

# Implementation Evaluation of the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme (FLBP)

## What is the FLBP?

The FLBP was established in 2007 to attract greater numbers of students into initial teacher education (ITE). A full-cost bursary is provided to high-performing students who specialise in phases and subjects which are national priorities. Bursars are required to give back by teaching in public schools for the same number of years for which they receive a bursary. Approximately R2 billion of public funding was disbursed to 23,392 students during 2007–2012.

JET Education Services (JET) was commissioned by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and the Department of Basic Education to conduct an **implementation evaluation** to ascertain the **effectiveness** of the FLBP by assessing the **results** against the **intended outcomes** over the period 2007–2012.

## Key findings

### Relevance and appropriateness

- The programme is **relevant** in terms of government priorities.
- The programme is **appropriate** in terms of student needs and the implementation environment: it responds to the supply and demand requirements of the basic education system.
- Programme design is reviewed regularly and continual improvement is evident, such as introducing recruitment based on priority needs and district-based recruitment.

### Effectiveness

- The programme **contributed to a substantial increase in ITE enrolment**: FLBP funded students comprised **15% of national ITE enrolment between 2007–2012**.
- The bursary is **awarded to high quality students** (with good academic results).
- FLBP bursars are more likely to graduate in the minimum time, very few drop out and **the majority graduate**.
- The programme is highly effective: **83.5% of graduates are paying back by teaching in public schools**. However, there is no mechanism to track graduates and ascertain whether they fulfil their service obligations.
- The majority of **graduates are teaching priority subjects** but large numbers are not teaching the subjects they specialised in.

## Efficiency

- **Recruitment** works well: the number of applications is increasing year-on-year and students who meet the selection criteria are selected. However, marketing to rural and poor students could improve.
- **Selection** is efficient and thorough. However, selection takes place after the start of the academic year which affects registration and causes anxiety for financially needy students.
- **Funding** is sufficient to meet student needs; the programme is **cost-effective** and offers value-for-money. However, the timing of **disbursement** is problematic because of misalignment between the government fiscal and the academic years. Payment delays impact on financially needy students and affect the cash flow of universities that support students to bridge the gap.
- **Placement** occurs largely at provincial level and **inefficiencies** are outside the control of the

programme: although 83.5% of FLBP graduates were teaching in public schools, only 50.6% were in quintile 1–3 schools and 30.4% were not placed within 60-days, effectively freeing them from their service obligation.

- **Monitoring and data management** is weak and under-resourced. The system is primarily manual and does not allow the tracking of students across the various business processes of the FLBP.
- **Effective planning** is necessary to address misalignment between the government funding cycle and the academic year.
- There is strong **collaboration and commitment** amongst stakeholders to make the programme work.
- **Governance** is strong and **management** is effective but current capacity is inadequate for optimal performance and poses significant risks for future programme delivery.

## Sustainability

- There is a need to ensure adequate staffing and information management systems to **enhance** the **long-term sustainability** of the programme.

## Key recommendations

- 1 The programme is effective and should be sustained.
- 2 Develop a strategy and tools to project supply and demand to inform determination of priority subjects linked to broader education sector planning.
- 3 Put measures in place to bridge the gap between the start of the academic year and the disbursement of FLBP funding.
- 4 Consider a range of placement options, including direct application to schools, national placement and extending the 60-day placement period.
- 5 Develop a management information system to support all FLBP business processes.
- 6 Track graduates into placement and monitor fulfilment of their service obligations.

## The Key FLBP business processes

