DRIVING UP QUALITY IN EDUCATION

A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN SCHOOLS
WHAT THIS PRESENTATION IS ABOUT……..

• The importance – for all countries - of driving up the scope and quality of education in its schools

• How an approach, based on Quality Assurance, is working in many countries – identifying key concepts within this approach.

• Why Accountability is an important strand of such an approach

• Why choosing an appropriate information base on which to base an Accountability system is critical!

• What this looks like in one country ...... Jordan.

• A copy of this presentation is available from cameron@harrisonleimon.co.uk
THE WORLD DISCOVERS THAT EDUCATION MATTERS

• Because a country’s economic growth and well being increasingly depends on its educational performance

• Because an effective inclusive education system is the best guarantee of a stable democracy.

• Because our young people matter – and education is the way one generation offers all that it values to the next.
BUT IMPROVING NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS PROVES HARDER THAN IT LOOKS

• **An investment led approach**
  - Curriculum Development Projects
  - Professional Development Programs for Teachers
• A great deal of change – but not much improvement in key areas
BUT IMPROVING NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS PROVES HARDER THAN IT LOOKS

• The realisation that this is critical area for government grows ........ So .....  

• Government intervenes!
BUT IMPROVING NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS PROVES HARDER THAN IT LOOKS

• The initial approach ……
  • Specify the curriculum in detail
  • Produce detailed teacher instructions
  • Provide lots of teacher support and training
  • Set lots of tests to check that the system is working
  • Link these results to rewards or sanctions on the key actors – ACCOUNTABILITY?
At precisely the time when the world is realising that the new economies need a new kind of working ...........

.........because the old “Fordist” approaches – specify the task; train to the task; check the output – have been replaced by an approach which is predicated upon the value added by the worker (that is, a Quality Control approach is being replaced by a Quality Assurance approach)

.........the irony is that at exactly that time, governments attempt to impose a Quality Control approach to schools.
WHY A QUALITY CONTROL APPROACH TO EDUCATION DOESN’T WORK ....

• The central act of the education process is a teacher teaching ....
  • ....and this is a complex and challenging process – not susceptible to control
• The context for this process is a school ...
  • ...again, an organisation which is complex and challenging in its essential functioning – and not susceptible to control in those areas which matter most
HOW DOES A QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACH WORK ….

……. IN ANY SYSTEM …….

• **Capacity Building** in the main actors and institutions of the system – that is, building technical and procedural capacity for self-improvement within the main actors and organisational units of the existing system, including building into the system well-designed feedback loops (with clear and explicit definitions of what is meant by *quality*) which will enable quality both of process and of outcome to be monitored by the actors themselves;

• **Decentralisation** - that is, shifting decisions about processes and the deployment of resources to the main actors and organisational units of the system in order to enable them, on the basis of what they have learned through the feedback loops, to act effectively, and if necessary in new ways, in pursuit of quality; and,

• **Accountability** – that is, having set in place arrangements which will enable and support actors and organisational units to reflect critically and positively on the quality of their work, and having empowered and enabled them by giving them as much control as possible over the circumstances and resources which shape the quality of their work, making appropriate arrangements to hold these actors and organisational units publicly and professionally accountable for the actual quality of output.
AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY BEGINS TO EMERGE ......

• It needs to be built on good curriculum development and teacher professional development
• It needs to be based on the school as the focus of attention
• But it needs to be more than that .......
• It needs to be able to:
  • Develop the capacity to improve in all schools;
  • Provide the means to implement and support the improvements; and
  • Put in place a powerful way of driving forward actual improvement – and in the right direction.
SO ... AN EFFECTIVE NATIONAL STRATEGY TO DRIVE UP EDUCATION QUALITY HAS THREE STRANDS ..... 

• **Capacity building** in schools and in the school management system – that is, giving them the ABILITY and the PROCEDURAL TOOLS to improve and develop

• The **Decentralisation** of control of resources and decision-making to schools – that is, EMPOWERING and ENABLING the development processes

• The creation of a powerful and effective **Accountability** system – that is, providing the MOTIVATION to improve
THE THREE STRANDS OF AN EFFECTIVE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY....

- **Capacity Building** - developing the technical and professional capacity within teachers, schools, advisers, and field directors, and building procedures and systems within schools and directorates (including developing clear sets of national Quality Indicators (QIs)), to enable the processes of critical reflection, school self-evaluation, and development planning for school-based improvement;
THE THREE STRANDS OF AN EFFECTIVE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY....

• **Decentralisation** - relocating control of resources to school and teacher level, devolving appropriate decision-making, and empowering teachers and schools to make those decisions which directly impact upon the quality of teaching and learning - while at the same time moving the role of Advisors towards support and guidance.
(SO ..... IF SCHOOLS ARE TRAINED AND SUPPORTED, AND RESOURCES AND DECISION-MAKING DEVOLVED .... WHY ISN’T THAT ENOUGH?)

- **Capacity Building and Decentralisation** together IS a good way to help *good* schools get *better*
- **BUT** on its own, this doesn’t ensure improvement in the overwhelming majority of schools – in fact, it often does exactly the opposite
- And this is what matters - ensuring that ALL schools improve is the central challenge – and the proper priority of government
THE THREE STRANDS OF AN EFFECTIVE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY....

• What is missing – what is needed – is a means to focus effort and provide motivation within the system ...... hence ....

• **Accountability** - creating a powerful and effective system of public and professional accountability for schools, and other relevant institutions, which will support and enable the processes of development set out above, and which will provide government with the means to steer policy and drive up the quality of outcomes.
A POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Needs to ......

• Provide the motivation and the dynamic to drive forward improvement - *from the inside!*

• Be universally respected and trusted – owned by the system

• Be focussed on the right things – because an accountability system **will be effective**, it can also distort the actual outcomes
SO ..... HOW WILL THE PROCESS WORK IN JORDAN? 
........IT WILL BE BUILT ON THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

- Schools are constantly engaged in an annual cycle of school self-evaluation – using the national Framework of Quality Indicators
- As a product of this school self-evaluation, each school produces its own annual School Development Plan
- This School Development Plan is implemented by the school – drawing on the decentralised resources and enabled by the decentralised decision making
- Each school is responsible for its own improvement
- Each school is visited regularly by a team of Assessors drawn from the national Education Quality and Accountability Unit (EQAU)
- The Report of this visit is based on exactly the same set of Quality Indicators
- This School Report – together with recommended Next Steps – is published
- The Field Directorate and their local team of Advisers work with the school to implement the Next Steps
- If necessary, the school is revisited by the Assessors after six months to check on progress
- The MoE uses these reports as an agenda to engage with Field directorates on quality – and also as an input to the national policy development process
ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON THE JORDAN ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM
THE EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY UNIT

• An Independent Unit within the MoE reporting directly to H.E. the Minister
• Approximately 100 Assessors very carefully selected from highly experienced and distinguished teachers, principals, advisers etc.
• Subject to intensive training for 18 months and a subsequent probationary period of one year
• Operating to the highest standards of professionalism and integrity
HOW WILL THE EQAU TEAM WORK?

• Work using the National Quality Indicator Framework
• Look carefully at the school self-evaluation and the school development plan
• Visit classrooms and watch teachers; interview students and parents
• Review patterns of student achievement against appropriate norms
• Base their conclusions on a careful mixture of quantitative and qualitative evaluation
• Write a clear School Report accessible to students, parents and community
• Make clear recommendations for action in a Next Steps section in the Report
WHAT WILL A SCHOOL REPORT DO?

• Report, positively, helpfully, and supportively on the functioning of the school – using the national Quality Indicators as its framework of reference.
• Recognise a school’s achievements publicly
• Point to its strengths and describe good practice discovered within the school
• Identify Key Problems
• Set out suggested Next Steps to tackle these problems

Cameron Harrison

Jordan: August 2015
STARTING POINT – THE SCHOOL’S OWN SELF-EVALUATION ….. FOR EXAMPLE ….

- The under achievement of students in across most subjects in years 11 and 12 – but particularly in Mathematics and Science. The exception being English Language, where student performance on national tests and examinations greatly exceeded national averages.

- The very low level of confidence and of aspirations amongst students, and a low level of expectations of student achievement amongst most – though not all – staff.

- A lack of recognition on the part of most staff that student achievement is a matter they can, and should, address directly; a reluctance to address issues of effective teaching and learning as representing ways in which student achievement can be reliably improved; a tendency for teachers to rely on traditional methods of instruction and classroom organisation in the overwhelming majority of their teaching; and a lack of confidence and skill amongst most teachers in anything using other than the most traditional methods
THE SCHOOL’S OWN PROPOSED NEXT STEPS ......

• Asking each subject department to develop plans to increase the level of student achievement in their subject, including: reviewing and improving curriculum materials; developing more effective teaching strategies; and, introducing common testing and marking across each year group.

• Asking the English department to organise and deliver a series of seminars for other staff in the school describing good practice within the English Department, and making arrangements for other teachers to be able to spend a day with English teachers in their classrooms.

• Developing plans for after-school “homework clubs” and “student mutual-help tutorial groups” to reinforce teaching and tackle individual learning problems.

• Developing plans for the Principal to spend one third of her time co-teaching with regular teachers on a systematic basis, and for the Deputes to commit an additional quarter of their time to the same process.

• Setting up a small group of suitable teachers to form an “Effective Teaching Working Group”, asking them to develop plans to bring descriptions and examples of good practice to the attention of staff – using assigned local authority staff as a supporting resource.

• Developing plans for a “Code of Best Practice” for all staff, dealing with the quality and nature of student-staff interactions, and designed to lift students’ expectations of themselves and of their school; and plan a series of visits to the school by suitable role-models, with opportunities for students to hear, meet and interact with these visitors.

• Organising a series of meetings to take place weekly between the Leadership Team and the teachers from each department in turn. The meetings will focus on reviewing, with those teachers, levels of student achievement within their subject against regional, and national norms, and against the achievements of the same students in other subject within the school. The meeting will also hear of progress on the departments’ plans to drive up achievement in their subject. This series of meetings will continue throughout the year.

• Committing the Leadership Team to delivering two “Parent and Student” meetings during the next year – these meetings being designed to lift parents and students expectations of their potential achievement and to enlist their support in this process.

Cameron Harrison
Jordan: August 2015
THE SCHOOL REPORT: SUMMARY

• The overall quality of teaching within the school is in need of improvement.

• The majority of the staff and the leadership of the school are well aware of this challenge and have already set in train measures aimed at tackling this problem energetically.

• The quality of teaching and learning within the English Department is outstanding and as a result, student achievement in this subject is very high.

• The work of the Mathematics department falls below the level of acceptability.

• The leadership of the Principal is outstanding and the overall performance of the school leadership team is effective.

• The quality of work within the leadership team is, however, uneven and shortcomings in this area should be tackled as a priority.

• The level of support offered by the Advisors is uneven; some is excellent, some requires improvement; the work of the Chief Advisor is outstanding.

• The level of expectations of staff and students ..........
ACCOUNTABILITY, AND DRIVING UP QUALITY IN SCHOOLS – THE TASK OF QEAU

• To build and support within the schools and other institutions of the education system an internal dynamic, owned and enacted by the teachers and principals themselves, clearly focused upon driving up the quality of education experienced by the young people of the Kingdom and energetically committed to improving, significantly, their learning.

• To enable and inform this process; to critique and advise, and to insist upon all involved in the education system – teachers or principals, advisers or field directors, administrators or technical experts - holding themselves to public and professional account for the ways in which they carry out their responsibilities.
WHAT THIS PRESENTATION HAS BEEN ABOUT

- The importance – for all countries - of driving up the scope and quality of education in its schools
- How an approach – based on Quality Assurance – is working in many countries
- What a QA approach looks like in schools, and school systems
- Why Accountability is an important strand of such an approach
- What are the plans for building an effective Accountability system in Jordan

- A copy of this presentation is available from cameron@harrisonleimon.co.uk
NEXT STEPS

The school should focus on improving student achievement by:

• improving the consistency and quality of learners’ experiences;
• developing approaches to meeting the learning needs of all pupils to raise levels of performance at all stages;
• improving care and welfare and in particular child protection procedures;
• increasing expectations of parents, staff and pupils;
• developing monitoring, target setting and the systematic tracking of pupils’ progress to better meet their needs and have an impact on improvement; and
• improving the impact of self-evaluation by identifying focused priorities which increase the pace of improvement.
WHAT MIGHT A SCHOOL REPORT LOOK LIKE?

- Overall, arrangements to meet pupils’ learning needs were weak. Subject teachers did not use a sufficient variety of approaches, target tasks effectively or provide a wide enough range of materials to meet all pupils’ learning needs well. In particular, they did not challenge more able pupils effectively, or provide sufficiently supportive materials for less able pupils. A few subjects arranged classes to enable them to meet pupils’ needs more effectively. Across the school, the pace of learning was appropriate for the majority of pupils. While a range of courses and levels were available, too many pupils were placed on courses that were either too demanding or not sufficiently demanding for them, particularly at S5/S6. Supported study classes were offered across the curriculum to assist pupils and prepare them for examinations.
WHAT MIGHT A SCHOOL REPORT LOOK LIKE?

• The overall quality of teaching was adequate. It was not of a consistently high standard across the school. Some teachers established a positive learning environment. They used questioning effectively to involve pupils and develop their knowledge but they did not always make pupils think or encourage them to provide extended responses. Teachers provided clear instructions and explanations and the majority made sound judgements in lessons to support pupils in their learning. Most teachers were beginning to share lesson content with pupils but only a few planned sufficient time to review learning effectively at the end of lessons. Most teachers were developing effective use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. Many lessons did not sufficiently sustain pupils’ interest by emphasising the relevance of topics to stimulate and motivate pupils. Often lessons were too teacher-led with insufficient focus on developing pupils’ responsibility and independence in learning. Across the school, teachers did not provide sufficient, regular and challenging homework.
WHAT MIGHT A SCHOOL REPORT LOOK LIKE?

• The headteacher’s impact on the school had been outstandingly positive. She provided leadership of very high quality by giving top priority to the importance of providing an inclusive and modern education to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential. Since taking up post seven years ago, she had communicated this vision very well to staff, pupils and parents and had been successful in engaging staff at all levels in taking forward an ambitious improvement agenda. She was highly respected and had gained the confidence of staff and parents through leading by example and setting very high standards for staff and pupils. She delegated very effectively and had established a collegiate atmosphere across the school, encouraging leadership amongst staff and pupils. The strong team of depute headteachers provided very effective leadership across the school. They communicated well with staff and had a high level of visibility around the school so that both pupils and staff found them approachable and helpful. They had very regular and supportive links with subject departments and provided very high quality leadership in key areas such as additional support for learning and guidance.
WHAT MIGHT A SCHOOL REPORT LOOK LIKE?

The school sustained improvement through a very thorough and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating its work. Staff had put in place very effective approaches to monitor and track pupil progress and these were used very well to help raise attainment and avoid under-achievement. Teachers analysed attainment data rigorously and took action as necessary when any weakness was identified. In consequence, high levels of performance were maintained and performance had improved in several areas. The school had a very effective programme of continuous professional development, much of it based on sharing existing best practice across the school. Departmental staff cooperated with senior management in a wide range of well-established quality assurance procedures. This included classroom observation which focused on indicators of quality to highlight existing good practice to be shared, as well as identifying areas for further improvement. Staff had also used quality indicators developed nationally to evaluate the work of subject departments and the overall effectiveness of the school. Almost all staff felt that they were well involved in discussing school priorities. At school and departmental level, staff had systematically sought out pupil feedback on courses and teaching approaches and had taken action in response to views expressed. The school had a firm intention to survey parents using an online system later in the session.
JORDAN .... TWO SAMPLE QIS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory: Urgent action Required</th>
<th>Adequate: Strengths just outweigh weaknesses But major improvement needed</th>
<th>Good: Important strengths, but a number of areas where improvement needed</th>
<th>Very Good: Major strengths but with a few areas requiring improvement</th>
<th>Excellent: Outstanding performance in all areas</th>
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<td>QI 1: The school and its teachers actively draw on the world outside the school to provide a positive and encouraging context for the curriculum, their teaching, and for student learning; the school also builds strong and productive practical partnerships with society, community, industry and commerce to enrich, inform and motivate student learning.</td>
<td>There is little understanding of the implications of Education for a Knowledge Economy evident within the staff or leadership of the school. Lessons, while sound, tend to be heavily theoretical and seldom draw on good concrete examples drawn from the world outside school. While there occasional examples of good practice to be found, the school has no policy on developing relations with outside bodies and no formal program of visits from the school by students, nor to the school by good external role-models.</td>
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<td>The school clearly understands the thrust of Education for a Knowledge Economy and reflects these priorities in its curriculum and its practices. Classrooms and lessons constantly draw on examples from the community, business and commerce, and apply the results of learning to practical situations outside school. The school has a well-articulated written policy on community engagement and a program of appropriate visits to external bodies and from external speakers.</td>
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<td>QI: 6. The school, teachers, and students actively track student achievement and prioritise improvement using appropriate and transparent methods</td>
<td>The assessments used in some subject in the school, though being carried out, are limited, not always technically acceptable, and sometimes poorly matched to the learning tasks. Evidence of teacher/class cross-marking is limited, and the level of difficulty of the assessments are not always well nor explicitly related to appropriate national standards for that stage of the curriculum. Some attention is given to individual student achievement but improvement is not adequately prioritised. The overall level achievement of students is not increasing sufficiently fast, and/or barely matches the standards expected of similar schools across the country. Greater priority needs to be given to helpful, positive, regular and easily-understandable reporting to students and parents on individual student achievement and progress. Students and parents do not express sufficient confidence in the fairness and transparency of school assessments.</td>
<td>Teachers in the school use good, well-developed assessment instruments, well matched to the nature and level of the learning tasks. The school benchmarks its assessments across classes and with national ERK&amp;E standards, and keep good and helpful records of student and class achievement. Each learner’s achievements are tracked and helpful individual feedback is given, progress is celebrated, and individual and group improvement is vigorously pursued. The overall levels and patterns of achievement of students in the school is increasing year on year, and compares well with the standards expected of other similar schools across the country. Students and parents receive regular and frequent reports of progress, and find the form in which assessments are reported easy to understand and useful. Students, teachers and parents have confidence in the fairness and transparency of the assessments.</td>
<td>Cameron Harrison</td>
<td>Jordan: August 2015</td>
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