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Nordic Consulting Group, Sweden AB

Evaluation of Sida's Support to Education

Lessons Learned from 20 Years and Five Countries

Final report



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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Foreword

Education plays a fundamental role for human, social and economic development, and is one of the Sustainable Development Goals in Agenda 2030. It is well known, that access to education increases a person's opportunity to influence life, and fully participate in society. Education is hence key for the advancement of an open, democratic society, economic development and gender equality.

Sida is a long-standing donor of educational support with a holistic approach to learning, covering all educational levels – from early childhood education, through primary and secondary education, to technical and vocational education, higher education and lifelong learning. Sida's support focusses on education systems and is aligned to a national strategy or plan, implemented by the partner government or recipient organisation. The support is directed to the country's own systems to the fullest extent possible. This approach differs Sida from other development partners.

Until the mid-2000's, Swedish support to education had an important role in most partner countries, but has since then gradually decreased. The share of Sida's support to education in relation to the total cooperation budget has decreased from 7.8 per cent in 1999 to 3 per cent in 2021. The decrease has foremost affected bilateral cooperation – education was prioritised in fifteen country strategies in 2006, and in four country strategies in 2021.

Against this background, in 2020, Sida's Director General decided to commission an evaluation of the effects of Sida's long-term support to education. The purpose of the evaluation is to systematise knowledge, to generate lessons learned, and to study to what extent Sida's support to education has contributed to building sustainable long-term effects. The evaluation concludes that Sida's systems approach has had positive effects on the national education systems. Sida has contributed to increased access to education facilities for children (boys and girls equally) in partner countries. Further, Sida support has contributed to better access to quality education for children who have special needs.

We wish to express our thanks to the evaluation team and all individuals – including staff at Sida, foreign missions and cooperation partner organisations – who participated in the evaluation. It is our hope that this report will serve those who are involved in decision making regarding support to education at Sida and foreign missions, and provide input to upcoming discussions concerning Sweden's added value in support to education in partner countries, and education as a priority area in bilateral strategies.

The report has been written by an external evaluation team commissioned by Sida. The analysis, conclusions and recommendations are the authors'.

Sundbyberg, 24 October 2022

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

(K)EQ	(Key) evaluation questions
BEMIS	Basic Education Management Information System
BESAF	Better Education for Afghanistan's Future
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EBA	Expertgruppen för Biståndsanalys (Expert Group on Aid Analysis)
EPforR	Education Programme for Results
FGD	Focus group discussion
GAML	Global Alliance to Measure Learning
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
IIEP	International Institute for Education and Planning
KII	Key informant interview
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MLE	Multilingual Education
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MSC	Most significant change
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OH	Outcome harvesting
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PEFA	Public expenditure and financial accountability
PFM	Public finance management
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PISA-D	PISA for Development
PoP	Perspectives on Poverty
PoP	Perspectives on Poverty
PT	Process tracing
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
RBM	Results-based management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToC	Theory of change
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UFE	Utilization-focused evaluation
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar

Preface

This is the final report of the *Evaluation of Sida's Support to Education: Lessons Learned from 20 Years and Five Countries*, commissioned by Sida's Unit for Policy Support (See Annex 1: Terms of Reference). In May 2021, Sida commissioned Nordic Consulting Group–NCG Sweden AB to undertake an evaluation of 20 years of Swedish support to the education sector, with a specific focus on the impact and sustainability of that support. It was agreed that the output for this evaluation would include a comprehensive report that would bring together the totality of the findings produced through case studies and a general review of the relevant data on experiences in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia and Tanzania, as well as a Case Study Report for Cambodia.¹ This present report is accompanied by a web-based dashboard² that permits users to review statistics relevant to the case study countries, and by a summary video³ that presents the main findings of the evaluation. The evaluation team was made up of a core group that consisted of Ananda S. Millard, PhD (team leader); May Pettigrew; Matti Tedre, PhD; Anka Kitunzi, PhD; Suzana Zivkovic (team members); and Dolf Noppen (overall quality assurance) and Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic (specific quality assurance); in addition, a national expert was included for each country study: Pilar Uriona (Bolivia), Mehgna Guhathakurta (Bangladesh), Loeurt To (Cambodia) and Kenny Manara (Tanzania).⁴ The report has been professionally copy-edited by John Carville.

The team wishes to extend its special thanks to Sida for entrusting NCG with this assignment, as well as to all respondents who agreed to share their views, experiences and perspectives. Without the latter's invaluable insights, this assignment would not have been possible.

¹ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

² <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com/> User name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20

³ <https://prezi.com/v/view/nHChH9e9r2pETVsRBkJo/>.

⁴ To protect their safety at a time of considerable uncertainty, details for the consultants who supported the Afghanistan case study are not provided.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Sida has engaged in normative dialogue with and provided financial contributions to the education sector using a systems approach and adhering to a number of principles and approaches that are currently considered best practice (e.g. a focus on capacity development and aid effectiveness together with the inclusion of both a development perspective and a programme-based approach) in an effort to secure a reduction in multidimensional poverty and an improvement in gender equality. This report examines Sida's support to the education sector over the last 20 years and specifically how this support has impacted, has had the potential to impact or has led to sustainable gains in relation to multidimensional poverty reduction and gender equality (i.e. improved or increased gender equality), with a particular focus on the last 10 years. Specifically, the evaluation has aimed to respond to four evaluation questions (See Key Findings).

The support provided by Sida to the education sector decreased from 7.6% of total Sida support in 1999 to 4% in 2019. Still, across all case study countries, Sida's past and/or present engagement was viewed as being highly relevant for and playing an important role in the achievement of results.

Methodology

A diagnostic theory-based evaluation approach⁵ has inspired the overall evaluation. Such an approach makes it possible to pursue the 'if/where, how and why' line of inquiry. More specifically, a diagnostic approach seeks to interpret empirical observations to identify if/where/how the identified object – in this case, the support provided by Sida – is producing the observed phenomena. A diagnostic theory-based evaluation focuses on hypotheses and their testing to understand the true nature of a process or mechanism observed. For this evaluation, the theories identified were based on observations reported (outcomes). The implementation of the approach was based on the combined use of outcome harvesting⁶ and process tracing.⁷

Data reviewed included a range of documents (See Bibliography) and original data collection including interviews and focus groups (See Annex 4 and 5). The data collection relied on document review and a variety of tools for collecting original data. Interviews used a case history and semi-structured interview modality, and the types of data they aimed to collect included 'most significant change' data. The assignment faced challenges and limitations related to a wide range of issues, a number of them linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility of visiting the case study countries or engaging face to face with end-beneficiaries. These shortcomings aside, the evaluation was able to amass a robust dataset.

The processing and analysis of data included the use of the above-mentioned approaches, as well as qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). Interviews were transcribed using Sonix. All data except for QCA data were processed using MAXQDA.

Key Findings

KEQ 1: The data collected during this study show that Sida's support has generated high-level effects (i.e. at the system level). This is specifically evidenced by the following four manifestations of positive impact:

⁵ Befani, Barbara (2020) 'Quality of Quality: A Diagnostic Approach to Qualitative Evaluation', *Evaluation* 26(3): 333–349.

⁶ Wilson-Grau, Ricardo (2018) *Outcome Harvesting: Principles, Steps and Evaluation Application*, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. See also https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting; <https://outcomeharvesting.net>.

⁷ Collier, David (2011) 'Understanding Process Tracing', *Political Science and Politics* 44(4): 823–830. See also <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Process-tracing.pdf>; https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322266946_Straws-in-the-wind_Hoops_and_Smoking_Guns_What_can_Process_Tracing_Offer_to_Impact_Evaluation.

Key Finding 1: Through its support, Sida has contributed to the increase in access to education facilities for children (boys and girls equally), both generally and for specific groups (See also EQ 2).

Key Finding 2: Through its support, Sida has contributed to the increased access to quality education for children who have special requirements/needs (See also EQ 2).

Key Finding 3: Through its support, Sida has contributed to promoting the identification of linkages between education received and employment opportunities available for children/youth.

Key Finding 4: Through its support, Sida has contributed to improving, or increasing the potential to improve, transparency and accountability within the education system.

Key Finding 5: Although Sida has consistently highlighted the importance of quality education, most children across most countries do not have access to good quality education.

Findings 1–3 have been dependent on several facilitating characteristics. These characteristics include ensuring that support was nested within the educational system of the country; ensuring that schools were built in close proximity to children’s homes; ensuring that lessons were imparted at a time that enabled children to participate (particularly relevant for working children or children with household responsibilities); sufficient and qualified school staff (management and teaching); ensuring that education was fee-free; ensuring that education facilities met basic standards (e.g. accessibility for movement-impaired children; sanitary facilities); ensuring that the provision of education addressed prejudices and that the school environment was prejudice-free or at least actively discouraged attitudes or behaviour that might prevent children who may experience prejudice from attending.

Overall, the ability to make headway in the provision of education was dependent on the political will of the government of the country supported; the existence of broad supporting policies; clear shared objectives between the beneficiary government and its corresponding education agency (i.e. ministry of education) and Sida; the ability of the supported agency to make use of the support provided; and levels of corruption that did not hinder the development of the education sector. The role played by the individual Sida representative in the country was also a determinant of the success of Sida’s efforts.

A critical shortcoming faced by the education system in most countries studied relates to the quality of education provided. The data collected for this evaluation show that in order for Sida to secure its overarching goals – multidimensional poverty reduction and improved gender equality – the education provided must be of good quality.

KEQ 2: Sida has supported people living in poverty, and specifically vulnerable children, including children living with disabilities, children from ethnic minority groups, working children and girls. The Sida support has enabled these groups of children to access education, and in certain instances has led to an improvement in the quality of the education provided to them.

In multiple instances, the support provided to children who are particularly vulnerable has served to illustrate that the provision of quality education is possible. The data collected further illustrate the importance, and value, of good quality education. Indeed, instances where pupils received good quality education showed considerable promise in relation to improved gender equality and reduction of multidimensional poverty.

KEQ 3: The data collected during this evaluation show that different interventions funded by Sida have achieved different dimensions of sustainability. The data also show that where sustainability has not been achieved or a particular dimension has not been attained, critical elements are in place for the different dimensions of sustainability to be achieved. The data also show that some dimensions of sustainability are more fragile or susceptible to environmental contexts than others.

Overall, the data make a strong argument in favour of Sida’s systems approach, which has combined providing broad support to government education structures with the use of small targeted interventions to test education modalities (i.e. multilingual education models, teaching for working children, etc.). Education modalities that have proved to work are then integrated into the broader education system.

KEQ 4: Sida has played an important role in supporting compliance with the fundamental human rights of all primary school children (See EQ 1), while its focus has placed specific

attention on marginalized or disadvantaged groups (See EQ 2). Sida has also consistently supported gender equality in education (See EQs 1 and 2).

Sida has been consistent in its position on and support for fundamental human rights and gender equality. The data show a tendency to focus on access to education for the general population, and a stronger focus on quality for smaller interventions focused on specifically vulnerable groups. The results of both efforts suggest that there is considerable work to be done by host governments, and by donors, such as Sida, to ensure that all primary school children, girls and boys, are able to access a good quality education (a fundamental human right).

Conclusions:

Support to education cannot by itself accomplish the goals of reducing multidimensional poverty and increasing gender equality, but the achievement of those two overarching objectives is dependent on the existence of a functioning educational system that provides quality education for all.

Sida's use of a systems approach has been positive because it ensured both that Sida's support approached the education sector from multiple angles and that the education system as a whole was strengthened. The findings of this evaluation demonstrate that, in addition to using a systems approach, it is critical that the education sector be viewed or understood as a complex ecosystem with numerous eco-subsystems, and that steps be taken to ensure that each eco-subsystem functions well as a foundation for the functioning of the whole ecosystem. While Sida cannot be expected to support each element of any one eco-subsystem, and certainly not the whole educational ecosystem, it is important that Sida assess the whole ecosystem and determine where its funding will be most appropriate and who else is engaged to ensure that Sida's own funding contributes in a way that it can lead to effective benefit. Failure to do so may mean that critical elements of an eco-subsystem are not supported, which in turn may mean that even the adoption of a systems approach may not produce the desired results.

Lessons Learned

These lessons focus on how to improve the role education can have in reducing multidimensional poverty and improving gender equality.

Education system – ecosystems and eco-subsystems: This study suggests that while limited progress can be attained from investing in single elements within a particular type of input, attention needs to be given to ensuring that all elements within an eco-subsystem are addressed – for example, all types of operational support (the operational eco-subsystem). Failure to do this means that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to attain expected results. While each context is different, ensuring that all strategic and operational aspects of the education system are able to function is important for ensuring that the whole system operates effectively and yields the expected results (quality education for all).

Quality and education systems: Poor-quality learning was a feature of all cases studied and indeed reflects a common weakness in education across the developing world that is of increasing global concern.⁸ Both Tikly's work⁹ and our own ecosystem theory of change illustrate how reforming education for quality outcomes requires identifying all key parameters and interdependencies and addressing them systemically (education system). Sida has focused attention on quality, but identifying mechanisms to ensure that quality is more effectively and consistently addressed has been difficult. Current efforts to expand the use of all available information at Sida's disposal in the design of robust approaches that can place quality education as a key goal will be important for ensuring that Sida is able to achieve its overarching goals (multidimensional poverty reduction and gender equality).

Conditions: There is no easy yes or no response to whether conditions should or should not be introduced into funding support mechanisms. However, having no clear expectation or any form of deadline for when a particular result (e.g., establishment/use of mechanism, system or operational reform, learning outcome, etc.) should be achieved can lead to slow progress, or even no progress, and make it possible to overlook elements that are critical for the achievement of success. The introduction of conditions needs to be tied to elements that are agreed to by all stakeholders and that are considered

⁸ Azevedo, J. P. (2020) 'Learning Poverty: Measures and Simulations', Policy Research Working Paper 9446, Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁹ Tikly, L. (2011) 'Towards a Framework for Researching the Quality of Education in Low-Income Countries', Comparative Education 47(1): 1–23.

valuable yardsticks and are attainable. Such conditions can be tied to the different phases of provision of support or linked to changes made within the system.

Spheres of influence: Education alone cannot achieve gender equality or reduce multidimensional poverty, but it can play a fundamental role in efforts to achieve those goals if the education is accessible to all and includes a clear gender-transformative agenda. Engaging in society in an economic, social and political way (addressing multidimensional poverty) requires that other areas also be addressed. In relation to economic engagement, this calls for clear articulation with other forms of support – such as employment opportunities, an improved business environment, improved farming practices, etc. However, when it comes to social and political engagement, the overarching context itself must enable this.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Context and synergies: Before determining where and/or on what Sida should focus its attention, it is recommended that Sida engage in and encourage dialogue with the host government, other donors and civil society actors in an effort to identify discrete opportunities where Sida can fill gaps or dislodge bottlenecks through the provision of funding. This process should be central to identifying and determining where Sida is best able to generate change.

Recommendation 2 – System and synergies: It is recommended that Sida ensure that its efforts are well articulated at the following key levels:

1. All Sida's efforts should be integrated into a systems approach. This means that smaller interventions intended to test intervention modalities should be designed in ways that permit their upscaling and integration into the education system if they prove successful.
2. Sida should ensure that its activities in the education sector are well articulated with existing activities in that sector (within the eco-system and relevant eco-subsystems). Specifically, this means that activities supported by Sida should feed into an aspect of the education system in ways that will enable their utility/value to be realized.
3. Sida should also ensure that activities funded in the education sector are well articulated with its activities in other sectors – for example, Sida's support to higher education (universities), support to TVET (when that is regarded as being outside the education system), and support to democratization, economic and market development, employment, etc.

Recommendation 3 – Key elements to ensure a working system: Lessons from different case-study countries highlight some aspects of the education system that are particularly critical and need to be taken into consideration when deciding to fund education activities. It is recommended that Sida consider these lessons and experiences when determining where and on what it should focus its interventions across all countries it considers investing in:

1. Transparent and accountable planning, implementation and accountability systems are required to ensure transparent Public Financial Management, therefore Sida should ensure that these mechanisms are put into place as part of funding provided or exist prior to funding.
2. An operational data collection, management and use system is critical to determining whether progress is being achieved.
3. There should be a clear, shared and concrete understanding regarding what quality of education means in the particular context in question (See Recommendation 6). The definition agreed upon locally must consider that there are a multiplicity of inter-related and interdependent prerequisites that must be in place and operating effectively for the realization of a quality education system. These relate to issues of: infrastructure; class size and times; teacher conditions, training and pedagogical effectiveness; curriculum and materials; assessment regimes; management, administration and governance at national, regional, local and school levels; home and community conditions; learner accessibility (health, sanitation, safety and disadvantages faced by members of linguistic minorities, particular ethnicities, the disabled or working children, etc.); policies and legislative framework.

Recommendation 4 – Conditions: There needs to be increased focus on what can be realistically measured and achieved. Goalposts should be clearly defined and framed within clear and realistic timeframes. Conditions established to measure progress should be the product of a dialogue with the host government and should look at long-term objectives, but should also permit the visualization of progress. Examples of co-creation and systems-strengthening can be drawn from Sida's experiences with result-driven programmes, especially those where close collaboration with other stakeholders, along with partners' expertise and commitment, has been key.

Recommendation 5 – Quality of education: It is recommended that Sida use a broad definition to frame what it means by quality of education. In addition, when work starts on an intervention in a particular country, Sida should recognize that each project is unique and is conducted in a specific context, and that what quality means for each intervention therefore also requires clear definitions. The complex and multifaceted concept of quality is often more easily approached in terms of more fine-grained preconditions for quality. The following three steps be included to ensure a robust and collective understanding, and assurance of quality, from the start of any intervention: (1) a consensus over all the relevant components of quality and its preconditions be clearly defined and integrated into the co-design of projects from the start; (2) that the definition of quality be well articulated within other sectors and society at large; and (3) that the definition of quality be integrated into how Sida supports (support plan) the sector.

Recommendation 6 – Gender transformation: It is recommended that Sida, within their work on education, focus attention on the systematic introduction of a gender transformative approach across interventions. Specifically, this means ensuring that: a) support for the development of policies and strategies place gender equality at the heart of the documents developed; b) support for development of budgets and budget support includes clear gender equality markers; c) teaching practices/methods, promote gender equality in the classrooms and challenge gender inequalities; d) gender transformative modules are included in curricula; e) all teaching material promotes gender equality; f) school environments are safe for all genders; g) health and protection services are considered a key element of education to promote safe and gender sensitive education facilities; h) support for grassroot efforts to transform local views and perspectives on gender to ensure that pupils go home to homes/communities that embrace gender equality.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Efforts to improve the provision of quality education in developing countries may sometimes appear futile in the face of studies such as those carried out in 2019 by the World Bank in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics and the Global Alliance to Measure Learning (GAML), which drew on national and cross-national learning assessment data across 100 low- and middle-income countries and found that at least 53% of all children in these countries were not able to read proficiently by age 10 – or even at age 12. In some regions, the literacy levels were even lower: in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, learning poverty is close to 87%.¹⁰ Likewise in 2018, the Programme for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D) consolidated report showed that while enrolment in primary school had risen in the report's case study countries – namely, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras and Senegal – less than half of all children reached Grade 7 (43%). Of those, only 15% achieved minimum skills in reading, and only 10% in mathematics, despite the fact that almost half of the children tested had attended nine years of school.¹¹ While the countries in the PISA-D consolidated report are not the same as those included in the present evaluation, the data for Cambodia – the only country in the present evaluation in which a PISA-D study has been conducted – are equally disappointing (See Cambodia Case Study¹²). Nevertheless, since the critical role of education as a means of reducing multidimensional poverty and achieving gender equality cannot be overstated,¹³ it is essential to find ways to ensure that learning outcomes improve; to shed light into what has or has not worked, where and how; and to identify what the principal pitfalls for securing a quality education for all might be.

Identifying where impact has been recorded and where sustainability has been achieved is critically important. Highlighting the meaningful single or multiple education interventions that may contribute to the fostering of a global population that enjoys gender equality and is not affected by the perils of multidimensional poverty is no easy task given the litany of structural and systemic challenges with which it is confronted. In the face of such challenges, how can Sida make best use of its resources and contribute to meaningful change? The evaluation presented here aims to shed light on this issue by answering four key questions that are focused on the impact and sustainability of efforts conducted over the last 20 years (See Figure 1 and Annex 1: Terms of Reference).

In recognition of how difficult it can be to identify real-world tangible impact and verifiably sustainable results, this evaluation has sought to identify outcomes that can be documented and traced, from which demonstrable positive or negative impacts can be gleaned, and/or that show verifiable levels of sustainability. This approach, which is further described in the section on methodology, has allowed the evaluation team to focus on experiences that have generated results in an effort to identify lessons that might facilitate both the multiplication of successful experiences and the avoidance of less successful approaches. Accordingly, the evaluation has not treated the education sector – or Sida's contribution to it – as a single cohesive environment where results might apply to the totality of the sector, or even to the areas to which most of Sida's contribution has been directed, but has rather aimed to identify important 'beacons of light' within a complex and vast expanse of shadows and then explore how these beacons of light were generated, developed, and have been or can be strengthened. The adoption of such approach has meant that the evaluation, on the one hand, could address questions about system-level support, but, on the other, could also look at smaller interventions and identify from among them those that have shown promise, along with those that have not.

¹⁰ Azevedo, J. P. W. D., Crawford, M. F., Nayar, R., Rogers, F. H., Barron Rodriguez, M. R., Ding, E. Y. Z., Arias Diaz, O. S. (2019). Ending Learning Poverty: What Will It Take? Washington: World Bank

¹¹ <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-for-development/> (accessed 20 January 2022).

See also <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/what-pisa-development-results-tell-us-about-education-access-and-learning-levels> (accessed 20 January 2022).

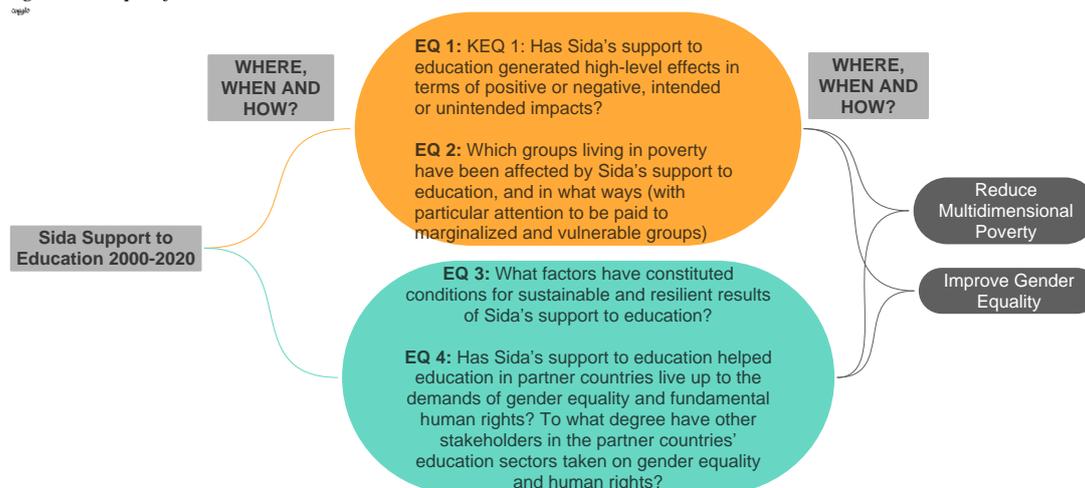
¹² See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹³ See <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-07-kix-gender-final-english.pdf> (accessed 20 January 2022).

1.2 Objective

In order to respond to the four evaluation questions (EQs), which focus on impact and sustainability, the evaluation has sought to identify **where, when and how** Sida's support to the education sector over the last 20 years has impacted, has had the potential to impact or has led to sustainable gains in relation to multidimensional poverty reduction and gender equality (i.e. improved or increased gender equality), with a particular focus on the last 10 years. Based on the findings and traced to the responses provided in the findings section, the conclusion to this report sets out the theory of change that was identified during the course of the evaluation. *Figure 1* presents the four EQs, as well as the overarching objectives of Sida support:¹⁴

Figure 1 Scope of the Evaluation



1.3 Methodology

A robust methodology was employed for this evaluation, the key elements of which are presented in Annex 6. Designing a methodological approach that could deliver on the demands of the assignment required considerable foresight and flexibility. The evaluation had to contend with the long period of time under study, case study countries with different timelines, different degrees of detail in the documentation on different cases, and challenges related to the experiential recall of those involved in the support provided by Sida. The evaluation required the use of a case study approach to identify and isolate impacts and sustainable results that could be meaningful in a broad sense. The evaluation team therefore identified a series of methodological approaches that, used in combination, could deliver the types of results expected. As with many complex evaluations, however, it was necessary to tailor the various approaches and methods to the particular purposes for which they would be used.

Use of a **diagnostic theory-based evaluation approach**¹⁵ inspired the overall evaluation. Such an approach makes it possible to pursue an 'if/where, how and why' line of inquiry. More specifically, a diagnostic approach seeks to interpret empirical observations to identify if/where/how the identified object – in this case the support provided by Sida – is producing the observed phenomena. In the context of this assignment, the use of such a process required that the evaluation team identify outcomes that could be linked to Sida support and explore what led to them. A diagnostic theory-based evaluation focuses on hypotheses and their testing to enable understanding of the true nature of a process or mechanism observed. For this evaluation, the theories identified were based on observations reported (outcomes). The implementation of the approach was based on the combined use of **outcome**

¹⁴ This evaluation does not explore the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, or other key and recognized OECD DAC criteria, of the support provided.

¹⁵ Befani, Barbara (2020) 'Quality of Quality: A Diagnostic Approach to Qualitative Evaluation', *Evaluation* 26(3): 333–349.

harvesting (OH),¹⁶ and **process tracing (PT)**.¹⁷ Outcomes harvested were subject to scrutiny during data collection. Once an outcome was verified through the data collected, a hypothesis was identified to explain the occurrence of the outcome. Hypotheses were then tested using PT. The aforementioned steps make use of both qualitative and quantitative data in the formation of a qualitative assessment, through PT reasoning, of the likelihood of a particular result. The different steps taken to collect, analyse and process data are explored in more detail in Annexes 6-8.

Five countries were selected for case studies: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia and Tanzania. Both the selection process and the reasons for the choices made were detailed in the Terms of Reference and confirmed in the Inception Report. Each country was chosen because it represented a distinct experience. The case studies were used as a foundation for the information provided in the report.

A range of challenges and limitations, which are listed and explained in detail in Annex 6, have impacted this evaluation. The following key ones deserve mention here. First, the ways in which Sida has supported the sector and engaged with other donors, as well as the ways in which the sector has been funded, made it impossible to distinguish between results derived from Sida support and results derived from other funding. Accordingly, this assignment focuses on contribution rather than attribution. Second, COVID-19 prevented almost all in-person engagement with respondents and even excluded some groups from engagement. Despite these challenges, however, there is no evidence to suggest the findings would have differed had the evaluation taken place at a time without an ongoing pandemic. Third, an effort to assess normative dialogue did not yield clear outcomes because the available documentation does not provide details of how such dialogue was used. Nor does it elaborate in any detail on how key elements were understood or how thinking about them evolved over time.

1.4 Understanding Sida's support

This subsection explores Swedish development cooperation thinking and serves as a backdrop for understanding both the methodological choices made in the evaluation (Section 1.3) and the latter's findings (Chapter 2). Support for multidimensional poverty and gender equality, the two main concepts against which this evaluation is intended to measure results, has a long history in Swedish development cooperation.¹⁸ Given the importance of these two concepts for this evaluation, specific attention is devoted to them here.

Aside from the general policy trends and focus of Sida's development aid support, mentioned above, Sida has approached the provision of support to education through the use of a *systems approach* that aims to ensure that support provided to any one element fits within a broader, complex, non-linear set

¹⁶ Wilson-Grau, Ricardo (2018) Outcome Harvesting: Principles, Steps and Evaluation Application, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. See also https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting; <https://outcomeharvesting.net>.

¹⁷ Collier, David (2011) 'Understanding Process Tracing', *Political Science and Politics* 44(4): 823–830. See also <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Process-tracing.pdf>; https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322266946_Straws-in-the-wind_Hoops_and_Smoking_Guns_What_can_Process_Tracing_Offer_to_Impact_Evaluation.

¹⁸ See Dahl, G. (2001) 'Irresponsibility and Partnership in Swedish Aid Discourse', discussion paper, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Schraeder, P. J., Hook, S. W., and Taylor, B. (1998) 'Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows', *World Politics* 50(2): 294–323. It was noted that the balance between solidarity and trade as leading priorities was contingent, in part, on the country's level of development. See Gynberg, V. B. (2013) 'Aiding Science: Swedish Research Aid Policy 1973–2008', Linköping Studies in Arts and Science no. 594, Linköping: Department of Thematic Studies – Technology and Social Change, Linköping University.

Schraeder, P. J., Hook, S. W., and Taylor, B. (1998) 'Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows', *World Politics* 50(2): 294–323.

Harsmar, Mats (2010) 'Swedish Aid: A Multi-Purpose Tool for Globalization', *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* 19(3): 38–57.

See Gynberg, V. B. (2013) 'Aiding Science: Swedish Research Aid Policy 1973–2008', Linköping Studies in Arts and Science no. 594, Linköping: Department of Thematic Studies – Technology and Social Change, Linköping University.

Carlsson, J. (1998) 'Swedish Aid for Poverty Reduction: A History of Policy and Practice', ODI Working Paper 107, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute. See also <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/>. Gynberg, V. B. (2015) 'An Analysis of Swedish Research Aid Policy 1973–2008', dissertation brief, Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys.

See also Gynberg, V. B. (2013) 'Aiding Science: Swedish Research Aid Policy 1973–2008', Linköping Studies in Arts and Science no. 594, Linköping: Department of Thematic Studies – Technology and Social Change, Linköping University.

Carlsson, J. (1998) 'Swedish Aid for Poverty Reduction: A History of Policy and Practice', ODI Working Paper 107, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute. See also <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/>. Gynberg, V. B. (2015) 'An Analysis of Swedish Research Aid Policy 1973–2008', dissertation brief, Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys.

<https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida646en-perspectives-on-poverty.pdf> (accessed 25 April 2022).

of elements. Sida's approach to supporting education through the use of a systems approach has paid attention, on the one side, to the complexity found within the education system and, on the other, to ensuring that whatever Sida has engaged in more specifically has been or is nested within or aligned with the policies and strategies of the funding recipient – the partner government or organization engaged with – as well as other donors supporting the education sector. This type of alignment has aimed to ensure that relevant elements of the education system have not been overlooked, that the system's complexity is recognized, and that critical elements are addressed.¹⁹

Within the overarching effort to support education using a systems-based approach, Sida support adhered to critical principles aligned with the terms of the 2005 Paris Declaration, which calls for aid effectiveness²⁰ and for development to be sustainable,²¹ and also conformed with key Sida perspectives related to gender, climate, poor people, conflict and rights. All of these perspectives have a critical role in education and are accordingly discussed in the report where they are relevant. However, given the focus of this evaluation on multidimensional poverty and gender equality, the latter two issues are dealt with in greater depth in the following subsections. The relationship between support to education and the aforementioned elements is presented graphically in the theory of change (See Section 3: The Theory of Change).

1.4.1 Multidimensional Poverty: The Swedish Definition and What It Means for Education

The Swedish focus on poverty alleviation, justice and equality dates back to at least 1962, when Government Bill 100 was written, but significant developments have taken place since that time.²² The origins of the current concept of multidimensional poverty date back to 2002 and a document on 'Perspectives on Poverty' (PoP) that has since been updated to incorporate subsequent global changes and trends related to progress – or the lack of it – in development. Despite considerable progress since 2000 in the areas of health, education (especially for girls) and income generation (the number of people living in extreme income poverty – i.e., below USD 1.90 per day – which halved over the period from 1990 to 2012), *income inequality* is a persistent challenge. More specifically, while there has been a noted reduction in terms of inequality *between* countries, there has been an increase in inequality *within* countries, with certain groups (e.g. indigenous peoples) being particularly affected and often left behind.²³ Other changes include a shrinking democratic space and persistent gender inequality, including gender gaps in multiple sectors that include education, where they specifically relate to access to quality education and consistent enrolment.²⁴ Environmental degradation is a continuing problem; conflict and insecurity are increasing; and technological development is not benefiting all equally, etc.²⁵ These conditions have highlighted the need for poverty to be understood in a more comprehensive way, and a recognition of the relationship between the above-mentioned factors and poverty lies at the core of the current definition of multidimensional poverty used by Sida, which is built around four key dimensions: (1) resources, (2) opportunities and choice, (3) power and voice, and (4) human security. Unlike the 2002 PoP definition, this definition thus includes human security, reflecting the impact conflict and violence have on people living in poverty.²⁶

Below, we provide a summary of how these four dimensions are understood within Sida and current Swedish development cooperation thinking:

1. **Resources:** This dimension focuses on access (or the lack thereof) to the resources needed to meet basic human needs. These include both material and non-material resources. In the context of education, such resources can relate to having access to education, being educated,

¹⁹ See Sida (2008) 'Guidance on Programme Based-Approaches', available at <https://www.sida.se/contentassets/19799ad815064543a3ce57757fb980da/14625.pdf> (accessed 20 January 2022).

²⁰ See <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm> (accessed 20 March 2022).

²¹ See <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> (accessed 20 March 2022).

²² Harsmar, Mats (2010) 'Swedish Aid: A Multi-Purpose Tool for Globalization', *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* 19(3): 38–57.

²³ See 'Dimensions of Poverty: Sida's Conceptual Framework, 2017', available at:

<https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62028en-dimensions-of-poverty-sidas-conceptual-framework.pdf>.

²⁴ See <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62054en-gender-equality-in-the-education-sector-focusing-on-issues-of-quality-of-education-and-completion.pdf>.

²⁵ See *ibid.*

²⁶ See *op.cit.* 'Dimensions of Poverty: Sida's Conceptual Framework, 2017'

- and/or being skilled or having access to the means to learn a skill, and may also cover being able to use such education and/or skill-sets to secure an improved income.
2. **Opportunities of choice:** This dimension focuses on the ability of individuals to use their resources to move out of poverty. In the context of education, it would relate to a person's ability to use the education they obtained to escape poverty.
 3. **Power and voice:** This dimension focuses on the ability of individuals to articulate their concerns in an informed way and to engage in informed decision-making. In relation to education, meeting the demands of this dimension requires that individuals are able to understand their rights and obligations, along with their role within a broader context (i.e. their socio-political and/or environmental context).
 4. **Human security:** This dimension focuses on security from physical, sexual and/or psychological violence. In relation to education, meeting the demands of this dimension requires a clear understanding of what constitutes violence and, importantly, what types of behaviour should not be accepted, as well as knowledge of how an individual might protect themselves from violence.

Sida views the above-mentioned dimensions as relevant for four specific development contexts:

1. The economic and social context;
2. The political and institutional context;
3. The peace and conflict context; and
4. The environmental context.

These contexts cover the totality of the social sphere, which, by extension, means that addressing multidimensional poverty requires that each dimension be addressed across all development contexts.²⁷

1.4.2 Gender Equality: Swedish Thinking and the Education Sector

Gender equality and the rights of women and girls represent a priority area for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. In 2016, the Swedish government declared that a gender perspective would be mainstreamed throughout all forms of cooperation.²⁸ Sweden is also party to various global commitments on gender equality, whose roots can be found in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. Other important commitments include the adoption of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women that resulted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, also known as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), which adopted gender mainstreaming as a goal.

Instead of understanding gender equality as an issue that can be addressed in isolation, gender mainstreaming aims to increase the efficient promotion of gender issues by including a gender perspective within every stage of the policy-practice process – from the development of policies all the way through to their implementation and monitoring and the subsequent modification of how they are implemented on the basis of emerging lessons learned. In 1995, Sida adopted gender mainstreaming as its main strategy for achieving its gender-equality goals. This means that, before a decision can be made on any issue, the implications for gender equality need to be analysed and understood, and all plans must include clear gender element based on a sound understanding of the relevant issues.²⁹

The Swedish policy for global development that was adopted by the Swedish parliament in 2003 stated that a key goal for Swedish development cooperation was to 'help create conditions that will enable the poor to improve their lives'.³⁰ Since studies have shown that rates of poverty are higher among some groups of women and girls than among their male counterparts,³¹ the policy served to highlight the need for an approach that emphasized gender equality and placed it at the centre of Sida's mission to

²⁷ See Sida (2019) Dimensions of Poverty: Poverty Tool Box, Stockholm: Sida.

²⁸ Regeringens skrivelse 2016/17:60: Policyramverk för svenskt utvecklingssamarbete.

²⁹ Sida (2005) 'Promoting Gender Equality in Development Cooperation', Stockholm: Sida.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Women Count presents new projections of global poverty by UN Women, UNDP and the Pardee Center for International Futures, who estimate that, globally, 388 million women and girls will be living in extreme poverty in 2022 (compared to 372 million men and boys). See <https://data.unwomen.org/features/poverty-deepens-women-and-girls-according-latest-projections;https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62332en-gender-equality-and-dimensions-of-poverty.pdf>

promote and create conditions for poverty reduction in partner countries that pursued equitable sustainable development.³²

In 2014, Sweden became the first country to launch a feminist foreign policy as a way of ensuring the application of ‘a systematic gender equality perspective throughout the whole foreign policy agenda’.³³ To accompany its feminist foreign policy, the government also issued a handbook that prescribed gender mainstreaming as a central strategy for the policy’s implementation. In the years since the launch of this policy, Sida’s work on gender equality has become more prominent. A 2018 evaluation of the implementation of Sida’s Plan for Gender Integration by the Expert Group for Aid Studies (Expertgruppen för Biståndsanalys, EBA) found that significant achievements had been reached in the area of gender equality,³⁴ and Sida’s partners often confirm the importance of the strong, if not lead position taken by Sida on the issue.³⁵ However, several evaluations and experiences from the field show that effective integration of the gender perspective seems to depend on the personal competence and commitment of individual staff officers.³⁶ To address this, Sida has further developed its ‘gender toolbox’ and is conducting training programmes (e-learning on gender equality) for its staff at HQ and abroad.³⁷

Sida’s approach to gender mainstreaming focuses on integrating a gender perspective into all programmes and highlighting gender equality in all dialogue with partner organizations and other stakeholders. In the specific context of education, gender often influences whether or not children attend and/or remain in school. Efforts to integrate a gender perspective into all programmes aim to counter the fact that, worldwide, girls are more likely than boys to be out of school, and the poorest girls/women from the most disadvantaged rural areas tend to have the lowest educational attainment levels (See Section 2.1: Findings on Impact).³⁸

Lately, Sida’s focus has been on extending the mainstreaming of gender equality in ways that make it more gender transformative. This involves addressing the existing social norms and unequal power relations that exacerbate gender inequality and seeking to change those patriarchal structures and systems. Gender transformation is highly relevant for educational systems, as it is something that can be integrated into teaching methods and curriculum content, as well as into what is made available to children and youth (opportunities). Indeed, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has developed a clear concept linking education and gender transformation (See Box 1: Understanding Gender Transformation in Education – The UNICEF Approach).³⁹

Box 1: Understanding Gender Transformation in Education – The UNICEF Approach

UNICEF defines gender-transformative education as an ‘inclusive, equitable, quality education [that nurtures] an environment of gender justice for children, adolescents and young people in all their diversity’. UNICEF’s suggested approach identifies several essential steps for efforts to produce a more gender-equal and inclusive education sector. Most prominent among these are the need to:

1. Transform education policies so they have gender equality and inclusive education as a primary objective. This means putting gender equality at the heart of education-sector plans, budgets and policies.
2. Focus on training teachers on how they can promote gender equality in their teaching practices and challenge inequalities in classrooms and the workplace.
3. Review teaching material and textbooks to ensure that they better reflect the diversity in society and achieve an improved gender balance. This also means challenging how women and men are portrayed in textbooks (e.g. women in caretaking roles and men as doctors and military staff).
4. Engage parents and community leaders in the gender-equality work to end harmful traditional practices and change discriminatory social and gender norms.
5. Adopt a ‘whole school approach so that schools are safe spaces for all students, whatever their gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation’.

Source: UNICEF, PLAN and UNGEI (2021) *Gender Transformative Education: Reimagining Education for a More Just and Inclusive World*. New York: UNICEF; available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/113166/file/Gender%20Transformative%20Education.pdf>.

³² Sida (2005) ‘Promoting Gender Equality in Development Cooperation’, Stockholm: Sida.

³³ See <https://www.government.se/reports/2018/08/handbook-swedens-feminist-foreign-policy/>.

³⁴ Bjarnegård, Elin, and Ugglå, Fredrik (2018) Putting Priority into Practice: Sida’s Implementation of its Plan for Gender Integration, EBA Rapport 2018: 07, Stockholm: Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ See <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/gender-toolbox>.

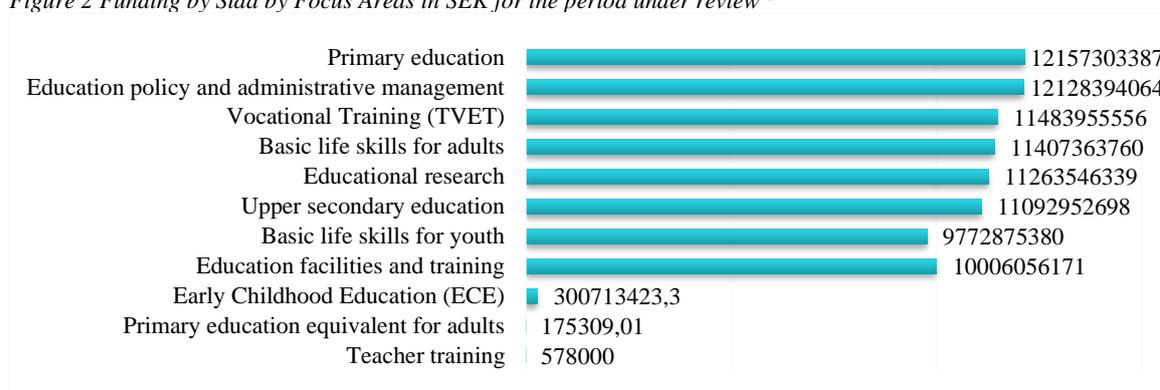
³⁸ Sida (2017) ‘Gender and Educational Attainment’, brief, Stockholm: Sida.

³⁹ Sida (2017) ‘Gender and Educational Attainment’, brief, Stockholm: Sida. For examples of gendered curriculum and gendered support, See Annex 3: Cambodia Case Study.

1.4.3 Sida Support to education over 20 years

Sida has supported the education sector in two critical ways: first, through *normative dialogue* – by expressing clear views and perspectives, driven by the concepts and notions introduced above – and, second, through *funding*. Sida’s funding for education was provided through a mixture of channels that included direct support to central and subnational governments and indirect funding to and/or through bilateral agencies such as UNESCO, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and UNICEF.⁴⁰ In addition, funding was also channelled to, or through, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)/ Civil society organisations (CSO) relevant to the education sector.⁴¹ Sida funding has been allocated to a range of efforts, but the main focus over the 20 years under review here has been primary, secondary, formal and non-formal education systems, as well as to education policy and administrative management. This is evidenced by Figure 2, which shows the proportion of total funds in relation to the themes mentioned which were provided to global, regional efforts, as well as to the case study countries.

Figure 2 Funding by Sida by Focus Areas in SEK for the period under review⁴²



The prioritization of women, girls and marginalized groups (including but not limited to ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities) has also been a hallmark of the support provided (See EQs 1 and 2). This is evidenced by the main outcomes of the support provided (See Section 2.1: Findings on Impact).

Over the period reviewed Sida has provided 15.8 billion SEK to the education sector and supported 46 countries for a time period equal or exceeding five years, the percentage of support to education relative to other areas of funding has decreased over the period under review: from 7.6% of total Sida support in 1999 to 4% in 2019. The proportion of global funding has increased over the years. The number of countries receiving Sida support for their education sectors has also decreased.⁴³ This reduction in the number of countries has led to some consolidation of funding, which means that the resources enjoyed by a country still receiving funding may have increased (See Figure 3).

⁴⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/derec/sweden/41384938.pdf>; <https://donortracker.org/country/sweden>; Evaluation of UNICEF Girls’ Education Portfolio, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/qu7ej60ejahqcgm/Evaluation%20of%20UNICEF%20Girls%27%20Education%20Portfolio.pdf?dl=0>; <https://www.globalpartnership.org/news/global-partnership-education-boosts-support-tanzania-us12-million>; <https://atom.archives.unesco.org/programme-cooperation-agreement-between-swedish-international-development-cooperation-agency-sida-and-unesco-2010-2013>; <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/review-of-the-unicef-programme-basic-education-and-gender-equality-in-afghanistan-2013-2015-final-report>.

⁴¹ <https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2020/11/30120117/Guidelines-for-cooperation-with-SPO.pdf>;

<https://www.fundsforngos.org/32716/identify-ngo-funding-opportunities-bilateral-agencies6/>;

<https://www.oecd.org/derec/sweden/41384938.pdf>; <https://donortracker.org/country/sweden>;

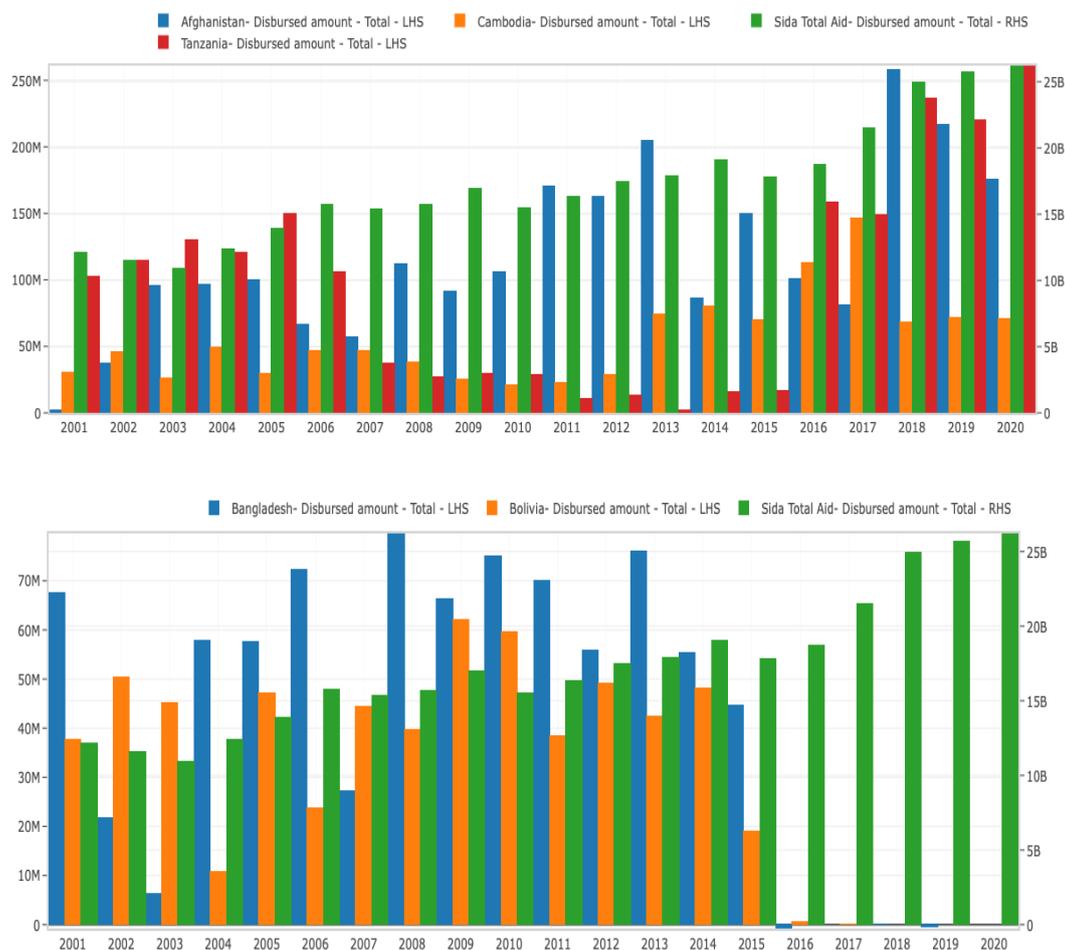
<https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62008en-evaluation-of-the-sida-child-and-youth-initiative-2011-2015---final-report.pdf>.

⁴² See <https://openaid.se/en> (accessed 15 November 2021).

Note: that the categorization of funding may not be exact. For example Teacher Training may have been included into other activities, may be found under other categories of support.

⁴³ See: <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com/> User name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20

Figure 3 Support at the Global Level in Relation to Support to Case Study Countries⁴⁴



Note: Figure 3 uses two scales to measure funding amounts. One is on the left of the figure, the other on the right. In order to accurately read the chart, use the tag ‘LHS’ (left-hand side scale) or ‘RHS’ (right-hand side scale) to ensure that the correct scale is used. The figure has been separated into two parts because when included in a single figure the difference in disbursed amounts between countries diminished the readability of the figure.

Another characteristic of Sida funding has been long-term (or longer-term) system-focused support. This type of support has been important for the establishment of structures and frameworks that may at some point be able to sustain themselves (See Section 2.2: Findings on Sustainability).

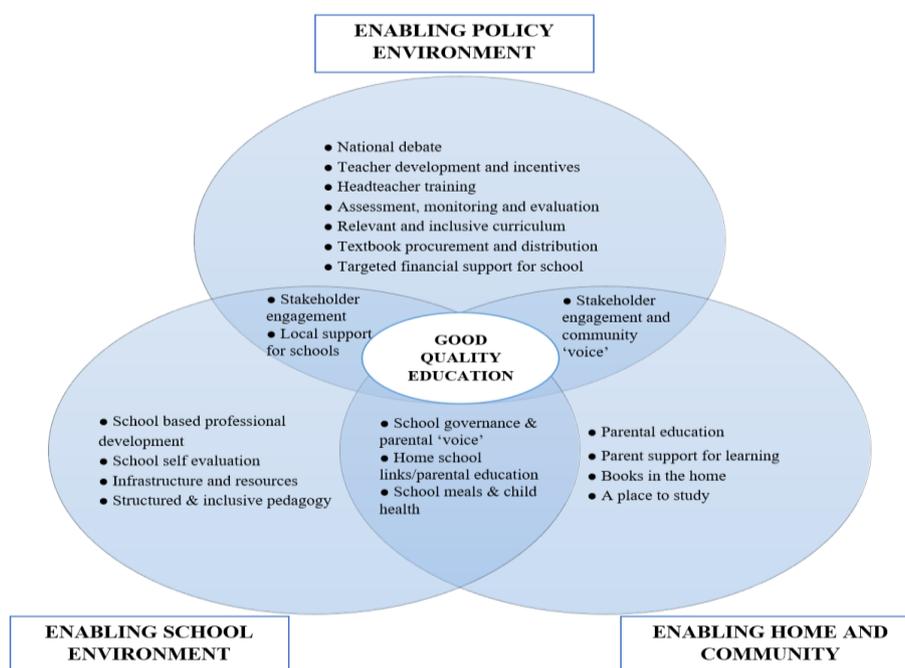
1.5 The education sector: Critical elements

The education sector is generally understood in terms of three key dimensions: *access*, *quality* and *management*. While these dimensions may be distinct at one level, they are also very much intertwined at another – a point made very clear by Tikly’s⁴⁵ widely cited framework for understanding quality, which includes a wide range of factors that can be categorized under quality as well as under access or management aspects of education (See Figure 4).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See <https://openaid.se/en>. (accessed 20 January 2022); <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com> (the dashboard is password protected; log in details to secure access can be requested from the evaluation commissioner).

⁴⁵ Leon Tikly is UNESCO Chair of Inclusive, Quality Education at the University of Bristol UK. He is a widely published author on Education.

⁴⁶ Tikly, L. (2011) ‘Towards a Framework for Researching the Quality of Education in Low-Income Countries’, *Comparative Education* 47(1): 1–23.

Figure 4 A Framework for Understanding Quality⁴⁷

While the data collected for the present evaluation evidence the complex interrelationship between these three dimensions, it remains important to distinguish between them, at least to some degree, not least because both this evaluation and other studies have concluded that achieving *access*, good *quality* and good *management* requires distinct efforts with different timelines.⁴⁸ Here, we aim to present what is meant by each element and how they relate to each other.

First, **access to education** focuses on efforts to facilitate engagement in education activities. Provisions concerning access to education are well codified within international legal standards and noted in numerous strategies, goals and recognized objectives, dating back to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: ‘Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit.’⁴⁹ Moreover, unlike many other precepts, the importance of access to education appears to have been a concept that was uncontested during the discussions that led to the adoption of the 1948 Declaration.⁵⁰ Both the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – the most ratified legal document in UN history – reiterate the legal obligation of states to provide education.

However, despite general agreement that all countries should meet the requirement to provide access to education, by the late 1980s it had become clear that progress on this target was far slower than had been expected. In response, in 1990 the World Education Forum conference was convened jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank in Jomtien. The resulting Jomtien Declaration launched the global campaign ‘Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs’⁵¹ and set out commitments for achieving: universal and equitable access to, and completion of, primary education; an expansion of pre-primary education; a reduction in adult illiteracy; an expansion of basic education and training for youth and adults; and increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ For a review on challenges faced by the issues that need to be considered see: Samoff, J., Leer, J., & Reddy, M. (2016) *Capturing complexity and context: Evaluating aid to education*. Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA). Elanders Sverige AB.

⁴⁹ See Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁵⁰ UNESCO (2000) *The Writing of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Paris: UNESCO.

⁵¹ See World Declaration on Education for All, available at https://bice.org/app/uploads/2014/10/unesco_world_declaration_on_education_for_all_jomtien_thailand.pdf. (accessed 15 20 January 2022).

sustainable development. Despite the aforementioned commitments, the turn of the millennium provided a keen reminder that, even in the 2000s, universal access to schooling was far from being achieved. The World Education Forum thus reconvened in Dakar in 2000 in an effort to underline and reaffirm commitments focused on education for all.⁵² These commitments were also reinforced in the same year in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁵³ where they were included within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),⁵⁴ which in 2012 were updated into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),⁵⁵ of which SDG 4 specifically targets education.⁵⁶

A critical issue concerning access is that it is not limited to any one group within society. Accordingly, it should include boys and girls, women and men, and all others, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, home location, socio-economic status, or physical or mental aptitudes.

All of the various documents mentioned above in some way addressed the concept of quality in relation to, for example, educational outcomes, the educational environment, training of teaching staff, or didactical approaches/methodologies.⁵⁷ In some, quality was broadly understood as including basic outcome elements, such as literacy, mathematical skills or human development. In others, the concept was less specified. The interviews and review of documents conducted as part of the present study highlight the complexity of defining what quality is. From a learning-outcome perspective, **ability to meet basic reading, writing and mathematics skills is consistently understood as the most basic level of quality.**⁵⁸ Similarly, ensuring basic proficiency of skills is also understood as quality in the context of technical training. Indeed, learning outcomes lie at the core of SDG 4.⁵⁹

What else quality might include and what actually constitutes quality are areas of considerable debate, with some arguing that quality education must (1) meet certain key experiential characteristics, such as specific classroom dynamics, teacher–pupil relationships, parental/community engagement; (2) result in the development of individuals who are well rounded, have an understanding of their rights, are able to effectively participate in society and take pride in their cultural heritage; and (3) include specific approaches to pedagogics and pedagogical elements.⁶⁰ In addition to these, Sida itself includes in its understanding of quality aspects related to school infrastructure, textbook and didactical material, and equipment in laboratories (i.e. quality learning environments). The notion of quality has been used to describe teacher training, information and communications technology skills, and pedagogical updates (capacity-building – i.e. improved teacher quality) that include curriculum development and the creation of new assessment instruments and quality assurance checklists (high-quality institutional frameworks).⁶¹ The concept has been used to justify support to the development of national educational policies, sectoral strategies and master plans. It has also been linked with child-friendly classrooms, gender equality and special-needs education (equality).⁶² Furthermore, different stakeholders also have different perspectives on what quality education is: ministries of education and other government agencies and offices, future employers, universities,⁶³ other higher education/training agencies,⁶⁴ local

⁵² See Dakar Framework for Action, available at: https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar_Framework_for_Action_2000_en.pdf. (accessed 20 January 2022).

⁵³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/united-nations-millennium-declaration>.

⁵⁴ See <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (accessed 20 January 2022).

⁵⁵ See <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> (accessed 20 January 2022).

⁵⁶ See <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4> (accessed 20 January 2022).

⁵⁷ For challenges related to measuring education quality, See, for example, Garrouste Norelius, Christelle, and Mendes, Shawn (2003) Progress and Result Indicators and Their Relevance for Educational Policy Analysis: Final Report, New Education Division Documents No. 15, Stockholm: Institute of International Education, Stockholm University.

⁵⁸ See <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/test/> (accessed 20 January 2022).

⁵⁹ See <https://sdg-education.net/en/sdg-videos/4-quality-education.html> (accessed 20 January 2022).

⁶⁰ World Bank (2018) World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise, Washington, DC: World Bank. For more specific learning outcomes from specific interventions, See Samoff, Jeff, Leer, Jane, and Ready, Michelle (2016) Capturing Complexity in Context: Evaluating Aid to Education, Stockholm: EBA.

⁶¹ See Moran, Greg, Connal, Criana, Kirama, Stephen, and Leung, Yvonne (2020) Evaluation of the Sida-Supported Education Programme for Results (EP for R) 2014–2021, Tanzania, Stockholm: Sida.

⁶² On Sida's goals, See also <https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/education>. Camaroni, Ivone (2002) 'Sexual and Reproductive Health of Youth in Northwestern Russia: An evaluation of a project'. Stockholm: Sida.

⁶³ For example, for Sweden, See <https://www.educations.com/study-guides/europe/study-in-sweden/requirements-11344>. For Bangladesh, See <https://bu.edu.bd/buPrev/admission/>. In Bolivia, different degrees have different requirements, but the overall admission requirement is dictated by the Reglamento de Admision Estudiantil de la Universidad Boliviana; See <https://www.umsa.bo/documents/1811251/1811998/10+REGLAMENTO+DE+ADMISION+ESTUDIANTIL.pdf/9270a6fa-727f-db68-d451-3fe3ee3606af>. For Cambodia, See <https://uc.edu.kh/ucs/Admissions%20Requirements/4/14/>. As in Bolivia, in Tanzania different universities and degrees have different requirements; See <https://www.tcu.go.tz/?q=content/undergraduate-admission-procedures> (accessed 20 January 2022).

⁶⁴ For example, ACAC in Cambodia; See Shift 360. 2018. Final Narrative report-ACAC: 2015-2018: Phnom Penh: Shift 360.

(rural or urban) communities, parents, and children themselves all have different visions of what quality education should provide.⁶⁵

In short, the scope of what can be included under the umbrella of quality is broad. Still, international measurements of quality, such as the PISA studies, focus on elemental learning outcomes (i.e. reading literacy, mathematics literacy and science literacy).⁶⁶ This is important because, within the development environment, and indeed in the context of this evaluation, when the concept of quality – specifically low quality – is mentioned, the term is usually understood in its most elemental sense. Following a review of what quality can and does mean, as well as an examination of Sida’s own engagement and priorities, it is important for Sida to have a broad definition of quality that can frame its engagement. The following definition is proposed: A quality education can be understood as one that is inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory and that equips learners with the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable them to become responsible, active citizens with sustainable livelihoods and able to thrive in their societies. The translation of such a definition to specific contexts, however, will occur in unique and different ways. In each case, there are a multiplicity of inter-related and interdependent components that must be in place and operating effectively. The categories to which these belong are illustrated in the theory of change introduced in Section 4, in which eco-subsystems are used to illustrate the different layers and elements within the education system that require attention.

The **management** of education includes management at the micro level (in the classroom, in the school, and the engagement between schools and the communities in which they operate) and at the macro level (in the ministries and departments responsible for managing and overseeing the education system). Indeed, how the education system is managed is what will ensure that education is accessible and of good quality. Ensuring that approaches and techniques to provide quality education that are seen to be successful are replicated and sustained also comes under the umbrella of education-systems management. Weak management systems can ultimately be responsible for a failure to deliver on the objectives of education for all. Such systems are therefore a critical element of the overall provision of education. How management is organized from country to country varies, with some systems being more complex than others. Ultimately, however, it is critical to ensure that the system in place is, in the long term, an effective one.

From the perspective of this evaluation, the elements of education that can influence multidimensional poverty and gender equality – such as the ability to recognize and defend one’s rights and equal opportunities for all – are dependent on consistent and good quality management of education facilities that provide good-quality education for all. At a very basic level, this education must secure basic learning outcomes. As Section 2.1: Findings on Impact and Section 2.2: Findings on Sustainability indicate, ensuring an education process that contributes to reducing multidimensional poverty and improving gender equality is dependent on progress along all three of the dimensions discussed above. In line with such an understanding, Sida’s own support has been predicated on a systems approach that has focused on improving management elements as a cornerstone of efforts to ensure access to quality education. The opportunities and challenges faced by this approach are examined as part of this evaluation (See Section 2.1: Findings on Impact and Section 2.2: Findings on Sustainability).

Report Components

The first part of this report consists of this introduction, which sets out the scope of the evaluation (Methodology is also dealt with in this section). A second section discusses findings aligned with the different EQs. Section 3 presents the theory of change that emerged from this evaluation, while Section 4 sets out the conclusions of the study, which are presented within the context of the theory of change. Section 5 presents key lessons learned, while the final section, Section 6, presents the recommendations.

⁶⁵ For more specific learning outcomes from specific interventions, See Elmqvist, Madeleine, and Bastian, Sunil (2006) ‘Promoting Media Professionalism, Independence and Accountability in Sri Lanka’, Stockholm: Sida; Clark, Norman (2004) ‘Water education in African cities’, Stockholm: Sida.

⁶⁶ See <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/> (accessed 20 January 2022).

2 Findings

Here, we explore the impact and sustainability of the Swedish-funded efforts to support the education sector and specifically respond to the four evaluation questions that are the focus of this evaluation (See Figure 1). For each question, a single finding or set of findings is found in a box at the start of the relevant section. These findings are then discussed in the subsequent paragraphs. The nature of the EQs and related findings meant that it was impossible to use exactly the same format in addressing each question. An effort to reduce repetition between responses has been made.

2.1 Findings on Impact

KEQ 1: Has Sida's support to education generated high-level effects in terms of positive or negative, intended or unintended, impacts?

Evaluation Question 1: Key Findings

The data collected during this study show that Sida's support has generated high-level effects (i.e. at the system level). This is specifically evidenced by the following four manifestations of impact:

Key Finding 1: Through its support, Sida has contributed to the increase in access to education facilities for children (boys and girls equally), both generally and for specific groups (See also EQ 2).

Key Finding 2: Through its support, Sida has contributed to the increased access to quality education for children who have special requirements/needs (See also EQ 2).

Key Finding 3: Through its support, Sida has contributed to promoting the identification of linkages between education received and employment opportunities available for children/youth.

Key Finding 4: Through its support, Sida has contributed to improving, or increasing the potential to improve, transparency and accountability within the education system.

Key Finding 5: Although Sida has consistently highlighted the importance of quality education, most children across most countries do not have access to good quality education.

'High-level effects or impacts'⁶⁷ refers to the degree to which changes at the policy or strategy level lead to changes in practice. Or changes in practice that can make, have made or are in the process of making changes at the policy or strategy level. These results involve a critical focus on changes that have had a direct impact on end-beneficiaries.

In general, Sida's approach is to work in collaboration with other donors, as well as with the government, and to nest its contributions into broader efforts (See Section 1.4: Understanding Sida's support). In line with Sida's systems approach, the aim here is to extrapolate from outcomes attributed to Sida's contributions to system-level changes (high-level changes) that have been generated or may emerge in future, along with the impact these have had or can realistically be expected to have (See Annex 7).

Below, each finding, together with the data supporting it, is discussed individually.

Key Finding 1: An increase in access to education facilities for children, for boys and girls equally, both generally and for specific groups, has led to an increase in the enrolment of children across countries supported

⁶⁷ In the context of this evaluation, 'high-level effects or impact' is understood to mean meaningful changes that have a systemic reach, where the effect is felt by the totality of the population in question or has the potential to reach the totality of the population in question.

Although there are questions regarding the validity of the data across case study countries, the general trends suggest an increase in gross enrolment rates across the different countries studied.⁶⁸ The increase in access to education, leading to increased enrolment, was attributed, at least in part, to Sida, across all countries studied. In all instances, the impact was achieved through a systems approach to education that accorded with key principles of aid effectiveness, HRBA and capacity development (refer to Cambodia Case Study).⁶⁹ The achievement of greater enrolment and improved access to education that has been visible has been influenced by a number of key factors (See **'Facilitating factors related to the first three findings'** later in this section and Annex 8).

Box 2: Beyond Attending Schools – Changing Gender Perspectives

Sida is well aware that securing equal access to school for boys and girls is not sufficient to secure a change in gender dynamics and constructions. Therefore, Sida has invested considerably in other efforts to promote gender equality within society. Within the school system, such investment has focused on equality among pupils and support for gender equality among teachers. In a more limited number of cases, the support has also included gendered curriculums, which appear to have generated positive results in relation to how boys and girls saw themselves, each other and their respective roles in society, which suggests that such an approach can make considerable headway in changing perspectives on gender more broadly.

While the efforts to improve enrolment that have been visible across all countries have addressed the 'resource' aspects of multidimensional poverty (See Section 1.4.1: Multidimensional Poverty: The Swedish Definition and What It Means for Education) and have also supported equal access for girls and boys and, in so doing, supported gender equality, other key requirements for reducing multidimensional poverty and securing gender equality have not been met. Indeed, for most beneficiaries, even though access to education has come to be characterized by considerable enrolment parity, this has not led to clear progress in relation to gender equality in general (i.e. the creation of a gender-equal or more gender-equal society). This does not mean that progress in equal-gender-access education is not important, but serves to highlight how gender equality in enrolment is only one of many steps needed to ensure that education supports a more gender-equal society.⁷⁰

Increase in access to education has also fallen short in terms of allowing children to meet the key elements of (1) *opportunities of choice*, (2) *power and voice*, and (3) *human security* identified by Sida as central for multidimensional poverty reduction (See Section 1.4.1: Multidimensional Poverty: The Swedish Definition and What It Means for Education). This does not mean that achieving increased enrolment is not valuable or beneficial for those end-beneficiaries that have benefited, but it serves to highlight the need for other elements (mainly quality of the education received and articulation with other sectors, such as employment opportunities and improved understanding of and access to political participation) to secure multidimensional poverty reduction and the realization of gender equality.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned, the achievement is important because it (a) demonstrates that it is possible to increase the number and proportion of children enrolled in school and (b) provides some interesting insights into what is needed in order to secure increased enrolment rates (See **'Facilitating factors related to the first three findings'** below).

Sida support has consistently involved the adoption of a systems approach.⁷¹ And although in most instances the aid provided has not included the building of schools per se (notable exceptions have included Afghanistan, where the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan has constructed schools directly,⁷² as have the World Bank-led ARTF EQUIP⁷³ and EQRA⁷⁴ programmes to which Sida contributed (See Box 3: Education as Humanitarian Assistance); Bolivia, where Sweden, in

⁶⁸ See the Dashboard at <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com> user name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20

⁶⁹ See Sida country and annual reports for each country. See Bibliography for full list of documents reviewed.

See Cambodia case study <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

⁷⁰ See Subrahmanyam, Gita (2016) *Gender Perspectives on Causes and Effects of School Dropouts*. Stockholm: Sida.

⁷¹ See <https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/education>

⁷² Annual Reports of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan provide details of school construction – for example, seven schools in 2017; See Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (2017) *Annual Report*. Stockholm: SCA.

⁷³ World Bank (2018) 'Implementation Completion and Results Report no: ICR00004482', available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/183831535403915494/pdf/ICR-Afghanistan-EQUIP-II-revised-July312018-08032018.pdf>; Sida (2010) 'Sida Education Portfolio', Stockholm: Sida.

⁷⁴ World Bank (2021) EQRA (P159378) Implementation Status & Results Report, April.

conjunction with the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark, also supported the building of infrastructure;⁷⁵ and Zanzibar, where Sida co-funded programmes have constructed school buildings, the general support has enabled the relevant authorities to focus attention on the development of necessary infrastructure.⁷⁶

Critically, enabling access to education is not just about building schools, but also about having systems that can build, staff and manage schools. Therefore, even in instances where Sida did not engage in infrastructure development, Sida support aimed at improving access to education through the provision of support to the education system. This has included support at the ministerial level in relation to the development of policies, strategies and plans that conceptualized and put in place mechanisms to achieve a considerable expansion of the education system. In Bolivia, for example, Sida worked towards a transformation of the education system, where the focus was on the launch of intercultural education, the professionalization of teaching staff, and the introduction of a basic curriculum that was to be used by both private and public academic organizations.⁷⁷ In Afghanistan, capacity support to the Ministry of Education resulted in progressively developed and increasingly inclusive systemic education plans that supported improved access.⁷⁸ In addition, the effort to train new teachers also supported improved access to education.⁷⁹ In Cambodia, Bangladesh, Bolivia and Tanzania,⁸⁰ the focus has been on strengthening the complete education system architecture – Tanzania’s multi-donor Education Programme for Results (EPforR) programme is a good example.⁸¹ The support provided to the education sector by Sida has led to the enabling of a number of contributing factors that through process tracing were confirmed as critical elements that facilitated improved access (See ‘**Facilitating factors related to the first three findings**’).

While the above shows that there has been progress on access, it is also important to explore the data in a more granular way – specifically, enrolment across grades and across genders. The general trend is that enrolment is highest in relation to primary school, with considerable drops between primary and

Box 3: Education as Humanitarian Assistance

In Afghanistan, support to the education sector meant the essential building of an education system ‘from scratch’. An important feature of the support provided to Afghanistan is that the 2010 Sida Education Portfolio (for Afghanistan) highlighted how Sida, unlike many other countries, permits humanitarian funding to be disbursed to civil society actors to build schools. This suggests a degree of flexibility and willingness/ability to support education systems also in times of crisis.

Source: Sida (2010) ‘Sida Education Portfolio.’ Stockholm: Sida

⁷⁵ AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suecia & Embajada del Reino de Dinamarca (2016) *La Canasta: Sistematización del Fondo de Apoyo al Sector Educativo, Bolivia 204-2015*, La Paz: AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suecia & Embajada del Reino de Dinamarca.

⁷⁶ Reed, Sheila. et. al. 2017. End-Term evaluation of the Global partnership for Education (2014-2016) Zanzibar. Sida: Stockholm. AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suecia & Embajada del Reino de Dinamarca (2016) *La Canasta: Sistematización del Fondo de Apoyo al Sector Educativo, Bolivia 204-2015*, La Paz: AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suecia & Embajada del Reino de Dinamarca. Bye, V., Calla, R., & Christoplos, I. (2013) *Outcome assessment of Swedish bilateral cooperation in Bolivia 2009-2012 (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2013:13)*. Sida. Dahl-Østergaard, T., Rojas, R., Moore, D., Rozo, P. (Ramboll Management) (2003) Sida-funded Projects through UNICEF – Bolivia, 1989-2002. Sida Evaluation, Department for Latin America, 03/41.

⁷⁷ See Ley de Educación Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez o Ley 070 (2010); Pérez, Virginia (2020) *Etnicidad y Educación en Bolivia*. La Paz: UNESCO; Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia (2019) *Revolución educativa con revolución docente*. La Paz: Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Education, Afghanistan (2016) *National Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021 (NESP 3)*, available at <http://anafae.af/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/National-Education-Strategic-Plan-NESP-III.pdf>.

⁷⁹ UNESCO (2021) *The Right to Education: What’s at Stake in Afghanistan? A 20 Year Review*, Paris: UNESCO; UNICEF (2021) ‘*Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Afghanistan*’ (August). Geneva: UNICEF.

⁸⁰ Pérez, Virginia (2020) *Etnicidad y Educación en Bolivia*. La Paz: UNESCO; Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia (2019) *Revolución educativa con revolución docente*. La Paz: Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia. Van Gerwen, Frans. et.al. 2018. *Outcome Evaluation of the Education Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) - Phase I and II*. Cambodia: MoEYS and UNICEF.

See also Royal Government of Cambodia. 2003. *Education for All- National Action Plan 2003-2015*. Phnom Penh: Royal Government of Cambodia. World Bank. (2010) *Project Performance Assessment Report, Tanzania*. Human Resource Development Pilot Project, Primary Education Development Program, Secondary Education Development Program. June. Washington: World Bank.

⁸¹ See <https://www.camb-ed.com/intdev/article/514/education-programme-for-results> (accessed 20 March 2022).

secondary school.⁸² In Cambodia, the drop is 72% and is largely equal across sexes.⁸³ In mainland Tanzania, 53% of students transit from primary to lower secondary school, and just 37% make it between lower and upper secondary school.⁸⁴ In Bangladesh, the number of children attending secondary school is about half of those that attend primary school, while in Bolivia roughly one-third of children who attend primary school continue to secondary school.⁸⁵

Beyond simple enrolment and dropout rates, there are other interesting trends. For example, in Bolivia enrolment numbers have declined over the last 20 years among primary schools in rural areas, but secondary school attendance in the same areas has increased, whereas in urban areas there has been a slight increase in attendance at both primary and secondary schools.⁸⁶

In relation to gender, enrolment rates in Bolivia are very similar between girls and boys, suggesting that gender has not played a critical role in determining enrolment. A similar gender trend is visible in Cambodia, the other country with data that permitted this type of assessment.⁸⁷ In Tanzania, roughly equal numbers of boys and girls entered the school system, but dropout rates were a bit higher among boys than among girls (there were 7.5% more girls than boys at Grade 7) and the trend continued to secondary education (10.4% more girls than boys).⁸⁸ The situation, however, deteriorates in tertiary education in Tanzania: the advanced (A) levels in the secondary school – a prerequisite for college entry – had 30% more boys than girls, and in tertiary education virtually all academic domains were male-dominated.⁸⁹

All of this suggests that while access has increased, there are challenges with retention that are tied to a wide range of factors – for example, distance to schools;⁹⁰ whether or not the school environment is considered safe; early pregnancy⁹¹ or marriage;⁹² gendered norms; parents' expectations regarding the benefits of education (perceived or real)⁹³ (See Box 4: Dropout Rates and Gender; 'Lessons Learned'). More specifically in relation to gender norms, a 2016 Sida study found that norms and practices related to gender become more pronounced as children reach puberty. This in turn leads to a widening of sex differences in access to and retention in education. Indeed, 'nearly 63 million adolescents of lower secondary school age worldwide were out of school in 2012, corresponding to an out-of-school rate of 17% – that is, 8 percentage points higher than the global primary out-of-school rate'.⁹⁴ A 2018 UNESCO report put this figure at 62 million, indicating very little change during the intervening period.⁹⁵ These figures are mainly attributed to the perception in most developing countries that the roles and responsibilities of adolescent girls lie not in the school but in the home. This is clearly visible in the increased dropout rates for girls as they progress through the grades.⁹⁶

⁸² This report has used the terminology employed in each of the country studies to denote a particular grade level. Each system is distinct, and therefore it would be inappropriate for the evaluation team to group specific grades together under a common terminology. 'Primary' and 'secondary' school/education are used as the standard terms when a document being referenced or reviewed does not refer to a specific system.

⁸³ OECD (2018) *Education in Cambodia: Findings from Cambodia Experience in PISA for Development*. PISA For Development

⁸⁴ United Republic of Tanzania (2021) *Education Sector Analysis for Tanzania Mainland – 2021: Final Report*, p.12. Dar Es Salam: United Republic of Tanzania

⁸⁵ See <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com> (the dashboard is password protected; log in details to secure access can be requested from the evaluation commissioner), all data sources available also in the Bibliography.

⁸⁶ See *ibid*

⁸⁷ See *ibid*. See also Annex 3: Cambodia Case Study

⁸⁸ United Republic of Tanzania (2021) *National Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST)*. World Bank open data, 2021:

⁸⁹ United Republic of Tanzania (2021) *Education Sector Analysis for Tanzania Mainland – 2021: Final Report*. Dar Es Salam: United Republic of Tanzania.

⁹⁰ Lawson, Andrew, et al. (2013) *Joint Evaluation of Budget Support to Tanzania: Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future, Final Report: Volume 1*. UK: ITAD, COWI and ADE.

⁹¹ Center for Reproductive Rights (2020) 'Forced Out: Mandatory Pregnancy Testing and the Expulsion of Pregnant Students in Tanzanian Schools'. Dar es Salam: Center for Reproductive Rights.

⁹² Human Rights Watch (2017) "'I Had a Dream to Finish School': Barriers to Secondary Education in Tanzania' New York: HRW.

⁹³ For an assessment of the role of quality in relation to school attendance and work for children. See Millard, Ananda, Forss, Kim, Basu, Asmita, Kandyomunda, Basil, McEvoy, Claire, and Woldeyohannes, Alemseged (2015) *Is the End of Child Labour in Sight? A Critical Review of a Vision and a Journey*. N.p.: Stop Child Labour, Hivos & Kinderpostzegels.

⁹⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF (2015) 'Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children', Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

⁹⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2019) *Combining Data on Out-of-School Children, Completion and Learning to Offer a More Comprehensive View on SDG4*.

⁹⁶ Subrahmanyam, Gita. (2016) *Gender Perspectives on Causes and Effects of School Dropouts*, Stockholm: Sida.

Another aspect that contributes to retention across grades, and that becomes increasingly relevant as children progress from primary to secondary school, is that of **quality of education** (See Box 9: What Is Quality and Why Does It Matter – The Beneficiary Perspective), particularly as that is understood by the target population and their families and communities.

Sida contributed to enabling access through support related to a wide range of interventions (such as building schools, training teachers, developing curriculum, developing policies, etc. – See Cambodia Case Study).⁹⁷ Not all types of interventions were funded across all case study countries, and not all interventions are relevant everywhere, but where relevant the data collected suggest that these interventions are critical.

In order to further explore what factors have contributed to enrolment in primary education, we used QCA analysis (See Annex 8). A series of indicators were examined in order to assess whether any of these would lead to improved or worse results. It was also noted, that in instances where the gender parity index showed favour to males in secondary school, enrolment in primary school did not grow consistently (steady enrolment increase). This suggests that, at least to a degree, enrolment in primary education is seen as a stepping-stone to secondary education. In turn, in cases where there is no gender parity in secondary school, this translates into contexts in which fewer children attend primary school. This is interesting because it suggests that gender parity in high school can be an indicator not only of gender progress but also of what can be expected in relation to primary school enrolment trends (See Annex 8).

The emphasis on access in so many documents is not surprising. As a 2016 EBA report highlights, it is far easier to quantify the building of schools and/or the number of teachers⁹⁸ rather than other education outcomes. And, indeed, enabling access has a direct impact on beneficiaries on the ground. What access translates into in the long term depends on a number of other issues, including factors discussed later in this report. The critical issue to underline here is that data collected in the field and the QCA analysis consistently showed that there are no conditions that by themselves ensured an increase in enrolment. This suggests that the whole education system needs to be examined and the presence/absence of facilitating factors scrutinized. Indeed, a key result from the QCA analysis (See Annex 8) is that the system is complex and individual factors are very interrelated. This makes a strong argument for viewing the education sector as an eco-system made up of eco-subsystems (See Section 3: The Theory of Change).

Box 4: Dropout Rates and Gender

In 2015, Sida commissioned a study to explore the links between gender and school dropouts in the Sida partner countries where primary and secondary education is a substantial part of the portfolio. The analysis focused on the main Sida partner countries within the education support portfolio – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Liberia, Rwanda and Tanzania. The resulting report concluded that ‘dropout’ has received little attention in the global education agenda, which until recently has emphasized *access to education* through a focus on enrolments, rather than *retention in education* with an emphasis on *completion*. While the proportion of children admitted to the first grade of primary school at the official entry age has increased globally and in every developing region since 2000, little and uneven progress has been made in reducing the rate at which children drop out before reaching the last grade of primary school. The report also concluded that ‘gender plays a role in these trends’. Globally, women and girls are more likely than men and boys to be out of school, and the poorest girls/women from the most disadvantaged rural areas tend to have the lowest educational attainment levels. But boys are also affected, mainly by the masculinity norms in different societies, where they, for example, face expectations about earning an income or joining armed groups.

Source: Subrahmanyam, Gita (2016) Gender Perspectives on Causes and Effects of School Dropouts. Stockholm: Sida.

⁹⁷ Cambodia case study <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

⁹⁸ Damon, Amy, Glewwe, Paul, Wisniewski, Suzanne, and Sun, Bixuan (2016) Education in Developing Countries: What Policies and Programmes Affect Learning and Time in Schools, Stockholm: EBA. For a discussion on the importance of quality See Millard, Ananda Forss, Kim Basu Asmita, Kandyomunda, Basil, McEvoy, Claire, and Woldeyohannes, Alemseged (2015) Is the End of Child Labour in Sight? A Critical Review of a Vision and a Journey. n.p.: Stop Child Labour, Hivos & Kinderpostzegels.

Key finding 2: Increased access to quality education for children who have special requirements/needs – for example, linguistic minorities, working children and children with disabilities

Sida has played an important role in facilitating access to education for children who could not benefit from regular education facilities, content or approaches without specific modifications being made for them. In all instances, the support provided was driven by HRBA concepts and included elements of capacity development.

Although in some instances the support did not meet all aid-effective criteria because these efforts were at times single-donor interventions and in some instances quite small, the success of these smaller interventions challenges the consistent relevance of all aspects of ‘aid-effective’ approaches.⁹⁹ The success of some of these smaller interventions, which have focused on addressing the needs of individual vulnerable groups, shows that in some instances it is relevant, effective and efficient to work bilaterally in smaller efforts without a joint donor effort. Supporting small targeted initiatives has allowed critical steps forward in the development of intervention models that can effectively respond to more disadvantaged groups. While it may not be necessary for all donors to jointly address the needs of a small beneficiary group, there is a need to ensure that no beneficiary is left behind. In addition, and most importantly, key lessons that can be learned from small initiatives may be overlooked in larger ones (See Box 5: Small Can Also Be Beautiful; Box 6: Why Testing Is Important – Even Best-Laid Plans).

Box 5: Small Can Also Be Beautiful

Sida has supported large systems in broad and comprehensive ways, and there is a clear merit in such an approach. However, support to small targeted and very specific interventions within those systems has at times provided opportunities that larger initiatives could not. Across the different countries studied, there have been some very targeted interventions that were of high quality and permitted the testing and refining of interventions.

The importance of these initiatives is twofold. On the one hand, they serve the targeted population and do so well. On the other, once tested they can be integrated into larger systems. The integration of robust programming into larger systems from the start can present challenges that come with scale. However, such challenges can be more effectively managed when an already working programme is integrated into a larger system and expanded over time rather than starting with a large and complex programme without first testing its viability. This is not to say that all small interventions result in stellar results, but rather that there is a role for such interventions, which, if managed and used well, can serve to improve education systems more broadly (See also EQ 3).

Delivering initiatives outside the larger system – on the ‘margins’, as it were – offers particular opportunities for important innovation because such initiatives may be able to incubate all the key parameters of effectiveness as ‘mini systems’ without the encumbrance of the mainstream – its bureaucratic structures, inflexibilities and requirements, weakness of capacity, and general adherence to the status quo. Examples of this form of innovation were visible in interventions to which Sida contributed in Bangladesh, where the BEHTRUWC project (2004–2014) targeted urban children domestic workers – the first project to do so. The project provided an innovative approach to accelerated, personalized learning and life skills through drop-in centres that operated flexibly. The project was later brought into the state system and subsequently expanded. It is implemented by UNICEF, which has built on the innovatory model developed in the Sida funding phase. Similar examples were seen in Cambodia, where specific models for multilingual education were developed, and training materials for persons with disabilities were developed outside the education system (See Annex 3: Cambodia Case Study). However, the opportunities afforded by these types of interventions does not mean that they always result in successes: they may also result in failures. These, however, are also important for improving understanding of what does and does not work (See Box 6).

⁹⁹ See <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida30748en-increased-aid-effectiveness---sida-action-plan-2006-2008.pdf>

By focusing attention on smaller interventions, Sida provided an opportunity for identifying approaches and solutions that would ensure that everyone has equal access to education. As with general access, these efforts have addressed the ‘resource’ aspects of reducing multidimensional poverty, and have also supported equal access for girls and boys. However, in comparison with efforts to access to general education (Key Finding 1), succinct pilots that targeted specific groups – ethnic minorities in Cambodia¹⁰⁰ or working children in Bangladesh¹⁰¹ (See Box 7: Educating Working Children) – have tended to demonstrate stronger elements of gender equality, opportunities of choice, power and voice, and human security – elements that are required if multidimensional poverty is to be addressed successfully (See Section 1.4.1: Multidimensional Poverty: The Swedish Definition and What It Means for Education). For example, some of these efforts have included tangibly gender-sensitive curriculums and/or curriculums that focused more attention on rights and cultural heritage (See Multilingual Education (MLE) in Cambodia case Study).¹⁰² However, not all such interventions have been successful. Efforts to improve girls’ access to quality education in Tanzania resulted in an elitist programme that catered for the few and was not replicable or scalable (See Box 6: Why Testing Is Important – Even Best-Laid Plans).¹⁰³

Box 6: Why Testing Is Important – Even Best-Laid Plans

In 2001, Sida joined forces with the Joha Trust, via the Swedish embassy in Dar es Salaam, to support Barbro Johansson Secondary School. At its core, the school was intended to support high-performing vulnerable children, and particularly girls. The school intended to charge fees to ensure sustainability and to allow it to provide scholarships. However, different reviews have concluded that the efforts of the Joha Trust to secure the financial longevity of the school have been unrealistic and that vulnerable girls have been unable to attend. Some of the challenges with securing financial viability are attributed to unclear management and procurement policies, but also to the cost efficiency of the school model used by the Joha Trust – mainly based on charging fees to remain sustainable. Ultimately, the experience has shown that the model is unable to generate the sustainability required or ensure that the most vulnerable children, from lower-income families, and specifically girls, are able to obtain a quality education.

See: Dastgeer, A., Sumra, S., Christoplos, I., Rothman, J. (2013) ‘Evaluation of the Barbro Johansson Model Girls’ Secondary School in Tanzania: Final Report’. Stockholm: Sida; available at: <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61580en-evaluation-of-the-barbro-johansson-model-girls-secondary-school-in-tanzania---final-report.pdf>.

Joha Trust (n.d.). About us. Retrieved from <https://johatrust.ac.tz/about-barbro/>

¹⁰⁰ Frawly, Jack. et al. (2019) Strategic Evaluation report: Education for Ethnic Minorities Programme: Cambodia. Australian Aid and CARE.

¹⁰¹ Pinz (Polytechnics International New Zealand Ltd) (2014) Final Evaluation of the Bangladesh Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project – 2nd Phase 2004–2014. RFP # LRPS-NHA-2013-09109614. Wellington: PINZ.

See also Directorate of Primary Education Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh (2014) Bangladesh Primary Education Annual Sector Performance Report - 2014 - PEDP 3 Final ASPR 2014. Dhaka: Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

¹⁰² UNICEF. 2019. Independent evaluation of the Multilingual Education National Action Plan. Cambodia: UNICEF Frawly, Jack. et. al. (2019) op.cit.

MoEYS. 2019. Education Strategic Plan-2019-2023. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and MoEYS. 2014. Multilingual Education National Action Plan 2014-2018. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

For a discussion on the MoEYS strategy of inclusion relevant to MLE See Tan, C. 2007. Education reforms in Cambodia: Issues and concerns. Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 6(1), 15-24.

¹⁰³ Dastgeer, Ali, Sumra, Suleman, Christoplos, Ian, and Rothman, Jessica (2013) Evaluation of the Barbro Johansson Model Girls’ Secondary School in Tanzania: Final Report, Stockholm: Sida; Available at: <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61580en-evaluation-of-the-barbro-johansson-model-girls-secondary-school-in-tanzania---final-report.pdf>; See also <https://johatrust.ac.tz/about-barbro/>.

Support for children with disabilities has involved two distinct approaches: First, support to special education schools, which has included support for the provision and development of teaching material. Second, support for systems changes. This has included both support for relatively small but meaningful changes, such as making schools accessible to children with movement impairment, as well as support for the integration of special schools into the educational system.¹⁰⁴ The latter has included fostering important discussions on key issues at the ministerial level, supporting the development of capacity on relevant topics within the ministry, support for the development of relevant policies and strategies, and supporting the establishment of relevant departments or integration of independent agencies into the education-management architecture, which can serve to enable the long-term sustainability of efforts to support children with disabilities (See EQ 3 and Cambodia Case Study).¹⁰⁵

While these small and targeted types of interventions can be valuable in terms of ensuring that the needs and rights of specific groups are better understood and addressed, it is important not to have too many interventions of this type, since they also require resources, and to avoid a situation where such interventions become so specialized and/or expensive that they cannot be replicated (See for example Box 6: Why Testing Is Important – Even Best-Laid Plans).¹⁰⁶

Box 7: Educating Working Children

Working children are one of the most underprivileged groups in Bangladesh. These are often domestic workers with very limited time outside of their domestic commitments. The BETHWRUC programme was funded by Sida from 2004 to 2014. During this period, BEHTRUWC covered all six divisional cities of Bangladesh and provided basic education and skills training to around 200,000 urban working children. Those targeted were workers who were not attending school and aged between 8 and 14 years old. Selection favoured girls – 60% of enrolments. The education took place in flexible ‘drop in’ learning centres with innovative teaching and learning materials to facilitate accelerated learning, and includes basic literacy and numeracy, including reading and writing in Bengali and English. The livelihood module in the programme teaches communication skills as well as other life skills related to health, environment and social issues. Sida provided approximately half of the project funding. The final evaluation of BEHTRUWC conducted by PINZ found that 74% of graduates gained functional literacy and numeracy skills and a further 20,130 went on to the livelihood skills training component. Quantitative data on this latter component are not available, but qualitative findings indicate increased incomes and alleviation of multidimensional aspects of poverty. The project has been institutionalized under government provision and continues to be implemented and expanded by UNICEF, which has built on the accelerated-learning and life-skills approaches developed by Sida. A six-month apprenticeship component was added towards the end of the period of Sida funding. This element included the inclusion of partnerships with small enterprises at the local level. The programme was linked to the national curriculum and to the state-level TVET system to allow transition to continued education beyond the programme. The programme has expanded to increased coverage of marginalized urban children nationally. UNICEF indicated that 98% of apprentices go on to employment (UNICEF, personal communication). During the COVID crisis, the Sida-supported accelerated-learning model has been deployed nationally as part of a broader set of government activities that aimed to support children affected by school closures (UNICEF, personal communication). The project is an example of Sida applying its commitment to human rights, gender and poverty alleviation through multi-level dialogue, advocacy, timely evidence, appropriate choice of implementing partner, and expert provision of learning and curriculum models and materials.

Source: PINZ (Polytechnics International New Zealand Ltd). 2014. *Final Evaluation of the Bangladesh Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project – 2nd Phase 2004–2014*. Wellington: PINZ.

¹⁰⁴ MoEYS. 2018. Policy on Inclusive Education. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

Krousar Thmey. 2017. Annual report. Phnom Penh: Krousar Thmey.

Krousar Thmey. 2018. Annual report. Phnom Penh: Krousar Thmey.

Krousar Thmey. 2019. Annual report. Phnom Penh: Krousar Thmey.

Krousar Thmey. 2020. Annual report. Phnom Penh: Krousar Thmey.

UNICEF. 2019a. Country Office Annual Report: Cambodia. Cambodia: UNICEF

See also for a discussion on conditions and challenges Ministerio de Educacion (2013) *Comprencon de las descpacidad III: Situacion de la Descapacidad en Bolivia y en El mundo*. La Paz : Ministerio de Education.

¹⁰⁵ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹⁰⁶ Dastgeer, Ali, Sumra, Suleman, Christoplos, Ian, and Rothman, Jessica (2013) *Evaluation of the Barbro Johansson Model Girls’ Secondary School in Tanzania*: Final Report, Stockholm: Sida; Available at:

<https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61580en-evaluation-of-the-barbro-johansson-model-girls-secondary-school-in-tanzania--final-report.pdf>; See also <https://johatrust.ac.tz/about-barbro/>.

It is also essential to strike the right balance between the development, testing and refinement of a model that is replicable and the introduction of this model into a larger system to both expand its reach (impact) and ensure its sustainability (See KEQ 3: Which factors have constituted conditions for sustainable and resilient results of Sida's support to education?).¹⁰⁷

Importantly, not all efforts to address the needs of minorities have been small and single-donor. The support provided by Sida in Bolivia¹⁰⁸ focused specifically on providing an education that would not only reach all children and address the needs for multilingual education across the country, and thus accommodate the linguistic needs of different groups, but also address concerns about cultural heritage and inclusion (See Box 8: A Multilingual and Multicultural Approach).

Sida has funded some of these interventions directly, and in other instances has indirectly funded interventions through intermediaries such as UNICEF or through basket-funds mechanisms in which multiple donors have participated (e.g. Bolivian Fondo de Apoyo al Sector Educativo 2005-2014).¹⁰⁹ The support to groups that have specific needs, often the most vulnerable in a society, varies from country to country, but the hallmark of such support is that it targets a specific group that is neglected by the general education system. In each instance, whether it be the provision of support to single ethnic minorities, to working children, or to visually or hearing-impaired children, to list some examples, the support has either been part of a carefully crafted intervention modality or has contributed to an existing effort and has aimed at making that effort more sustainable (See EQ 3).

The success of these interventions relies on the degree to which the particular factors that caused the exclusion or particular vulnerability were addressed in each context. This means that the degree of success varies from case to case, but ultimately it means that without Sida support some (or all) of these groups would not have had access to the type of support that they required to secure their own access to education.¹¹⁰

Importantly, the facilitating characteristics that affect the overall success of support to education, discussed later in this section, are also relevant to support that targets groups that are particularly vulnerable (See EQ 2). Most importantly, the factors that contribute to the expansion of access also contribute to the possibility of enabling access for specific groups.

Box 8: A Multilingual and Multicultural Approach

In Bolivia, the education system has been modified since the early 1990s to include, first, bilingual education and, later, multilingual education, as an important effort to 'decolonize' the education system and ensure national ownership of the education process. The logic behind these modifications was that providing inclusive education for indigenous peoples required working at an intra- and intercultural level. The prioritized steps were to reassess the history, culture, cosmogony and oral knowledge of each indigenous people (intracultural) as an essential step towards initiating an intercultural dialogue that would culminate in a comprehensive agreement on what should or should not be included in the education curricula and ensure that all ethnic groups, along with their histories, cultures, and knowledge bases, were adequately reflected in the education process. For this reason, it was decided to develop, first of all, regional curriculums that would reaffirm the diverse cultural identities. Later, the goal was to complement these with a base curriculum, applicable at the national level, to establish a shared educational base. There was also a commitment to professionalizing teaching to ensure that teachers had the necessary knowledge to apply both types of curriculums. However, according to the National Diagnosis of Bolivia on Education (UNESCO, 2020), performance in mathematics, reading and science remains at low levels (I and II), which shows the need for further strengthening of the quality of primary education and improving teaching practices.

Source: UNESCO (2020) 'Aplicación del tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo (TERCE). Diagnóstico nacional de Bolivia.' Santiago: Oficina Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe.

¹⁰⁷ See also the MLE UNICEF experience in Cambodia: UNICEF (2019b) Independent evaluation of the Multilingual Education National Action Plan. Cambodia: UNICEF.

¹⁰⁸ Bye, Vegard, Calla, Ricardo, and Christoplos, Ian (2013) Outcome Assessment of Swedish Bilateral Cooperation in Bolivia 2009–2012, Stockholm: Sida.

¹⁰⁹ AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suiza & Embajada del Reino de Dinamarca (2016) La Canasta: Sistematización del Fondo de Apoyo al Sector Educativo, Bolivia 2004–2015, La Paz: AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suiza & Embajada del Reino de Dinamarca.

¹¹⁰ Barkat, A., Khan, M. S., Rahman, M., Chowdhury, T. A., & Al Hussain, A. (2010) Basic education for hard-to-reach urban working children: study on benefits, sustainability and cost. *Report prepared for UNICEF. Dhaka: Human Development Research Centre.*

Key Finding 3: Linkages to employment opportunities have been made available for children/youth

All categories of respondents across all of the countries studied agreed that an important purpose of education is its utility – being able to use what has been learned in order to escape multidimensional poverty and/or gender inequality (See also Box 9: What Is Quality and Why Does It Matter – The Beneficiary Perspective).¹¹¹ Being able to use one’s education depends on a number of factors, including the quality of the education received as well as the ability to use the education one has received as a platform from which further training or education can be secured. One of the challenges faced by the education sector (and a factor that has contributed to a devaluation of education’s importance) has been the lack of articulation between education and what may come after.¹¹²

Sida has supported a number of impact-inducing initiatives that have sought to provide post-education opportunities. These have included provision of support to beneficiaries to help them identify what they may be able to do after school,¹¹³ as well as the funding of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)¹¹⁴ and other technical training programmes. Although outside the scope of the present evaluation, Sida also provides funds for higher education, which means that pupils who have benefited from the support provided in earlier stages of their education can benefit from continued academic support.¹¹⁵ Here, however, the focus is on initiatives that are not part of the higher education process.

Sida has provided specific support to individual projects that have shown good results. For example, the Centre for Mass Education’s Basic School System and Adolescent Girls project in Bangladesh (funded by Sida from 2004 to 2016). This provided basic education and vocational training to poor youth from rural areas, with approximately 1,500 rural students being enrolled annually (60% girls). Some 80% of the graduates went on to employment or further education.¹¹⁶ The evaluation of the project concluded that it had been successful in providing education and skills training, though efforts to enable access to employment in foreign trade enterprises has had more limited success.¹¹⁷ Interview and focus-group data collected during the case study for Bangladesh corroborated the findings of the evaluation. Respondents engaged during the case study data collection who were familiar with the

Box 9: What Is Quality and Why Does It Matter – The Beneficiary Perspective

As discussed in Section 1.5, the definition of quality in relation to education is a matter of considerable debate. From an end-user perspective – specifically, the views of relevant families and communities – quality is often defined or understood in terms of whether attending school will improve the life/livelihood of the child. According to respondents, parents take a very pragmatic view of what attending school might mean. They appear far less concerned with concepts, experiences and ideals, and far more concerned with the practical application of what their children might learn. This means that the education children receive may be of sufficient quality to enable them to move forward to whatever the next step might be (higher education, technical training, job placement) and must be well articulated with whatever might come next. What all of this means is that parents will only support the education of their children if they believe that engaging in school adds value – or adds more value than the alternative (i.e. helping out at home, getting a job). The findings suggest that, from the perspective of end users, there is a critical window during which education can afford to not achieve its quality objectives. Once that window has closed, parents may be reluctant to support an education process that they consider low in value.

¹¹¹ See https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/UNICEF_Defining_Quality_Education_2000.PDF

¹¹² See for example: ILO (2002) *El Trabajo Decente y la Economía Informal : Informe VI*. Geneva: ILO where opportunities after education are discussed.

¹¹³ Finn Church aid and Swedish Employment Service. 2017. Project proposal: career Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools – The Bridge to Employment. Cambodia: Finn Church Aid
Chea, Chanthan. Et al. 2021. Evaluation Report: The Final Evaluation of the “Career Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools – The Bridge to employment project. Phnom Penh: Finn Church Aid.

¹¹⁴ Denbach, Andreas, Watson, Julian, Jänecke, Bianca, and Singh Bhandar, An (2015) Final Evaluation of the ‘Modular Second Chance Education with Livelihood Skills and Gender Empowerment – Phase V: A Programme Implemented by the Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), Stockholm: InDevelop Sweden.

¹¹⁵ See <https://openaid.se/en>. (accessed 20 January 2022).

¹¹⁶ Denbach, Andreas, et. al.(2015) op.cit.

¹¹⁷ ibid.

intervention, including graduates themselves, highlighted that participants of the project had been able to engage in financially viable self-employed trade activities (carpentry, welding, tailoring). There was a consensus among respondents familiar with the effort that results had been positive and that vocational training leading to employment was often a precursor to formal education. The success experienced in Bangladesh was not echoed in other contexts, however. In Bolivia, where Sida halted support in 2016, current efforts to provide TVET have not led to expected results. Multiple respondents noted that skills secured were not of high calibre and/or that training did not lead to wealth-generating opportunities.¹¹⁸ While Sida is not supporting these initiatives at the present time, it is relevant to note that the quality of the TVET provided and the topics of focus are important determinants for their success.

Here, it is important to underline that, by and large, TVET programmes have been limited, and those where results have been positive have been few. However, reviews/evaluations of TVET programmes, as well as interviews conducted during this evaluation, indicate that TVET can play critical role in securing improved livelihoods for those who take part in them. This in turn can lead to a reduction of some elements of multidimensional poverty.

As with access, the provision of opportunities has an impact on end-beneficiaries, but the benefit of such impact is highly dependent on (a) the quality of the support provided and (b) the ability of pupils to make use of the knowledge secured.¹¹⁹

Facilitating factors related to the first three findings: Securing access to education (Findings 1 and 2) and articulating education with skills to secure employment (Finding 3) require that a number of factors be present. While not all of those factors are always relevant, a list of the most critical factors identified by the evaluation team is provided below.

1. **Working with the system:** that is responsible for the provision of education (education management). This process requires a clear plan for execution. In some instances, Sida provided direct funding to the relevant ministries and departments (i.e. core funding – sometimes, as in Tanzania, jointly through basket funds allocated for the implementation of sectoral policy programmes).¹²⁰ In others, it supported the development of policies, plans and strategies and the strengthening of ministerial systems to manage larger educational systems (as in Cambodia,¹²¹ Bolivia¹²² and Bangladesh).¹²³ The findings of this evaluation consistently show that the existence of a functioning education system is vital for the success of interventions. It is important in this context to underline that the education systems across the case study countries suffer severe shortcomings. However, they meet the basic requirements needed to sustain an expansive and expanding educational system.¹²⁴ These include having

¹¹⁸ For information on employment opportunities and securing rights as employees See: Buikema, P. (2009) Trabajo Decente y el Sector Informal: Mejoramiento Oportunidades de Trabajo mediante Certificación en Bolivia. Institute of Development Studies:UK.

¹¹⁹ ILO (2002) El Trabajo Decente y la Economía Informal : Informe VI. Geneva: ILO
Buikema, P. (2009) Trabajo Decente y el Sector Informal : Mejoramiento Oportunidades de Trabajo mediante Certificación en Bolivia. Institute of Development Studies:UK.

¹²⁰ For the Cambodia experience of joint donor aid See Annex 3: Cambodia Case study.

¹²¹ Van Gerwen, Frans. Et.al. 2018. Outcome Evaluation of the Education Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) – Phase I and II. Cambodia: MoEYS and UNICEF. For more details on the Cambodia experience of joint donor aid See Annex 3: Cambodia Case study.

¹²² AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suiceia & Embajada del Reiono de Dinamarca (2016) La Canasta: Sistematización del Fondo de Apoyo al Sector Educativo, Bolivia 2004-2015, La Paz: AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suiceia & Embajada del Reiono de Dinamarca.

¹²³ Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Directorate of Primary Education Fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP4) (2019). Bangladesh Primary Education Annual Sector Performance Report 2019. Dhaka: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

¹²⁴ Including a robust legislative, strategic and policy architecture. See Bibliography for a compendium of relevant document from Cambodia and or Annex 3: Cambodia Case Study. In Bolivia current legislation includes Ley de Educación Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez o Ley 070 (2010), and previous relevant legislation included: Bolivia: Ley de Reforma Educativa, 7 de julio de 1994. Ley 1565. In Bangladesh some of the relevant legislation includes: Bureau of Non-formal Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of Bangladesh (2006) Non-formal Education Policy. In Tanzania some of the relevant documents include: Tenmet (Tanzania Education Network) (2017) Strategic Plan, July 2017-June 2022. From Education for All to education 2030. Dar Es Salaam. United Republic of Tanzania (2005) National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). Vice President's Office. June. United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Education and Culture

multi-year plans; having mechanisms for the recruitment and management of staff, including teaching staff; being able to administer the minimum materials/resources required for schools to be able to run; and having secured funding (internally within the government budget or externally from donors) to maintain the system (See ‘Public Financial Management (PFM)’ - Finding 4).

Corruption is a problem that affects many countries, and those supported by Sida are no exception.¹²⁵ However, there is a clear distinction that needs to be made between corruption levels within the education system that render it non-functional and corruption levels that affect but do not completely destroy the system.¹²⁶

2. **Proximity to the home:** Logistical accessibility has been consistently identified as a critical factor determining school attendance.¹²⁷ The data collected for this evaluation show that schools must be brought to children, rather than vice versa. Indeed, data on enrolment in secondary schools and, specifically, drops in enrolment are attributed to, among other things, the distance to the pupils’ homes. Girls’ attendance was linked to distance between the school and the child’s home.¹²⁸ Respondents regularly noted that safety is a greater concern with girls, and therefore distance was an even more critical factor when the goal was to achieve gender-equal rates of enrolment.¹²⁹ While geographical proximity was not highlighted as a key factor for TVET and counselling, it should be emphasized that these services need to be within reach. Having services in locations that would-be beneficiaries cannot access easily or where accessing the services will entail costs will dramatically undermine their reach and impact.
3. **Time of lessons:** In the case of working children, experiences in Bangladesh demonstrated how making education accessible (proximity) can involve both where the school is located and the time of day at which classes are held, as these factors may have a critical impact on children’s ability to participate in educational activities. While the experience of working children is particularly relevant in this context, the time of classes is also important for children more broadly, particularly in relation to household chores they may be responsible for and the time required to get to school.¹³⁰
4. **Staffed schools:** Ensuring that schools are staffed is also critical to increasing access to education. In relation to staffing, there are three important points that need to be considered: quality of staff, numbers and subject specializations. The data from the countries studied show that staffing numbers have increased with the increase of enrolled pupils. However, a second point concerns the quality of teaching and whether teachers have the necessary skills to use the teaching material and to ensure a high-quality learning environment that meets basic standards such as ‘child-friendly schooling’, ‘gendered curriculum’ and ‘inclusive education’. The third point is that, in some cases, for example in Tanzania, even when there

(2001) Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP) Medium Term Strategic and Programme Framework 200-2005. Dar Es Salaam, January. United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Education and Culture (2001) Teacher Education Mater Plan (TEMP) medium Term Strategic and Programme Framework 2000-2005. Dar Es Salaam, January. Additional relevant documents are found in the Bibliography. The Afghanistan case was somewhat different since efforts started at a time where there was little architecture to build, and rather a whole system had to be established.

¹²⁵ For a list of the results of the Corruption Perception Index See: <https://www.transparency.org/en>

¹²⁶ For a review of Sida’s regulation on anti-corruption See: <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida4362en-sidas-anticorruption-regulation.pdf>

¹²⁷ Damon, Amy, Glewwe, Paul, Wisniewski, Suzanne, and Sun, Bixuan (2016) Education in Developing Countries: What Policies and Programmes Affect Learning and Time in Schools, Stockholm: EBA.

¹²⁸ Lawson, Andrew, et al. op.cit.

See also: Subrahmanyam, Gita (2016) Gender Perspectives on Causes and Effects of School Dropouts. Stockholm: Sida.

¹²⁹ It is worth noting that while the idea that distance to school and safety were a major constraint for girls attending secondary school, and in Cambodia was cited by multiple respondents as the reason why girls did not attend secondary school, the enrolment data suggest that drop-out rates between primary and secondary school are consistent between boys and girls, which suggests that this factor does not affect girls in particular. In other countries, for example, Tanzania, the discrepancy in drop out between girls and boys is much more marked. See original data: <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com> (the dashboard is password protected; log in details to secure access can be requested from the evaluation commissioner).

¹³⁰ See Barkat, A., Khan, M. S., Rahman, M., Chowdhury, T. A., & Al Hussain, A. (2010) Basic education for hard-to-reach urban working children: study on benefits, sustainability and cost. *Report prepared for UNICEF. Dhaka: Human Development Research Centre.* (BEHTRUWC) Project – 2nd Phase 2004–2014. Wellington: PINZ.

are plenty of teachers, there may still be a shortage of specific *types* of teachers, such as maths or science teachers. Each school needs not just a certain number of teachers but also enough qualified teachers for all subjects.¹³¹

5. **Education that is free** has also been identified as a key factor affecting access. Sida has contributed to enabling fee-free education by supporting the relevant ministries in areas that allowed those entities to free up resources in ways that made the introduction of fee-free education possible (e.g. PEDP and EPforR in Tanzania; See Box 10: Securing Fee-Free Education).¹³² In Cambodia, where access was already formally fee-free, although this was often undermined by corrupt practices, efforts to reduce corruption have served to support the provision of fee-free education (See Cambodia Case Study).¹³³
6. **Adaptability to pupil needs** can also play a critical role in ensuring enrolment. Specifically, does the education provided meet minimum criteria for enabling the engagement of children? For example, is access provided for mobility-impaired children? Is the teaching language-appropriate? Does the school have minimum facilities, including, for example, toilets?¹³⁴ Do students have permission to attend if pregnant or a mother? Are childcare facilities available? (See Key Finding 2).
7. **Prejudices:** While support specifically targeting children from minorities, children with disabilities, working children, girls and other marginalized groups can be an important step towards facilitating and even encouraging the engagement of

Box 10: Securing Fee-Free Education

School fees in Tanzania's basic education system were lifted in two stages, and Sida was a key partner in both stages. First, by relying on the financial support of donors such as Sida, Tanzania abolished primary school fees in the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) of 2001. General budget support, to which Sida was a major contributor, was a key driver of the transformation of the education sector in the early 2000s. That effort steeply increased government funding to the education sector, which would not have been feasible without general budget support (sectoral budget support played a lesser role). Second, based on the national education policy of 2014, another initiative abolished fees for all basic education from 2015 and achieved a degree of success in purging parts of the system of ad hoc irregular 'fees' and corruption. That turned secondary schools from an opportunity for the few into a much more broad-based system, and massive support through the EPforR programme addressed some of the greatest challenges involved in that shift. There is a strong consensus among the stakeholders – including a number of key civil society organizations – on the positive impact of the EPforR programme on the education sector.

Sources: United Republic of Tanzania (2001) 'Education Sector Development Programme: Primary Education Development Plan (2002–2006)', Dar es Salaam: Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC).

Lawson, Andrew, et al. (2013) *Joint Evaluation of Budget Support to Tanzania: Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future, Final Report: Volume 1*. UK: ITAD, COWI and ADE United Republic of Tanzania, President's Office. (2014) *Big Results Now! Tanzania Development Vision 2025. 2012/2014 Annual Report*. Dar Es Salaam: United Republic of Tanzania, President's Office

Linsjö, Karin (2018) 'The Financial Burden of a Fee Free Primary Education on Rural Livelihoods: A Case Study from Rural Iringa Region, Tanzania', *Development Studies Research* 5(1): 26–36.

HakiElimu (2010) 'Education in Reverse: Is PEDP II Undoing the: HakiElimu
Moran, Greg, Connal, Criana, Kirama, Stephen, and Leung, Yvonne (2020) *Evaluation of the Sida-Supported Education Programme for Results (EP for R) 2014–2021, Tanzania*, Stockholm: Sida.

¹³¹ Lawson, Andrew, et al. op.cit.

¹³² United Republic of Tanzania (2001) 'Education Sector Development Programme: Primary Education Development Plan (2002–2006)', Dar Es Salaam: Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC). Embassy of Sweden, Tanzania (2004) Country Report 2004. Dar Es Salaam: Embassy of Sweden, Tanzania. Embassy of Sweden, Tanzania (2006) Outcome Assessment: Tanzania–Sweden 2001–2005. Dar Es Salaam: Embassy of Sweden, Tanzania. Lawson, Andrew, et al. op.cit. p. 105; United Republic of Tanzania (2014) Tanzania Development Vision 2025: Big Results Now! Annual Report 2013/2014 Dar Es Salaam: Government of Tanzania. Linsjö, Karin (2018) 'The Financial Burden of a Fee Free Primary Education on Rural Livelihoods: A Case Study from Rural Iringa Region, Tanzania', *Development Studies Research* 5(1): 26–36.

¹³³ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹³⁴ Toilets and washing areas are particularly relevant for girls who have started menstruating, as this is considered a critical time during which girls drop out or reduce attendance.

these groups in society more broadly, prejudice can also play an important role in supporting the exclusion of minority groups. This means that in addition to developing projects or programmes to provide education services to vulnerable groups, systemic prejudices that affect them must also be addressed. Systemic prejudice can be addressed in part via the curriculum imparted to minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable children, but also requires a broader effort to change concepts and preconceived notions at the society level – for example, as part of the broader education curriculum, as part of teacher training, or at the policy level (See Box 1: Understanding Gender Transformation in Education – The UNICEF Approach).¹³⁵

As the factors that appeared to support increases in enrolment were examined, it was found that ensuring an increase in primary enrolment is both complex and case-specific. This suggests that while the facilitating characteristics detailed in the previous paragraphs are consistently important, the degree of donor support needed to achieve or address them may vary from case to case. In addition, there are a number of conditions that may also affect the ability of Sida, or any other donor, to secure an impact from the interventions they have supported. The principal conditions identified include the need for the **political will** to facilitate an environment that welcomes the expansion of the education system. This means there must be **broad supporting policies** in place or a keen desire to develop these. At an overarching level, there needs to be a set of **shared objectives** between the host government and Sida. **Corruption can exist**, but it needs to be within manageable limits.¹³⁶ This means that it cannot affect the education system in a way that shuts the latter down. All of the above-mentioned factors need to be nested within a minimum level of host-government **capacity to capitalize on the support provided**. This means there needs to be the know-how locally, or that know-how needs to be first developed. There must also be a capacity to absorb the support provided (See EQ 3). A last point that seems to be critical but is apparently often overlooked is the role played by the **individual representing Sida locally**. The data collected both during this evaluation and by others make a compelling argument for the importance of individuals. In particular, the degree to which individuals involved understand the complexity of the local cultural and socio-political architecture and are able to secure a seat at the table and make their voices heard plays an important role that is hard to quantify. The degree to which improved guidance from Sida could balance out the importance of individuals' personal characteristics and knowledge is currently unknown.

Key Finding 4: Improved, or Potential to Improve, Transparency and Accountability within the education system.

None of the education systems examined can currently be described as fully transparent or accountable. Indeed, none of the support provided by Sida to develop monitoring and evaluation systems that were supposed to improve transparency and accountability has led to a fully operational system at this time. However, some of the monitoring and evaluation systems that Sida has supported show promise; their importance as part of efforts to ensure an education system of good quality have been underlined; and therefore these efforts merit discussion.

¹³⁵ See also Theresa Tuwor & Marie-Antoinette Sossou (2008) Gender discrimination and education in West Africa: strategies for maintaining girls in school, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12:4, 363-379
<https://education-profiles.org/es/america-latina-y-el-caribe/bolivia/~inclusion>
<https://borgenproject.org/girls-education-in-bangladesh/>

Frawly, Jack. Et. al. (2019) op.cit. Krousar Thmey. 2017. Op.cit. Krousar Thmey. 2018. Op.cit. Krousar Thmey. 2019. Op.cit. Krousar Thmey. 2020. Op.cit.

¹³⁶ It is noted that Sida has zero tolerance for corruption, but at the same time it needs to be able to work in countries where corruption exists. In the context of this assignment, manageable corruption refers to a country where there is corruption, but where corruption does not affect the use of Sida funding. See <https://www.transparency.org/en> and <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida4362en-sidas-anticorruption-regulation.pdf>

Across the different countries examined there are issues with corruption, including cases where nominally fee-free education involves actual fees for pupils (kickbacks and corruption), resources are misspent, there are unverified statistics regarding enrolment and retention, and/or the quality of education provided is not fully overseen and controlled.¹³⁷ However, the lack of fully effective monitoring systems to assess the provision of education does not mean that efforts to establish systems that could enable such controls are not important. In Cambodia and Tanzania, Sida supported mechanisms to ensure that resources reached schools and teachers directly, while in Bangladesh support was focused on monitoring systems, and a similar approach was incorporated within the support provided to Cambodia. Although in Cambodia the quality monitoring system for the education system is not yet operational (See Cambodia Case Study),¹³⁸ in Bangladesh the Performance Management System put in place with Sida support has become well established within the education system and contributes to ensuring adequate resource allocation within the education system and the monitoring of education support (See Box 11: Results-Based Management in Bangladesh).

In Tanzania, the past few years have seen clear improvements in accuracy and veracity of data collected in the education sector, and much of this progress can be credited to the Sida co-funded basic education management information system (BEMIS).¹³⁹ In Cambodia, the monitoring system has not yet translated into ensuring a good quality education system (See Cambodia Case Study).¹⁴⁰

In Afghanistan, efforts to support the establishment of a policy and a strategy-level mechanism to ensure that the provision of education services was monitored did achieve some success. Once developed into a robust system that included a human resources component, the Education Management Information System was effective in identifying ‘ghost teachers’ who were receiving pay but not present in schools.¹⁴¹ This was a significant measure in terms of reducing widespread corruption.¹⁴²

Box 11: Results-Based Management in Bangladesh

Under the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP2), Sida directly supported the development of a results-based management (RBM) system, including provision of technical assistance to the Department for Primary Education. RBM was successfully implemented and used for Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) planning and budgeting, through annual operational plans, and reporting, through annual sector performance reports. National key performance indicators were introduced to measure primary education outputs and outcomes. At district and school levels, school-level improvement plans and Upazila education performance profiles were introduced, again with direct contribution from Sida. PEDP2 was viewed as having strengthened donor harmonization, MoPME ownership, and overall planning and management of the education system, including targeting more resources to the most disadvantaged areas of the country. Sida chaired the PEDP3 Administration and Monitoring Working Group, responsible for improvement in teacher career paths and recruitment, improved school censuses, and distribution of textbooks. These measures were also significant in increasing transparency, thus reducing corruption. Under the current PEDP4, the RBM system has been further strengthened and forms an institutionalized component of the programme.

Sources: Poate, D., and Vaillant, C. (2012) *Joint Evaluation of Support to Anti-Corruption Efforts (2002–2009): Synthesis Report* (a.k.a. ‘Bangladesh Country Report’). Oslo: Norad; Asian Development Bank (2015) ‘Validation Report: Bangladesh Second Primary Education Development Programme’. Reference Number: PVR-391. Metro Manila: Independent Evaluation Department, Asian Development Bank; Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh Directorate of Primary Education Fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP4) (2019) *Bangladesh Primary Education Annual Sector Performance Report 2019*. Dhaka: Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

¹³⁷ A requirement of any attribution of impact is that support has generated impact on end-beneficiaries, not only at the outcome level within systems.

¹³⁸ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹³⁹ NIRAS Sweden AB (2020) Evaluation of the Sida-supported Education Program for Results (EporR) 2014-2021, Tanzania (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2020:23). Sida.

¹⁴⁰ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹⁴¹ Government of Afghanistan Ministry of Education & Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (2018) ‘Environmental and Social Management Framework EQRA Project: Final Report’, June; Ministry of Education (2017) ‘Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment of the Ministry of Education. October. Kabul: Ministry of Education

¹⁴² Communication from interview respondents in the EQRA project led by the World Bank.

More specifically, Sida has played an important role in relation to public financial management (PFM) as it is also tied to the question of transparency and accountability. Findings from the period under review indicate that development and enhancement of PFM mechanisms have taken place in all of the case study countries. Review and analysis of various public expenditure and financial accountability (PEFA) documents, legislative documents, annual reports and related public expenditure documents indicate that, in all these countries, at varying levels of advancement and application, all the basic elements of PFM (planning, budgeting, implementation/public procurement, accountability/reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and oversight) have been institutionalized.¹⁴³ In all case study countries, there is a mix of PFM policies, strategies and legislation relevant to service delivery in general, including in relation to the education sector. However, despite the substantial support to education over the last two decades, it was not possible to establish any instances where Sida-funded activities were clearly associated with or led to PFM reforms for the education sector.

Despite progress with the implementation of national/subnational plans and budgets for the education sector (and other services) that have improved levels of accountability and corruption, countries like Tanzania,¹⁴⁴ Cambodia¹⁴⁵ and Afghanistan¹⁴⁶ continue to rank very low in the Transparency International Corruption Perception index.¹⁴⁷ In relation to the sustainability of results achieved with Sida support, there is evidence that public expenditure on education has been institutionalized in all of the case study countries through national PFM systems (education sector planned for; education sector budgets established; funds flow through national treasuries; accountability and reporting systems in place). Therefore, support provided by Sida and other stakeholders to the case study countries contributed to the enhancement of public expenditure management practices in the education sector through public expenditure reporting and accountability requirements.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ 2017 Annual Review_PFM RP_Eng_20 April 2018, https://www.dropbox.com/s/w5ico18ww56xfms/2017%20Annual%20Review_PFM RP_Eng_20%20April%202018.pdf?dl=0; Cambodia Law_on_Public_Finance_refinedEnglish, https://www.dropbox.com/s/3f79jipyohptsy/Law_on_Public_Finance_refinedEnglish.pdf?dl=0; National PEFA Cambodia, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/pi1v68zw2m8kox8/National%20PEFA%20Cambodia.pdf?dl=0>; Final SFMM 2017, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/exbvuv1j0tz4ilz/Final%20SFMM%202017.pdf?dl=0>; Naron-Public Finance in Cambodia-2009-English, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/nwouqdurv25sxw9/Naron-Public%20Finance%20in%20Cambodia-2009-English.pdf?dl=0>; RROIP-2013-English, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/q1qnby10v3lugmq/RROIP-2013-English.pdf?dl=0>; <https://www.pefa.org/country/bolivia>; <https://www.pefa.org/node/506>; <https://www.pefa.org/country/tanzania>; <https://www.pefa.org/country/afghanistan>; <https://www.pefa.org/country/cambodia>; https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/14999/711_Public_Finance_Management_Reforms_Impact_Education_Tanzania.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y; https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/ppar_cambodia_12282016.pdf; <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Public-Financial-Management-in-Latin-America-The-Key-to-Efficiency-and-Transparency.pdf>; <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/429336/public-financial-management-systems-bangladesh.pdf>.

¹⁴⁴ Lawson, Andrew, et al. (2013) *Joint Evaluation of Budget Support to Tanzania: Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future, Final Report: Volume 1*. UK: ITAD, COWI and ADE. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/derec/ec/Joint-Evaluation-of-Budget-Support-to-Tanzania-Lessons-Learned-and-Recommendations-for-the-Future-Vol1.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ National PEFA Cambodia (1), <https://www.dropbox.com/s/9su130c0ey9x7s2/National%20PEFA%20Cambodia%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0>; Final English OBI Report(1), <https://www.dropbox.com/s/m3gf5lh250c113a/Final%20English%20OBI%20Report%281%29.pdf?dl=0>; Naron-Public Finance in Cambodia-2009-English, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/nwouqdurv25sxw9/Naron-Public%20Finance%20in%20Cambodia-2009-English.pdf?dl=0>; <https://www.pefa.org/country/bolivia>; Basic Education In Bolivia-Wb, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/dvjwvx9z2pr9sre/BASIC%20EDUCATION%20IN%20BOLIVIA-WB.pdf?dl=0>.

¹⁴⁶ 1. Help Desk Afghanistan_Anti Corruption and Education_Assessment of MEC report, https://www.dropbox.com/s/pcf8i20xm79v8q/1.%20Help%20Desk%20Afghanistan_Anti%20Corruption%20and%20Education_Assessment%20of%20MEC%20report.pdf?dl=0; https://www.dropbox.com/s/wxedbz4sq8i1nf/2.%20Help%20Desk%20Afghanistan_Anti-Corruption%20and%20Education_Overview_final.pdf?dl=0; Norad_2016Country Evaluation Brief_Afghanistan, https://www.dropbox.com/s/3ydydm7x6e00dm/Norad_2016Country%20Evaluation%20Brief_%20Afghanistan.pdf?dl=0; Zurcher_Part2BilateralReportAfghanistanMarch2020_0 (1), https://www.dropbox.com/s/vimlramtghwattq/Zurcher_Part2BilateralReportAfghanistanMarch2020_0%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0.

¹⁴⁷ Corruption Perception Index See: <https://www.transparency.org/en>

¹⁴⁸ Budget Transparency Brief 2010 – English, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/8zx98nxwwmuw325/Budget%20Transparency%20Brief%202010%20-%20English.pdf?dl=0>; Mapping budget in education-FINAL-Eng-Clean, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/qw3pirdq979cebv/Mapping%20budget%20in%20education-FINAL-Eng-Clean.pdf?dl=0>; National PEFA Cambodia (1), <https://www.dropbox.com/s/9su130c0ey9x7s2/National%20PEFA%20Cambodia%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0>;

Given the implications of public expenditure practices on the implementation and sustainability of investments, it is notable that, in its support to the education sector, Sida has not imposed any conditions on beneficiary countries as a way of influencing or requiring targeted PFM reforms. While there have been references to questions of public accountability and the integrity of PFM systems in some sample country agreements, these issues have simply been treated as matters of ‘special importance’ and not as conditions.¹⁴⁹ Dedicated policy dialogue or/and specific requirements/conditions for PFM enhancement would probably have made it possible to directly link Sida support to public expenditure management advancements that have evolved among the beneficiary countries during the period under review. Various analyses indicate a correlation between targeted donor conditions and PFM reforms, with some of these studies concluding that a lack of or reluctance to impose PFM conditions in association with the provision of aid funding undermines PFM reforms and implementation.¹⁵⁰

Key Finding 5: Most children across most countries do not have access to a good quality education

The previous discussion has highlighted some important successes in the education sector over the last 20 years. However, there is one critical shortcoming that has fundamentally affected Sida’s ability to contribute to a more marked improvement in the reduction of multidimensional poverty and an increase in gender equality through education. This is that, when understood in terms of a broad view of learning outcomes that would include not just a focus on key subjects (languages, maths and science) but also the issues of how different genders are viewed and how basic skills can facilitate access to further (future) training and skill development, **quality of education** has been poor. Indeed, in most instances, even when the focus is only on learning outcomes on key subjects, quality of education has also been poor. Of course, Sida cannot be held solely responsible for this, but the less-than-stellar results seen in studies such as PISA-D and the World Bank assessment of quality results in low- and middle-income countries raise questions about the level of attention – or lack thereof – that quality has garnered.¹⁵¹ Obviously, it is not possible for an organization to achieve all of its goals at the

Final English OBI Report(1); Cambodia Law_on_Public_Finance_refinedEnglish, https://www.dropbox.com/s/3f79jipyohptsy/Law_on_Public_Finance_refinedEnglish.pdf?dl=0; <https://www.oecd.org/derec/sweden/41384938.pdf>; <https://www.pefa.org/country/bolivia>; <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida2721en-voices-and-processes-toward-pluralism-indegenous-education-in-bolivia.pdf>; National_Budget_FY2015-16 Bangladesh, https://www.dropbox.com/s/ttu4pwc3ymexfc2/National_Budget_FY2015-16.pdf?dl=0; Final ASPR 2016 28 September 2016 Bangladesh, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/dlzhgvp77q36sbe/Final%20%20ASPR%202016%2028%20September%202016.pdf?dl=0>; <https://www.pefa.org/node/506>; <https://www.pefa.org/country/tanzania>; Afghanistan Education Report and Statistics, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0xvenst1r6ojdv/Afghanistan%20Education%20Report%20and%20Statistics.pdf?dl=0>; 2021_ESA FINAL REPORT Tanzania, https://www.dropbox.com/s/mfamoimcl077d25/2021_ESA%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf?dl=0; 2020_AESPR, https://www.dropbox.com/s/lodh10v2onliwjs/2020%20_AESPR.pdf?dl=0; <https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/tanzania#development-1>; https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/annual_report_sida_evaluations_2018_webb.pdf; Cambodian Education Context, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/cvedb6d57shfzh7/Cambodian%20Education%20Context.docx?dl=0>; https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/14999/711_Public_Finance_Management_Reforms_Impact_Education_Tanzania.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

¹⁴⁹ Agreement between Sweden and Bangladesh, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1q6ufpe1wn61u8r/Agreement.pdf?dl=0>; <https://atom.archives.unesco.org/programme-cooperation-agreement-between-swedish-international-development-cooperation-agency-sida-and-unesco-2010-2013>.

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/derec/49238996.pdf>; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b6c522f40f0b640b9b9e9c7/Donor_support_in_Public_financial_management.pdf; <https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Implementing-Public-Financial-Management-Reform.pdf>; <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2008/wp08217.pdf>; <https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/the-uses-and-limitations-of-donor-conditionality/>.

¹⁵¹ See Azevedo, J. P. (2019) et al.

It is noted that assessments within the case study countries also raise concerns about quality:

Afghanistan: The first standardised national learning assessment was conducted by ACER in 2013 of a national sample of grade 6 children. Most children performed at ‘basic proficiency level’ (do basic mathematical operations; identify directly stated information in short texts on familiar topics; and write one or two very basic sentences) while a substantial minority failed to demonstrate ‘basic proficiency’. Overall, students performed at the same level or below grade 4 students in neighbouring countries.

See: Lumley, T., Mendelovits, J., Stanyon, R., Turner, R., & Walker, M. (2015). Class 6 proficiency in Afghanistan 2013: Outcomes of a learning assessment of mathematical, reading and writing literacy).

same time, and Sida has consistently supported the concept of quality, including in relation to learning outcomes. However, examples of where Sida support has materialized in more tangible good quality education results have all been tied to cases characterized by clear and predefined objectives (See Section 4: Conclusions and Section 5: Lessons Learned).

EQ 1 Conclusions

While no intervention examined during this evaluation has unequivocally reduced multidimensional poverty or improved gender equality at a broad level, there is good reason to recognize the role that education can play in both reducing multidimensional poverty and improving gender equality. Indeed, Sida's use of a systems approach, whereby support is provided in a way that takes into account the complexity inherent in the education system and is aimed at supporting multiple elements of the educational sector in order to foster the emergence of a stronger educational system, has proved to be important. Data collected during the interviews conducted for this study, as well as evaluations of the multilingual education effort, suggest that enabling minority groups to obtain an education has far-reaching impacts.¹⁵² The data suggest that children who are unable to actively engage with society – whether because they do not speak the most commonly spoken language or because they suffer from a disability (sight, hearing or other impairment) – feel unworthy and are often considered unworthy.¹⁵³ These data suggest that by facilitating access to education for these children, Sida has not only enabled them to potentially have access to basic skills (reading and writing), but has also facilitated a much more fundamental process related to self-worth and engagement within society, both by supporting the development of multilingual education and by supporting processes to strengthen the quality of education for persons with disability and/or improving access to education for children with disabilities.¹⁵⁴ These findings are important to the individuals in question, but far more important in terms of their broader implications. They essentially suggest that if education is of good quality, if curricula and teaching approaches include gender and equality markers, then education can contribute to the reduction of multidimensional poverty and an increase in gender equality. The link between education and multidimensional poverty reduction and increases in gender equality also highlights how, even though Sida's activities have included a highly visible rhetoric about quality in education, quality has been consistently missing at the systems level in all of the countries in which it has been active, and that without the achievement of quality education, at least at the learning outcome level, there are limited opportunities for Sida's overarching objectives (i.e. multidimensional poverty reduction and gender equality) to be achieved. It is also critical to recognize that the only country that has been able to achieve some degree of quality in a more systemic fashion has been Tanzania, where

Bangladesh: In 2013, three quarters of 5th grade children failed National Assessment minimum standards in maths and language, hence functionally illiterate. A study led by the World Bank of learning assessment outcomes over the period 2011-2017, found that in all four years, less than 26% of grade 5 students achieved grade level proficiency in Bangla, and the percentage of students achieving grade level proficiency in mathematics declined from 30% in 2011 to 16% in 2017.

See: Bhatta, S. D., & Uttam, S. (2019). *Whither Quality? What Do Recent National Assessments of Student Learning Outcomes in Bangladesh Tell Us*.

Bolivia: A 2017 assessment found that learning outcomes were low. Specifically the study found that the vast majority of pupils (above 50%) were generally only able to perform the most basic tasks in the subject under question. This was true across subjects. See https://www.minedu.gob.bo/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4675:resultados-de-evaluacion-de-aprendizajes-en-bolivia&catid=182&Itemid=854, Accessed: 12 June 2022.

Cambodia: See Cambodia Case study. The most recent data from Cambodia is from PISA where results were worse than national data suggested. Importantly corruption around exams may have contributed to the discrepancy.

Tanzania: Learning outcomes have been steadily improving. While passing grades have increased dramatically this does not necessarily equate with learning outcomes. A review of learning outcomes in 2016, however, showed an improvement of 11% points from 2014 in English and 5% points in math. Still the rate of competence was 52% and 65% respectively meaning that approximately half of children did not meet the basic learning outcome expected. See: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31465/Student-Learning-Outcomes-in-Tanzania-s-Primary-Schools-Implications-for-Secondary-School-Readiness.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> Accessed: 12 June 2022.

¹⁵² Frawley, Jack (2019) *Strategic Evaluation Report: Education for Ethnic Minorities Programme: Cambodia*, Canberra: CARE; See also Krousar Thmey (2017) op.cit.; Krousar Thmey (2018) op.cit.; Krousar Thmey (2019) op.cit.; Krousar Thmey (2020) op.cit.

¹⁵³ Studies from other countries have been able to substantiate this finding more robustly. A 2003 Sida evaluation found that 'improving the self-esteem of children and women is marked in connection with the intercultural and bilingual education activities'; See Sida (2003) 'Sida Funded Projects Through UNICEF 1998–2002', Sida Evaluation 03/41, Stockholm: Sida. The extrapolation made by some respondents in the case study of Cambodia can therefore find supportive evidence from other contexts.

¹⁵⁴ Frawley, Jack (2019) *Strategic Evaluation Report: Education for Ethnic Minorities Programme: Cambodia*, Canberra: CARE; See also Krousar Thmey (2017) op.cit.; Krousar Thmey (2018) op.cit.; Krousar Thmey (2019) op.cit.; Krousar Thmey (2020) op.cit.

Sida supported a very strong results-oriented programme monitoring over the last six years.¹⁵⁵ Although the use of a funding-for-results approach is more recent than the less rigid approaches that have been used in other case studies and in Tanzania, the use of such an approach in Tanzania accounts for over half of the ten years of concentrated focus of this evaluation, and therefore the experience should not be discounted. Importantly, funding for results appears to show considerable promise as a distinct approach that provides opportunities different from those of previous approaches. This does not mean that payment for results is the only way to ensure progress, but it does mean that it is a way of promoting progress that appears to have been successful in Tanzania.

KEQ 2: Which groups living in poverty have been affected by Sida's support to education, and in what way (with particular attention to be paid to marginalized and vulnerable groups)?

Evaluation Question 2: Key Findings

Sida has supported people living in poverty, and specifically vulnerable children, including children living with disabilities, children from ethnic minority groups, working children and girls. The Sida support has enabled these groups of children to access education, and in certain instances has led to an improvement in the quality of the education provided to them.

Given the manner and focus of its support, Sida's assistance to persons living in poverty and marginalized groups is directed towards a considerable subset of the general target population on which Sida has focused during the period under review. As a result, the findings detailed under the previous questions apply here, too (See Annex 7)¹⁵⁶. Here, however, the focus is on the type of support provided and how the support addressed the needs of the most vulnerable. An effort has been made to minimize repetition between EQ1 and EQ 2.

Analysis of World Bank data on poverty indicators across the case study countries reveals that, although the situation is generally improving, considerable proportions of the population are affected by poverty.¹⁵⁷ Still, current levels of poverty across the case study countries ranged from 17.7 % in Cambodia to 54.5% in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁸ At the general level, the support provided has specifically benefited the poorest through systems that sought to enable access to and reduce the costs of education. Sida has been a strong proponent of fee-free education and has specifically aimed to support this by funding educational systems in ways that would enable them to be fee-free, as in Tanzania,¹⁵⁹ and by reducing the opportunities/need for kickbacks from students to teachers by ensuring that teachers are able to secure access to their full salaries (Cambodia) (See Cambodia Case Study).¹⁶⁰

In addition to the general population, some specific marginalized groups have been directly targeted by Sida. These groups include persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and working children (See EQ 1: Finding 2). In addition, and specifically in the case of Afghanistan, support provided by Sida to ensure girls' access to education should also be considered as targeting the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. Under Sida's funding to the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, schooling was provided in marginalized rural areas of that country.¹⁶¹ The main gender-related barriers that girls and boys and

¹⁵⁵ NIRAS Sweden AB (2020) *Evaluation of the Sida-supported Education Program for Results (EpfOR) 2014-2021, Tanzania (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2020:23)*. Stockholm: Sida.

¹⁵⁶ See <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com/> User name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20

¹⁵⁷ See <http://wdi.worldbank.org/tables>.

¹⁵⁸ See <http://wdi.worldbank.org/tables>.

¹⁵⁹ United Republic of Tanzania (2001) 'Education Sector Development Programme: Primary Education Development Plan (2002–2006)', Dar es Salaam: Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC).

Lawson, Andrew, et al. (2013) *Joint Evaluation of Budget Support to Tanzania: Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future, Final Report: Volume 1*. UK: ITAD, COWI and ADE

United Republic of Tanzania, President's Office. (2014) *Big Results Now! Tanzania Development Vision 2025. 2012/2014 Annual Report*. Dar Es Salaam: United Republic of Tanzania, President's Office

Linsjö, Karin (2018) 'The Financial Burden of a Fee Free Primary Education on Rural Livelihoods: A Case Study from Rural Iringa Region, Tanzania', *Development Studies Research* 5(1): 26–36.

HakiElimu (2010) 'Education in Reverse: Is PEDP II Undoing the: HakiElimu

Moran, Greg, Connal, Criana, Kirama, Stephen, and Leung, Yvonne (2020) *Evaluation of the Sida-Supported Education Programme for Results (EP for R) 2014–2021, Tanzania*, Stockholm: Sida.

¹⁶⁰ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹⁶¹ Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (2018) Annual Report. Stockholm: SCA.

young people in developing countries face in accessing or remaining in education stem from issues, practices and policies at a number of levels that differ between countries, but include:¹⁶²

1. **Individual/household level:** poverty; low perceived value of girls' education; income shocks; death/illness of parents; lack of parental support for education; ethnicity and social exclusion; gendered traditional practices; early marriage; early pregnancy; and lack of interest in school (which is linked to other factors).
2. **School/community level:** high cost of schooling/corruption; lack of a nearby school; school-related gender-based violence; inadequate school facilities for girls/women; lack of clean toilets adapted for women/girls; unequal learning environments; lack of female teachers/role models; and a non-inclusive language of instruction.
3. **Policy/system level:** inadequately enforced policies on access to school for pregnant girls/young mothers; inadequately enforced legislation on school-related gender-based violence; and inadequately enforced legislation on harmful traditional practices.

In addition, children and adults with disabilities in Afghanistan were also targeted. For example, over the period 2016–2019, 1,476 children with disabilities were enrolled in mainstream schools, representing a 56% increase on the figure for the previous four years.¹⁶³ The ability that persons with disabilities have to access education is affected in multiple ways. Children with movement impairment have often faced difficulties getting to schools (See EQ 1), but also once there often face further challenges in gaining access to the buildings themselves (See Cambodia Case Study).¹⁶⁴ In addition, children with more pronounced disabilities, such as hearing or sight impairment, require special materials and special teaching methodologies that have often not been widely unavailable. In addition to challenges related to poverty, gender and physical vulnerabilities, some children have faced difficulties because of their living conditions. Working children, for example, faced additional barriers to attending school (See Box 7: Educating Working Children). In its educational support activities, Sida has consistently sought to support the most vulnerable (See EQ 1). Specific details about what Sida support has enabled are provided below.

Policy integration: Sida has supported either the development of policies able to ensure that vulnerable groups receive the support they require (Afghanistan) or the application and refinement of such policies (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Tanzania and Bolivia).¹⁶⁵ In Bangladesh, for example, PEDP3 enshrined gender mainstreaming and inclusive education as key goals in the revised version of the programme in 2015, targeting children with special needs and/or disabilities and introducing multilingual education for children from minority groups or with disabilities. This support has ensured that in Bangladesh a working framework now exists within which more tangible support can be provided.

Access: Sida has supported access to education by ensuring that vulnerable groups such as those listed in earlier examples could attend school. In some instances, this has meant providing support to ensure that schools have access for children with mobility impairment or sanitary facilities for girls. In other instances, it has meant ensuring that education is conducted in a language that allows children to engage in and benefit from the education process (See Box 12: Shifting Discourses – Manifesting Sida's Views; and Case Study Cambodia).

¹⁶² Sida (2017) 'Gender and Educational Attainment', brief, Stockholm: Sida.

¹⁶³ Arm Consulting (2019) *Inclusive Education Report*. Stockholm: SCA.

¹⁶⁴ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹⁶⁵ Support to PEDP (Primary Education Development Programme) was Sida's most important contribution to education in the early 2000s (Sida Country Report 2004: Tanzania). Dar Es Salam: Sida Campero, J. C., & BETA GAMA SRL. (2015) *Evaluación de resultados del PEI 2010-2014 del Ministerio de Educación (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2015:10)*. Sida. UNICEF (2015) *Evaluation of Phase one of the Cambodia Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF)*. Cambodia, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). July. Phnom Penh: UNICEF.

Materials: Sida has also been engaged in supporting the development and production of materials to facilitate teaching for specialized groups. This has included material for sight- and hearing-impaired children, material enabling the engagement of linguistic-minority children, and material for children who have limited time for school attendance, such as children who work (See Case Study Cambodia¹⁶⁶). In the case of the latter, the focus was specifically on the development of material for accelerated learning (See Box 7: Educating Working Children).¹⁶⁷

Teacher training: Ensuring that more disadvantaged groups received the support they needed and had access to education has often meant having teachers willing and able to support these groups. The support provided by Sida has expanded the reach of teacher-training activities, including training for all teachers on how to engage with children who are disabled (Cambodia, Tanzania), as well as specialized training for teachers of children who are disabled (Cambodia), speak a minority language or have different a cultural background (Cambodia, Bolivia), or are from a specific group whose living circumstances make it difficult for them to access school/education, such as working children (Bangladesh).¹⁶⁸ While these efforts have been vital for those who have benefited, results have varied.

The trends seem to suggest that when efforts were far-reaching and targeted the teacher population at large, the effects were less pronounced than when efforts were more targeted and specific. For example, efforts to train regular teachers on how to handle children with disabilities in Cambodia have not been as effective as efforts to train teachers who are specialized on working with children with special needs. This difference is attributed to the coverage of the effort and, according to multiple respondents across countries, to cultural conceptions held by the teachers themselves. Interviews from Cambodia provided extensive examples of how teachers in regular schools often mistreated children with disabilities, deliberately excluding them or even mocking their deficiencies. Similarly, in Bolivia there were also reports of psychological and physical mistreatment of children. Some respondents described the problem as highly prevalent, and particularly bad in the case of children from ethnic minorities. Although Sida's support in Bolivia did not specifically target children with disabilities, respondents noted that children with disabilities who attended regular schools were also subjected to ill-treatment. These sorts of behaviours by teachers were attributed to deeply entrenched cultural views that are difficult to eradicate. In cases where teachers were provided with extensive training and were

Box 12: Shifting Discourses – Manifesting Sida's Views

During the period under review, Sida has supported the provision of support that was gender-equitable and/or had gender-transformative implications/objectives (See Section 1.3.2), in addition to supporting the provision of inclusive and participatory approaches for ethnic minorities and other most disadvantaged groups, such as working children and the disabled (See EQ 2). Although Sida has focus on gender equality and gender transformation it is important to recognize that Sida was not alone in highlighting the importance of gender equality and supporting the rights of the disadvantaged. Moreover, unlike other donors, Sida has opted not to insist that its policies, strategies and perspectives on the world be replicated. Interviews conducted for this evaluation revealed that other donors, such as USAID, are far more demanding. Thus, while Sida's discourses can be seen to be replicated in some countries, it is difficult to attribute this to Sida policy, although there are some limited exceptions to this conclusion. Interviews revealed that:

1. In relation to gender issues, in some cases Sida has included conditions to their support or was specific in their views (rhetoric) that have led to clear changes. For example, in Afghanistan, the inclusion of sanitary services for girls in schools was attributed to Sida's efforts and discourse.
2. In some cases, indirect progress aligned with Sida rhetoric was pushed forward by civil society actors. Specifically, in some instances, civil society actors that received funding from Sida supported specific positions that Sida also advocated.

This does not mean that Sida did not contribute to shifting views and perspectives, but rather that (a) often its views and perspectives were aligned with the broader views and perspectives of the donor community, and (b) attribution is very difficult given the more diplomatic approach taken by Sida.

¹⁶⁶ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹⁶⁷ See Pinz (Polytechnics International New Zealand Ltd) (2014) op.cit.

¹⁶⁸ See Pinz *ibid.* Krousar Thmey. 2020. op.cit. Krousar Thmey. 2019. op.cit.; Krousar Thmey. 2018. op.cit.; Krousar Thmey. 2017. op.cit.; Frawly, Jack. Et al. (2019) op.cit.

specialized in working with their pupils, the results appear to have been vastly different. Interview respondents attributed this mainly to two factors: first, the provision of more in-depth knowledge and support during the training process; second, these teachers had deliberately sought to gain special training/work with a special group.

The data collected strongly suggest that consolidation of the progress achieved within the broader educational systems of the case study countries, including ensuring that support is provided to teachers in the regular system, will require robust monitoring and the ability of the system to act upon the results of monitoring efforts. As mentioned under EQ 1, Sida has invested considerable resources in the development and establishment of monitoring systems. However, the impact of these is not yet felt by end-beneficiaries. The findings presented here provide a further illustration of the relevance of such systems and of the need to further support them in order to ensure that they can generate all their expected potential, including not just monitoring but also the improvements identified as necessary through such monitoring (See EQ 1: Finding 4).

EQ 2 Conclusion: Support provided by Sida has consistently focused on the most vulnerable, but this type of support has only been provided once a system able to absorb such support has been present. This highlights an important point. Without a system that can manage a *regular* education system, there is no way to include support for groups that have particular or special needs. The only exceptions to the need for an existing system that can effectively manage *regular* education services are infrastructure-related activities linked to gender equality and accessibility for the movement-impaired, which ensure that schools are accessible and have basic facilities that enable participation (e.g. sanitary facilities).

2.2 Findings on Sustainability

KEQ 3: Which factors have constituted conditions for sustainable and resilient results of Sida's support to education?

Evaluation Question 3: Key Findings

The data collected during this evaluation show that different interventions funded by Sida have achieved different dimensions of sustainability. The data also show that where sustainability has not been achieved or a particular dimension has not been attained, critical elements are in place for the different dimensions of sustainability to be achieved. The data also show that some dimensions of sustainability are more fragile or susceptible to contextual aspects than others.

Sustainability is understood as the continuation of the net benefit of a contribution.¹⁶⁹ However, net benefit is not static. Unlike the delivery of a good or service, achievement of sustainability must be understood in the present context as a complex system in which transformation is as important as continuity. The mere persistence within a complex system of a policy, programme or project is not proof of its sustainability if it is no longer meeting the need for which it was originally designed (or if that need is being better met by some other means). Accordingly, here we have explored the factors that have influenced the sustainability of Sida's support at four distinct levels: **replication, consolidation, sectoral transformation** and/or **social transformation**. The achievement of these different dimensions of sustainability (along with the ways in which the various factors that contribute to each level interact) is not a linear but rather a dynamic process (See Annex 7). This means that system transformation can serve to ensure that consolidation or replication take place, and vice versa. Here results have been derived from outcome trajectories identified (Annex 7 and 8), as well as from literature and interviews which have not focused on outcomes.

Replication: There are several initiatives that have been tried and tested and that, with continued financial support, can be replicated. This type of sustainability is the most basic and generally necessitates that financial and, in certain instances, human-capacity resources remain in place. By and large, Sida efforts have sought to ensure that once interventions were refined and were good enough for replication, the interventions were absorbed by the broader education system, which would lead to

¹⁶⁹ See <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

their consolidation and/or to sectoral transformation.¹⁷⁰ Accordingly, the examples of replicable interventions are ones that are in transition to more comprehensive forms of sustainability (consolidation or system transformation).

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that replication of programmes/projects is an important step and one that can be supported either by external actors such as Sida or by society at large (See Box 13: Replication is Still Progress – Continuing to Provide Education in Afghanistan).

For example, if there is a transformation within society whereby the importance of education is understood and valued, then society as a whole can play a role in ensuring the replication of services. Most often, instances where members of society at large demand the continuation or expansion of an activity manifest as grass-roots efforts. The two possible avenues for ensuring the replication of initiatives means that either donors such as Sida must be able to continue supporting them or a movement within society needs to be born to support the replication of particular activities.

Box 13: Replication is Still Progress – Continuing to Provide Education in Afghanistan

An example of interventions that were funded and that operated independently is Sida's support to the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA). Directly funded by Sida since 1982, the SCA provides education to some 94,000 children in 16,400 community-based schools across half the provinces of Afghanistan, in rural, often hard-to-reach areas. Its educational provision is of significantly better quality than that of government schools (average test scores of 57 and 55 compared to 36 and 43, respectively), and it also offers effective programmes for disabled children and adults. The SCA employs its own teachers (nearly 6,000), the vast majority of whom are Afghan nationals. The organization situates itself within the communities it serves and is respected and trusted locally. This may account in large part for its success in getting girls enrolled in its community schools (58% girls compared with 39% nationally). Its resilience and sustainability are evidenced by its ability to continue provision of primary school education in all of the provinces it served immediately after the Taliban takeover in 2021. While it could be argued that the SCA has had a significant impact on Afghan rural cultures in terms of greater empowerment of girls, it is unclear whether the replication reported for 2021 will be perpetuated (i.e. whether the programme will continue to be replicated). While school closures have mainly affected secondary schools, it is unclear if these will be extended and what the restrictions will mean for SCA schools.

Sources: Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (2019) *Annual Report*. Stockholm: SCA. Mansory, Amir Mohammad (2010) 'Do Children Learn in Afghan Schools? Assessment of Math and Language Achievements of Students at the End of Grades 3 and 6 in SCA Supported Schools.' Stockholm: Education Technical Support Unit, SCA. Arm Consulting (2019) *Inclusive Education Report*. Stockholm: SCA. Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (2018) *Annual Report*. Stockholm: SCA. See: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/23/taliban-orders-girls-schools-shut-hours-after-reopening>, accessed 17.06.2022
<https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/04/talibans-ban-girls-education-afghanistan>, accessed 17.06.2022

¹⁷⁰ See: Pinz (Polytechnics International New Zealand Ltd) (2014) op.cit.

Sida (2003) Sida Funded Projects through UNICEF 1998-2002. Sida Evaluation 03/41. Stockholm : Sida Frawly, Jack. Et al. (2019) et.al.

Chea, Chanthan. Et al. 2021. et.al. Shift 360. 2018. Final Narrative report-ACAC: 2015-2018: Phnom Penh: Shift 360.

The Afghanistan experience provides a good example of sustainability that unfortunately did not move far beyond the replication level. In this case, the support received by and large enabled the creation of a new education system from scratch, but the mechanisms for ensuring that the created system was fully consolidated within the existing government structures, and within society at large, at the time of the Sida engagement were insufficient to ensure their continuation when the government changed to one that has openly devalued education. It is important to note, however, that from 2018, and under the government's Education Development Strategic Plan, a system-wide and systemic education plan had been put in place,¹⁷¹ and initiatives under that plan were well developed by the time the Taliban took over.¹⁷² One of these initiatives is the Better Education for Afghanistan's Future (BESAF) programme, which was directly funded by Sida and implemented by UNESCO: 'The programme adopt[ed] a system-wide capacity development approach intended to provide a single, comprehensive and seamless UNESCO response to key challenges of the education sector in Afghanistan, in full alignment with the [then] on-going reform processes emerging from the NESP III.'¹⁷³ Multiple respondents thought that Sida's efforts to get children (particularly girls) into school, especially in the first 10 or 12 years after 2001, had negatively affected the drive to ensure that the education provided was of sufficient quality. However, from 2015 a systems approach that included the key elements of teacher training, curriculum development, enhanced monitoring systems, and improved planning capacity at central and subnational levels had begun and, with the advent of BESAF in 2018, was establishing the foundations for quality provision. It is not possible to know whether any residues of that effort will survive under the Taliban, though recent news reports of Taliban crackdowns on girls' access to secondary school and the imposition of religious curricula, if verified, would suggest that is unlikely. What is clear is that Sida should not assume responsibility for failures of education development under the current regime. On the contrary, the work of the SCA continues, and a UN news report from December 2021 quoted an interview with the SCA's secretary-general, who stated that 'the Taliban are not always monolithic or uniform once they get down to the local level. There is a sense of pragmatism and responsiveness to the local community. We have a very good standing with the local communities. The elders are very keen and eager to see our activities continue running.'¹⁷⁴

A review of the different experiences across different case study countries suggests that the conditions necessary for replication to be achieved include:

1. The availability of financial resources for their continuity; and
2. Demonstration to end users of their value, so that they may demand their replication. For example, the value of the provision of multilingual education or education for children with disabilities has, in some instances, gained sufficient support that communities recognize the value of such programmes and may be in a position to demand their continuity.

Consolidation: Most Sida support has sought to secure the consolidation of initiatives or results, which means expanding the reach of the interventions funded. This means that Sida funded efforts with the expectation that these, once proven as viable and successful responses to current challenges/gaps in the provision of quality education for all, would be nested within broader systems where they could be replicated. All of the examples provided under EQ 1 would fall under this category in that they are results that have aimed to become part of the broader education system or are supported by broader education systems. The factors that enable the attainment of impact, which were listed under EQ 1, are also critical for ensuring sustainability – mainly political will, supporting policies, shared objectives and manageable levels of corruption. The one additional factor without which sustainability is not possible is capacity. As noted under EQ 1, the ability to carry out activities – know-how – is necessary if impact is to occur, and indeed a similar level of capacity is required for replication (discussed above). However, if consolidation is to be achieved, there must also be absorption capacity. In other words, the relevant institutions and systems must be able to consolidate a specific practice.

¹⁷¹ Ministry of Education (2016) National Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021 (NESP 3), available at <http://anfae.af/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/National-Education-Strategic-Plan-NESP-III.pdf>; Ministry of Education (2018a) 'EMIS Data Set 1396'

¹⁷² Key respondent communications (UNESCO and Sida interview respondents).

¹⁷³ Project brief, available at <https://en.unesco.org/node/342914>.

¹⁷⁴ See <https://www.passblue.com/2021/12/13/rural-taliban-accept-a-swedish-plan-to-keep-educating-girls-in-afghanistan/>

A second example of consolidation of systems is the introduction of multilingual education (MLE) in Cambodia. The MLE system in Cambodia (See Case Study Cambodia)¹⁷⁵ was planned as a pilot-and-expand model, whereby systems to include MLE were developed and tested and are now in the process of expansion within the ministerial system. Unlike the Tanzanian case, this model does not accept shortcomings at the start but rather takes a phased approach to consolidation.¹⁷⁶

The inclusion of special education for hearing- and sight-impaired children into the domain of Cambodia's education ministry is also an example of consolidating efforts.¹⁷⁷ While Sida has not directly supported the inclusion of special needs schools within the ministry's domain, or the transfer of responsibilities from the NGO that until now has managed these schools, Sida did support the development of the structures within the ministry that can support such a transition and has also supported the development of teaching materials that have been used and will be used in the future. What is common to these examples is that they highlight the need for absorption capacity as a critical element of sustainability.

The process of consolidating sustainability is dynamic and requires the acceptance of trade-offs. In Tanzania, efforts to expand the educational system led to considerable increases in enrolment, which in turn led to overcrowding in the classroom. The consolidation of the expansion of the educational system required that overcrowding be accepted to begin with, and that a clear plan be drawn up to ensure that overcrowding could be reduced as quickly as possible. This example illustrates how a system can consolidate a process with a clearly laid-out plan that allows for shortcomings in the short term but is able to address them in a relatively short time period.¹⁷⁸

Sectoral transformation: It can be argued that, in its support, Sida has by and large focused most of its attention on efforts to secure sector-level transformation. The examples of Bangladesh,¹⁷⁹ Bolivia¹⁸⁰ and Cambodia¹⁸¹ are good illustrations of efforts that have been made to support the broader educational system in the development of policies, strategies, frameworks and capacity at ministerial levels. In all of these countries, Sida has made a concerted effort to ensure that the appropriate organizations – such as ministries or departments of education, depending on the particular context of each country – had full ownership of the processes. The support provided by Sida has resulted in a set of sound and robust documentation and high-level systems, such as monitoring systems, that the ministry can use to support the development of the education system. However, the experience of these three countries and the support provided also highlight considerable gaps in the provision of education for all, where consistently the quality of the education provided has been subpar at the learning-outcome level.

The experience from the case studies demonstrate that policy documents exist and are solid, but in most cases their application – and hence the impact these policy documents can have – is more limited. What this means is that achieving this level of sustainability will be consistently difficult unless policy documents are applied, which is most often outside the sphere of influence of Sida (i.e. Sida can support the development of policies and encourage their application, but cannot ensure their application).

¹⁷⁵ See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

¹⁷⁶ UNICEF. (2019b). op.cit.

Frawly, Jack. et al. (2019) op.cit. World Bank open data, 2021. Sida (2005) *Outcome Assessment: Tanzania–Sweden 2001–2005*. Dar Es Salam: Sida.

See: Evaluation of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – Literacy and Numeracy Education Support (LANES) program in Tanzania (2014–2018), Sida, 2018:43. Stockholm: Sida. The textbook statistic is from 2018 (p.60).

¹⁷⁷ Reported but documentation not yet available for review.

¹⁷⁸ World Bank open data, 2021. Sida (2005) *Outcome Assessment: Tanzania–Sweden 2001–2005*. Dar Es Salam: Sida. See: Evaluation of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – Literacy and Numeracy Education Support (LANES) program in Tanzania (2014–2018), Sida, 2018:43. Stockholm: Sida. The textbook statistic is from 2018 (p.60).

¹⁷⁹ ADE Consortium lead by Christensen P., F. (2016) Joint strategic evaluation of the development cooperation of Denmark, Sweden and the European Union with Bangladesh 2007 – 2013. See also Ahmed, M. (2011). *The Sector-Wide Approach in Bangladesh Primary Education: A Critical View*. CREATE Pathways to Access. Research Monograph No. 57. Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2008) *Evaluation Study. Education Sector in Bangladesh: What Worked Well and Why under the Sector-Wide Approach?* Operations Evaluation Department, Asian Development Bank. Reference number SAP-BAN 2008-82. December.

¹⁸⁰ AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suiceia & Embajada del Reiono de Dinamarca (2016) *La Canasta: Sistematización del Fondo de Apoyo al Sector Educativo, Bolivia 204-2015*, La Paz: AECID, UNFPA, Embajada de los Países Bajos, Embajada del Reino de Suiceia & Embajada del Reiono de Dinamarca.

¹⁸¹ Van Gerwen, Frans. et al. 2018. *Outcome Evaluation of the Education Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) - Phase I and II*. Cambodia: MoEYS and UNICEF.

The exception found amongst case studies has been the Tanzanian experience where funding for results has placed emphasis on the application of policies. Sectoral transformation driven by funding tied to results should not be understood as a panacea, however. Such a process has worked well in Tanzania because the specific conditions in that country allowed for it (See Box 14: Programme for Results Funding Mechanism). Indeed, the effort aimed at and succeeded in (1) improving learner performance in 3R assessment; (2) identifying lagging schools, students and teachers; (3) increasing teacher effort as measured by presence in the classroom; (4) improving teacher proficiency in 3R subjects; and (5) improving textbook/student ratios.¹⁸² In other contexts, the successes experienced in Tanzania have not materialized. For example, a cohesive drive at the ministerial level was not present in Bolivia or Cambodia. In Cambodia, a minister with a clear vision about what quality of education is and how to achieve it has in recent years attempted to put in place an alternative system of schools in an effort to demonstrate that public education can work well (See ‘New Generation Schools’ in Cambodia Case Study).¹⁸³ The inner dynamics that characterize the Ministry of Education in Cambodia have prohibited clear and faster-paced progress and challenge the idea that results-tied funding would have worked in that context. It is also doubtful whether a funding-for-results approach would have been effective in Bolivia, owing to a number of factors, central among these being that the need for ownership of the process, including the pace of its progress and its key elements, has been a central rhetorical theme in that country. Indeed, anything that can be considered colonial, which at times appears to equate with anything that is not nationally born, is summarily rejected. This makes difficult the provision of support by outside donors, as well as the sharing of external experiences and lessons from elsewhere.

Box 14: Programme for Results Funding Mechanism

First introduced in 2012, the ‘programme for results’ (PforR) mechanism is a variant of sectoral budget support in which release of funds is tied to achievement of ‘disbursement-linked results’ (DLRs) measured by specific ‘disbursement-linked indicators’ (DLIs). Those pay-for-performance indicators are defined collaboratively, but the government is free to pursue them in ways it considers most effective and efficient. An independent verification team is tasked with verifying the results. The expected benefits of PforR are reduced transaction costs, as well as improved transparency, ownership, sustainability, sector dialogue and systems thinking. Tanzania’s 2014–2021 *Education Program for Results* (EPforR) programme was the first major programme to apply the mechanism in the education sector. The programme aimed to improve the quality of education in Tanzanian primary and secondary schools, and it included 9 results measured by 19 indicators. Despite considerable unanticipated challenges in the sector, the programme met or exceeded all but one of its targets. All evidence on EPforR points to a very successful programme. Determinants of success were many, including (1) a focus on pragmatic, unambiguous targets instead of vague ‘capacity development’ or ‘system improvement’; (2) strong government ownership, including an ability to celebrate the results as theirs, and strong incentives to deliver results; (3) individuals with decision-making power across ministries, political will, and ability to engage in months of intensive joint planning; (4) donor consensus, coordination and harmonization; (5) a shift to using reliable, timely information for decision-making; (6) an incentive for different government offices to develop protocols, standard processes and mechanisms for working together to meet the goals; and (7) sustainability through new public expectations of access to education – a ‘new normal’. PforR mechanisms work best when there are clearly quantifiable results, champions to maintain the momentum and much room for improvement, but progress becomes more difficult once the low-hanging fruits have been picked. Towards the end of the programme, a number of EPforR stakeholders began to see signs of complacency developing, as well as waning commitment to results, diminishing returns, and development partners branching away from the original consensus.

Source: NIRAS Sweden AB (2020) Evaluation of the Sida-supported Education Program for Results (EPforR) 2014-2021, Tanzania (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2020:23). Sida.

DFID (2021) Education Programming for Results, Programme Completion Review. March. UK:DFID

¹⁸² NIRAS Sweden AB (2020) Evaluation of the Sida-supported Education Program for Results (EPforR) 2014-2021, Tanzania (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2020:23). Stockholm: Sida.

¹⁸³ MoEYS. 2019. New Generation School Operational Policy Guidelines. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Education Youth and Sport.

See <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/cambodia-case-study>

In Afghanistan, there could have been clear opportunities for an approach such as the one used in Tanzania because a whole system was being created from scratch. However, the degree to which such an approach would have supported the longevity of the system beyond the withdrawal of the USA-led coalition is speculative at best. Still, the Afghanistan experience does suggest some important missed opportunities. Sida's support to the education sector tended to operate as intervention islands with little internal coherence or external synergies with other agencies, and adequate stock-taking of the weaknesses uncovered in successive research studies and evaluations was lacking.¹⁸⁴ A report by Adam Pain (2021)¹⁸⁵ contends that there is little evidence of an institutionalized learning approach within Sida and that Sida has focused upon ambitious 'unbounded' initiatives on the grand scale of state-building, gender equity, etc., in which failure has been the norm. By contrast, in more 'bounded' projects with clearly defined and more modest aims, Sida has had many successes (See EQ 1).

Social transformation: This type of sustainability is predicated on how society at large understands education, its role and the benefits it brings (See Box 9: What Is Quality and Why Does It Matter – The Beneficiary Perspective). Although there are examples of changes in how education is viewed by society, in most instances these views are very concentrated on specific efforts and experiences. Interestingly, Dana Burde's research in Afghanistan found that parents in rural areas covered by community-based schools favoured education that was inclusive of girls when school environments were perceived as safe and appropriate for girls.¹⁸⁶ In Bolivia, it also appears that having an education that is culturally sensitive is widely commended. Nevertheless, falling enrolment rates in that country may suggest that failure to ensure that the quality and content of the education provided ensures an improvement in standards of living may be challenging the relevance of education for many of its users. The considerable drop in education attendance between primary and secondary school across the different case study countries also shows that there are important questions about what the 'value' of education is.¹⁸⁷ However, there are multiple examples of where the provision of quality education has been able to shift social perceptions towards one that understands and values education services. For example, experiences with MLE education and education for children with disabilities have shown that society can view education as a stepping-stone to enable those groups of pupils to become more active members of society (See Cambodia Case Study).¹⁸⁸

There are a number of factors that have been identified as contributing to social-transformation sustainability:

1. First, and most importantly, there needs to be a recognition by society that the education being provided adds value. This will serve to ensure that society prioritizes the investment needed for education to succeed – first and foremost sending children to school because it is believed that doing so will add value to their lives.
2. Second, the population within a society must feel empowered to demand a sustainable education system. This means that democratic processes need to be in place to permit this.

EQ 3 Conclusion: Sida has been able to secure consolidated levels of sustainability through its use of a systems approach. However, there are other forms of sustainability – at the sectoral and societal levels – that require more attention. There are individual examples of Sida support leading to sectoral transformation and encouraging social transformation. These examples show that such transformation can be engineered and that, although formally outside Sida's sphere of influence, there are opportunities that Sida can capitalize upon to support levels of sustainability that lead to both sectoral- and societal-level changes.

¹⁸⁴ Pain, A. (2021) 'Punching Above Its Weight or Running with the Crowd? Lessons from Sweden's Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2002–2020', Working Paper for the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), Stockholm: EBA.

¹⁸⁵ Pain, A. (2021) 'Punching Above Its Weight or Running with the Crowd? Lessons from Sweden's Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2002–2020', Working Paper for the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), Stockholm: EBA.

¹⁸⁶ Burde, D., & Khan, J. (2016). Will You Send Your Daughter to School? Norms, Violence, and Girls' Education in Uruzgan, Afghanistan.

¹⁸⁷ See <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com/> User name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20

¹⁸⁸ For information on inclusion of persons with disabilities See Arm Consulting (2019) Inclusive Education Report. Stockholm: SCA

KEQ 4: Has Sida's support to education helped education in partner countries live up to the demands of gender equality and fundamental human rights? To what degree have other stakeholders in the partner countries' education sectors taken on gender equality and human rights?

Evaluation Question 4: Key Findings

Sida has played an important role in supporting compliance with the fundamental human rights of all primary school children (See EQ 1), while its focus has placed specific attention on marginalized or disadvantaged groups (See EQ 2). Sida has also consistently supported gender equality in education (See EQs 1 and 2).

Here results have been derived from outcomes harvested (See Annex 7), QCA (See Annex 8), as well as interview data and documents which have not focused on outcomes, including statistical data.¹⁸⁹

Education for all as a fundamental human right: The right of education for all is well recognized (See 'The education sector: Critical elements').¹⁹⁰ Importantly, Sida's support to education is not only linked to making education available, but critically understands education as a stepping-stone to an improved livelihood. In the context of this evaluation, education is a right that, when fulfilled, can enable the reduction of multidimensional poverty and increase gender equality.

Some in the education sector, including some of the interviewees from different case-study countries, have argued that achieving education for all and ensuring compliance with fundamental human rights needs to overlook the issue of quality at the start because it is not possible to support both access and quality at the same rate. This perspective suggests that quality can wait, but the implication is that quality will not be forgotten, just delayed. The critical question here is until when. In Tanzania, quality was compromised early on in the expansion of its education system because the number of pupils far exceeded the proportion of teachers needed.¹⁹¹ However, the Tanzanian case shows that it is possible to catch up on quality when a clear plan to do so is established. This should not be taken to suggest that the quality of education in Tanzania is now stellar, but rather that efforts to clearly envision how quality can be attained were put in place in that country and this appears to be showing positive results.

In Bolivia and Bangladesh, where a clear perspective on what quality should mean is lacking, progress in relation to quality has been slow. In Bolivia, according to multiple respondents, the discussion on what 'quality' should include has been going on for the best part of the last 20 years. The process itself has been incredibly inclusive, but the side-effect of this inclusivity has been a total failure to arrive at a final decision. In Cambodia, it is not the lack of a framework of what constitutes quality but rather the inability of the system to implement it that is the problem. In Afghanistan, increasing access involved training school-leavers to teach in the primary sector, many of whom were at best Grade 12 graduates. Here, the challenges in terms of improving quality were particularly daunting.¹⁹²

In Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia and Afghanistan, Sida has facilitated access and, in so doing, supported meeting one part of the fundamental right to education (See EQ 1), but it has not been able to ensure that the support met minimum quality standards. This has been the case despite a clear quality-focused rhetoric and considerable support for capacity-building both bilaterally at the country level and through wide-ranging efforts such as the International Institute for Education and Planning (IIEP) and broad UNESCO funding.¹⁹³

The inability of education sectors to improve quality to the degree needed to ensure that standards of living improve considerably and bring people out of poverty is troubling. However, this should not be

¹⁸⁹ See <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com/> User name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20

¹⁹⁰ OECD (2018) Education in Cambodia: Findings from Cambodia Experience in PISA for Development. Vienna: PISA For Development.

¹⁹¹ Sida Outcome Assessment: Tanzania–Sweden 2001–2005. Evaluation of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – Literacy and Numeracy Education Support (LANES) program in Tanzania (2014–2018), Sida, 2018:43. World Bank open data, 2021. World Bank. 2013. *Joint Evaluation of Budget Support to Tanzania: Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future, Final Report: Volume 1*, Washington: World Bank. See also: Hakielimu. (2014) Hakielimu 2012–2016 Strategy: An open, Just and Democratic Tanzania with Quality Education for All. Mid Term Evaluation Report. October.

¹⁹² See Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. (2021) Evaluation of SCA's Teacher Training Component. Education Programme, submitted by Sabah, S. - April. Stockholm: SCA. See also: Holmberg, A., Kohi, D., Rothman, J., & Schellekens, L. (2016) Review of the UNICEF programme Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan 2013–2015 (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2016:8). Sida.

¹⁹³ See: <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en>

understood either as the sole responsibility of Sida or as a missed opportunity. Rather, the finding suggests (1) that there is a clear need for quality to be agreed upon early on in the provision of support to the education process; (2) that the definition of quality must also be well articulated within other sectors and society at large; and (3) that this definition must also be integrated into plans for support. These elements would serve to ensure that quality does not become the orphan child of efforts to support education. Of course, this does not mean that the understanding of quality is static, but rather that to ensure any form of quality is maintained a consensus on what should be considered as constituting quality is important. Once a point of departure has been agreed upon, and mechanisms to ensure quality and assess quality have been put in place, the discussion on how to continue to improve quality could and should continue.

This finding is clearly supported by the successes with the efforts to ensure access to quality education that Sida has been part of. These efforts have consistently been of limited scale and highly targeted towards a specific group of the population: minorities, special groups, persons with disabilities, etc. (See EQ 2).¹⁹⁴ These efforts stood apart from the broader support to education because their implementation was under the full control of a single party (implementing partner), and benchmarks for progress were more carefully identified and articulated. The success of standalone single interventions might open the door to the suggestion that only small initiatives function, but that would be an inaccurate representation of the data collected. Rather, what the data on these single/standalone interventions show is the critical importance of identifying some forms of benchmarks for progress and the value that standalone initiatives can have in developing models that can be rolled out/upscaled once the concept is proven to be successful.

Gender and support to girls: Sida has consistently placed gender and gender equality at the forefront of the support it provides. This is one area where Sida has ensured that all interventions have a gender element, and where interventions that do not include a gender-equality element are not considered. Accordingly, it can be argued that Sida has contributed to the mainstreaming of gender equality in the education sector. However, it is also worth noting that Sida has generally not been alone in emphasizing the importance of gender and gender inclusivity. Other donors, including host governments, not only have been amenable towards but also have actively pursued gender equality within school systems. Still, there are some specific interventions that Sida has supported where gender was a key element that may otherwise have been overlooked. In Afghanistan, for example, Sida supported the inclusion of girls in schools in conjunction with other donors, but also engaged in specific activities that served to promote gender equality in the implementation of the school system.¹⁹⁵ For example, its efforts to actively ensure that schools had sanitary facilities for both girls and boys means that attempts to address the challenges faced by girls who are menstruating can be attributed to Sida support and influence (See Box 12: Shifting Discourses – Manifesting Sida’s Views). In Bangladesh, there were specific programmes targeting girls, such as TVET, which focused on equipping young girls with marketable skills,¹⁹⁶ while in Cambodia efforts to support high-school graduates have incorporated clear gendered approaches to counselling high-school students.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, some MLE efforts in Cambodia have included gendered curriculums.¹⁹⁸ All of these efforts have been a response to Sida support. Their reach, however, remains quite limited.

From a broader perspective, it is important to underline that, where data have been available, figures for the enrolment of girls and boys at primary school level suggest relatively equal numbers.¹⁹⁹ This is particularly significant because a broader analysis using QCA shows that ensuring gender quality (using the Gender Parity Index for 2020)²⁰⁰ is tied to the conduct of IIEP analysis and IIEP plans. Indeed instances where IIEP analysis and IIEP plans are present coincide with cases in which gender-

¹⁹⁴ See Barkat, A., Khan, M. S., Rahman, M., Chowdhury, T. A., & Al Hussain, A. (2010) Basic education for hard-to-reach urban working children: study on benefits, sustainability and cost. *Report prepared for UNICEF. Dhaka: Human Development Research Centre.*

¹⁹⁵ See Nordic Consulting Group (2008) Evaluation of MoE/UNICEF’s “Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme” for 2006-2008 Afghanistan. Kabul and Oslo.

¹⁹⁶ Denbach, Andreas, Watson, Julian, Jänecke, Bianca, and Singh Bhandar, An (2015) Final Evaluation of the ‘Modular Second Chance Education with Livelihood Skills and Gender Empowerment – Phase V: A Programme Implemented by the Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), Stockholm: InDevelop Sweden.

¹⁹⁷ See: Chea, Chanthan. et al. 2021. Evaluation Report: The Final Evaluation of the “Career Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools - The Bridge to employment project. Phnom Penh: Finn Church Aid.

¹⁹⁸ Frawly, Jack. et al. (2019). op.cit.

¹⁹⁹ See <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com/> User name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20

²⁰⁰ See Gender Parity Index at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Metadata.aspx?IndicatorId=9> (accessed 10 January 2022).

equality ratings have been achieved. This suggests that these analyses and plans may play an important role in supporting the attainment of increased gender equality. More significant data also indicate that if gender equality is to be improved at the society level, it is necessary to ensure gender parity in high school. This is a very important finding because it suggests that while the focus on primary school is important, focus on secondary school is critical for gender equality. As noted in multiple instances throughout this report, quality of primary school education is a critical factor for continued education in secondary school (See Annex 8).

EQ 4 Conclusion: Sida has contributed to the implementation of human rights in terms of supporting, promoting and ensuring access to education. However, the education accessed has not been consistently of good quality. Quality education is complex, and Sida cannot be considered responsible for whether or not it is achieved, but this finding highlights how Sida has had more success in supporting the attainment of the access aspect of human rights than in ensuring quality at an overarching level. Quality education has been achieved in numerous Sida-supported interventions when these were smaller in size (See EQ 1 and Cambodia Case Study). In relation to gender, Sida has played an important role in ensuring that gender issues were consistently kept on the table and recognized as critical in the context of any support provided.

3 The Theory of Change

This section presents the theory of change that emerged from a review of the totality of the data collected. The theory of change does not provide a depiction of any one single case or country, but rather summarizes the information collected from all of the case studies, as well as documents and globally relevant interviews.

The theory of change must be read left to right and is, to ease readability, found over two pages. The starting point claimed by Sida is rooted on four overarching factors or starting points. These are:

1. **Sida values:** This means, according to Sida, that all support provided is underpinned by Sida's core values. These cannot and are not compromised. Therefore, all change mechanisms are affected by the adherence to these values. However, this evaluation did not assess how these core values affect specific results, or the degree to which the absence of these values could have yielded alternative results. Rather, these values are recognised as common to all interventions.
2. **Sida funding:** This refers specifically to the resources made available by Sida to support the education sector. This evaluation has explored activities and efforts which received Sida financial support. The theory of change identifies a wide range of activities and how these are linked to results. The evaluation found that Sida supported a wide range of activities across the case study countries. Experiences derived from these activities are reflected throughout the theory of change.
3. **Normative Dialogue:** This evaluation could not systematically assess normative dialogue because available information on how such dialogue was used was inconsistent and not sufficiently robust. However, in interviews it was noted that normative dialogue plays an important role in how Sida approaches support and is a backdrop for all funded activities. Therefore it has been included in this theory of change as a point of departure common to all support provided.
4. **Enabling environment:** The data also suggests that an enabling environment must be present for any intervention to be supported. This means that Sida examines the environment and decides regarding the degree to which the environment in the country considered for support is one that will be able to capitalise on the support provided.

All the above elements are understood as a point of departure, as these influence or determine whether support will be given, and how the support is provided.

In addition to the elements detailed above, the theory of change shows several elements, which must be read vertically - top to bottom). These include:

1. **Support modality:** This element refers to the ways Sida has supported the education sector. Specifically, the provision of financial or in-kind support.
2. **Inputs (strategic and operational):** These elements refer to the provision of support that aims to facilitate or enable the development or execution of activities which have strategic or operational value. Specifically, it refers to activities that Sida has supported directly (funding or in-kind contribution), or indirectly by facilitating the access to funds or in-kind support to conduct these activities.
3. **Outputs (strategic and operational):** These elements refer to the expected (and in some instances documented) outputs that have emerged from activities supported by Sida.
4. **Outcomes (strategic and Operational):** These elements refer to the expected (and in some instances documented) outcomes that have emerged from activities supported by Sida.
5. **Medium- and long-term impacts:** The elements refer to the expected (and in some instances documented) impacts that have emerged from activities supported by Sida.
6. **Impact on Sida Goals:** This element refers to how expected impacts can be linked to the achievement of Sida's overarching goals.

7. **Assumptions/conditions:** These elements may exist between two elements, for example between outputs and outcomes or may be embedded into a single activity (vertical) and determine if an activity is possible at all.

The education sector is a complex eco-system. In addition, this evaluation found that within the vertical elements listed above exists an eco-subsystems (depicted by individual boxes within which elements related to each other are listed). These eco-subsystems are composed of a wide range of elements which are interlinked and need to be viewed holistically. For example: building schools must be accompanied by teacher training, effective provision of teacher salaries, training of school management, the development of teaching material, etc. The evaluation has found that failure to ensure that individual elements within an eco-subsystem are addressed can mean that the change mechanism (re: the expected result) no longer materialises. Similarly, an eco-subsystem that does not function effectively will undermine the operation of the whole eco-system. The complexity envisioned in the theory of change that emerged from the data shows that support to the education sector requires that those involved simultaneously focus attention on the elements within an eco-subsystem and between different eco-subsystems in order to ensure that the whole ecosystem functions and that Sida's overarching objectives are achieved. In sum, the theory of change shows that there are multiple relationships within the theory of change and that ensuring that the totality of elements are addressed is critical to ensuring an overarching positive outcome. This does not mean that Sida must support all elements, but it does mean that someone must. Sida's system approach is well suited to supporting the education system. However, envisioning the education system as an eco-system with eco-subsystems is an important step because it serves to crystallise the complexities within the system and highlight the importance of interrelationships. A systems approach does not necessarily require that the whole eco-system and relevant eco-subsystems be fully understood, and that Sida support be well nested within a mechanism where all elements receive adequate support.

The above is depicted in Figure 5 and Figure 6. The elements depicted in the theory of change are ones that were identified during the data collection and analysis process and are reflected in the findings discussed in 'Section 2: Findings.'

Figure 5 Theory of Change part 1

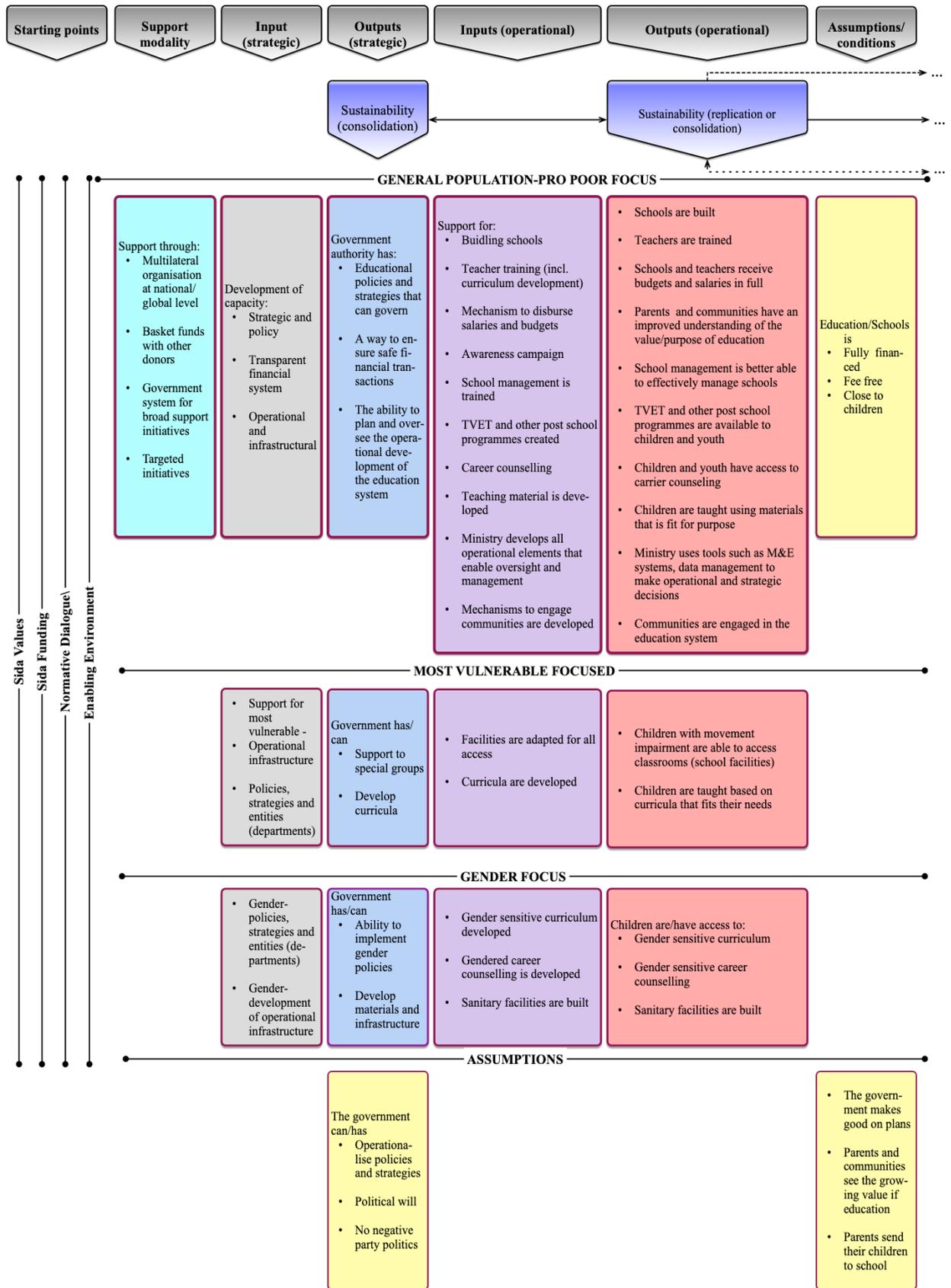
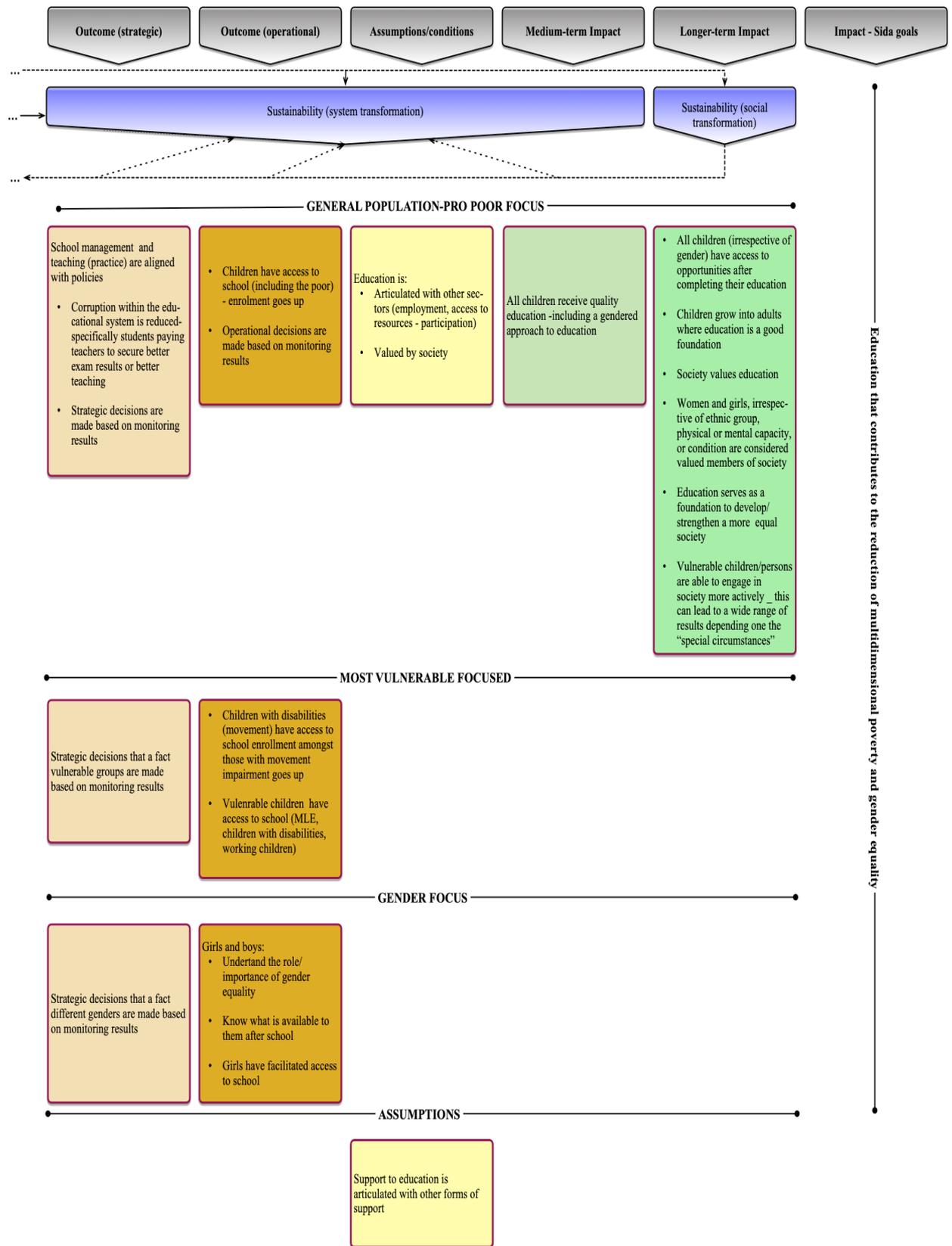


Figure 6 Theory of Change part 2



4 Conclusions

This section presents some conclusions by explaining the implications of Sida's support to the education sector and situating that support within the wider context of Sida support in general and in relation to Sida's contribution to the attainment of multidimensional poverty reduction and the securing of gender equality. We have anchored the discussion of these issues around the theory of change that emerged from this evaluation, which points to the complexity of the education sector and the need for engagement in a wide number of activities in multiple aspects of the sector if success in reducing multidimensional poverty and improving gender equality is to be achieved.

Conclusion 1: Sida has been able contribute to the delivery of high-level impacts in the education sector that, when environments factors have been present, have been able to support the reduction of multidimensional poverty and gender equality. The data collected show that Sida has contributed to improved access to education for both girls and boys; has contributed to improved quality of education in specific instances; has been able to foster linkages between education and opportunities for children and youth after attending school; and, lastly, has played a role in improving accountability of education. These findings are critically important because they show, first, that it is possible to influence education systems and play a critical role in improving those systems, but also, second, that making progress is challenging and requires robust systems. The data also show clearly that the interventions funded with Sida support that have been limited in scope and scale have often aimed to be integrated and upscaled once proved successful. Lastly, the most notable successes were identified when the environment was one where quality education was delivered, and where there were post-school opportunities for children and youth where they could make use of skills gained (enabling environment).

Conclusion 2: Sida has paid particular attention to the needs of minority groups, vulnerable groups and girls. There are many examples of interventions that focused specific attention on children and youth that were particularly vulnerable, or paid specific attention to the inclusion of girls. Gender inclusion has been a hallmark of Sida support, but gender transformation-inspired activities have been more localized. Similarly, the more comprehensive efforts to address the needs of particularly vulnerable groups have also been localized.

Despite their limited scope, the interventions conducted show that there are intervention modalities that can provide solutions that result in high-quality education for pupils and that can theoretically be upscaled. However, the data collected show that the roll-out and upscaling of such interventions has so far been limited. This suggests that much stronger emphasis on upscaling is needed, and also that upscaling requires considerable time and effort, including clear financing. Financing does not need to be the responsibility of Sida, but it must be included in initial plans if the effective roll-out and upscaling of activities is to be ensured.

Conclusion 3: Sida support has led to some sustainable efforts. The majority of interventions that have achieved sustainability have done so at either replication or consolidation levels. The data suggest, however, that for quality education to be achieved on a consistent basis there is a need to ensure sustainability at both the system and the societal level. This level of sustainability requires more attention from Sida. While the data show that Sida has supported efforts that can lead to both system and social transformation types of sustainability, they also show that the achievement of such levels of sustainability requires a plan for achieving these types of goals from the start and a process that is incremental and recognizes that achieving sustainability is in and of itself a dynamic process.

Conclusion 4: Sida has consistently framed its support to the education sector within its efforts to support compliance with human rights principles. These efforts have enabled Sida to play an important role in furthering support in the rights sector while supporting education. However, some important compromises have been made – specifically in relation to the provision of quality education – and these will require considerable attention in the future. Until now, the focus has been on ensuring that Sida support was aligned with human rights, rather than actively exploring and ensuring that support for human rights was consistently expanded. While there are good reasons for such an approach, the evaluation found that there are important opportunities and lessons that Sida can

capitalize on to ensure that human rights are understood as having a wider scope in the future, and include for example, not only access to education, but also good quality education.

5 Lessons Learned

Sida's global experience supporting education provides some important lessons learned, which are discussed in this section. Responding to these lessons may improve the role education can have in reducing multidimensional poverty and improving gender equality.

Education system – ecosystems and eco-subsystems: This study suggests that since limited progress can be attained from investing in single elements within a particular type of input (See 'Operational and Strategic Inputs' in the theory of change) or eco-subsystem attention needs to be given to ensuring that all elements within an eco-subsystem are addressed – for example, all types of operational support (including the operational eco-subsystem). Failure to do this means that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to attain the expected results. While each context is different, the elements shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6 needs to be included (at a minimum). This does not mean that there are no other elements involved, but these are those that we have identified as critical.

It is also critical to understand the whole education system as a complex ecosystem, where support will not yield expected outcomes unless it addresses all of the required areas. It is of limited value, for example, to build schools if there is no mechanism to train teachers, update the curriculum, ensure that schools are well managed, etc. (See 'Conditions'). Therefore, the support provided must be articulated with other forms of support and must be part of a long-term strategy that is focused on long-term results. Failure to do this will mean that support benefits the few and never quite attains the level of impact expected.

Ultimately, ensuring the attainment of gender equality and the reduction of multidimensional poverty is directly tied to the provision of quality education. The provision of quality education is tied to a wide range of aspects of the educational system. While some individual children will clearly benefit even from education that does not meet basic quality criteria for all the population (e.g. projects that target specific subgroups or categories of children and/or pilot interventions), and it may help reduce their poverty or have an impact on existing gender norms, such results are more valuable in demonstrating that impact is possible than in showing that Sida's support has been able to achieve systemic change.

Quality and systems: Poor-quality learning was a feature of all cases studied and indeed reflects a common weakness in education across the developing world that is of increasing global concern.²⁰¹ Both Tikly's work and our own ecosystem theory of change illustrate how reforming education for quality outcomes requires identifying all key parameters and interdependencies and addressing them systemically. Typically, Sida's efforts to support the education sector in any given country set out overall objectives and areas of interventions. The staff at the country embassy or at Sida HQ in Sweden have a degree of flexibility in terms of how those interventions are defined (for example, focus on strategic development, ministry level-capacity development, teacher training, curriculum development, building/strengthening of monitoring and evaluation capacity, etc.) and how funding for them is allocated (for example, multilateral donor pool, direct support to government, implementing agency, etc.) as long as these are in line with Swedish government goals and priorities.²⁰² Sida has consistently produced sound evidence-based analytical country reviews and multidimensional poverty analyses. These provide valuable contributions to efforts to understand the conditions, context and problem structure in a given country. However, detailed, system-wide theories of change rarely follow Sida's strategies nor in turn get elaborated in plans for development actions. In an effort to mitigate this problem, the EBA announced in June 2021 that it would prepare an anthology of theories of change in

²⁰¹ Azevedo, J. P. (2020) 'Learning Poverty: Measures and Simulations', Policy Research Working Paper 9446, Washington, DC: World Bank.

²⁰² Sida (2008) 'Guidance on Programme-Based Approaches', Stockholm: Department for Methodologies And Effectiveness, Sida.

Swedish development cooperation in the light of recommendations²⁰³ that Sida develop its use of theories of change at a strategic level.²⁰⁴ This is timely: Momentum is building particularly in the large global agencies towards defining education quality reform from a complex systems perspective. For example, the Asian Development Bank has been applying a complexity lens to education quality reform issues, as reflected in its most recent work that draws on country analyses, 21st-century competency profiles and the school improvement literature to present a detailed account of challenges, innovations and disruptive practices required for transformative social and economic development.²⁰⁵

Conditions: The various experiences across the different case study countries represent a wide range of situations and contexts show that the issue of conditions is complex: there is no easy yes or no response to whether conditions should or should not be introduced into funding support mechanisms. However, having no clear expectation or any form of deadline for when a particular result (e.g., establishment/use of mechanism, system or operational reform, learning outcome, etc) should be achieved can lead to slow progress, or even no progress, and make it possible to overlook elements that are critical for the achievement of success (See Cambodia Case Study).²⁰⁶ The introduction of conditions needs to be tied to elements that are agreed to by all stakeholders and that are considered valuable yardsticks and are attainable. Such conditions can be tied to the different phases of provision of support or linked to changes made within the system. For example: By which date can a project, if successful, be expected to be consolidated or integrated into the system to secure system change? How long can it be reasonably expected to take for teachers to be trained, curriculum updated, and teaching materials made available? These types of conditions must be linked to the support provided, but also to commitment to timelines by partners (i.e. government).

Spheres of influence: It cannot be denied that education alone cannot achieve gender equality or reduce multidimensional poverty, but it is also clear that it can play a fundamental role in efforts to achieve these goals if the education is accessible to all and includes a clear gender-transformative agenda. Engaging in society in an economic, social and political way (addressing multidimensional poverty) requires that other areas also be addressed. In relation to economic engagement, this calls for clear articulation with other forms of support – such as employment opportunities, an improved business environment, improved farming practices, etc. However, when it comes to social and political engagement, the environment itself must enable this. Specifically, this area of multidimensional poverty requires the political system to enable a more open, equitable and democratic society. In societies that enjoy basic democratic principles of freedom of expression and an unrestricted civic space, donors such as Sida can support democratic processes and participation by supporting civil society and political processes overall. In addition, access to a broader set of goods and services, such as healthcare, is also critical for reducing poverty, as are steps to address the impact of environmental degradation and adaptation to climate change/resilience-building. These areas can be supported through other interventions, but the ability that any one population has to effectively and fully benefit from these goods and services, as well as to demand the provision of quality services, lies in education. In relation to gender, it is important to note that while a wide array of activities can be conducted to support gender equality, the foundation for changing gender dynamics lies in individuals' early years

²⁰³ For example, in 2013, a Sida decentralised evaluation noted that 'many interventions that are funded by Sida lack an explicit theory of change, although a plausible chain of contribution/attribution can usually be discerned';²⁰³ See Christoplos, I., Hedqvist, A. L., and Rothman, J. (2013) 'Swedish Development Cooperation in Transition? Lessons and Reflections from 71 Sida Decentralised Evaluations (April 2011–April 2013)', *Studies in Evaluation* 2013: 1, Stockholm: Sida.

²⁰⁴ Theories of Change in Swedish Development Cooperation: An Anthology (forthcoming); See <https://eba.se/en/pagaendestudier/theories-of-change-in-swedish-development-cooperation-an-anthology/15153/>.

²⁰⁵ Pillay, H., and Panth, B. (2022) 'Foundational (K-12) Education System: Navigating 21st Century Challenges', Metro Manila: Asian Development Bank & Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology. For a broader discussion on existing theories of change and the development of these, See Wilkinson, H., Hills, D., Penn, A., and Barbrook-Johnson, P. (2021) 'Building a System-Based Theory of Change Using Participatory Systems Mapping', *Evaluation* 27(1): 80–101; Peta, I. (2018) 'Theory of Change for Development: Understanding, Usage, and Influence', master's degree thesis, Division of Risk Management and Societal Safety, LTH Lund University, Sweden; Bowman, K., Chettleborough, J., Jeans, H., Whitehead, J., and Rowlands, J. (2015) 'Systems Thinking: An Introduction for Oxfam Programme Staff', available at: <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/579896/ml-systems-thinking-151020-en.pdf?sequence=1>.

²⁰⁶ See NIRAS Sweden AB (2020) Evaluation of the Sida-supported Education Program for Results (EPforR) 2014-2021, Tanzania (Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2020:23). Sida.

DFID (2021) Education Programming for Results, Programme Completion Review. March. UK:DFID.

and in the educational system. Education that is gender-sensitive and gender-transformative is thus a critical step for ensuring gender equality.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ UNICEF, PLAN and UNGEI (2021) *Gender Transformative Education: Reimagining Education for a More Just and Inclusive World*. New York: UNICEF. See also: Ministry of Women’s Affairs of Cambodia (2014) *Education Gender in Education and Vocational Training Cambodia Gender Assessment 2014*. Cambodia Scientific Research Publishing. Nordic Consulting Group (2008) *Evaluation of MoE/UNICEF’s “Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme” for 2006-2008 Afghanistan*. Kabul and Oslo: NCG. UNICEF (2014) *An evaluation of UNICEF’s upstream work in basic education and gender equality (2003–2012): Cambodia Country Case Study*. July. Cambodia: UNICEF.

6 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Context and synergies: Before determining where and/or on what Sida should focus its attention, it is recommended that Sida engage in and encourage dialogue with the host government, other donors and civil society actors in an effort to identify discrete opportunities where Sida can fill gaps or dislodge bottlenecks through the provision of funding. This process should be central to identifying and determining where Sida is best able to generate change.

Recommendation 2 – System and synergies: It is recommended that Sida ensure that its efforts are well articulated at the following key levels:

1. All of Sida's efforts should be integrated into a systems approach. This means that smaller interventions intended to test intervention modalities should be designed in ways that permit their upscaling and integration into the education system if they prove successful.
2. Sida should ensure that its activities in the education sector are well articulated with existing activities in that sector (within the eco-system and relevant eco-subsystems). Specifically, this means that activities supported by Sida should feed into an aspect of the education system in ways that will enable their utility/value to be realized.
3. Sida should also ensure that activities funded in the education sector are well articulated with its activities in other sectors – for example, Sida's support to higher education (universities), support to TVET (when that is regarded as being outside the education system), and support to democratization, economic and market development, employment, etc.

Recommendation 3 – Key elements to ensure a working system: Lessons from different case-study countries highlight some aspects of the education system that are particularly critical and need to be taken into consideration when deciding to fund education activities. It is recommended that Sida consider these lessons and experiences when determining where and on what it should focus its interventions across all countries it considers investing in:

1. Transparent and accountable planning, implementation and accountability systems are required to ensure transparent Public Financial Management, therefore Sida should ensure that these mechanisms are put into place as part of funding provided or exist prior to funding.
2. An operational data collection, management and use system is critical to determining whether progress is being achieved.
3. There should be a clear, shared and concrete understanding regarding what quality of education means in the particular context in question (See Recommendation 6). The definition agreed upon locally must consider that there are a multiplicity of inter-related and interdependent prerequisites that must be in place and operating effectively for the realization of a quality education system. These relate to issues of: infrastructure; class size and times; teacher conditions, training and pedagogical effectiveness; curriculum and materials; assessment regimes; management, administration and governance at national, regional, local and school levels; home and community conditions; learner accessibility (health, sanitation, safety and disadvantages faced by members of linguistic minorities, particular ethnicities, the disabled or working children, etc.); policies and legislative framework.

Recommendation 4 – Conditions: There needs to be increased focus on what can be realistically measured and achieved. Goalposts should be clearly defined and framed within clear and realistic timeframes. Conditions established to measure progress should be the product of a dialogue with the host government and should look at long-term objectives, but should also permit the visualization of progress. Examples of co-creation and systems-strengthening can be drawn from Sida's experiences with result-driven programmes, especially those where close collaboration with other stakeholders, along with partners' expertise and commitment, has been key.

Recommendation 5 – Quality of education: It is recommended that Sida use a broad definition to frame what it means by quality of education. In addition, when work starts on an intervention in a particular country, Sida should recognize that each project is unique and is conducted in a specific context, and that what quality means for each intervention therefore also requires clear definitions. The complex and multifaceted concept of quality is often more easily approached in terms of more fine-grained preconditions for quality. The following three steps be included to ensure a robust and collective understanding, and assurance of quality, from the start of any intervention: (1) a consensus over all the relevant components of quality and its preconditions be clearly defined and integrated into the co-design of projects from the start; (2) that the definition of quality be well articulated within other sectors and society at large; and (3) that the definition of quality be integrated into how Sida supports (support plan) the sector.

Recommendation 6 – Gender transformation: It is recommended that Sida, within their work on education, focus attention on the systematic introduction of a gender transformative approach across interventions. Specifically, this means ensuring that: a) support for the development of policies and strategies place gender equality at the heart of the documents developed; b) support for development of budgets and budget support includes clear gender equality markers; c) teaching practices/methods, promote gender equality in the classrooms and challenge gender inequalities; d) gender transformative modules are included in curricula; e) all teaching material promotes gender equality; f) school environments are safe for all genders; g) health and protection services are considered a key element of education to promote safe and gender sensitive education facilities; h) support for grassroots efforts to transform local views and perspectives on gender to ensure that pupils go home to homes/communities that embrace gender equality.

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Year		Call-off assignment
2017	1	Anti-corruption – MEC report
	2	Anti-corruption – Overview
	3	Girls' education
	4	RBFA within education
	5	Support to EQRA
	6	Support to Swedish Committee
	7	Peace/conflict and education
	8	TVET
	9	Capacity building for results
	10	A Study/mapping regarding Community Based Education in Afghanistan (with mission)
2018	11	IWA report on corruption in education
	12	UNESCO IIEP evaluation report
	13	UNESCO ELA assessment report
	14	New UNESCO proposal

- 15 Education in Emergencies overview
- 16 NRC education in emergencies proposal
- 17 Save the Children EiE proposal
- 18 Girls education
- 19 Community Based Education (CBE) (summary)
- 20 ToR Education Joint Sector Review
- 21 NESP III M&E framework
- 22 Sector Wide Approach (SWAp)
- 23 The Education Reform Paper
- 24 Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)
- 25 Education issues in new strategy (compilation)
- 26 Skills development issues in new strategy (compilation)
- 27 Early Childhood Care and Education
- 28 Higher Education and research in Afghanistan
- 29 Inclusive Education and Out of School Children
- 30 Inspection - supervision - monitoring
- 31 Education to prevent violent extremism and promote peace
- 32 Religious education
- 33 Education for Sustainable Development
- 34 The role of the private sector in Education
- 35 The role of civil society in education
- 36 ICT in education
- 37 Education Cannot Wait -MYP
- 2019 38 UNESCO Conflict analysis for UNESCO's Kabul Office
- 39 UNESCO Capacity Needs Assessment Report
- 40 UNESCO: Final Evaluation Report of ELA3 Project
- 41 USAID: Mid-Term Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme
- 42 MEC: Monitoring the Education Sector. Fourth Monitoring Report
- 43 2019-2021 Girls' Education Strategy
- 44 First draft of out of school children policy

Evaluation of Sida's Support to Education

Lessons Learned from 20 Years and Five Countries

This report examines experiences related to the support provided by Sida to the education sector over the last 20 years (2001–2020), with a specific focus on four key evaluation questions: (1) Has Sida's support to education generated high-level positive or negative, intended or unintended, effects (impact)? (2) Which groups living in poverty have been affected by Sida's support to education, and in what ways (here, particular attention will be paid to marginalized and vulnerable groups) (impact)? (3) What factors have constituted conditions for sustainable and resilient results from Sida's support to education (sustainability)? (4) Has Sida's support to education helped education provision in partner countries live up to the demands of gender equality and fundamental human rights, and to what extent have other stakeholders in the education sectors of those countries taken on gender equality and human rights (sustainability)? The report draws on data collected from and on Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Tanzania and globally. The evaluation found that Sida has contributed to expanding the access to education, and has, in certain instances, supported access to quality education, specifically for specific marginalised and vulnerable groups. Sida has also contributed to expanding the access to education for girls. The evaluation also found that ensuring a good quality education is delivered is challenging, complex, and central to ensuring that support to education is sustainable and has an impact on reducing multidimensional poverty and increasing gender equality.

This report is supplemented by a Cambodia Case study report, which can also be available at <http://www.sida.se/publications>; a dashboard, which can be accessed at <https://sida-education-dashboard.herokuapp.com/> User name: Sida Password: SIDA-DASHBOARD-20; and a video that can be viewed by accessing <https://prezi.com/v/view/nHChH9e9r2pETVsRBkJo/>.

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