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A Human Rights Based Approach to Education and Skills Development - Summary

The right to education is established in several international Human Rights treaties signed and ratified by most states. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 28 and 29 is the most important. In addition to the Human Rights treaties, many states have made commitments to international educational development goals – the Education for All (EFA) goals, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) number 2 and 3. These goals are often translated into national level goals, policies and plans to which governments could be held accountable. Some countries have joined the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), to realise these common goals. . New international education commitments Post 2015 are proposed (Muscat Agreement) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) have been drafted to replace the MDGs. The 17 proposed SDGs has one specific goal on education and skills development (Goal 4) “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*” (Goal 4), with seven specific targets. The new framework is expected to be adopted in 2015 and will cover the period up to 2030.

The educational rights have been translated into three core elements, rights TO, IN and THROUGH education, meaning:

To	In			Through
	Frames	Process	Results	
Education and skills development should be guaranteed directly to everyone, without discrimination.	Structure, Governance, Curricula, Teachers, Resources	Pedagogy, Methods of teaching and learning. Content of Learning.	Effects for individual: Changed attitudes and values. Acquisition of skills, competences and abilities.	Effects for society: Shared democratic values and commitment.

A human rights based approach to education and skills development takes a starting point in **international human rights commitments and standards**. It analyses the reasons why girls, boys, women and men are not accessing education or reaching learning targets despite these commitments – and focus the support on addressing these barriers. Key questions are:

- Have the HR obligations and core elements of rights TO, IN and THROUGH education been used as a point of departure for dialogue, programming and funding decisions?
- Is the right to education recognised in the constitution, bill of rights or national legislation? If so, how can Sweden use these commitments to strengthen dialogue and programming?
- Is the program based on an analysis of the causes of the non-fulfilment of the rights to education and skills development?

- Is there a national education strategy based on these analyses and on internationally recognised standards for education, which can guide donor contributions?

An important element in a human rights based approach is the focus on **empowerment and capacity development** of both rights holders and duty bearers. A key driving force for change is knowledge of educational rights and empowerment to claim these rights. Key questions are:

- Does the intervention build capacity of the authorities to plan, deliver and monitor educational rights? Does it inform and empower students and care givers to claim these rights?

Finally, a human rights based approach is about planning and monitoring how the values and principles underpinning the UN human rights treaties - **non-discrimination, participation, accountability and transparency** - are applied in the programme design and processes. Key questions to consider are:

<p>Non-discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is non-discriminatory legislation, policies and resource allocation in place? • Is disaggregated data on school and out-of-school population available? • Are physical, structural and attitudinal barriers addressed? 	<p>Meaningful participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all stakeholders have a possibility to take part in planning, monitoring and influence policy and processes in education and skills development? • Do teachers and school leaders have ability to initiate participatory processes? • Are participatory methods developed for teaching and learning with respect to class-room size?
<p>Openness and Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is information regarding priorities and budgets communicated to the public via accessible formats and channels? • Is there adequate monitoring of how resources are distributed throughout the education system, from central to local level (anti-corruption)? • Are learners and their guardians informed about their educational rights and rights related to working life? Are they able to engage with the education system and to make use of complaints mechanisms? 	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there performance indicators in place that allow monitoring of progress in ensuring access to quality education and skills development? • Are there complaint mechanisms? • Do politicians, educational authorities at national and district levels, school leaders and teachers, and guardians have awareness, knowledge, capacity and resources to respond to educational rights?

To learn more on a human rights based approach to education and skills development, read the full thematic area brief.