

An Evaluation of the UNESCO Project titled Capacity Building of District Education Officers in Educational Planning Implementation and Community Participation

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Abstract

The prime concern of the present article is to evaluate the UNESCO project "Capacity Building of District Education Officers in Educational Planning, Implementation and Community Participation". The Executive District Officers (EDOs), District Education Officers (DEOs), Deputy District Education Officers (DDEOs) and Heads of the Secondary Schools within 10 sampled districts of four provinces of Pakistan constituted population for this study. 25 Master trainers and 80 trainees trained under this project from Punjab, Sindh and NWFP were drawn as sample. To what extent the project has been successful in developing the capacity building of district education officers in educational planning, implementation and community participation was the main research question of the study? Data were collected through the in person administration of questionnaires to district education officers trained under the project and the

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master trainers of AEPAM, Islamabad and PITEs of the country

Regarding findings it was found that adequate arrangements for training courses were made at AEPAM and PITEs by providing all necessary facilities including appropriate sized rooms, proper seating arrangements, Audio Visual aids and related equipment Master Trainers were found fully trained and well prepared during the training. A majority of them had employed proper teaching techniques and helped the trainees in doing practical exercises during the training sessions. Regular visits were made by the members of stakeholders for monitoring the activities and shared problems faced by the trainees during the training. Overall the present project is rated as a success and it is recommended that the project may be launched all over Pakistan to benefit all district education officers at national level.

Key Words: Capacity Building, District Education Officers, Educational Planning, Implementation, Community Participation, Devolution Plan, Decentralization, Experimental Group, and Self explanatory modules.

Introduction

Pakistan is striving hard to achieving Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015, but the present pace of achievements in this regards is not satisfactory. The present Government has prepared a National Plan of Action (2001-2015) for EFA. The country is facing a lot of problems in gaining momentum to achieve its targets within the stipulated time period. Lack of involvement of community in decision making, ineffective management and inadequate capacity of utilization of resources available for education at district level are considered some of the reasons for low implementation rate in the country. In this context recent reforms regarding educational decision making has been decentralized from the provincial level to district level.

UNESCO in collaboration with the Academy of Educational Planning and

Management (AEPAM) has initiated a pilot project titled "Capacity Building of District Education Officers in Educational Planning, Implementation and Community Participation". The Project aims to train district and sub-district level educational administrators, planners and local supervisors in their related jobs and assignments.

Objectives of the Project

According to the project proposal (Revised version 2006) the main objectives of the project were to:

- i. Enable the trainees to meet new challenges, effectively plan and implement EFA initiatives in their jurisdictions and mobilize local communities for their active participation in educational decision making.
- ii. Contribute in improving efficiency and output of the district level officials and facilitate in increasing access and quality of education.

Institutional Framework and Strategy

Before Devolution of authority during 2001, provinces had the mandate for planning, financing and administration of education. Many of these tasks have been decentralized to district government under devolution plan. At the federal level, AEPAM is only national level training institution offering training courses on various aspects of planning, implementation and monitoring of educational programmes in the country. At provincial level Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education (PITEs) and a number of teacher training colleges are providing pre-service and in-service training to school teachers. During 2004-05, UNESCO worked with the PITEs for organizing capacity building workshops for district level managers and school principals. Training of educational planners and administrators was a new idea for PITEs. However, these institutions made a good progress to undertake this challenge.

There are about 125 districts in Pakistan and an estimated 1500 to 2000 educational managers of various grades and levels are working in these districts.

Area approach was adopted by the project. It implies that trainees should represent all provinces of the country. UNESCO in consultation with the Ministry of Education, provincial governments and other stakeholders selected 10 districts for this project.

Project Coordination

- i. The project was planned and executed in collaboration with the following:
- ii. UNESCO Office Islamabad.
- iii. Policy and Planning Wing, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- iv. Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM), Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- v. Educational Planning and Management (EPM) Department, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad.
- vi. Project Wing, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- vii. Curriculum Wing, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- viii. Federal College of Education, Islamabad.
- ix. Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO.
- x. Provincial Departments of Education and Literacy.
- xi. Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education (PITEs).

AEPAM was the principal implementation partner at federal level and PITEs assumed the responsibility of providing training to educational managers in their related provinces. UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) shared their experiences in the material development, organization of workshops and training of educational personnel, especially the trainer masters. EPM department AIOU contributed to develop training modules for the trainers and trainees.

Target Beneficiaries

Table 1 depicts the categories of the district education personnel were the target beneficiaries of the project:

Table 1 Target Beneficiaries of the Project

Sr. No.	Position	Number
i	Executive District Officers (Education)	25
ii	District Education Officers	50
iii	Deputy DEOs/Assistant DEOs	155
iv	Master Trainers	30
v	Total	260

The devolution exercise was being undertaken in the country, which was traditionally centralized regarding educational decision making, right from its creation from British India. The centuries old setup specially that involving bureaucratic machinery was being revamped by decentralization of educational decision making from province to district level by the present military government in 2000. All these factors called for a scrutiny of the whole exercise in order to find out problems, draw lessons and offer corrective policy recommendations.

Monitoring of the Project

The following mechanism was adopted for continuous and regular monitoring of the project:

Project Steering/Advisory Committee

The main functions of the Steering Committee were to evolve recommendations for the training, curriculum and extend support and guidance for the implementation of the project. For this purpose a committee was constituted of the following:

- i. Joint Educational Adviser (JEA) Policy and Planning Chairperson
Wing, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- ii. Director General AEPAM Ministry of Education Member
- iii. Director, Directorate of Staff Development Lahore Member
- iv. Directors PITEs, Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, and Balochistan Members
- v. Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO Member
- vi. UNESCO Islamabad Member

vii. Project Coordinator

Secretary

Field Visits

It was the responsibility of the UNESCO staff to undertake field visits to monitor the project activities by meeting concerned implementation partners and visiting training sites. They were assigned the duty to ensure the proper functioning of training courses organized by the stakeholders in their related provinces.

Evaluation Studies

Two evaluation studies were envisaged to ascertain reliable information about the pace and impact of the project implementation. First was the mid-term (Formative) and the second was the Final (Summative Evaluation). Findings of the Formative were to be used for improvement of the implementation strategy and to overcome deficiencies, if any. The final or Summative evaluation was designed to assess the impact of the project after completion of the project.

Statement of the Problem

In Pakistan education is mainly the responsibility of provinces. Some of the educational institutions are also run by the Federal Government. Despite concerted efforts by different governments, the country is still facing problems in providing education at school level for its ever growing population and needs of the society. The present military regime has introduced devolution of power plan to decentralize the education from provincial to district level. Under this plan all educational decisions were to be made at local level. It was expected that problems regarding provision of quality education, effective management, allocation and effective utilization of resources will be overcome. Due to lack of skills of district educational management in the field of planning, implementation and rationale decision making in education have hampered efficient and effective management of education at district level in the country. Thus there was an urgent need to overcome these problems of district education officers. In this context,

UNESCO in collaboration with AEPAM has initiated a pilot project titled "Capacity Building of District Education Officers in Educational Planning, Implementation and Community Participation". The Project aims to train district and sub-district level educational administrators, planners and local supervisors in their related jobs and assignments.

Present study was designed to assess the impact of the project in achieving its targets launched by AEPAM, Ministry of Education, Islamabad sponsored by UNESCO Office Islamabad.

Objectives of the Article

The main objectives of the study were to:

- i. Evaluate the project in terms of capacity building of the targeted educational personnel.
- ii. Assess the level of covering the objectives of the project by contents of the course materials.
- iii. Appreciate the availability of AV aids and their utilization during the training.
- iv. Explore the extent of participation of the community in the project
- v. Make recommendations for further improvement of the project for capacity building of district educational officers.

Research questions, Design and Method

The design contains a description of the data required for the study, and instruments used for data collection from the respondents. The design of the data collection method is such as the information that is necessary to understand the responses of individuals involved in the study regarding the capacity building of educational personnel in educational planning, implementation and community participation in Pakistan. The research design of the study can be divided into two parts. The first part is based on the review of the literature on decentralization and devolution of power plan in Pakistan. This review provided us with a deeper

insight into various issues related to the devolution of power in Pakistan. The second part of the research design deals with the procedure adopted to collect data from the respondents within the target areas. Following research questions were addressed in the study.

Main Research Question

To what extent the project has been successful in developing capacity building of district education officers in educational planning, implementation and community participation?

Sub-Questions

Following sub-questions were addressed leading to answer the main research question:

- i. Were adequate academic facilities provided during the training courses?
- ii. Were adequate physical facilities provided in the training courses?
- iii. Were relevant AV aids available and fully utilized during the training?
- iv. Did the monitoring teams visit the training venues regularly?
- v. Were objectives of the training materials fully achieved during the training?
- vi. Were master trainers fully trained and used proper teaching techniques?
- vii. Did the training provided to trainees correspond to needs of their jobs?
- viii. Did the trainees learn new concepts of educational planning and implementation in the training courses?
- ix. Did the training provide an in-depth vision in the trainees trained under this project?
- x. Were the trainees given chance to share their experiences and problems during the training courses?
- xi. What problem areas, if any, the trainees faced after completion of the training courses?

Primary Data

The primary data for empirical work was collected through questionnaires. The primary sources were personnel directly involved in important functions like policy making, planning, implementation, and administration of education at district level in Pakistan. Respondents include E.D.Os, D.E.Os, Dy. D.E.Os, Asst. D.E.Os, and Heads of secondary schools of the 10 selected districts from all the provinces of Pakistan. In addition to this another sample was drawn from the Master Trainers involved in the training of trainees under the project. A survey was conducted to collect data from samples drawn from the population. The researcher collected data from 80 trainees and 25 Master Trainers respectively from four provinces of the country.

Secondary Data

Regarding the secondary data we extensively reviewed the literature on decentralization of powers and the devolution power plan in Pakistan. The secondary data mainly came from the analysis of official reports and documents (published/unpublished) by the government of Pakistan. Other secondary sources used critically examined were studies and reports, published and unpublished, by various international agencies and by eminent scholars in this field were critically examined.

Research Instruments

Two separate questionnaires were developed one for district educational officers trained under the project and the other for the master trainers. There were two sections of each questionnaire. First part is related to personal information of the respondents and the second part focuses on provision of physical and academic facilities in the training courses, academic performance of master trainers, availability and use of AV aids and related equipments, conduct of training courses and monitoring system etc

Rationale for Research Instruments

Questionnaire is a set of questions logically arranged in order to collect data from respondents. This tool was used to collect primary data from respondents because they were all educated enough to understand questions in the printed form. The other reasons for using questionnaires were the following:

- i. Questionnaires as a tool for data collection is more appropriate than other methods when the respondents are more in number and widely dispersed.
- ii. The use of questionnaires for the collection of data is relatively cheaper compared to other methods.
- iii. Questionnaires can easily be coded and analyzed.
- iv. Questionnaires are also convenient for respondents, because they can fill in questionnaires when they want and at the speed they want to go.
- v. Maximum data can be collected through questionnaires in a short period of time, for example, data can be collected from group(s) at a time.

Improvement of the Tools

Before administering of the tools for data collection these were discussed with the senior academicians having expertise in the field of education. They were former and present faculty of Educational Planning and Management (EPM) faculty of Education AIOU, Islamabad. The questionnaires were refined in the light of the feedback from the educational experts.

Population

As discussed earlier in chapter 1, all E.D.Os, D.E.Os, Deputy D.E.Os, Asst. D.E.Os and Heads of the secondary schools within the 10 sampled districts out of four provinces of Pakistan constituted population for this study. The number of population was 230 district educational officers and 30 Master Trainers.

Sample

According to the agreement researcher was supposed to draw a sample of 10 trainees and 4 master trainers from each province. However, for making the sample more representative and authentic for generalization of results, researcher selected 80 trainees and 25 master trainers from Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Balochistan. This was done during the training courses they were attending. Master trainers were included Punjab, Sindh and NWFP. In the case of Balochistan efforts were made to include maximum number of trainees and trainer masters in the sample. However a sample of 5 master trainers and 10 trainees could be drawn for the study from Balochistan. The details of the sample are presented in table 3.1.

Table 2 Breakup of the Sample for the Article by Provinces

Province	Master Trainers	Trainees
Punjab	07	31
Sindh	04	26
NWFP	09	13
Balochistan	05	10
Total	25	80

Procedure for Data Collection

Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to district educational officers trained under the project and the master trainers of AEPAM, Islamabad and PITEs of the country. Data were collected from the respondents of Punjab, Sindh and NWFP in person. However, the data were collected through personal contacts and mail from the respondents of Balochistan. It was due to high security risk and floody weather conditions in Balochistan during the period the survey was conducted for data collection.

The data collected from the respondents was analyzed and interpreted using the SPSS package at Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. The analysis and interpretation of the data is presented in section 4 of the study. Before proceeding to the details of method adopted for collection of the data from respondents it seems to be logical to describe the population and samples for this study.

Findings

Summary of the findings based on the comparison of results from analysis of the data collected from the trainees and master trainers involved in the study is presented below:

1. It has been observed that about 94 percent trainees were from 36 to 60 years age group and 91.5 percent having teaching experience ranging from 11 to 30 years and above. It is also noted that a large majority (83 percent) of trainees had administrative experience from 1 to 20 years.
2. A significantly large majority (93.8 percent) of respondents had Master degree at their credit, whereas about 73 percent were holding M.Ed degree.
3. 37.5 percent trainees included in the sample were female which reflects the tendency of the women lot towards teaching profession in Pakistan
4. Despite the fact that majority of respondents were aged and experienced, only 57.5 percent had received such training before the training imparted under the present project 100 percent trainees and about 96 percent master trainers had received invitation letters for their respective training courses on time.
5. Results from trainees and master trainers' survey revealed that audio-visual aids and related equipment were available and properly utilized by MTs during the training. Results from trainees' survey indicated that 86 percent trainees and 97.5 percent MTs were provided study materials

during the training.

6. 100 percent master trainers and about 94 percent trainees agreed that they were provided with proper seating facility during the training courses.
7. 92 percent master trainers and 100 percent trainees agreed that rooms were well lit during training hours.
8. 100 percent master trainers and about 89 percent trainees agreed that regular monitoring visits were paid by the UNESCO staff.
9. 96 percent master trainers and similarly 71.25 percent trainees agreed that monitoring teams asked about the problems faced by them during the training.
10. 88 percent master trainers and about 81 percent trainees agreed that MTs were well versed with subjects. It implies that the selection of master trainers was carefully made keeping their expertise in view.
11. Results from trainees' and master trainers' survey indicated that 86 percent trainees and 96 percent master trainers agreed that MTs focused their respective topics during the training.
12. Results from the survey identified that 100 percent master trainers and about 86 percent trainees agreed that MTs substantially helped the trainees in doing exercises during the training.
13. The survey indicated that 76 percent master trainers and 80 percent trainees agreed that MTs covered respective course contents during their sessions.
14. Results of the survey indicated that 96 percent master trainers and 72.50 percent trainees agreed that resource persons used appropriate teaching techniques making their sessions more useful.
15. 92 percent master trainers and 86 percent trainees agreed that the training met professional needs of trainees. Results of the survey indicated that almost same percentage of master trainers and trainees (i.e.88 percent) agreed that trainees were served ample opportunities to share their

experiences during the training.

16. The survey confirmed, 84 percent master trainers and about 86 percent trainees agreed that objectives of the training were properly introduced to the trainees.
17. 92 percent master trainers and 87 percent trainees agreed that contents of the course materials comprehensively covered the objectives of the training.

Conclusions

The given conclusions are drawn from findings of the article:

1. The District Education Officers trained under the project were experienced and were academically and professionally sound. However, it is interesting to note that only 57 percent had received training prior to the current training which implies that they had not been provided with opportunities of such training before.
2. The percentage (37.5) of female participation in the present study is quite encouraging which is higher than "overall active participation of females in economic activities at national level, i.e.15.93 percent". (Pakistan Economic Survey 2005-06; p.193), as referred earlier under finding 3, that teaching profession is priority option for females in Pakistan
3. The invitation letters were mailed in time to MTs and trainees through their related organizations.
4. Adequate arrangements for training courses were made at AEPAM and PITEs by providing the requisite facilities inclusive of appropriate rooms, seating arrangements, AV aids and related equipment. All these facilities were also properly utilized during the training.
5. Master Trainers were trained and prepared for the training. They employed effective teaching techniques and helped the trainees in doing practical exercises during the sessions. They debated emerging contemporary concepts of educational planning and management with the

trainees in detail.

6. Trainees were inspired to share their experiences through comparison of the new and old systems of education in Pakistan. This exercise served the trainees an insight to differentiate the two systems of educational planning and management in the country.
7. The content of the study materials provided during the training were effective to materialize objectives of the training.
8. Regular monitoring visits were made by the members of stakeholders to share and resolve problems faced during the training.

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precisely the trainees were satisfied with the training they received under the project, "Capacity Building of District Education Officers in Educational Planning, implementation and Community Participation". The success of the project very much depends on the effective application and adoption of the knowledge, skill and technique they learnt, in their working practices. This would be a subsequent phenomenon to be studied and assessed later.

Observations of Respondents

The respondents offered substantial suggestions to improve and enrich the design of the training in terms of content and conduct of training courses in future. According to them the following areas need more emphasis:-

1. Educational Planning, Management and Leadership skills.
2. Orientation of new financial and administrative rules and regulations.
3. Accommodation may be provided within the premises of PITEs where training is organized
4. Increase in duration of training
5. Extended practicing exercises to be blended in the training. sessions.
6. Computer training needs to be an essential component for district

education officers because a majority of them was computer illiterate.

7. Recent subject material on public relations be added in training modules.
8. Training in projection techniques and project formulation i.e. development of Planning Commission Proformas, especially PC 1 -PC 4.
9. School related managerial problems.

Recommendations

The article leads to the given recommendations primarily based on observations made by the respondents, critical review of modules and result of data analysis:

1. Activity oriented methodology shall be useful in improving the planning and management skills of the trainees. For the purpose expertise from AEPAM, Department of Educational Planning and Management AIOU and Planning Commission Islamabad may be involved.
2. Duration of the training be extended up to two weeks.
3. T
o make the training effective trainees be given assignments related to managerial problems faced by the district education officers in their working situations.
4. Recommended that trainees be provided accommodation within the premises of training institutions especially in PITEs to save the time and facilitate the training process.
5. Self Assessment Questions (SAQs) be added in all modules.
6. Modules provided to trainees are sketchy. Self explanatory modules be developed and provided to trainees to enable them to benefit from them at their working places later.
7. Updated financial and administrative rules and regulations, hard or soft copies be included in the training materials.
8. It has been observed that a significant majority of trainees were not trained in using computer in educational planning A comprehensive

training on the use of computer in educational planning and management may be arranged for district education officers in collaboration with Bureau of Computer Islamabad.

9. As the trainees commented adversely on the lecture based teaching the MTs need to use activity oriented teaching methodology.

10. A

comparative study may be conducted to assess the level of impact of the training by comparing the job performance of the "Experimental Group" (educational officers who received training under the project) with the "Controlled Group" (those who did not receive such training). For this purpose follow up studies about the district educational officers who received training under the project may also be carried.

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In summary the present project is rated as a success. 80 percent of the district education officers representing the population were less than 55 years and a majority of them did not receive such training. Thus it is safely recommended that the project may be launched all over Pakistan to benefit all district education officers at national level.

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