

DFID management response: Independent evaluation of the results based aid in education in Rwanda

Upper Quartile in association with the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR-Rwanda) were commissioned by the UK Department for International Development to undertake a **mixed-methods process and impact evaluation of the Results-Based Aid (RBA) pilot in Rwandan education (2012-2014)**, considering if, how and in what circumstances the RBA pilot has contributed to the results envisaged in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed between DFID and the Government of Rwanda (GoR).

This was a pilot programme, set up to test a previously untested theory of change. Lessons generated from this and other pilots will be disseminated and incorporated into guidance and best practice as appropriate

The main purpose of the evaluation is to determine any contribution of the RBA pilot to additional learners completing key stages in primary and secondary education and additional teachers becoming competent in the use of English as the medium of instruction. The evaluation also considers the response of the recipient (GoR) and other key actors to RBA and seeks to establish the various processes that led to observed results.

This final report presents findings in relation to 2014 completion data and data on English language proficiency, as well as findings from across the three year pilot. The quantitative evidence from the evaluation shows that, over the period of the programme, the Government of Rwanda made strong progress in improving the number of exam sitters at Senior 3 (S3) by 11%, and at Senior 6 (S6) by 49%. These achievements saw £5.4m disbursed as RBA by DFID.

However, the evaluation finds that **RBA had no consistent incentive effect on completion results**. Where completion performance was outside the range of what would be expected without RBA, performance was as likely to be below trend as above it. There were two instances of above-trend performance: S3 exam sitting in 2013 and S6 exam sitting in 2014. The latter performance was unanimously linked to the historical, domestic policy changes of 9 Year Basic Education and 12 Year Basic Education. The picture surrounding S3 performance in 2013 is less clear, but there is no real evidence of RBA strongly influencing any of the possible causes.

Whilst the finance provided by DFID has helped the Government of Rwanda to deliver its priorities in education, the evaluation was unable to find evidence to suggest that the RBA incentive, in and of itself, encouraged additional results. The evaluation puts forward two possible explanations: the size of the RBA payments were small, relative to Rwanda's total education budget, and so presented only a small incentive and the Rwandan Government was already focused on improving education results. The evaluation suggests that incentives may need to be created and sustained over a longer period if they are to lead to additional results through encouraging partner government reforms.

On the second indicator of teachers' English language proficiency, the researchers conclude that **it is not possible to comment on the extent to which RBA may have impacted results**, due to lack of comparability of data. The 2012 and 2014 results are from different exams, taken under different conditions. Changes to the 2014 exam are expected to have made the test a more accurate measure of teachers' English, but also to have positively affected the results.

It is important to clarify that a lack of evidence for RBA causing these results does not imply that no results were obtained. The independent verification process was robust and all payments were made on evidence of the results occurring. However, **results would have happened anyway without the RBA pilot**.

The evaluation also highlights the additional costs, to GoR and to DFID, associated with RBA. These include the cost to GoR in budget forecasting in sector planning and costs to DFID in terms of independent verification of results and the opportunity costs of significant advisory inputs to negotiate and manage the pilot.

RESPONSE TO EVALUATION REPORT (overarching narrative)

Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
<p>1. New research (Clist and Dercon, 2014, p1, NAO, 2015), available since RBA was agreed, states that agreements should see a good measure as a prerequisite for success. This report concurs wholeheartedly, and finds RBA should not be used again in the Rwandan education sector unless better measures can be identified.</p>	Accepted	DFID Rwanda does not propose to use RBA in education within its current programme. However, it accepts that a clearly defined measure of a relevant outcome is integral to programme success and has implemented this in its new programme
<p>2. In the specific case of RBA to the Rwandan education sector, there are two possible avenues for future agreements. First, RBA could use a learning indicator (as discussed in the year two evaluation report; these are now feasible (Upper Quartile, 2015)). Second, RBA could use English proficiency as the performance measure.</p>	Accepted	DFID Rwanda does not propose to use RBA in education within its current programme, though has introduced a learning outcome indicator (functional literacy) into its new technical assistance programme, with English proficiency being a key output.
<p>3. Greater attention should be paid to the political context in which PbR operates both in future research and agreements. In particular, the evaluation suggests that future designs consider the degree to which a measure reinforces or cuts across political incentives for the leadership of the sector, the likelihood of priorities shifting within the policy cycle, the degree of management control over the</p>	Accepted	This recommendation has been integrated into wider DFID thinking on PbR.

<p>bureaucracy and how the financial disbursement is passed on to the leadership.</p>		
<p>4. Efforts should be made to ensure that in future the benefits of understanding and delivering RBA improvements outweigh the costs. This is not simply about agreeing a tariff that is large enough, but about agreeing suitable timeframes and working with the prevailing political incentives. Crucially, it means ensuring that the financial disbursement is passed on to the sector, not lost in the budget process that requires negotiation, such as with MINECOFIN, and which would be a condition before any PbR was made.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>An emerging body of evidence is emerging on RBA and RBF, all of which make DFID better placed to understand where and how Results Based mechanisms can improve VfM. In addition, lessons on design, such as the tying of disbursements closer to the implementation, are noted and will inform central guidance.</p>
<p>5. Future negotiations should bear in mind that recipient governments have more information on likely improvements than donors; this may prevent payment being made for improvements that may have happened anyway</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>This point is noted.</p>