



APM Project Management Awards



WINNER'S

CASE STUDY



Category **The Mike Nichols Award for Inspiration 2015**
 Winner **Lower Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Examination Reform Programme, Uganda (CURASSE),**
Mott MacDonald Ltd trading as Cambridge Education

Sponsor



Overview

Deciding what, how and when to teach a nation's children is a huge task. It is highly political, especially in a country with 56 tribes and at least 40 languages. It is even more difficult when that country – Uganda – is one of the poorest in the world with insufficient teachers, educational resources and classrooms.

Secondary education was stuck in the old colonial

past. The highly academic curriculum had been in place for more than half a century, designed for those destined for positions of power in Ugandan society. It was taught by rote and was largely irrelevant to the needs of today's students. Educational outcomes were extremely low.

In 2007, its government offered free secondary school places to all children who passed the primary

leaving examination. This doubled the number moving up to secondary schools, but many dropped out having learned little.

Funded by a loan from the World Bank, the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda set out on the Lower Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Examination Reform Programme (CURASSE) – the first of its kind in Africa.

Between 2011 and 2014, Mott MacDonald supported the implementation of this transformational, £2,020,759 project, which also involved reworking an 18-month programme into 15 weeks.

Objectives

The CURASSE objective was to produce school leavers with science and technology skills, together with values relevant to their lives, their country and their continent.

These were to include increased awareness of HIV and AIDS and other health risks, respect for democracy, equality, race, gender, disability, human dignity, culture, life and social justice.

A curriculum framework that would have immediate impact had to be agreed before teams could begin work on the 11 syllabuses and learning materials. Ideas were to be trialled in classrooms, engaging pupils in a variety of learning contexts across the country before introducing this new holistic approach in 2017.

The Mott MacDonald team was committed to capacity development, participatory approaches and world-class standards.

Challenges

CURASSE had to be inclusive, meeting the needs of all of the country's pupils in content, difficulty and learning styles. It challenged the status quo, with many in high-ranking positions objecting to what they perceived as a dumbing-down of the curriculum.

This huge reform project was embedded into the National Curriculum Development Centre in Kampala, itself in desperate need of reform. Curriculum specialists did not know how to do their jobs, knew little about modern educational techniques and had low motivation levels. Their skills had to be developed at the same time as completely overhauling curriculum.

Due to reasons outside the project's control, the second phase of CURASSE was reduced from 18 months to just 15 weeks. A way had to be found to ensure that the critical deliverables at least were in place to enable teaching training and textbook development, but the specialist assistance needed to achieve this was unavailable in Uganda.

Resources

The Mott MacDonald team based itself at the NCDC offices, which was a huge shift for the client who had previously been used to consultancy teams working remotely from the actual issues.

By working alongside the client and liaising frequently with other departments and agencies, the team ensured that decisions were made locally and with all involved able to contribute.

In the early months, the focus was on collaboration to build a shared understanding of the situation and the scale of what lay ahead. The team ran a national campaign inviting suggestions from the public, culminating in a curriculum shaping day, leading to the curriculum wheel of eight sets of generic skills and values.

Results

This visionary project delivered a lasting legacy for the children of Uganda, despite the many cultural, historical and economic challenges. It helped decision-makers within the education system to embrace a curriculum that will engage and enable young people to participate in the global economy and improve their communities and society.

Exceptional project management skills ensured that baseline outcomes were delivered and leaving the client with the materials to take the reforms forward. A research-driven approach to creating the new curriculum changed the perception of how much could be achieved and now millions of children will receive an education fit for the 21st century in a country emerging from decades of violence.

The APM Project Management Awards have been celebrating project management excellence since 1993 and the broad range of categories is designed to make entry possible for projects and companies of all sizes and complexity.

The awards reflect the invaluable contribution project managers make in all sectors of society and the event provides an opportunity for industry professionals to meet with colleagues and entertain guests as well as celebrate at one of the year's most exciting events.

Highly regarded in the project management industry, the awards reflect the dedication and talent that helps to shape the project management community and the world around us. The finalists, winners and sponsors of the awards attract national publicity for their achievement and involvement. Winning an award provides invaluable recognition and kudos to the careers of winners.



For more details on the awards and how to enter or attend, visit apm.org.uk/awards or email awards@apm.org.uk

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