
[Effective plan preparation](#)

BRIEF 1

[Educational planning methodology](#)

At the close of the Education for All period in 2015, the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) Results for Learning Report 2014/15 indicated that only roughly half of GPE developing country partners' sector plans were based on a rigorous analysis of the past situation, while a quarter failed to include a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework (GPE, 2015).

Moreover, many countries' education sector plans (ESP) did not systematically identify key obstacles to *learning* in their education system, or target them to improve education quality and learning outcomes, focusing primarily on expanding access. Yet learning is key to achieving national aspirations, as well as those of communities and learners themselves.

ESPs are the single most significant framework documents to improve an education system's access, quality, equity, efficiency and management. Collaborative efforts contribute to their elaboration, improving the insight provided by sector analysis, the relevance of strategies and programmes planned in response, and the effectiveness of their implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

The [IIEP and GPE Guidelines for education sector plan preparation](#) (GPE and IIEP-UNESCO, 2015) recommend that every education sector plan be:

- guided by an overall vision, offering quality education to all;
- strategic, identifying specific priorities to achieve the vision;
- holistic, recognizing the need for coherence among sectors;
- evidence-based, shaping strategies and programmes according to data and analysis;
- achievable, considering financial, technical, and political constraints;
- context-sensitive, reflecting a country's realities and vulnerabilities;
- attentive to disparities, addressing different groups' specific needs and characteristics;
- coherent, ensuring a logical and consistent flow in its content.

Furthermore, the process of ESP elaboration, to meet current standards of good practice, should be:

- country-led, to ensure the greatest possible success through national ownership;
- participatory, to build consensus among all stakeholders through policy dialogue;
- well-organized, with clear leadership and coordination structures;
- focused on capacity-building, to develop knowledge and strengthen motivation.

These criteria and standards apply throughout the process of planning learning.

Planning to improve learning and offer quality educational services

Placing enhanced learning at the centre of education sector goals and funding priorities involves addressing a number of related priorities at each step of the decision-making process, from analysis to appraisal, through policy formulation, programme elaboration, and action planning and costing.

Issues related to educational access (e.g. school construction, materials' production, and teacher supply) have easily measurable objectives, strategies, and costs. But issues related to educational quality and learning are more difficult to document, analyse, and quantify. Education planners face questions such as: What are the major obstacles that currently affect student achievement? What are the issues, objectives, priorities, and strategies that will effectively improve learning outcomes? Which of these are achievable financially, technically, and politically? What other interventions, such as those related to early childhood or health, can be catalysts in the context of a systemic approach?

References and sources

GPE (Global Partnership for Education). 2015. [Results for learning report 2014/15: basic education at risk](#). Washington: GPE.

GPE (Global Partnership for Education), IIEP-UNESCO (International Institute for Educational Planning). 2015. [Guidelines for education sector plan preparation](#). Paris: IIEP.

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