The Path towards Improving Quality in the International Education Database

UIS efforts cut across many areas:
- Improving statistical quality, relevance, and policy use within countries;
- Improving availability of internationally comparable statistics;
- Analysis of cross-nationally comparable data.
Strategy

- Decision was made to focus on strategic opportunities and the ‘quick wins’.
- No formal framework has been adopted.
- Evolve into a model that suits:
  - the size of the organization;
  - the relative maturity of its processes;
  - product focused
  - applicable to the work environment and mission
Organizational Improvements

- Obtained political independence
  - Formally established Institute in November 1999
- Obtained physical separation
- Policy direction provided via High Level Governing Board since inception;
- Reviewed Human Resources
  - All positions opened up to competition – majority of all positions filled with new, highly qualified, inexperienced staff members.
Since 1999, focused on an evolutionary approach to continuous quality improvements.

Reviewed all outputs, cancelled some (yearbook) and focused on a broad range of products including targeted analytical reports, regional reports, and Global Education Digest.

Improved and extended electronic dissemination capabilities.

Built up strong relationships with key internal and external clients;
Survey Improvements

- Via stakeholder review (1998/99)
- Via process review
  - Reduced time-to-publish;
  - Improved incoming data (response rates and quality);
  - Increased quality in internal processes;
  - Enhanced overall processing and dissemination systems;
  - Increased metadata availability;
Country Focus

- Capacity Building
  - Broad Scope via Regional Workshops
    » Get to know data providers / build up contact lists;
    » Train data providers on survey instruments;
    » Train staff on survey instruments, working in international organization, working with countries.
  - Targeted activities
    » Extended IMF DQAF for education statistics
    » Long-term engagements with education ministries via specific funding initiatives and regionally based UIS staff
Process of Engagement

- Seeking quality improvements both within mandates as well as institute wide;
- Developing formal processes
  - Execute -> Review -> Revise -> Repeat
- Self assessment programme initiated in 2003
  - At the organizational level via offsite retreat for all staff and a second retreat restricted solely to senior staff.
- Working groups formed with representation from all areas of the organization to tackle initiatives with broad impact (eg. WG on adhoc data requests).
• Creation of a centralized independent institute has proven to be an enabler;
• Location in Montreal hampers communications, efficiency, budget! Degree of autonomy from UNESCO unclear.
• Almost complete loss of corporate knowledge severely impacted early operations of Institute; At the same time, this has provided opportunity for change.
• The quality efforts have already resulted in concrete improvements to both processes and products;
The Positives

- Empowering managers and employees to speak out and act has:
  - Made significant improvements in many areas of the organization, processes, and products in relatively short time period;
  - proven to be effective for a young, small (65 FTE) organization;
  - enabled buy-in from employees;
  - Avoided burden of implementing framework in an organization with effectively no corporate memory or capacity to absorb resource overheads
The Opportunities

- Quality metrics;
- Systematic sharing of ‘good practices’;
- Self Assessment tools for survey products to aid structure / consistency of assessment.
- Use of client-satisfaction-surveys to provide additional and valuable input to the review processes.
Thank You

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