Creating Knowledge (Mvele-dzandivho) – a task without finish: Final evaluation report
(25 & 26 Nov. 2008, Closing-out Conference)

CH Prinsloo, G Ntabanyane, T Netshitangani (with C Pereira)
Objectives and design

• Objectives (summative evaluation of)
  • Extent to which project achieved its objectives
  • Functionality and effectiveness of participating schools
  • Extent of achievement of pre-set targets

• Design
  • Indicators-driven (monitoring component)
  • Trends over time (Baseline, Mid-term and Summative)
Methodology (1)

- **Sample and respondents**
  - 27 schools (28 in 2006); 16 with secondary & 15 with primary grades
  - Across 6 provinces
  - Grades 4, 7 & 10
  - District, school management, governing bodies, teachers, learners / Representative Councils of Learners (or RCLs)
Methodology (2)

• Instruments
  • Interviews, document reviews, observations, questionnaires
  • Performance testing
  • Literacy / Language and Numeracy / Mathematics
Methodology (3)

- Procedures
  - Around middle May
  - Visit of one to two days per school
  - Trained teams of experts
Key deliverables

- **Presentations (3):** JET, BHP Billiton, and this closing-out conference
- **Executive/summary version of report**
- **Technical report**
- **School profiles (against indicators):**
  - Management and Governance
  - Teacher Development and Support
- **Datasets**
- **Any other options (? - www, media)**
Findings and discussion
Management and governance indicators
## Management and governance indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School management (53)</th>
<th>School governance (20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>Capacity of SGB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum policy</td>
<td>Practices and implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>RCL capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion of LOLT</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management of LSMs</td>
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<td>10</td>
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### School management trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Upward</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Downward</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum policy</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of SGB</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices and implementation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL capacity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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Teacher development and support indicators
### Teacher development and support indicators (65)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved time management</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum planning and implementation</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment strategies</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting reading and writing with insight</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion of use of learning support materials (LSMs)</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Teacher development/support trends

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<td>Time management</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
Overview of impact: Management, governance and teacher development

• Majority of indicators shows a positive / upward trend:
  • Management structures
  • Curriculum policy
  • Time management
  • SGB existence
  • Teaching time and teacher knowledge
  • Curriculum planning and implementation
  • Assessment practices
  • Promotion of reading and writing
  • Promotion of appropriate LSM use
Overview of impact – cont.

- But some indicators show a **negative** / **downward** trend:
  - Monitoring of curriculum policy implementation
  - Time-tableing detail
  - LOLT work volumes set
  - LSM inventories and orders
  - SGB meetings and minutes
  - Key financial policies and records
  - RCL operations and participation
  - Some assessment frequencies and control
Target achievement

- School management: 10 of 53
- School governance: 1 of 20
- Teacher development / support: 10 of 65

**Note:** When targets were set, jointly with service providers, high expectations of (approaching) 100% of the schools were posed. Was this (un)realistic?
Learner performance
Overall scores: Numeracy / Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning area and grade</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 Numeracy</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 7 Mathematics</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10 Mathematics</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade 7
Overall numeracy performance by skill

Mean %

Baseline  Interim  Impact
Grade 10 Overall mathematics performance by skill

- Mathematical concepts
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Total

Baseline
Interim
Impact
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<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 Literacy</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7 Language</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10 Language</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade 10
Overall reading and writing performance

Baseline
Interim
Impact

Writing to provide information
Creative Texts
Literal
Inferential
Total

Social science that makes a difference
Overview of impact: Learner performance

- **Grade 4**
  - **Numeracy**: Main improvement in counting and ordering but others remain +/- at baseline levels
  - **Literacy**: Only improved in paragraph comprehension
- **Grade 7**
  - **Mathematics**: Improvement across the board except in computations
  - **Language**: Good improvement across the board
- **Grade 10**
  - **Mathematics**: Better on mathematical concepts than on algebra or geometry – knowledge production type questions better than comprehension or application
  - **Language**: Notable improvement in creative writing and inferential comprehension
Early Childhood Development (1)

- Empirical evidence (on indicators) showed substantive gains over time (since 2006) pertaining to:
  - Fewer learners per classroom (down to 35 from 46)
  - More detailed and better time allocation in time tables
  - Increased participation in rest of Foundation Phase with a view to planning
  - Feedback and quality assurance by HoDs much more in evidence lately
Empirical evidence (on indicators) showed substantive gains over time (since 2006) pertaining to (continued):

- Range of teaching skills and methods used by teachers increased
- Increased attendance of training / support events by teachers
- Higher satisfaction levels regarding training quality

Various respondents pointed out that high staff turnover jeopardised capacity development and continuity
Youth and Social Development (1)

Positives:

- A number of sporting codes continued to benefit well (soccer, netball, cricket, volleyball and table tennis)
- Cultural and other activities such as chess, drama, debating, traditional dancing and indigenous games increased well
- Inter-school competitions / collaboration increased
- HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns kept expanding
- Increased integration of life-skills activities into the curriculum occurred
Positives (continued):

- Increased assistance was received from the side of the district (supporting the establishment of RCLs)

Negatives:

- The lack of facilities remains dire
- Fewer RCLs (high schools only) than before received annual training for their roles and responsibilities
- RCLs have been consulted decreasingly about introduction of new youth activities
Project coordination

- Not a direct focus of the evaluation
- Service provider perspectives were positive:
  - Clarity about their brief and contractual obligations
  - Open communication with project management team, Department, school management and teachers
  - Establishment of area working groups was conducive to good working relationships between different parties
“Final word” on Mveledzandivho (1)

- Much improvement in many of the indicators for governance & management and teacher development & support
- Will not necessarily have a direct and immediate impact on learner performance; improved management and teaching practices are noteworthy, though, BUT one needs to guard against unrealistic expectations (teacher backlogs, learner knowledge gaps, language policy implementation challenges)
“Final word” on Mveledzandivho (2)

• In summary: project achievements are commendable

• Critical questions raised:
  • Should it not have been imbedded into a holistic poverty alleviation and community development approach?
  • Should schools be allowed to choose to participate?
  • Should clustering of schools and delivery areas be pursued for more sustainable support?
What gains should be taken forward? (--and how?) (1)

- Continuity of participants at all levels is an important condition for sustainability
- A tie-over period, with structured arrangements, monitoring and deliverables, is advocated (i.e., a focused sustainability action plan)
- This has to include wider implementation of many only recently developed policies, strategies and plans
What gains should be taken forward? (and how?) (2)

• Shortened “bureaucratic” lines and channels would help
• There are many remaining needs at schools (expanding training to more staff and schools, ongoing support, monitoring, various resources – but infrastructure alone would not be enough)
• Wide debate and dissemination of the findings
There is good and recent research material out there concretising many aspects of school reform:

- Prof Jonathan Jansen – teacher quality, textbooks and time on task (the 3 “T”s)
- JET / Dr Nick Taylor – appropriate conceptual / cognitive feedback to learners on how they perform
Perspectives from literature / theory

- McKinsey report (2007) – (i) getting the right people to become teachers, (ii) developing them into effective instructors, (iii) ensuring that the system delivers the best possible instruction to every child

- Related recent HSRC studies – (i) increasing expectations / raising the bar regarding the volume of reading and writing (and in terms of the cognitive demands posed in general), and (ii) the non-negotiable requirement that learners master Foundation Phase (Gr R to 3) learning contents on a year-by-year basis