

Baseline Approach: 'quality education and vulnerability programme' - VVOB Zimbabwe

Rationale for the baseline

In the 'quality education and vulnerability' programme in Zimbabwe we are seeking to monitor capacity development processes in the colleges of teacher education and the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. We are specifically interested in observable changes of our direct partner's capacity to address vulnerability issues of lecturers, student teachers and children in the schools. For us to be able to monitor these changes over time, it is therefore important that we know the starting point of our partner's capacity. To that effect we have carried out a baseline study about the professional practices of our direct partners at the start of the programme.

Methods used

We used our programme planning as analytic framework for our baseline study. This was possible because our programme planning is built up around specific capacity development milestones or progress markers. These milestones are descriptions of observable professional practices of our direct partners whom the programme seeks to strengthen. Using these milestones as a basis for data collection, we managed to develop an insight in the current capacity of our direct partners in the various teacher education colleges and Ministry. Data collection was carried out by members of the programme support team using a variety of methods such as interviews, focus groups, participant observation, self-assessment by the partners and conversations with lecturers and students. Data analysis was done through a process of coding and categorising the data in broader categories and themes. The quantitative translation of the baseline information based on the number of colleges was useful to present the baseline data in a graphical way.

Using the baseline data

- Presentation of the baseline data through a brief PowerPoint presentation was recognised to be a very effective way of presenting the programme to our partners. By presenting information about the partner's own capacity based on actual facts, partners were taken out of their comfort zones and developed a clearer understanding about the opportunities for developing their capacity. This resulted in a much deeper and shared understanding about the programme and the role of the various partners.
- Because of the direct link between the baseline and the programme planning, we are able to compare the information from our monitoring processes with the baseline data to qualify and quantify the programme's progress in terms of capacity development of our direct partners.