

Concept Note¹

for

1st dialogue of the Joint Action for Education in Timor-Leste

(ACETL)

I. Introduction

Timor-Leste is in the process of Development since the Country gained its independence in 2002.

The development of the Education sector is a pivotal part of the whole development process as reflected in the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030: “...*Our Vision is that all our Timorese children should attend school and receive a quality education that gives them the knowledge and skills to lead healthy, productive lives and to actively contribute to our nation development²...*”.

Therefore Education should be the at the core of the development strategy, as the education sector contributes to the preparation of human resources capacity that is required by the labor market in different segments.

In this regard, integrated effort by the government, donor partners and civil society organizations are pivotal and strategic to move education forward.

The National Education Strategic Plan 2011-2030 underlines the importance of partnership: “...*the Government of Timor-Leste recognizes the vital role civil society can play in meeting Education targets and to heighten the value of this relationship will promote Public-Private partnership. The Ministry is committed to support the work of church, NGOs and other organizations involved....*”³

There are many challenges ahead to improve the quality of Education so that Timor-Leste is able to compete both regionally and internationally.

¹ Drafted by Rui Manuel Hanjan for the Ministry of Education

² See Page 16, The Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030

³ see page 79; The National Education Strategic Plan 2011-2030

There is a need to have effective coordination with all partners and to intensify efforts to support the education sector to bring up the quality level to the required standards.

These challenges are underlined in the National Education Strategic Plan as follows: ***first**, poor alignment of International Cooperation with education sector needs and priorities. **Second**, uncoordinated proliferation of teacher training programs in schools resulting in unacceptable teachers absence from the classrooms. **Third**, little or no coordination of the work performed by more than 25 national and international non-government organizations (NGOs), many whom are involved in school-based activities without knowledge or authorization of the Ministry of Education⁴*

The actual situation in Timor-Leste reveals the many challenges ahead, which are linked to the preparation and the implementation of curriculum, the concentration and distribution of qualified teachers, and the participation of donors in supporting this sector, etc.

Many experiences demonstrate **that the improvement of Education requires the intensive focus and participation of many entities and various stakeholders.**

Following the recent visit by the Minister of Education to several schools and the recognition that the highest results of the national student exams are concentrated in private schools in Baucau (Fatumaka and Venilale) and in Dili (Escola Canossa Has Laran), there are questions that need to be answered:

- Why Catholic schools are doing better than non-catholic or public schools?
- Why these schools are mainly concentrated in Baucau and Dili?
- How are their curricula implemented?
- How are the teachers distributed?
- How is teacher training held?
- Is there support by NGOs and donors?

All these questions are relevant for the round table discussion in order to identify the factors that may contribute to success and failure of education across the districts.

⁴ see, page 53; The National Education Strategic Plan 2011-2030

II. Objective

The objective of the round table is to:

First, gather all relevant stakeholders involved in the education sector to share their experiences and lessons-learned for the improvement of quality of education.

Second, to establish integrated commitment within a Commission of Joint Action for Education in Timor-Leste (ACETL) to contribute to the Education process.

III. Participants

A preliminary list of participants is attached and may be modified during preparation for the round table.

IV. Activity

A one day round table discussion planned for 31 January 2013 will be promoted by the Ministry of Education.

Each representative will be asked to prepare a draft paper for discussion in accordance with a template , which will be sent out to the participants.

This draft paper will cover major education issues as: teacher training participation, student enrolment, curricula implementation, etc.

V. Method/approach

The round table discussion is intended to promote the active participation of the following various partners working in the Education Sector:

- the Government, represented by the Minister of Education who will welcome the participants and outline the issues to be addressed at the meeting;
- The
- Representatives from the church, religious institutions and relevant education partners whom are invited to share their experience.

The Director General of the Ministry of Education will form four working groups divided according to regional representation and will facilitate the group discussions.

At the working group sessions, each representative will share their experience in the major education issues as: teacher training, preparation for exams, student learning achievement and completion, how and why they do well, what the main constraints and obstacles students face;

Each working group will deliver panel presentations identifying strengths and weaknesses in the above-mentioned areas, and advising on the level and effectiveness of donor and civil society support ;

The Ministry of Education Meeting Staff will summarize the panel presentations, and prepare conclusions/recommendations for better-coordinated development of the Education Sector Action Plan.

VI. Sharing of Lessons Learned for Education Development

The panel summary, conclusions and recommendations will be published and disseminated among all Education partners to support them in implementing the “best practices” in Education, the sharing of the lessons-learned. All the meeting outcomes will be distributed and broadcasted in mass media.

VII. Establishment of Joint Action For Education In Timor-Leste (Ação Conjunta para a Educação em Timor-Leste)

The round table will result in the establishment of a permanent committee for Joint Action for Education chaired by the Minister of Education. A joint statement regarding round table achievements and commitment of all participants to further Education Sector Development in Timor-Leste will follow.

VIII. Conclusion, closing and call for the next meeting

The one-day round table discussion will end with the closing speech of the Minister of Education and announcement of the planned date of the next meeting.

Annex I.

Civil Society organizations school based; Representatives of Catholic Schools (Don Bosco Baucau, Cannosa Has Laran, Escola Katholica Besilau, Escola Catholica Fuiluro, Escola Katholica Misao Maliana, Escola Catholica Sao Jose Dili, Eskola Katholika Paulo VI, Eskola Katholika S. Pedro Comoro; all headmasters of Representative Muslim Schools; Representative of Protestant School; CONECTIL (Concelho Nasional da Escola Catholica Timor-Leste); and Donors representatives (list is attached).