EQUIP2 Lessons Learned in Education

Teacher Professional Development

A Guide to Education Project Design, Evaluation, and Implementation Based on Experiences from EQUIP2 Projects in Djibouti, Liberia, and Pakistan

By Mark Ginsburg, Jennifer Rose, and Elizabeth Adelman

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Acronyms

AED   Academy for Educational Development
AIR   American Institutes for Research
CT   Pakistan Certificate of Teaching
EDC   Education Development Center
EFA-FTI   Education for All - Fast Track Initiative
EMIS   Education Management Information System
EQUIP1   Education Quality Improvement Program - Building Educational
             Quality in the Classroom, School, and Local Community
EQUIP2   Education Quality Improvement Program - Educational Policy,
             System, Management and Information
GCET   Government Colleges of Education
IIEP   UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
IRC   International Rescue Committee
LTTP   Liberia Teacher Training Program
M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation
MA   Master of Arts
MCID   Mississippi Consortium for International Development
MOE   Ministry of Education
MSU   Michigan State University
NGO   Non-governmental Organization
PhD   Doctor of Philosophy
Pre-STEP   Pakistan Pre-service Teacher Education Program
Projet AIDE Djibouti Assistance to Education Project
PTC   Pakistan, Primary Teaching Certificate
RFA   Request for Application
RTI   Research Triangle Institutes
SAVE   Save the Children
UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID   United States Agency for International Development
USG   United States Government

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the knowledge, skill, and commitment of educators (teachers and educational leaders/managers) is an essential element in efforts to improve education provision, quality, and relevance (Leu, 2005). Teacher professional development is an area of particular interest to countries looking to improve their education system outcomes, as well as international organizations and donors focused on supporting these kinds of reform. However, improving the capacity and commitment of educators is not a simple task.

Teacher professional development systems and policies are complex and extensive, serving and comprising a very large number of people over the course of their careers. For educators, professional development is a life-long process. Even before formally entering the teaching profession, educators experience a time in primary and secondary school as learners where they are observers of their own teachers. On leaving school, potential educators enter pre-service professional development programs (Muzaffar, 2011), followed by an initial period of school-based induction, and finally an in-service phase that extends until retirement (Leu & Ginsburg, 2011). Professional development therefore takes place in a system that includes all of the organizational providers of pre-service, induction, and in-service programs (e.g., universities/colleges, national/local school systems, teachers' unions, NGOs, private sector firms, and, at least temporarily, international organizations) as well all of the personnel that work within these organizations, e.g., school/district administrators (see LeCzel and Ginsburg 2011), local supervisors/inspectors, and pre-service/in-service teacher educators (see du Plessis and Muzaffar, 2010).

To ensure that all these programs and structures are linked, a professional development system also includes more or less formally articulated structures, mechanisms, and policies (Megahed and Ginsburg, 2008). These describe the regulations, standards, assessment procedures, and resources for the provision of pre-service, induction, and in-service programs and for the recruitment, retention, evaluation, and promotion of educators (Wilson, 2008). These system features are important because they control the frequency and quality of professional development activities as well as encourage/discourage individuals to become, remain, and grow professionally, and perform effectively as educators.

Developing the capacity and commitment of educators, therefore, involves more than just isolated or periodic professional development events or programs for teachers. It is important to conceptualize professional development reform in its entirety as a career-long process within systems and policies which enable educators (teachers, administrators, and supervisors) to acquire, broaden, deepen, and continuously update their knowledge, skill, and commitment in order to more effectively perform their work roles (Schwille and Dembélé, 2007). The size and scope of this system means that a country's effort to reform the professional development system and policies is complex, requiring the support of many stakeholders from all parts of the system, increased resources in the form of technical, material, time, and funds, as well as adaptable approaches for a wide variety of contexts. To enable this process of reform, developing countries often call upon international donors to support the development and implementation of approaches and to provide the various resources required. The precise nature of this support, the resources required, and how each advances country-led processes of teacher professional development reform is the topic of this paper.

The USAID-funded Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP1 and 2) has provided assistance to governments in various countries in the area of teacher professional development over the past seven years. In this paper, EQUIP projects in Djibouti, Liberia, and Pakistan were selected for review.

Brief Project Summaries

Djibouti Projet AIDE (2003-2009)[1] & Djibouti Education Program (2009-2013)
Funding Level: $11.9 million & $9.5 million
Implementers: AIR, FHI 360, SAVE
Program Objectives/ Components:
2003: a) develop teacher and principal development programs, and curriculum & instructional materials; b) mobilize community action around equity issues, girls' education, and non-formal education; and c) construct & rehabilitate school & latrine; and d) purchase school furniture
2007: a) support improved educational infrastructure, equipment and facilities management systems;
b) improve and develop professional development programs for educators, develop teaching policies, establish teacher resource centers; c) develop strategies and programs to provide learning opportunities for out-of-school

1   The 2003-2009 period consisted of a series of shorter, separate cooperative agreements or extensions: June 2003 - June 2006, July - Oct 2006, Nov 2006 - Feb 2007, March 2007 - Sept 2008, and Oct 2008 - Oct 2009.

girls and boys; and d) improve capacity for central and decentralized planning, budgeting, and collecting/using information

2008: a) support decentralized teacher training; b) improve education system planning, EMIS, community participation, and building maintenance; and c) increase opportunities for out-of-school girls/boys to gain education and job-training

2009: a) support decentralized teacher training, b) strengthen strategic information capacity, c) increase community participation, and d) enhance opportunities for out-of-school youth and disadvantaged girls

Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP I, 2006-2010 & LTTP II, 2010-2015)
Funding Level: $17.2 million & $60 million
Implementers: FHI 360, MCID, IRC, & RTI
Program Objectives/ Components:
2006: a) improve teacher education system and reform curricula; b) up-grade staff, reform curriculum, develop materials at university college of education & rural teacher training institutes; c) organize in-service teacher training and up-grading; d) strengthen school-level management and community support for education; and e) provide policy and program effectiveness research

2010: a) increase MOE capacity to plan, budget, deliver & measure educational quality; b) strengthen MOE capacity to plan/manage teacher training and professional development; c) increase Regional Teacher Training Institutes capacity to plan and deliver quality teacher training; and d) help align language and reading standards, curriculum, textbooks, instructional and learning materials, tests and formative continuous assessments with teacher training standards and training programs, especially for literacy

Pakistan Pre-Service Teacher Education Program (Pre-STEP, 2008-2013)
Funding Level: $57.9 million
Implementers: FHI 360, EDC, MSU
Program Objectives/ Components:
a) improve systems and policies that support teachers, teacher educators and education managers: standards, licensing, pay/grade scales, professional development, applied research
b) support university education faculties to develop/revise, evaluate and finalize elements of pre-service teacher education [4-year] bachelor's degrees, including infrastructure improvements, faculty MA/PhD degrees in US, & links with US universities
c) Support (national and provincial) MoE and government colleges of elementary teaching to develop/revise, evaluate and finalize elements of pre-service teacher education [2-year] associate degrees, including links with Pakistani universities
d) Develop a plan to implement new curriculum for new and existing teachers: scholarships for students and capacity building for faculty members

Although all three projects supported teacher professional development reform, the focus in each was on different aspects of the system. In Djibouti, Projet AIDE primarily supported the development of in-service teacher professional development programs at the school level, with some project

activities directed at improving pre-service provision at the institutes of higher education. In Pakistan, Pre-STEP assisted in the improvement of the pre-service professional development system and policies, particularly at tertiary institutions. In Liberia, LTTP 1 and 2 supported pre- and in-service teacher professional development system and policy reforms both at the school and the university levels. Although the focus of each project was different, this review explores the common features of each project that enabled or constrained the process of teacher professional development reform, presenting the findings as lessons learned. The purpose of these lessons is to provide guidance to donors and program implementers in the future design, implementation and evaluation of projects that support the reform of teacher professional system and policies.

Methodology used to carry out this review

This review used a qualitative approach to better understand the reasons that governed project decisions by investigating the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, and when. The main methods used in the study included reviewing documents and interviewing key informants. It is important to point out that this review is not an evaluation of each associate award, but rather an attempt to learn from the implementation process, the challenges faced by the projects, and the factors that limited and enabled project activities as seen by those involved over the project life-cycle. Site visits did not take place nor were all groups of relevant stakeholders interviewed. Furthermore, only key documents were reviewed (e.g., requests for proposals, proposals, annual work plans, annual reports, internal and external evaluation reports) rather than all documents generated by a given associate award.

INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

In coordination with colleagues involved in the other lessons learned associate awards reviews, an interview protocol was developed to guide in the eliciting of key informants' perspectives on the context, objectives, activities, and outcomes of each of the associate award projects.

TOPICS ADDRESSED IN INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. EQUIP2 project's objectives and development hypothesis (assumptions about how the achievement of the project's objectives related to professional development reform would lead to broader educational, economic, and political goals).
2. Key project activities related to the reform of professional development.
3. Whether the activities led to the outcomes (successes or achievement of objectives and goals).
4. Extent to which the project planned for and achieved sustainability of professional development reforms.

5. Adequacy of time frame for achieving project objectives related to professional development.
6. Adequacy of funding for achieving project objectives related to professional development.
7. Other challenges (related to funding agency, implementing organizations, host country institutions, and other factors) that were encountered in implementing professional development reforms.

INTERVIEWS CARRIED OUT USING THE PROTOCOL

The protocol was used to conduct interviews of approximately an hour and a half each. A few face-to-face interviews were arranged in Washington, DC, but most were done at a distance via telephone and, in one case, using written questions and answers (in French) via email. Those interviewed included home office and field-based staff of the implementing organization, with some individuals having previously been employees of the host country's Ministry of Education or other key educational institutions. A total of 13 individuals across the projects in the three countries were interviewed (see Table 1). The majority of the interviewees were implementing organization staff based in the home office or in the field. The timing of the activity (late 2010) made it difficult to interview any USAID staff involved in these projects, but every effort has been made to compensate for this gap by drawing extensively on relevant USAID Mission documents.

Table 1: Total number of people interviewed by country and affiliation

	Home Office Staff	Field-Based Staff	Field-Based & Host Country Institution Staff	USAID	Total
Djibouti	2	3	1	0	6
Liberia	1	2	0	0	3
Pakistan	1	1	2	0	4
Total	**4**	**6**	**3**	**0**	**13**

After all the document reviews and interviews were completed, the document excerpts and interview notes were analyzed to identify lessons learned for planning and implementing projects related to professional development. In the next section, the lessons learned are presented and examples from each of the associate awards serve to illustrate how these were derived.

Methodology

Lessons Learned from the EQUIP Associate Awards

The analysis of data collected over the course of this review reinforces an overarching message that the reform of professional development is a process that requires a comprehensive approach, an adequate time frame, sufficient human and financial resources, host government commitment, and buy-in of educators and other stakeholders. However, within each of these lessons is a need to also highlight the complexity of the situation in which professional development reform takes place. Each account therefore draws attention to some of the factors, both within and outside the project, that enable and/or constrain progress.

1. COMMIT TO A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

From the early stages of planning and implementation and through the project life-cycle, the projects included in this review all recognized the need to adopt an approach that prioritized not only efforts to build the capacity and infrastructure of specific parts of the professional development system, but also the related institutional structures, mechanisms, system, and policies. However, their efforts to implement this comprehensive approach were often limited by the financial and human resources available, host-country and donor pressures, as well as the overall timeframe of the project.
In Djibouti, Projet AIDE was initially designed to "support teachers through improving pre-service and in-service teacher education, strengthening pedagogical skills, including school heads/principals, and … establishing teacher resource centers" (AIR, 2003, pp. 4-5). Over time the project broadened its mission to give more attention to policy and system issues. The project organized activities to improve teaching policies, established an MOE unit responsible for in-service teacher education, improved the capacity of teacher educators to deliver in-service teacher education, improved skills of school directors to support school-based teacher education, and developed a national teacher training policy and a national teacher training plan (AED, 2009, 2010; AED and SAVE, 2007, USAID/East Africa, 2007). However,

due to a finite amount of resources (time, personnel, and funding), as this more comprehensive approach evolved, it brought with it the need to prioritize activities and make significant trade-offs. In the initial stages of Projet AIDE, and under pressure from the MOE, time and resources were allocated to technical activities such as developing professional development manuals and overseeing construction and rehabilitation work. The project's intended scope included developing professional development programs as well as working with the MOE on system and policies, and the institutional aspects of the system had to be postponed. Project staff saw this as a major gap in the project's initial implementation and only in later stages, when more resources were available and staff had time to focus on these areas, was it possible to adopt the intended comprehensive approach, which is now underway.

In contrast to Djibouti, the project in Liberia was, from the beginning, able to focus on improving various aspects and levels of the professional development system as well as increasing and enhancing capacity and materials. Following guidance from the RFA issued by the USAID/Mission, LTTP I supported the development of in-service teacher training programs; a competency-based framework for teachers at all levels and for all institutions; professional development programs for current and future teachers; institutional and staff capacity at the University of Liberia, Regional Teacher Training Institutes, and other in-service providers; public-private sector commitment to educators' professional development; and research to inform new policies and systems (AED and IRC, 2006, AED et al., 2007). This integration of policy/system activities with capacity and materials development continued with the onset of LTTP II, where the project's focus expanded to include additional policy/system elements as well as increased teacher training activities.

In the RFA for Pre-STEP, USAID/Pakistan (2008, p. 4) sketched the comprehensive intent for the project's focus on professional development: "The goal … is to improve the quality of basic education through improved teaching. This will be achieved through the institutionalization of pre-service teacher education reforms ..." Policy/system level as well as institutional and individual capacity were part of Pre-STEP's mission, and included developing a workable and functioning framework for nationwide teacher professional development; improving the capacity of Higher Institutes of Teacher Education to develop and revise pre-service teacher education qualifications; strengthening linkages between the government colleges of elementary teaching and schools; developing standards for pre-service teacher education and the revising of the curricula; and establishing scholarship programs to upgrade the qualifications of teacher educators (AED et al., 2008). While

interviewees noted that such a comprehensive reform initiative presented enormous challenges, they also indicated that it was important that the program was not limited to capacity building and materials development. Interviewees noted that attention needed to be paid to changing the institutional/system structures for the new TPD approach to be sustained in the long term. In one example, where new programs with more demanding requirements were developed, the project recognized that a complementary effort to revise the pay and grade scales of those completing the course would ensure that institutions would be better able to attract students. Similar approaches were used throughout the project, where system and policy reforms helped to create the framework and incentives for the more successful implementation of professional development programs by ensuring work was done at both a technical and institutional level.

The conceptualization of professional development systems and policies presented earlier in this paper drew attention to the life-long nature of professional development (observation, pre-service, induction, and in-service), the numerous organizational providers for each stage, the structures and mechanisms that enable the system to function, and the policies that provide the guidelines and incentives for how it operates. In any reform of the system, it is unlikely that all these various system parts can be addressed at a given time. Nevertheless, it is important that a reform of any part of the system, either as part of national initiative or as the focus of a project, develops an approach that views the system in its entirety.

Reforms to one part of the professional development system should be viewed in relation to the larger system and policies, as well as the overall education system, and national context. Each of the country examples points to a need to address policy and system issues as well as capacity building and materials development so that all activities are mutually reinforcing and enhance sustainability. However, a comprehensive approach that includes such diversity of activity introduces a greater degree of complexity to implementation of the reform. Planning activities to best sequence and coordinate activities is essential to ensure that scarce resources (time, staff, and financial) are most effectively used.

2. BUILD SUPPORT AND ELICIT HOST GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

With each of the examples in this review, and for their own particular reasons, host government commitment and capacity (personnel, infra-structure and/or financial) were over-estimated at the start of the projects. As

a result, projects needed to devote considerable time and effort to initiating project activities so as to engender support and commitment for the planned reforms. In each case construction and rehabilitation programs provided a significant, highly visible way to jump-start the project, building credibility and support for the full range of professional development program activities planned. However, these programs were costly and time-consuming, and to some extent detracted from the less visible, but more desirable, activities needed for sustainable reform. The tradeoffs thus need to be considered, and an approach employed needs to balance costs and benefits of engaging in construction and rehabilitation as part of reform projects verses other types of technical activities.

As is the case for most international education development activities around the world, whether funded by bilateral or multilateral organizations, USAID's activities in Djibouti were linked to political, economic, and cultural goals. Although some goals highlighted changes or improvements for Djibouti society, others were more closely tied to what might be considered U.S. interests. USAID funding to support programs in Djibouti was strongly led by a desire to enhance the stability and democratic society of a nation that was both a strategic ally in the region and a security partner (USAID/East Africa, 2008; USAID/East Africa, 2007, 2009). Thus, Projet AIDE and its efforts to promote professional development for educators in Djibouti were enabled by these geopolitical rationales. These same rationales may have also influenced the US government's decision to launch the project before it had established a Mission in the country and before there was time to develop in-depth knowledge of and working relations with the Ministry of Education (MOE).

This situation in turn led, in part, to initially different expectations at the beginning of the program in 2003 between the MOE and the project team. Under pressure from government officials to devote additional resources to school construction and rehabilitation, the project shifted its focus to building and rehabilitating school buildings, latrines, and furniture as well as teacher resource centers (AIR, 2003). On the one hand, this focus led to high visibility of the project and strengthened project relations with MOE and other stakeholders. On the other hand, the use of resources for construction projects deflected efforts away from the programmed tasks of supporting professional development activities and policy development.

In Liberia, USAID's decision to initiate the LTTP I was informed by the post-conflict situation. This meant that professional development activities were framed in terms of establishing peace, enabling economic development and foreign investment, and enhancing the perception of the

legitimacy of the Liberian government. According to the RFA, Liberia's education system and its teachers needed to be developed "to impact cultural norms and values through pedagogy and curriculum that pave the way for conflict resolution and resiliency, and the foundations for a more stable and economically viable Liberia" (USAID/Liberia, 2006, p. 3). The Mission also highlighted the importance of the project in strengthening "the legitimacy of the government in a state emerging from conflict" by working "with the Ministry, supporting it and having it front and center as activities are developed to achieve objectives" (USAID/Liberia, 2006, p. 5). This post-conflict context meant that project staff needed to work in collaboration with the new Liberian government in ways that gave it legitimacy, despite the fact that the institutional and individual capacity of the government and the educational system made it less than an equal partner in the reform efforts. Moreover, the situation was further complicated because of Liberia's limited financial resources, a problem that was exacerbated by the 2008-2009 global economic crisis. Due to MOE funding shortfalls, USAID had to accept financial responsibility for some of the programming costs that the Liberian government had previously agreed to shoulder.

These driving political and economic forces meant that in the initial stages of the project there was increased host-country pressure to allocate project funds on developing basic physical infrastructure rather than only the professional development activities, and policy/system improvements originally planned. As a result, the project devoted human and financial resources to reconstruction and rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, mainly of the rural teacher training institutes (RTTIs). Although policy and professional development activities did take place during LTTP I, such efforts were constrained because of the infrastructure focus. At the same time, such renovation work provided visible evidence of USAID/Liberia's and LTTP I's commitment, and encouraged those involved in the RTTIs (and the Ministry) to engage in reestablishing and improving other aspects of the system.

USAID activity in Pakistan must be understood as part of the broader political, military, and economic relations between Pakistan and the United States. In part, Pakistan-US relations revolves around the global "war on terror," particularly in terms of threats by radical Islamists in Pakistan and US requests for Pakistani military intervention along Afghan-Pakistan border. As interviewees observed, these relations created the incentives for USAID/Pakistan to support a large teacher education reform program and an USAID/Pakistan's RFA (2008, p. 4) states that "Pakistan's ability to progress towards sustained economic development and long term social stability rests upon the quality of its education sector." It was believed that a large-scale

project in the field of education would serve to create a more positive image of the US government with a population that was generally not in favor of the US military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

This complex and dynamic relationship between the USAID and Pakistan government presented challenges for the implementation of Pre-STEP. Not only did security restrictions on staff and consultant travel to certain areas within the country mean that contact with staff at some universities and many government colleges of elementary teaching was limited, but also funding flows and mechanisms were highly dependent on fragile relations between the two countries. From the beginning of the Pre-STEP Program it was recognized that rehabilitation and/or construction work in the institutes of higher education could be used as a way to demonstrate the project's credibility and better enable effective implementation of technical interventions. The project identified the upgrading of physical facilities in up to 15 universities as one of the key results under the activity of modernizing higher institutes of teacher education. Interviewees indicated that the promise of rehabilitation and improvement of physical facilities was one of the major factors that encouraged university administrators and faculty members to welcome participation in Pre-STEP. However, for a variety of reasons, although needs assessments were conducted at 15 universities, rehabilitation work had been completed at only four institutions by April 2011. Interviewees noted that the delays in initiating such visible improvement activities weakened the project's and USAID/Pakistan's credibility with stakeholders at various levels of the system.

For all decision makers and stakeholders (including the donor) within different political, economic, and cultural contexts, there are varied needs and rationales for supporting or opposing any major reform effort. To enable change to occur, therefore, it is important to try and understand the needs and rationale of the people and organizations involved and, where possible, to understand how these rationales can be leveraged to build support for the reform. Leveraging resources to build credibility through highly visible activities, like construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure, is one way to engender support for a project and encourage engagement in, perhaps, less high profile activities. At the same time it should be noted that improving the quality of facilities in teacher education institutions and even in schools can be seen as a contribution to enhancing the professional development system; the former provides a more attractive and better site for pre-service and in-service teacher education, while the latter is likely to encourage individuals to remain in the profession and devote time and energy to their work. However, as noted above, there are other parts of the professional development system

– such as the curriculum, or in-service pedagogical support activities - that also require reform efforts.

3. ENGAGE WITH A WIDE ARRAY OF STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to garnering the commitment and support of more high-level host country partners, each project recognized that wide engagement of stakeholders across and within the professional development system was essential to project success. Failure to involve the people who were both affected by the reforms as well as instrumental in implementing them had significant effects on the project's ability to institutionalize any changes. Each project saw the need to ensure that stakeholders participated in the development and implementation of activities to ensure that reforms were adapted for the particular contexts of different regions, districts, and institutions, and were involved in building consensus around each reform.

Prior to project start up in 2003, the absence of a USAID mission or previous education program in Djibouti meant that "at the outset, the goals, objectives and expected results of the project were not presented to the Ministry and … were not harmonized with those of the Ministry's strategic plan …" (AIR, May 2007, p. 12). Moreover, the resulting lack of initial in-country knowledge and experience meant that the project struggled to identify the full range of stakeholders and their diverse needs until significant project time had elapsed. As a result, many activities early on in the project failed to engage a wide enough spectrum of people, particularly across regions. In regions where inspectors/advisors tended to be fairly independent and to guard their autonomy, centrally developed policies and programs were not always welcomed, let alone implemented, in all regions. One interviewee indicated that the project should have taken regional diversity more into consideration when developing the curriculum and instructional materials for in-service programs for teachers, and the lack of piloting in different regions was identified as a key obstacle to scaling-up programs. A second example highlighted the challenge posed in re-establishing and supporting teacher resource centers when project activities failed to engage a wide range of stakeholders around proposed improvements to the in-service program.

The project's initial focus on developing the capacity and commitment of only the staff of teacher resource centers failed to fully appreciate the role that personnel outside the resources centers played in providing in-service programs. By not systematically involving regional inspectors and advisers, the project missed a chance to engage the personnel who were seen subsequently as being in a position to contribute to teacher professional

development on a more frequent basis during and after the project's operation. Furthermore, limited direct engagement with teachers and school directors caused additional problems, in that: a) the project did not anticipate or recognize early on that teachers would resist attending workshops during vacation periods and b) it was difficult to verify the quality and impact of the professional development activities they experienced.

By contrast, the LTTP initiative in Liberia not only focused on a broad range of professional development system elements, it also was conceptualized to involve a wide range of stakeholders at various levels of the system. In one example, substantial time and energy were devoted to developing standards for teachers and for teacher education programs as critical steps in re-establishing and reforming pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. One interviewee reported that the LTTP I project team worked to "build the base of new [PD] system" and "not just patch together what existed." And according to the team conducting the Mid-Term Assessment, one of the major accomplishments of LTTP I was the development of "general principles of teacher competency known as Professional Standards for the Liberian Teacher [which were] established and finalized through a national consensus-building initiative." In its final report for LTTP I, the EQUIP2 team reported that the "new professional standards for teachers, developed through a national consensus process, served as a basis for teacher education program development as well as national policy revision and development."

EQUIP2's final report for LTTP I explained that involvement was not limited to educators and other ministry personnel: "The national teacher standards development efforts proved that students could be active contributors to the process along with educators" (AED, 2010, p. 63). However, limitations in capacity and experience of Liberian counterparts did present some challenges to the project's commitment to involving a variety of system personnel in program activities. At the same time the broad base of participation in various policy and program development activities seemed to increase stakeholder buy-in and may have limited resistance to the proposed reforms.

In Pakistan, Pre-STEP also took a very participatory approach to its work. The consistent operating principle of Pre-STEP was to maximize local participation in project design and implementation (AED, 2011). This meant that Pre-STEP staff worked with stakeholders at the national, provincial, and institutional levels. Interviewees and the transition report (AED, 2011) highlighted that at the national level, the project established advisory and steering committees, including representatives from the Higher Education

Commission, the Ministry of Education, and other stakeholders who served as working group for reviewing and recommending policies. Similar groups were established in each province/area of Pakistan where Pre-STEP also established provincial offices (AED, 2011). Through these offices, the project team increasingly sought to work through provincial education offices to plan and conduct capacity building and other activities focused on the government colleges of elementary teaching. In addition, Pre-STEP worked with 15 universities and an initial cohort of 14 regional institutes of teacher education (i.e., government colleges of elementary teaching].

However, despite the engagement of stakeholders in each project area, diversity across different provinces proved challenging for scaling up of activities. Before Pre-STEP, each province had great differences in policies, for example, regarding pre-service programs and requirements for hiring primary school teachers. Pre-STEP set out to develop a program that took into account the substantial amount of work that had already been done in developing draft provincial policy frameworks, teaching standards, professional development plans, and curriculum objectives (AED et al., 2008). This meant working at different speeds and with different approaches in the different provinces/areas and by, where possible, allowing variation to be negotiated at the provincial level as well as centrally.

Engaging with individuals and organizations at various levels of the system is a necessity and a challenge in initiatives to reform teacher professional development. These three projects point to the importance of mapping and finding ways to involve various groups as early as possible. In most aspects of the system (e.g., developing standards, evaluating teacher performance), institutionalization and sustainability is enhanced by building a consensus with a wide range of parties (e.g., unions, MOE, universities, head teachers). However, in scaling up, the diverse contexts and practices in different regions or districts will require an approach that seeks to engage gatekeepers and decision makers across the country to ensure these centrally developed systems, policies and structures are equally acceptable, applicable, and implementable – perhaps in adapted forms – in all regions.

4. ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The case studies highlighted the project length and timeframe as a key constraint, not just in terms of implementation, but also with regard to ensuring that the capacity within the host country was sufficiently developed to sustain activities and processes once the project had ended.

In Djibouti, the April 2009 evaluation of USAID's Djibouti education program pointed out that "the ability of Projet AIDE to promote sustained institutional change and system reform in the areas of teacher education … has been limited by the short-term nature of USAID assistance over the past three years" (AED, 2009, p. 2). Interviewees shared this view, explaining that the June 2003 through June 2006 period was not sufficient to accomplish the project's objectives, especially if one devoted time to building mutual trust and good working relationships with various stakeholders. Interviewees also noted the limited time available for trying to change institutional culture and individual behavior (e.g., rigid centralized methods of planning and implementing teacher professional development) in order to enhance the sustainability of reforms. Moreover, although the EQUIP1 cooperative agreement was extended, this involved two short-term periods: four months until October 2006 plus four additional months until February 2007. Subsequently, an EQUIP2 team negotiated a seven-month cooperative agreement, initially for the period of March 2007 through September 2008 followed by a thirteen-month agreement for work from October 2008 through October 2009. The four-year cooperative agreement (November 2009 through September 2013), which was a response to the concerns raised in the 2009 evaluation, was appreciated by interviewees, but they stressed – and were stressed by – the challenge of the series of short-term extensions. They noted that this limited what could be accomplished, since staff were winding down, starting up, and winding down, thus restricting their horizons for planning, reducing their goal-related activities, deflating their morale, and undermining their credibility with MOE staff and other stakeholders.

In Liberia, project staff identified an on-going tension between building individual and institutional capacity (and thus increasing the probability of sustainability) and getting things done, such as developing standards, drafting policies, designing program curricula, and enhancing personnel systems. In its final report for LTTP I, EQUIP2 states that "the MOE is still at its early development stages and change has been slower than expected. Any implemented sub-sector program should incorporate a broader MOE capacity-building component into its program (and an associated budget) and work in coordination with donor and implementing partners support to MOE rebuilding of its institutional and management structures" (AED, 2010, p. 62). Interviewees expressed that this was an issue of whether the project had been designed with sufficient time. For instance, they mentioned that after conducting the "Assessment" beginning in late 2006 and then developing and getting agreement on a work plan in the first half of 2007, there were really only 2 school years remaining, given that the initial project end date was October 2009. And, the plan developed in 2007 could not

anticipate the additional five months eventually provided by an extension (through March 2010) which was subsequently granted. In contrast, given the groundwork laid by LTTP I and the objectives identified for LTTP II, the five-year time frame built into LTTP II was deemed adequate by one interviewee at an early stage of the new project.

Interviewees involved in implementing Pre-STEP in Pakistan perceived the 5-year time-frame as insufficient, given the scope of the project. They mentioned the large number of institutions with which they were to work, the low levels of institutional and individual capacity of most of these institutions, the comprehensive focus of the project (including capacity building, program/curriculum development, and policy reform), the multiple levels of the system with which they were engaged and at which they needed to gain stakeholder buy-in, the delays in obtaining home office and USAID approval for or changing decisions about moving forward with certain aspects of the programs (e.g., rehabilitation, scholarships), and the security and other challenges of day-to-day work in Pakistan. No interviewee cared to speculate on how much additional time would be required, but one estimated that it was likely that only "60% of the objectives could be achieved" within the originally defined 5-year period.

Other EQUIP2 research has emphasized the "power of persistence" when seeking to reform education (Gillies, 2010). The point is that reform is a long-term activity, and trying to rush the process or deciding that efforts have been un/successful in the short term can be counterproductive. This is also a lesson that can be learned from the case studies of professional development presented here. Pursuing actions that in the shorter term improve the effectiveness of teachers, managers, and supervisors and enhance the quality of education must be balanced with ensuring adequate time to institutionalize a comprehensive professional development system.

5. ENSURE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES

The previous lessons learned point to a need for a comprehensive approach to reforming professional development, a need to leverage support for the reform through high visibility initiatives (e.g., infrastructure improvements), as well as a process of reform that engages a wide array of stakeholders. Each of these lessons has implications for the amount of human and financial resources required. But, as with any education reform effort, budgeting for a program of professional development reform is no simple task. One of the major challenges is figuring out how to balance the need for external project financial and human resources to support change efforts with the desire not

to create a dependency relationship or implement something that is not sustainable beyond the life of the project.

Project AIDE in Djibouti struggled throughout the project to establish a balance of external funding to move the reform forward, with ensuring that country capacity (both funding and staffing) could sustain the reform long term. All interviewees who had been involved in Project AIDE in Djibouti agreed that the funding ($11.9 million for 2003-2009 and $9.5 million for 2009-2013) was not sufficient to achieve the project's objectives, particularly during 2003-2009 when the funds were being used to cover construction costs that far exceeded the amounts budgeted, and to finance a continual expansion of project responsibilities. Nevertheless, even though the project was perceived to have "limited" resources, interviewees expressed concern about whether the Government of Djibouti would be able to marshal its own funds to sustain the project's achievements. Likewise ensuring the human resources necessary for the planned reform were sufficient and balancing the desire to use and build local expertise with the need to bring in international technical experts proved challenging. Interviewees expressed a preference for more long-term project staff as well as more short-term technical assistance consultants, in part because local capacity and work ethic were perceived as very low. However, because of limited financial resources, in practice the project had to draw on local ministry and college staff to plan and implement the professional development programs for school personnel. This ultimately contributed to institutional and individual capacity building and increased the likelihood that such activities could be continued (i.e., sustained) without the presence of the project, but may have slowed down the implementation of the activities.

The documents and interviews analyzed for the Liberian case devoted more attention to the human resource dimension. Echoing comments made by other interviewees, one individual described the state of the MOE's capacity as very low, opined that there were not enough faculty members at the University of Liberia, and suggested that those present had had no recent training. The interviewee further indicated that there was even less individual and system capacity in the Regional Teacher Training Institutes. Moreover, an Institutional Change Study conducted by LTTP identified low staff technical capacity and insufficient infrastructure as an obstacle to institutional change (AED, 2010). Thus, during LTTP I field-based staff and international short-term consultants played a prominent role in planning and implementing activities. Although international consultants were recruited, LTTP I made sure that they worked in concert with ministry, university, and RTTI personnel, and that some specific activities were devoted to building capacity of Liberians working in focal institutions. Continuing capacity

gaps within Liberia, exacerbated by high MOE senior level staff turnover (AED, 2010), meant that LTTP II had to continue using this approach. "The strategy for effectively positioning the project as an extension and support to the Ministry will be to establish a working presence and office in the Ministry and regional offices to the extent possible … for at least the senior technical advisors … from other countries. However, all foreign technical advisors will have Liberian colleagues and counterparts who will take over the professional responsibilities as the foreign advisors are phased out of the project" (AED and RTI, 2010, p. 7). According to one interviewee, this also reflected LTTP II's greater focus on capacity building in the Ministry, even though this might slow the pace of achieving deliverables.

While local staff capacity was one challenge that the project tried to address, financing proved to be a second. During both LTTP I and LTTP II in Liberia, USAID and project staff faced the dilemma of supplying needed resources versus pursuing an approach that was sustainable. The post-conflict situation created real limitations in Liberia's financial and human resources, while at the same time the circumstances were seen as temporary, and thus a future was imagined when the country would be able to assume greater, if not full, responsibility for continuing improvements in the professional development system and in the provision of quality of education. The government's limited financial resources remained an issue at least into 2010, in part because of the global financial crisis. EQUIP2's final report for LTTP I noted that "budget shortfall crisis within the government meant the Ministry had to retract on commitments originally made that would have led to more MOE-operated, sustainable teacher education systems [and] the logjam on payroll issues slowed rapid movement of trained teachers, trainers and staff onto payroll and this served as a deterrent to in-service teacher trainees and prospective trainees" (AED, 2010, p. 62).

In Pakistan, staff involved in implementing Pre-STEP also faced the dilemma of, on the one hand, having and needing to deploy external/foreign financial and human resources in support of the project and, on the other hand, of wondering whether the reforms could be sustained beyond the project. The level of funding was substantial (initially budgeted at $75 million over 5 years) and in part this munificence was required to encourage the Pakistani government to partner with the US in military and security matters. The negative reaction of Pakistani officials as well as educators concerning the delay in implementing infrastructure rehabilitation and the halt in sending faculty for graduate programs – characterized as "the largest and most critical contribution that Pre-STEP can make to the modernization of higher institutes of teacher education in Pakistan" (AED, 2011, p. 12) – reinforces the symbolic, but also material, importance of the external financial

resources. Interviewees noted that they believed the project was underfunded, given its scope, and also pointed to the government's seeming inability (because of growing debt repayments and military budget commitments) to fund the promised pay increases for teachers with the new degrees. However, interviewees also pointed to a problem of sustainability because, based on how other projects had been implemented, government employees had come to expect extra payments for conducting workshops and other professional development activities for school and college personnel – something that could be seen as part of their job responsibilities.

Moreover, interviewees noted that provincial education offices not only were understaffed but many of the staff were perceived to have limited qualifications and capacity. Thus, the project relied on international staff and consultants as key contributors to planning and conducting professional development for the institutions that were developing the new pre-service teacher education programs. Although interviewees said the expectations for capacity building in a given time period required using more outside experts, they also expressed the belief that, despite limitations, the best way to proceed was to collaborate with and help position personnel within the system to continue the work beyond the life of the project.

In each of the projects, additional resources (human and financial) were needed to move the reforms forward. Host governments of relatively poor nations, particularly those coming out of conflict, have limited financial resources, and staff that are often under-qualified or insufficiently skilled to implement the planned reform efforts. In this resource deficient environment, projects have to balance the pressing need to achieve project objectives with the development objective of transitioning to a sustainable, country-led reform. This requires careful sequencing of project activities, the integration of capacity building into all activities, and realistic expectations for when host country governments can take on the responsibilities of implementation and funding. For instance, projects need to include from the beginning activities that help governments establish (financial and human) resource independence for the reforms.

Conclusions

Enhancing the commitment and capacity of educators is an essential element in efforts to improve the quality, relevance, and provision of education. All countries require a professional development system that provides opportunities for teachers and school administrators to increase their knowledge, skills, and commitment throughout their careers. Developing the capacity of educators, however, involves more than just the provision of learning opportunities. These capacity building programs must be linked and integrated by structures, mechanisms, and policies that regulate the frequency and standard of professional development programs as well as provide the incentives to join, remain, and grow in the profession. The development and reform of such systems is an enormous task that requires the support of many stakeholders from all parts of the system and substantial resources in the form of technical assistance, materials, time, and funding. For this reason, many developing countries require external resources to initiate and implement these reforms. For international donors, therefore, understanding the most effective ways of providing program support and allocating resources in support of sustainable teacher professional development reform is both of interest and importance.

Based on project staff experience and an analysis of project documents, this review of USAID-funded projects in Djibouti, Liberia, and Pakistan highlights some of the challenges that donor support faced and points to a number of lessons learned pertaining to the design, implementation, and evaluation of this kind of project support. In summary, because teacher professional development systems are large and complex, reforms were best served by an approach that included a range of carefully scheduled activities that simultaneously addressed issues of capacity building, infrastructure, and system and policy issues. This comprehensive approach relied on the commitment and buy-in of not only higher level government officials, but also a wide range of individuals and institutions across the system. When the project design included implementing centrally developed reforms nation-wide, project design needed to pay particular attention to engaging with and building the capacity of counterparts at all levels of the system and from all regions and districts. Moreover, sufficient time and resources were required to implement project activities across the various levels of the system, address the many various components of the reform, and engage with and build the

capacity of the diverse stakeholders. Although not specifically discussed in the interviews, the above lessons point to a need for using, not only outcome measures, but also process indicators to effectively measure change and the institutionalization of processes and policies.

While this review draws out some of the key lessons learned from these three projects, it is by no means a complete review of either these projects or the range of project support for teacher professional development. In addition, although these lessons give some guidance for the future design and implementation of future donor support for teacher professional development reform, it should be stressed that for each country context, the rationales for reform and the feasibility of supporting these reforms will be different and impact on the suitability of any project design. However, it is hoped that this associate award review offers useful insights into this areas of project support and provides the reader with some guidance on the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective teacher professional development reform projects.

Conclusions

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