 28 December 1999 providing a legal basis for the reform.

88. The planning process for the reform revealed several challenges to the implementation of an extended basic education. These included limited financial resources; substantial delay in the implementation of the Decentralisation Policy; disregard of commitments to education by all partners, including state, local governments, private sector, technical & financial partners, NGOs, etc.; lack of mastery of the management of the flow of students at secondary and tertiary levels; weak private sector; and insufficient number of graduates to recruit teachers from.

89. In *mobilising resources*, a financial simulation exercise was carried out to determine the level of resources required followed by a donor roundtable (held in June 1998). Following the round table

exercise, partners selected areas they would support, amongst them, Netherlands for development of the curriculum, ACIDI for textbooks and JICA for classroom construction.

90. Internal resources mainly from central government were also mobilised. Budgetary allocation to education rose from 22.5 percent in 1996 to 33.2 percent in 2009. During the initial phases of Education Sector Investment Programme (*Programme d'Investissement de Secteur d'Education - PISE*), government's share represented 67 percent, local communities about 2 percent and technical and financial partners 31 percent.

91. In terms of the *Organisation & Management of extended basic education of 9 years*, the cycle was divided into four (4) levels. This is reflected in the education policy, *Les grandes orientations*, which stipulate that basic education (l'enseignement fundamental) is a single block of 9 years structured into four (4) levels as follows:

- Level 1 (initiation): two (2) years – Year 1 & Year 2
- Level 2 (aptitude): two (2) years – Year 3 & Year 4
- Level 3 (consolidation): two (2) years - Year 5 & Year 6
- Level 4 (orientation) : three (3) years – Years 7, 8 and 9

92. The *curriculum* was revised and structured around five (5) domains. For each domain the key competencies, objectives, content, learning activities and mode of evaluation defined. The curriculum was developed using the participative model involving departments of the Ministry of Education dealing with teaching, fundamental education, teachers, school heads, teachers' unions, technical partners and elected officials.

93. In order to teach the new curriculum which is competency-based, *teachers* were mobilised and trained. And given the importance of teachers in the delivery of quality education, *control pedagogique* is supposed to be carried out periodically by a range of monitoring personnel from school level (School Head), regional and at the central levels.

94. In terms of *classroom and school infrastructure* provision, authorities in Mali also adopted a two-pronged approach in which children will receive 9 years of uninterrupted basic education from first primary schools (Years 1-6) and continue to lower secondary schools (Years 7-9) or begin and finish in the same basic cycle schools (Years 1-9). This approach allows countries to begin introducing the reforms in the existing primary and lower secondary schools. The important thing is to ensure that there will be no break in the education of the children until they complete Year 9.

95. The strengths in the Mali case were the will of the political and professional leaderships determined to improve the level of literacy of the population by increasing access and quality of education and the consultations of a wide range of stakeholders including technical and financial partners.

96. In addition to the challenges revealed during the planning exercise for the reform, further difficulties were encountered in implementing the extended basic education. These included insufficient number of teachers; weak pedagogical support; insufficient textbooks; and short training time. In terms of delivery of the competency-based curriculum, the limited capacity among teachers in using this kind of curriculum was a major challenge.

5.3.4. Lessons Learned

97. Among the lessons that could be learned from the Mali experience, include the critical role of partnerships in the implementation of the basic education reforms and the importance of stakeholder involvement early in the process. For instance, through the involvement of technical and financial partners in the preparation of the sector programme, it was possible to finance one of the most difficult components of the reform, additional classrooms, through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

98. It is very difficult to introduce competency-based curriculum especially where teachers lack the requisite skills to use the approaches.

5.5 How were the Implementation challenges recognised?

99. Generally, the challenges were recognised during the planning phase of the introduction of extended basic education. It was at this stage that the difficulties related to provision of classroom infrastructure, textbooks & learning materials, provision of teachers and capacity building of education personnel, were recognised in Rwanda, The Gambia and Mali. Indeed, for Mali, the financial simulation exercise was very useful in providing a picture of the costs of introducing the extended basic education of 9 years.

5.6 What interventions are promoted to transform the challenges into opportunities?

100. A variety of interventions were put in place to address the challenges. In the case of classroom construction, Rwanda, Gambia, Mali adopted a two-pronged approach to the provision of classroom space. As stated earlier, the approach consisted of rationalising the use of existing classroom stocks (both primary & lower secondary) while building new classrooms. To reduce the cost of construction of new classrooms, the government of Rwanda in addition to the two-pronged approach, adopted a policy making it a requirement for every Rwandan above the age of 18 years to participate in the construction programme. This is what it called the “*method non-conventionnelle de construction de l’infrastructure*” and included the political and professional leadership, defence and security personnel, engineers, architects and other professionals whose involvement added value/quality to the structures.

101. The capacity challenge in curriculum at the national level made capacity building in curriculum design & development very important to some countries such as The Gambia. As this challenge was detected early and identified as a factor that could undermine the implementation of BEAP, capacity building was built into the BEAP activities to be supported by partners. UNESCO provided this support to The Gambia and several other African countries including Ethiopia in 2009 and 2011.

102. In all three case studies, teachers needed to be trained or retrained to teach the new curriculum as very few teachers were conversant with competency-based approaches to teaching and learning. In Mali and Rwanda when work on the curriculum was completed, teachers were mobilised and trained in the new curriculum. In The Gambia, as the curriculum framework has recently been completed, school heads, senior teachers and cluster monitors are being sensitised on the orientations of the new framework. Activities are underway to reflect competency-based approaches to teaching, learning & assessment in the teacher training curriculum.

103. For the preparation and supply of teaching and learning materials, again the Rwanda case involving engagement of local publishers, decentralisation of textbook procurement and robust electronic monitoring system, was instructive. Similarly, The Gambia and Mali experiences are worth noting as they were able to build in or link the reforms into the sector programme thereby assuring funding. In the case of Mali, it coincided with the preparation of a sector investment programme. Given that the most difficult challenge faced by African countries in reforming their basic education systems has been and continues to be financial resources and that the convergence of adequate capacity and right timing to incorporate the reforms in a new or revised sector programme may not always happen, system managers and sector policy-level officials must be prepared to be innovative and flexible in determining ways to accommodate the reforms in the sector programme. For instance, The Gambia was able to access financial resources for the preparation of the curriculum framework from the FTI catalytic fund.

6. CONCLUSION

104. BEAP was officially launched about three years ago (2008) following the Kigali regional workshop on the extension of basic education to support countries in reforming basic education systems to facilitate the attainment of the EFA and MDG goals. In so doing, increase access and participation in education as a right of every child and improve the quality and relevance of basic education to prepare children for lifelong learning and the world of work. Subsequently, BEAP was launched in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Djibouti, Seychelles and several other African countries.

105. From the synthesis of the case study reports it is clear that a variety of entry points can be used to trigger the reforms advocated by BEAP. These could be extension of basic education, curriculum, teachers and teacher training. Once the trigger has been decided, it is realised that all the other components of the system, including the curriculum, textbooks and learning materials, teachers and teacher training, classroom space and related issues of resource mobilisation, partnerships and capacity building would all have to be addressed. This is to be expected as the BEAP reforms need to be comprehensive and holistic in nature.

106. The experiences from The Gambia, Rwanda and Mali show that BEAP-type reforms of basic education can work. For instance, the first cohort of students following the common core curriculum in Rwanda within the extended basic education of 9 years will be proceeding to senior secondary school after sitting to a national examination. Indeed, as a result of the success in implementing free basic education of 9 years, the government of Rwanda is considering extending basic education to 12 years.

107. Likewise, the development of the Gambia national curriculum framework for basic education of 9 years also triggered by the adoption of BEAP, has been completed and printed. Sensitisation of teacher trainers, school heads and cluster monitors on the curriculum framework and capacity building in competency-based teaching and learning and assessment of learning outcomes are already underway for the same categories of personnel.

108. Even though several countries have now extended their basic education system to 9 years and others have made the declaration (notably in the UEMOA zone), the implementation of BEAP is still largely in its infancy in terms of impact. This notwithstanding, there are some lessons and key messages that need to be heeded for the successful implementation of BEAP.

6.1. What lessons could be learned from the BEAP implementation experiences?

109. In terms of lessons learned, it came out very clearly from the case studies that the following lessons are worthy of note in successfully implementing basic education system reforms:

- Strong leadership and political will are crucial in the successful implementation of the extended basic education of 9 years.
- Partnerships are critical in securing the technical, financial and physical means to embark on the reform.
- For financial resources, government must demonstrate commitment to basic education reform by reflecting this commitment in the national budget. Partners and other stakeholders could then fill in the funding gaps.
- Education managers and technicians would have to “*think outside the box*” or “*think unconventionally*” when addressing both textbooks, teaching & learning materials and construction of school infrastructure.
- Capacity building in a range of areas is essential to support the reform exercise. Building the capacity of education sector personnel – curriculum developers, quality assurance and

examinations specialists, teacher trainers, planners, system managers is essential to support the system reform.

- In terms of the provision of classroom infrastructure, the adoption of the two-pronged approach adopted by Rwanda, Gambia and Mali have enabled the countries to begin introducing the reforms in the existing primary and lower secondary schools while basic cycle schools are being built. Community participation could also be useful in both cash and kind.
- For financing and sustainability, it is important to incorporate the BEAP reforms into the education sector programme or medium-term expenditure plan. As the desire to introduce BEAP reforms may not coincide with education sector programme preparation or review, sector managers need to be very innovative and flexible in their approach. The reason for this is that there may not be a specific budget line or cost area labelled “BEAP” in an existing sector programme, but pillars or axes addressing increasing access & equity; improving quality of education; support to sector management; infrastructure; and similar pillars, could be used to support BEAP-type activities such as curriculum improvement, teacher training, capacity building and classroom construction. In such a case, strong arguments may be provided to the partners financing the sector programme or the specific pillar.

6.2. Key Messages from the implementation of BEAP at country level

110. The key messages derived from the lessons learned are highlighted in this section. It has been demonstrated by the case studies that using the BEAP framework to reform basic education systems works. This notwithstanding, the key messages highlighted in this section need to be satisfied or heeded for the smooth implementation of BEAP.

111. The implementation of basic education system reforms using the BEAP concept has advanced in Rwanda, Mali and The Gambia through strong government leadership and commitment.

Message 1: Government must take the lead demonstrating strong leadership and political will which are critical in successfully implementing BEAP reforms.

112. Government has utilised non-conventional methods to provide additional classroom space in Rwanda where it was able to construct over 6000 classroom and 15,000 toilets in two years. It could be useful therefore for government officials to “think outside the square” or “non-conventionally” when it comes to addressing challenges such as classroom construction and teaching & learning materials.

Message 2: Education policy-makers, system managers and technicians need to be innovative and flexible in thinking and approach to education system reform challenges.

113. The ability of the case study countries to realise progress in the implementation of BEAP was to some extent dependent on the capacity of the sector personnel. In the case of The Gambia, the paucity of expertise in curriculum was recognised early and capacity building activities built into the BEAP road map. Education system managers and technicians also need to have their capacity built in their various areas to enable them support the comprehensive and holistic system reforms.

Message 3: Capacity building of education personnel in a variety of areas is crucial in supporting the reforms.

114. Partnership, whether with technical and financial partners or with local communities is important. All these categories need to be consulted, involved and contribute to the reforms. This will make available resources as well as increase the relevance and legitimacy of the reforms.

Message 4: Partnership is important in implementing BEAP reforms.

6.3. What support do countries need to implement BEAP?

116. It came out quite clearly during the implementation of BEAP and confirmed by the case studies that at national level there is a dearth of expertise in curriculum (the heart of the education system) as well as in planning, system management, monitoring and evaluation. Countries therefore need assistance in building capacity of education personnel in these areas to support the reforms. The UNESCO initiated Postgraduate Diploma in Curriculum Design & Development is in support of the building of capacity in curriculum issues.

117. Similarly, technical and financial support is necessary. Technical assistance in the form of specialists is needed to support the reforms while sector capacity is built. Financial support within the framework of the sector investment programme could also be very useful.

6.4. How do we proceed with secondary education?

118. The senior secondary school level will soon receive the increased numbers of graduates of the 9-year basic education cycle, it is therefore important to prepare secondary education for the new student profile.

119. Education Ministry officials and partners should be thinking to extend BEAP to the final three years of secondary education to continue to reinforce the concept of lifelong learning and emphasise skills and competencies and attitudes and values acquisition. Given that some of the first cohorts of the 9-year basic education cycle are graduating in 2012 in Rwanda, it will be useful to define core learning areas for senior secondary education to foster national economic and social development.

120. While the transition from lower secondary to upper/senior secondary school is low in most countries, it is important to work to improve access and indeed quality of secondary education. This is important since presently selective examinations will have to be taken to proceed to Grade 10 thereby limiting the transition of Grade 9 students to Grade 10. The current situation with respect to secondary education has the potential effect of undermining gains accruing from the introduction of BEAP.

7. APPENDICES

Annex 1: Basic Education in Africa Programme, Information Paper (2008),
ED/2008/PI/1 (also contains the Kigali Call for Action)

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