

# 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) training. A full-cost bursary is provided to high-performing students who specialise in phases and subjects which are priorities for South Africa. Bursars are required to give back by teaching in public schools for the same number of years that they receive a bursary: 23,392 students received bursaries between 2007 and 2012, which is 15% of the total ITE enrolment during this time.

An **implementation evaluation** was commissioned, covering the period 2007-2012, to ascertain the effectiveness of the FLBP.

## Key findings

### Programme design

- The FLBP responds to the supply and demand requirements of the basic education system.
- The programme design is reviewed regularly and continual improvement is evident, such as introducing recruitment based on priority needs.
- The bursary is awarded on the basis of merit, i.e. academic performance. Having “a passion for teaching” was also identified as an important consideration.

### Effectiveness

- The programme contributed to a substantial increase in ITE enrolment between 2007-2012.
- The bursary has been awarded to high quality students (with good academic results).
- FLBP bursars are more likely to graduate in the minimum time than is expected on average. Very small numbers drop out and the majority graduate.
- The majority 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 who are teaching are teaching a priority subject, but large numbers are not teaching the subjects they specialised in.
- There is strong collaboration and commitment amongst varied stakeholders to make the Programme work.
- More effective planning is necessary to address misalignment between the government funding cycle and the academic year.

## Efficiency

- **Recruitment** generally works well, as the Programme is able to select students who meet the selection criteria. The number of applications is increasing year-on-year. Marketing to rural and poor students could improve and means testing could be considered to determine relative need.
- **Selection** is efficient and thorough. However, selection takes place after the start of the start of the academic year. This affects registration and cause anxiety for financially needy students.
- **Funding** is sufficient to meet student needs. However, the timing of **disbursement** is problematic because of misalignment between the government fiscal and the academic year; delays in payments impact on financially needy students meeting their basic needs and affects the cash flow of universities that support students to bridge the gap.
- **Placement** occurs largely at provincial level and the programme has limited monitoring system. Inefficiencies are largely 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, tracking and data management** is weak and under-resourced. The system is primarily manual and does not allow the monitoring or tracking of students across the various business processes of the FLBP.

## Sustainability

- There is a need to ensure adequate staffing and information management systems to enhance the 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 Consider a mechanism to determine relative financial need of applicants to better target needy students.
- 4 Put measures in place to bridge the gap between the start of the academic year and the disbursement of FLBP funding.
- 5 Consider a range of placement options including: direct application to schools, national placement and extending the 60-day placement period.
- 6 Develop a management information system to support all FLBP business processes.
- 7 Track graduates into placement and monitor fulfilment of their service obligations.

## The Key FLBP business processes

