**Smart Buys, Great Sales and Special Offers**

**My blog identifies the issues and makes specific suggestions for GEEAP going forward**

**Blog at www.keithlewin.net or type: Lewin UKFIET into google**

1. Key issues for the GEEAP are: Who is buying what, from whom? What are governments, NGOs and donors buying and selling given that 90% of the costs of basic education are in teacher’s salaries? Is there really a (global/national) market for projects that determines price and value for money? If the best buy is also the best sale is everyone in the market smart? How does the cost vary with the source of finance (grants, low interest and commercial rate loans?). If we buy every “best buy” does our shopping basket give us the same balanced diet in Malawi as in Vietnam?
2. The choice of “buys” is restricted to interventions that are externally funded, have RCT evaluations, and achievement data (on early grade literacy/numeracy). More than half the citations are from only five countries – India, Kenya, Indonesia, Jamaica and Brazil. Only 14% of case studies are from LICs, and 86% are from LMICs and UMICs. Intriguingly a minority have cost data and “half of all interventions that have cost data produce no significant effects: these interventions are not included in the figures”. This risks confirmation bias. Knowing which interventions have no effect and why would seem is as important at knowing which ones do have an effect.
3. The single Great buy is “Giving information on education benefits, costs and quality” (p10) and is based on cost data for only two countries (Figure 1, p32, N=2)) one of which (not named) shows no effect. Four of the seven Great/Best buys have fewer than four country case studies (Figure 1) each of which includes cases where the effect is close to zero. The “bad buys” include “textbooks, additional teachers to reduce class size, school buildings, quality grants, salary increases, libraries”. Paradoxically this list includes many of the things that Ministries, the GPE, development agencies and systematic reviews actually support. Some are cheap others very expensive. All this is confusing to stakeholders in countries that already have agreed national priorities and ongoing SDG4 programmes.

Looking forward GEEAP needs to do more work on sustainable **financing and green aid**.

GEEAP seeks to calculate “how many years of high quality schooling can be bought for an additional $100 spent on each intervention”. Most costs in every education system are in teachers’ salaries. $100 buys as much as four times as much teaching time in a LIC than in an LMIC and eight times as much as in a UMIC so buys cannot easily be compared. Morfe fundamentally the core recurrent costs of mass education systems cannot be “bought” in separate transactions. They have to be sustainably financed from domestic revenue complemented by loans and grants. The questions for donors is which interventions require aid and which can be domestically financed and which aid modalities lead to the most sustained and green development.

**Question:**

* **How will the proposed GEEAP reforms be funded, how much will the “buys” cost, who will pay the bills in different LICs, LMICs, and UMICs what modalities of aid will be most effective in supporting sustainable educational financing?**
* **How will each of the best and worst buys be costed in relation to their impact on the environment and achieving Net Zero?**