

Working collaboratively with private-sector partners in the evaluation of ICT for education initiatives: reflections on challenges encountered in the field

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Thesis research

*Exploring alternative approaches to the
monitoring and evaluation of ICT for
education initiatives in Africa*

Aspiration

Pedagogy

Power

Partnership



Structure

- Risks and rationale
- Method and choice of partners
- Challenges, dilemmas and lessons
- Conclusion – keeping critical



Risks and rationale

- Commodified research (Heyman 2000)
- Rise of the corporatised university (Gibson 1998)
- Problematise the ‘D’ – the best place to start!
- Values are not the same
- Solution cannot be to disengage

Choice of partners - EuroTalk

- London-based language learning software company
- In Malawi since 2005 in partnership with MoE
- Interactive learning for 50 primary schools
- Three stage monitoring and evaluation exercise



Choice of partners - Eduvision

- Swiss education company operating since 2005
- Working in Ethiopia with MoCB
- To provide content for \$100 laptops in 5 schools
- Multiple partners





Rationale for choice of partners

- Programmes operational and fitted in PhD timeframe
- Each initiative was potentially viable
- Commitment to invest time and resources into M&E
- Welcomed academic input to inform approach
- Keen to be flexible and engage with innovative approaches



Challenges, dilemmas and lessons

- Parameters
- Mindset
- Time
- Language
- Ethics



Mindset

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

- Einstein

The current obsession with almost instant, demonstrable impact is distorting and needs challenging at every level.

**- Wallace and
Chapman 2004**



Conclusion

- Compromise is vital but decide what is non-negotiable
- Conflict will occur all the time
- Critical analysis is the foundation