



Human Resources Development in EU External Aid Programmes - A British Council Perspective

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Brussels, 11 December 2012



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The British Council

- The British Council was established in 1934 as the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities;
- BC's overseas network extends to 233 locations in 110 countries – making it one of the most represented non-governmental organisations in the world;
- For the last 40 years, the British Council has worked with governments, donors and lenders to provide its specific expertise within the context of development aid.

The British Council and Development – Key Areas of Expertise:

Education management and sector reform: the British Council supports initiatives to enhance access to and improve the quality of primary, secondary and higher education. In education management, BC assists capacity building, support decentralisation and monitor and evaluate large reform programmes.

Human rights, rule of law and justice: BC provides assistance for improving human rights, providing access to justice and raising awareness of rights. BC provides experience of how the UK legal system, educational institutions and civil society groups take forward human rights and the rule of law.

Technical and vocational education and training: BC provides technical support for the development of skills for employability that are required for economic sustainability through diversification and social regeneration.

The British Council and Development – Key Areas of Expertise:

Social development: BC assists in the development of skills and sharing of knowledge to help bring about equality and inclusion. BC focuses on eradicating social exclusion based grounds such as gender, race, age and disability.

Training management: BC manages scholarship programmes and training contracts for international organisations such as the EC.

Public administration reform: support the strengthening of public administration and service delivery, based on principles of good governance.

Economic development: supporting economic and financial reform for sustainable development.

The British Council's specific contribution towards the EC's Development Aid

The British Council operates in 110 countries worldwide: it provides concrete expertise and experience of the in-country situation in its core sectors of activity;

BC has extensive experience in working in difficult environments: BC's long-standing presence in many so-called 'fragile states' has shaped its approach to development programmes delivery by embedding conflict resolution, and stabilisation measures in its actions;

Since early 2011, the British Council has been granted the status of eligible partner for Indirect Centralised Management by the EC: this particular status enables the EC to conclude Delegated Cooperation agreements with the British Council: BC contributes to the identification and formulation of a particular action within the annual programming cycle of the EC, and is then entrusted with the implementation of those actions.

Human Resources Development in EC's Development Aid

- Human Resources Development is one of the key pillars of the EU's Development policy as it is an essential prerequisite for sustainable social and economic development;
- With regards to education, the EU promotes access to quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. In line with this, the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals of universal primary education and gender equality in education is a key priority of the EC's development policy.
- Furthermore, the EC pays particular attention to quality of education issues, vocational training as a means of addressing poverty as well as inequalities.

British Council Experience with EC Funded Projects in Education: Iraq and Eritrea

Title: Support to Improving the Quality of Education in Iraq

Project Budget: €8.75m

Implementation period: 2011-2014 (36 month contract)

Aid management mode: Direct Centralised Management through a Direct award EC grant contract

Title: Support to the Education Sector in Eritrea - Improving Access and Quality of Basic Education

Project Budget: €3.4m

Implementation period: 2007- 2011 (48 months contract)

Aid management mode: Direct Centralised Management through a Technical Assistance Service Contract

Support to Improving the Quality of Education in Iraq

This project concentrates on 3 interlinked interventions in the field of education. These are:

- 1. Schools Action:** Expansion of the work already undertaken on teaching and learning, leadership, management and school standards
- 2. TVET Action:** Development of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Iraq
- 3. Physical Education and Sports Action:** Improving the quality and relevance of PE and sport in schools

Iraq: Objectives of the Schools Action

This action has a *geographical dimension* focusing on particular districts in Iraq. The major objectives of this action are to improve quality and relevance of TVET by:

- a. developing a coherent **TVET strategy and action** programme;
- b. developing a **sector based approach** for competency based **qualifications and curricula development**; and
- c. enabling TVET institutions to effectively manage the **delivery of competency-based TVET**.

Iraq: Objectives of the TVET Action

This action concentrates on the *policy dimension and selected sectors of focus for TVET* in Iraq. The major objectives of this action are to:

- a. improve the **quality and standards** of the learning experience, pedagogic skills of teachers, the leadership and management skills of principals;
- b. develop supported school self-evaluation and **capacity for planning educational improvements / developments** in primary and secondary schools in Iraq.

Iraq: Objectives of the PE and Sports Action

This action concentrates on the *overall creation of a PE and sports education capability* in Iraq. The major objectives of this action are to:

- a. develop the **institutional setup** through the establishment of 10 autonomous Specialist Sports Colleges (SSCs) with delivery capability and clear linkages with business and other community organisations;
- b. develop the **quality and relevance** of the PE and Sports **curricula** as a vehicle for **social inclusion** in Iraq.

Iraq: Expected impact of the Project

1. Improved education standards in 1,700 schools through improved teacher training. This will benefit 800,000 pupils in 10 Iraqi provinces directly;
2. Improved the curriculum in 160 Iraqi vocational colleges through work with Iraqi businesses. This will help 130,000 young people acquire the skills they need for the labour market and secure jobs;
3. Improved quality of sport and PE in schools by creating 10 centres of excellence. These centres in turn will act as hubs for neighbouring schools to raise awareness of the value of PE and sports in schools.

Support to the Education Sector in Eritrea - Improving Access and Quality of Basic Education

This project was an integral part of a broader education sector reform programme. It focused on a number of quality based objectives in the field of education. These were:

1. Supporting certification of basic education teachers;
2. Enhancing the professional competence of certified primary school teachers;
3. Establishing a pre and in-service support for basic TVET instructors;
4. Initiating the overall curriculum reform programme for basic education;
5. Strengthening quality assurance/control of delivery of basic education; and
6. Development of the National Accreditation and Evaluation Systems

Eritrea: Quality of Basic Education – main outputs:

- New national teacher education policy and strategy developed
- Continuous Professional Development Strategy for teachers established;
- Training packages for school directors in leadership and management
- Improved pedagogy through a Pedagogic Manual;
- Improved school planning and teacher improvement through a School Director and Supervisor's Manual;
- Occupational standards and competency based curricula for TVET developed in collaboration with employers representatives;
- Alignment of national curriculum with examination practices and assessment methods, and establishment of a draft national qualifications framework;

The British Council's experience with EuropeAid projects

The EC's Development Aid Programmes are:

Relevant – DEVCO programmes focus on national partner countries' strategic priorities (exceptions include 'situations of crisis');

Policy-driven – More and more, EC Development/Cooperation programmes are derived from EU-Partner country dialogue agendas ('agreement-driven');

Predictable – Annual Action/Work Programmes provide a sound basis for expected project opportunities;

The British Council's experience with EuropeAid projects II

The EC's Development Aid Programmes are gradually becoming more:

Streamlined – Increasingly, DEVCO programmes operate within a restricted number of sectors; meaning that fewer sectors are tackled, but in a more comprehensive way (sector wide approach)

Devolved – To enable an accentuated relevance and speedy implementation of intended actions, more responsibility for programming is given to EU Delegations (ex: SPRING programme)

Decentralised – Ownership of sector programmes is essential for the sustainability of actions: national authorities take on a programming role in many parts of the world (IPA, Morocco, etc)

The British Council's experience with EuropeAid projects III

The EC's Development Aid Programmes are gradually becoming more:

Expertise focused – tenderers are requested to demonstrate inherent expertise (not the 'what' can a bidder deliver, but the 'how')

Partnership-based – local agents of change are key drivers for sustainability of action

Integrated – linkages between instruments and donor-coordination are key for a comprehensive approach to sector reform

The British Council's experience with EuropeAid projects IV

Challenges to pursue EC Development Aid Projects:

Competition – Donor funding is a very competitive market; reliance on a limited number of good experts for long term assignments and tight financial resources – leading to relatively low success rates;

Investment Costs – Potential contractors need to be prepared to up-front up to 5% of total project budget for pursuit costs (positioning, scoping missions, events to demonstrate competency, etc);

Network – Critical to establish excellent network of practitioners and key experts in given fields of activity – both at international and local levels

The British Council's experience with EuropeAid projects V

Challenges to pursue EC Development Aid Projects:

Financial Considerations – EC service contracts are financially competitive if investment and project management costs are managed well;

Financial requirements for bidding – potential contractors are required at prequalification stage to demonstrate cash-flow and liquidity levels linked to the size of project budget so as to minimise financial constraints for project delivery;

Local Requirements – beneficiaries have specific needs and objectives from a particular initiative; these need to be clearly understood/addressed within the consortium/bid to have a 'fighting chance'.

The British Council's experience with EuropeAid projects VI

Opportunities in EC Development Aid Projects:

Market – Development programmes remain a high potential market for public/private sector consultants;

Operational – EC Development Aid contracts enable practitioners to transfer know-how in a development context;

Management – EC contracts offer a relatively low risk and transparent contractual relation (NB: crisis situations are a special case);

Financial – the EC is a reliable client whose payment terms - although somewhat lengthy – are usually respected.

