

The SEIGYM Programme Somalia

Extract from

Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods: A Review of Approaches and Experiences

Oxenham, J. et al. The World Bank Africa Region, Washington D.C. 2002.

SEIGYM, Somaliland

The Somaliland Education Initiative for Girls and Young Men (SEIGYM), supported by the Africa Educational Trust, has adopted an unusual, possibly unique, approach for its urban participants. It gives them vouchers, which they can use to obtain the training that they want. As all the vocational and technical training on offer requires some school qualification, non-literate participants can locate and pay for instruction in literacy and numeracy, before moving on to specifically livelihood training. Over three years 5,000 disadvantaged girls, young women and young ex-militia men have received literacy/numeracy and/or vocational skills training.

The scheme took care to win the support of the local authorities and leadership and indeed works partially through them. Two main committees were formed with representatives from the ministry of education, women's groups, youth groups, local NGOs, international NGOs and UN agencies. Later, there were also four "district" committees. These committees, working with tribal elders and community groups, select the disadvantaged girls and young men to receive vouchers.

Two systems then operated:

(a) students could receive a voucher which they could use to purchase education or training of their choice. The voucher was redeemable only through the Africa Educational Trust (AET) and only if AET inspected the training provider and certified its standards. AET also provided training courses for alternative trainers and craftsmen and women who wanted to run small training courses (e.g. carpenters, driving instructors, painters, tailors, nurses).

This system worked best in the larger towns, where there were craftsmen and women who wanted to provide the training and where there were enough students with vouchers to make it worth their while to run a course -usually 10 to 15 students for one particular subject.

(b) In other areas, vouchers were offered, but there were meetings and discussions with the students to ask what they wanted to purchase with them. Based on this, AET then recruited local trainers to provide the course, paying them against the value of the vouchers. This worked best in the smaller towns and was also important when the majority of students wanted literacy and numeracy.

In a number of cases a local committee agreed to support a project in which a local trainer was setting up a course for a specific group, e.g. a literacy class for 40 disabled people or a basic education class for the children of outcasts, to allow them to gain access to normal schools.

To identify the people who could apply for vouchers, AET worked with each local committee to reach agreement on definitions on who was eligible. Then AET and the

committee worked on “fair and transparent” selection procedures in that locality. The reason for the different committees lay in the fractured nature of the local society: they aimed to try to cover different clan areas, so that the central committees would not be accused of bias towards their own clans. Based on the agreed procedures, the committees take responsibility for working with the local community groups, women’s groups, local authorities, Imams and clan elders to select the young people who would receive vouchers.

The vouchers are redeemed through a system of supervision and accountability. A local AET staff member monitors each “class” on a monthly basis. In the more remote areas, a local teacher or community worker is paid to do the monitoring, using an agreed procedure and reporting form. Voucher payments are then made against satisfactory performance. At present, this is measured very simply - attendance record of students and teacher over the month, teacher’s written lesson plans over the month, comparison of work in a random sample of students’ exercise books with objectives and work set out in lesson plans, the actual ability of students to complete exercises studied over the past month, as shown in their books and lesson plans.

In many cases, local classes are organised and run by women’s groups, community groups and youth groups in an area. In such cases, payment is made to the management of the group. For vocational courses, individual local trainers or craftsmen and women train small groups. Again these are monitored and payment made against delivery.

The account above suggests that, although SEIGYM does not aim directly at institution or capacity building beyond the skills and livelihoods of its learners, it is in effect forming new institutional norms, capacities and skills.