

Conclusions

Compared to other socio-economic sectors, and more than ever, education involves more complex and multidimensional problems. Governments are not able to meet the broad social demands without adopting restrictive measures within the education. In the dynamics of educational management of student flows, as well as that of public finance, they have to make difficult decisions to regulate the utilisation of resources, without in any way leading to serious disruptions and dysfunctions.

Faced with economic and financial difficulties, the ministries of education are under pressure from financial services (be they national or international) to prove that the resources they were provided are being used effectively. These pressures have contributed to the introduction of new approaches to accountability-based programming and management. The bilateral and multilateral agencies are increasingly requiring programming of development actions to be more results-based.

In aid-dependent countries, often in the face of the mitigated results of external support, development partners are going through sector-wide approaches in support of governments' priorities and procedures. The guiding principles and commitments, as encapsulated in the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*, include the following:

- f* Recipient countries to exercise effective leadership over their development policies, strategies, and to coordinate development actions;
- f* Donor countries to align their support with recipient countries' national development strategies, institutions, and procedures;
- f* Donor countries to ensure that their actions are more harmonized, transparent, and collectively effective;
- f* All countries to manage resources for results;
- f* Donor and developing countries to be mutually accountable for development results.

This overall context changes the way countries and agencies work in the preparation and implementation of development plans and programmes in the education sector. These plans should give the assurances that the educational policy will be achieved.

In sum, planning has become more complex, especially in developing countries, involving much diversified and specialized skills and competences. Education managers are required to acquire not only the necessary technical capacities, but also the political negotiation and communication skills to effectively engage with finance ministries, external partners, and civil society organizations. The work ahead of education planners and managers has been, and is going to be more demanding and challenging. Mastering the concepts and methods of strategic planning is an enabling, though not sufficient, factor in order to cope with the educational demands and challenges faced by education planners and managers.

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