

International cooperation in the impact evaluation of restructuring general secondary education in East Timor – achievements and challenges

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The TIMOR project Evaluating the impact of restructuring secondary education in East Timor: a study in the context of international cooperation (<http://projetotimor.web.ua.pt>) was framed by Evidence Based Policy, Theory of Change and Monitoring and Evaluation (ME). Timorese policy makers, intermediate government structures, school directors, teachers' educators, teachers, pupils and Portuguese teacher educators were involved in the ME phases of the mixed study. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, documental analysis and observation in schools, training sessions and classrooms.

Data analysis enabled to conclude that the i) curriculum materials (co)developed with Timorese entities – curricular plan, 14 syllabus, 42 student's books and 42 teacher's guides for the general secondary (GS) education – are valued due to their quality, the standardization of the GS curriculum they enable, their coherence/adaptation to the Timorese context and ii) educational activities concerning their use resulted in short/medium-term advantages to the educational process regarding linguistic/scientific/curricular/didactic levels. Medium/long-term contributions for the country's development

are likely to be achieved, should favorable conditions for the restructuring be maintained.

Recommendations to overcome challenges identified have been proposed, namely regarding the conditions of GS schools in terms of infrastructure, organization, functioning and respective legislation and regulatory mechanisms for education and school management; the initial, postgraduate and in-service teacher education (duly monitored and certified) and its adaptation to the current curriculum with a view to change the existing teaching practices, teachers' and students' conceptions regarding the educational process, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

These justify the continuity of the ongoing cooperation and ME of the GS restructuring, which brings considerable benefits beyond the parties involved.

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