2003:1 **Joint Evaluation**

Ted Freeman
Sheila Dohoo Faure

Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education

Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries
Final report

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Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education

FINAL REPORT

Evaluation Undertaken by

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
Goss Gilroy Inc. – Canada
Education for Change Ltd. – United Kingdom

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The evaluation was commissioned by a group of thirteen donors and development organizations, who along with representatives from four partner countries, constituted an Evaluation Steering Committee.

Evaluation Steering Committee Members

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom
Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland
European Commission
Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy, Burkina Faso
Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida, Denmark
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda
Ministry of Education, Zambia
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chair)
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
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World Bank

PREFACE

"Education for all" entails a vision and a set of objectives adopted by the world's governments and international organizations in Thailand in 1990 and reaffirmed a decade later in Senegal. That shared goal requires new levels and forms of global cooperation, including significant and sustained external support. Alas, progress has been slower than anticipated.

What has happened? What have been the extent, forms, and consequences of external support to basic education in developing countries?

Reflecting the partnership at the core of the commitment to education for all, thirteen international and national funding and technical assistance organizations launched an evaluation of external support to basic education. Four partner countries, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia participated in the evaluation, making it a truly joint effort. The oversight and governance of the evaluation was itself participatory, involving a steering committee which was constituted by the thirteen agencies and the four partner countries and which included representatives of both evaluation units and education departments.

Evaluating aid to education is particularly challenging. External support has both technical and political dimensions, each shaping and supporting, and sometimes obstructing, the other. Education is a marvellously complex, and often only partly visible process, and perhaps the most contested of public policy arenas. The evaluation's major strategy for addressing these challenges was reflected in its objective, which was to examine the process of external support to basic education provided by international and national funding and technical assistance agencies. The evaluation was thus mainly concerned with external support (aid) and basic education, with primary emphasis on the links between the two.

Partnership and process have been central to the evaluation, both in its content and its conduct. Its focus had three major components. First, what has been the nature and evolution of external support to basic education? Second, what have been the effectiveness and efficiency of externally supported basic education activities? And third, to assess the evolution of the aid relationship more generally, has there been progress in restructuring foreign aid as partnerships for basic education development?

This evaluation has thus had a very broad reach. To assess external support to basic education globally, the evaluators reviewed a very large set of documents, including smaller and larger scale evaluations, project reports, sector studies, and other analyses of aid and basic education. To ground their findings empirically, the evaluators completed four illustrative detailed case studies, with the cooperation and participation of national education officials, in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Zambia.

The evaluators were themselves a distinguished international group, led by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and including Goss Gilroy Inc. and Education for Change Ltd. The evaluation team consisted of experts from the North and from the South.

This final report draws on the evaluators' work over nearly eighteen months, including both the document review and four country case studies. Detailed separate reports on that work are available in both print and electronic format.

What have we learned? External support has contributed to expanding access to basic education. Funding agencies and partner countries have developed new patterns of cooperation and collaboration. External support is now increasingly routed directly to the education ministry or to the national budget. At the same time, project support continues to have a useful role. The focus on formal primary education has often reduced attention and funding to adult literacy and other out-of-school education programmes. Increased standardization and coordination of approach among funding agencies has been accompanied by inattention to national and local needs and circumstances. The voices of teachers and others in the broader education community remain difficult to hear.

The findings are of course much richer and more detailed than these brief observations! Their presentation is readable and provocative.

Evaluations provide a mirror, helping us to see more clearly the choices we have made and the paths we have decided to follow. Their findings prompt us to reconsider those choices and explore other paths. That is the challenge we are facing today.

Rob D. van den Berg
Chair, Evaluation Steering Committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation team wishes to thank all of the members of the Evaluation Steering Committee for their guidance and hard work in overseeing the evaluation. As Chair of the Evaluation Steering Committee, Rob D. van den Berg, Director of the Policy and Operations Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was conscientious and creative in ensuring that the guidance provided to the evaluation team by the Steering Committee was fair and clear and was well understood by the team.

In particular, we would like to express our thanks to the members of the Evaluation Management Group: Janet King and Goberdhan Singh of the Evaluation Division of the Canadian International Development Agency, Lucien Back of the Evaluation Office of UNICEF and, as Chair, Ted Kliest of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Evaluation Management Group were the ongoing point of contact between the evaluation team and the agencies and countries commissioning the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education. They worked tirelessly to improve the quality of our work and to preserve a spirit of partnership in the evaluation. Dr. Joel Samoff was also extremely helpful to the evaluation team in his role as advisor to the Management Group and the Steering Committee.

Finally, our thanks are due to the many people in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia who gave freely of their time and their expertise to ensure that our work was based on the best information they could make available to us. Their participation greatly enriched this report and, indeed, the evaluation could not have been successful without them. As always, the evaluation team members are responsible for any errors or omissions.

Ted Freeman
Sheila Dohoo Faure

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

General acronyms

AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
BMZ	Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EC	European Community
EFA	Education for All
ESC	Evaluation Steering Committee
FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	*Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH*
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries (Initiative)
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWAp	Sector-wide Approach
TA	Technical Assistance
UNDAF	United Nations Development Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPC	Universal Primary Completion
UPE	Universal Primary Education

Country-specific acronyms

Bolivia

FPS	*Fondo Nacional de Inversión Productiva y Social* / Social Productivity Fund
MECyD	*Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes* / Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports
PRE	*Programa de Reforma Educativa* / Education Reform Programme
VEA	*Viceministerio de Educación Alternativa* / Vice Ministry of Alternative Education
VEIPS	*Viceministerio de Educación Inicial, Primaria y Secundaria* / Vice Ministry for Initial, Primary and Secondary Education

Burkina Faso

PDDEB	*Plan décennal de développement de l'éducation de base* / 10-Year Plan for Development of Basic Education
PIP	Public Investment Plan

Uganda

EFAG	Education Funding Agencies Group
ESA	Education Standards Agency
ESIP	Education Strategic Investment Plan
GOU	Government of Uganda
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PPET	Post Primary Education and Training

Zambia

BESSIP	Basic Education sub-Sector Investment Programme
MOE	Ministry of Education
PRP	Primary Reading Programme

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Basic education – The Jomtien Conference identified basic education as being the foundation for lifelong learning and human development and recognized that "the diversity, complexity, and changing nature of basic learning needs of children, youth and adults necessitates broadening and constantly redefining the scope of basic education" (Declaration 5).

Basic education programme – A programme is a grouping of activities that support one or more basic education objectives, but which are broader in scope than a project (for example, covering all regions of a country, addressing several components of basic education, using multiple strategies). A programme is usually funded and/or implemented by more than one external agency.

Basic education project – A project is a grouping of activities that support one or more basic education objectives, but which are limited in time and in scope (for example, targeted to one geographic area, addressing only one or two components of basic education, using only one strategy). A project is typically funded and/or implemented by one external agency.

Basic learning needs – Generally, the terms "basic education" and "basic learning needs" are used interchangeably. Basic learning needs generally include "early child care and development opportunities, relevant, quality primary schooling or equivalent out-of-school education for children, and literacy, basic knowledge and life skills training for youth and adults" (Bentall et al, 2000).

Budget support (direct budget support) – This is external financial support that is provided to the recipient country's national government, usually through the Ministry of Finance. Budget support can be divided into three categories of increasing constraint:

- General budget support: flows from external sources into the general revenue of the government. Constraints are sometimes in the form of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) conditionalities that require the government to keep spending in certain sectors (typically education and health) above negotiated thresholds;
- Sector support: external funding that is targeted for use in a specific sector or sub-sector; and
- Earmarked sector support: funding that is further constrained or targeted to in a specific sub-sector (such as basic education), or even to particular activities within a sector or sub-sector. Within the constraints of sector or earmarked sector support, the line ministry may have the flexibility to move resources around within the sector or sub-sector.

Education for All – Based on the six goals of Education for All defined in the *Dakar Framework for Action,* externally supported efforts to attain Education for All could be expected to encompass activities in the areas of:

- Comprehensive early childhood care and education;
- Free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- Addressing the learning needs of all young people and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programmes;
- Adult literacy, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

- Elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and achieving gender equality in education; and
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education so that measurable outcomes are achieved by all.

Macroeconomic budget support – This is support that is provided to the recipient country's national government, through the ministry of finance, and is not earmarked for any particular sector.

Project or programme support – This is support that is provided by one or more external agencies for a specific set of activities that are defined in the project or programme design and in which there is limited flexibility to move resources between activities.

Promotion rate – This reflects the number of children promoted in a given year from one school level to the next, expressed as a percentage of all children in the initial level in the initial year.

Sector – The operational definition of a sector varies from context to context. In some countries, basic education is considered to be a sector. In others, it is a sub-sector of the education sector.

Sector-wide Approach (SWAp) – Generally a SWAp includes support that:

- Is sector-wide in scope;
- Is based on a clear sector strategy and framework;
- Is based on long-term plans;
- Includes host country ownership and strong coordinated partnership with external agencies;
- Is developed and implemented with the involvement of, and partnership with, all local stakeholders;
- Includes the involvement of all main external agencies;
- Is based on common implementation arrangements and effective donor coordination
- Relies on local capacity; and
- Includes provision for results-based monitoring.

Universal Primary Education (UPE) – The Millennium Development Goal defines universal primary education as being a state in which children everywhere, boys and girls alike, are able to complete a full course of primary schooling of acceptable quality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction and Methodology

This report presents the results of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries (Joint Evaluation) commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 support agencies with the participation of four developing countries.[1] Representatives from Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia joined representatives of the 13 support agencies to form an Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC met at important points in the evaluation cycle and served as the ultimate decision-making body for the evaluation.

A consortium of private firms with experience in evaluation and in basic education carried out the evaluation. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) was the lead organization in the consortium, which included Goss Gilroy Inc. of Canada and Education for Change Ltd. of the United Kingdom.

The Joint Evaluation included case studies of external support to basic education in the four participating countries. It also encompassed a global review of documents on the subject of external support to basic education. The work was carried out between February 2002 and July 2003. The material for this Final Report is drawn from the Document Review Report (hereafter referred to as the Document Review) and from the Country Case Study Reports (hereafter referred to as the Country Studies) for Burkina Faso, Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia.

The requirements for this evaluation were outlined in the *Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education: Framework Terms of Reference* (2001) which identify three main components for the evaluation:

- The nature and evolution of external support to basic education;
- Externally supported basic education; and
- Partnership for basic education development.

These evaluation components were addressed at three different levels:

- Intents, policies and strategies;
- Practices; and
- Results and consequences.

This structure guided the work on all evaluation products.

An initial review of documents was carried out in the spring of 2002 and it provided some support to the field work that followed. However, the final Document Review was not completed until the spring of 2003 and was reviewed by the ESC meeting in New York, in March 2003, at

[1] The Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is sponsored by: the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida, Denmark; European Commission (EC); Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.

the same time as it reviewed the draft Country Studies. The four country case studies were carried out over the period from April 2002 to January 2003.

The Joint Evaluation of Basic Education encompassed a number of important organizational and methodological features. Three of the most important included:

- The active participation in the ESC and in the overall guidance and governance of the evaluation of four partner countries, which were the focus of the field phase of the evaluation;

- An attempt to fully integrate consultants, based in each of the participating countries into teams conducting the country case studies; and

- The attempt to develop a global assessment of external support to basic education through the mechanism of an extensive document review structured around the key issues outlined in the *Framework Terms of Reference*.

While these characteristics imparted important strengths to the evaluation, it is important to note that, in conducting the study, the evaluation team encountered some difficulties and problems, which included:

- First and foremost, the extreme difficulty of determining the financial volume and shape of external support to basic education due to the differences among external agencies in the way that they classify, encode and report on disbursements to education. This problem remains pervasive at both a global and national level;

- While the information base accessed through the document review process was an extremely rich one, the necessity of a second effort to successfully complete the document review gave rise to problems in timing. It was more difficult than anticipated for the results of the document review to inform the work of the country case study teams in "real time," as they prepared or carried out their work in each country; and

- While the country case studies were intended to be illustrative rather than representative, it soon became clear that some of the most important and striking results of the evaluation were found at that level of enquiry, which made it important to link the results at the country and global levels to ensure a wider validity for the country case study results.

In the main report, the evaluation team has attempted to show very clearly how the global evidence gathered through the document review strongly reinforces the results of the country case studies in support of the findings and conclusions reported below.

II. Key Conclusions of the Evaluation

The overriding conclusion of the evaluation concerns the ongoing search for meaningful partnership as a road to the effective provision and use of external support to basic education, and hence to improvements in basic education in partner countries. The commitment to partnership is evident in the efforts of both external agencies and national and local partners over the period from 1990 to 2002. What is most lacking, however, is a willingness and determination to improve basic education through locally developed solutions, which are most relevant to the particular

contexts of partner countries and which are built from the "ground up" rather than through the application of blueprints and templates developed at a global level.

The six main evaluation conclusions are described in the box below. The detailed findings of the evaluation and the implications of each conclusion are discussed in the pages that follow.

Key Evaluation Conclusions

1. There has been a strong tendency for external agencies to place increasing emphasis on the use of external support for accelerating progress in basic education, especially in relation to the education goals of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the Education for All (EFA) goals. This tendency has been accompanied, at times, by a reliance on blueprints, templates and prescribed solutions that has been detrimental to a commitment to partnership, has been inconsistent with the capacities of partners and has sometimes limited the relevance of programmes and projects. There is a need to place greater emphasis on the relevance of external support to local needs and capacities – for more tailored local solutions within a global consensus on goals.
2. The movement to programme support and Sector-wide Approaches (SWAps) is one of the most significant trends in the provision and use of external support to basic education. It has been intended, at least in part, to contribute to strengthened national ownership and to improve partnership (and thereby improve the effectiveness of the provision and use of external support). In a real sense, the shift to programme support is an indication of the commitment of external agencies to strengthen partnership. However, this form of support does not necessarily improve partnerships if implemented as a blueprint rather than a process. It has, in some cases, contributed to increased tensions and divisions among distinct groups of external agencies. On the positive side, it has led to some improvements in the sense of national ownership and to better coordination of external assistance.
3. The movement to supporting basic education through SWAps and other forms of programme support needs to be accompanied by an understanding of the positive role of project assistance, especially in supporting innovations and in providing targeted support to marginalized groups. There is considerable evidence that project forms of support can be more effectively integrated into programme approaches with the consequent effect of strengthening the positive aspects of both modalities.
4. The movement to programme approaches in supporting basic education has not always been accompanied, at least in the short term, by a reduction in the administrative burden for host governments. A very heavy burden of planning, coordination and monitoring has been made more difficult by uneven progress in the development of common administrative procedures among external agencies and a reluctance to accept local processes as adequate.
5. Although there is agreement on the broad range of components included in basic education, in reality the focus of most activities of both external agencies and national partners has been placed on formal primary schooling with negative effects on other areas of basic education. Further, while progress has been made in providing access to primary schooling, there are serious persistent problems in improving the quality of basic education.
6. There has been a sustained agreement within the international community, including external agencies and national partners, on the priority of basic education, but funding levels from the external agencies have not kept pace with expectations or implied commitments. This is, at least in part, a reflection of the complexity of planning and resource allocation processes surrounding the provision of external support and to problems in the absorptive capacity of partner governments.

III. Findings

The evaluation team developed these six key conclusions, based on detailed findings with respect to the three evaluation issues: external support to basic education; externally supported basic education and partnership.

External Support to Basic Education

Volume of External Support

- The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in 1990 represented a watershed for the international community because the conference declaration set out agreed-upon goals that were shared by external agencies and national partners and were accompanied by an agreed-upon process of planning, follow-up and reporting at both the national and international levels.
- Yet, at a global level, the volume of external support to basic education did not increase in the period from Jomtien to Dakar at the rate that could have been expected from the nature of the commitments made. By 2002 there remained a very wide gap between the estimated amount of external assistance required to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals for 2015 and the amount being provided. This gap may, in part, be explained by external agency perceptions of the absorptive capacity of partner countries as well as the complexity of programme planning and development processes at a global and national level.
- Despite repeated calls for improvements in reporting of external flows to basic education, external agencies do not code their support to the basic education sector in a consistent way. Those charged with monitoring progress still must deal with substantial flows that are essentially not identified with specific uses within the education sector.
- There have been significant efforts since Dakar to increase the flow of funds in support of basic education (including the Education For All Fast Track Initiative). These efforts have not yet resulted in increased disbursements and they encounter problems in attracting sufficient long-term commitments from external agencies. This is often related to concerns over absorptive capacity.
- The four countries participating in the Joint Evaluation have experienced a pattern of funding that is quite different from the global pattern reported in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002). They have seen substantial and sustained increases in the mid to latter part of the 1990s and extending into 2001. This pattern has been associated with the approval of national policies, strategies and programmes in basic education.

Nature of External Support

- There has been continuous involvement in policy dialogue and technical assistance (TA) by a wide range of agencies in each of the four countries participating in the evaluation. The intensity and range of external agency involvement in TA varies over time, as does the role of lead agency in each area of activity. In particular, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and selected bilateral agencies have provided important TA at different points in time in each country studied. The movement to a programme or SWAp is often accompanied during the planning stages by an increase in the volume and intensity of TA.

- In the four countries there was a shift in focus of TA away from education-specific expertise, such as teacher education and curriculum development and towards programme development and improved management.

Modalities of External Support

- As noted, a number of global and national factors have contributed in each of the countries studied to an ongoing narrowing of the focus of external support and national resources to concentrate almost exclusively on Universal Primary Education (UPE) to the detriment of non-formal education, including adult literacy. Where support is provided to these areas, it is often directed through Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) with a consequent weakening of the government ministries charged with the responsibility.

- There has been substantial progress towards a programme approach or SWAp in each of the four countries. The main limitation seems to be that only the Uganda programme covers the entire sector and full participation in all four cases is limited to a core group of external agencies, with the "outer" group of supporting agencies including some who work within the overall policy and programme framework and some who do not.

- Three of the four Country Studies suggest that the host governments have a strong sense of ownership of the resulting programme (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia) while three of the four (Burkina Faso, Uganda, Zambia) also point to the fact that the core group of agencies participating have attempted to harmonize administrative procedures. All point to some improvements in coordination.

- Conditionalities have been a feature of external support to basic education in all four countries. In two of the four countries (Bolivia, Zambia) they have reflected national priorities and goals while in the other two (Burkina Faso, Uganda), conditionalities appear to have played a role in weakening the national sense of ownership of sectoral programmes in basic education.

Externally Supported Basic Education

Focus on Primary Education and Issues of Gender, Quality and Relevance

- Externally supported basic education at a global level, and in the four participating countries, has made important progress towards achieving the EFA goals, especially in the area of expanded enrolment in primary schooling. On the other hand, the pace of expansion means that achievement of the EFA goals and the MDG by 2015 remains at risk.

- The goal of achieving gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment is proving more difficult than expanding overall levels of enrolment. It tends to receive less explicit attention in programme planning and implementation. Addressing gender parity is especially difficult where, among other things, the very structure of the primary school system discourages girls' participation.

- Given the previously noted concentration of external support to basic education on the goal of UPE (mainly through formal primary schooling), the tendency for non-formal education to be dealt with by different administrative structures than primary and

secondary schooling contributes to its isolation, as does the tendency for external funds to be provided to non-formal education through NGOs. On the other hand, it is worth noting that external agencies and governments alike are placing more emphasis on non-formal education and on EFA goals outside UPE in the planning of new-generation programmes.

- Improving the quality of externally supported basic education efforts represents an enduring problem for partner countries, a problem that limits the effectiveness of external support. In some cases, expansion of the system to improve access is seen as a cause of declines in quality. It seems more likely that quality issues persist due to an inability to make use of available research and monitoring tools and because organizational cultures resist innovation and change. This, in turn, contributes to problems in the perceived relevance of externally supported basic education, particularly for primary school leavers.

- Quality is about learning and covers both cognitive and affective learning. Quality has more dimensions than measurable outcomes in literacy and numeracy. Yet quality tends to be measured by examination results and, therefore, all other aspects of quality are given short shrift, since examinations are only one limited method of measuring some aspects of cognitive learning. There are many other aspects of cognitive learning that are not assessed by examinations. In addition, examinations do not measure in any way affective learning.

Governance Issues

- In order to make effective use of external support (and of national resources) partner countries often need to undertake basic reforms of their systems for planning, managing, and delivering basic education services. There are often significant roadblocks and impediments in the reform process, including tradition and organizational cultures, which are highly resistant to change. The most significant factors undermining reform may be the exclusion of key stakeholders from the planning of reform efforts and the absence of a strong sense of "ownership" of the reforms on the part of national governments. Both of these are related to evolving concepts of partnership.

- Decentralization has been a constant theme and a continuous challenge in the use of external support to basic education. There is no suggestion that decentralization can or should be abandoned or reversed since it has an important role to play in ensuring greater relevance of the basic education system to local communities. What seems most important, however, is for decentralization efforts to proceed at a judicious pace so that local needs and capacities can be taken into account and strengthened.

- There have been important efforts to use external support to improve monitoring and evaluation systems. These have contributed to a better information base and have strengthened the capacity of partner governments to take part in joint assessment missions associated with SWAps and with programme support. On the other hand, there are problems in linking the results gathered through monitoring and evaluation to changes in programmes and in systems for delivering basic education. Most important, perhaps, have been problems in assessing pilot projects and special initiatives so that they can "go to scale."

Participation in Design and Development of Basic Education System

- Efforts to use external support to increase the efficiency of basic education systems, especially formal schooling, have often not taken adequate account of the interests, needs and viewpoints of teachers or provided for their ongoing professional development. Some programmes to expand coverage and improve efficiency include measures perceived as an attack on teachers' professional status and pride, such as changes in teacher status, salary reductions or reductions in the length of teacher education, with insufficient attention to the principle of teachers as partners and as "owners" in the development of primary education.

- The isolation of teachers from the programme design and development process has the effect of weakening the political legitimacy of many reform programmes in basic education and, further, tends to result in programmes that lack relevance and practical application in such areas as teacher training, materials development and curriculum reform.

- Efforts to develop mechanisms for local participation in the administration, management and governance of local school systems have laid the basis for increased participation of parents and communities through, for example, parent associations and school councils. They need to be further developed and to go beyond their current use as administrative support bodies. Their potential to link schools to communities better should not be underestimated.

Sustainability

- As primary school systems expand and the size of the annual cadre of primary school leavers increases, the question of what happens to those who complete primary school becomes more and more acute. Secondary school systems lack the capacity to absorb all those who qualify and primary school achievement is seen as failing to equip children for the work world. This is a major issue in the relevancy of basic education for learners and their parents.

- The history of increasing external support and expanding systems of public schooling in partner countries gives rise to considerable risk of non-sustainability. Despite efforts such as the Education For All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and the implied long-term commitment associated with SWAps, most funding of external support to basic education is provided on a relatively short-term basis. There is a necessity, at least in some countries, for recognition on the part of external agencies of the need for high levels of sustained, predictable, funding for both the recurrent and investment costs of basic education over a long-term period. At the same time, it is important to recognize that many partner countries (for example Bolivia and Zambia) have matched increases in external resources provided by external sources with comparable increases in national budgets and expenditures.

Partnership and the Factors Supporting Partnership

The evaluation suggests that truly effective partnerships for basic education have not been achieved in many countries. Yet it also suggests that this is not a reason to call off the search. Nor does it mean that the history of the almost 13 years since Jomtien is one of wasted effort. The evaluation does identify a number of factors that contribute to more developed partnerships in basic education, and that those factors can be described under the headings of continuity, capacity, participation and relevance.

Continuity

- The emergence of the MDGs in education and the formal concentration of the FTI on those goals have tended to reinforce the trend for external support to focus on UPE, diverting attention away from partnership with a focus on all the components of basic education.

- Basic policy continuity in partner countries (including all four studied for this evaluation) has been a contributing factor in encouraging significant levels of funding and other forms of external support.

- In the four countries, there are very serious concerns over the sustainability of the current level of funding. External agencies need to recognize that the commitments implied by their support of major expansions in primary school systems are long-term. The risk to each of the partner countries of substantial disengagement by the external support agencies is very high and the consequences would be devastating.

- In some countries (including Burkina Faso and Zambia) problems in staff rotation and discontinuities in public sector management have very important detrimental effects on partnership since they undermine the capacity of the partner country to hold its own in discussions and negotiations on policies and programmes. They also undermine externally supported efforts at capacity building. In contrast, Bolivia has been able to maintain a fairly high level of stability in the managerial and technical staff of the Ministry and has benefited more from capacity development efforts.

- The shift to SWAps has resulted in a change in the work demands for external agency staff. They are required to be more involved in sector-wide analysis, policy formulation and planning, negotiations and require a greater understanding of the "politics" of external agency coordination. Yet, these are not part of the traditional skills of education experts in external agencies at the country level.

- Programmes of public sector reform aimed at improving human resource management and professionalizing and regularizing processes for staffing, training, promotion and retention have been linked by external agencies, in their policies and plans, to their continued commitment to provide support to key ministries involved in basic education. However, the extent to which these overarching reforms have, in reality, had an impact on basic education is not yet clear.

Constraints in Administrative and Technical Capacity

- The problem of imbalances in administrative and technical capacity between external support agencies and their national partners continues to seriously undermine efforts to develop effective partnerships in basic education. Some countries have been able to maintain a stable cadre of managerial and technical staff and have benefited from external support to capacity development. As in the case of Bolivia, some have also been able to access expertise and experience in the region (with the help of external support).

- The movement towards programme forms of support to basic education, including SWAps, has not yet resulted in a notable reduction in the overall administrative burden faced by national agencies involved in basic education. In fact, there is some suggestion that, in the short-term at least, the burden may have increased. There have been gains in the area of common assessment processes and harmonized reporting requirements but on balance the programme mode has not been the solution to the problem of unbalanced administrative and technical capacities between external agencies and national partners.

Roles and Participation

- The movement to programme forms of support to basic education has often involved the emergence of two distinct categories of external support agencies: an inner group providing support to the common programme and an outer group providing project support. It is essential that the many agencies constrained from participation by their mandates and structures (including United Nations agencies and TA agencies) not be excluded from participation in key policy development and programme assessment structures. Their active involvement will strengthen the variety and quality of support available to national partner governments as they deal with the demands of programme support.

- There is a tendency for the dialogue surrounding the development, implementation and assessment of large-scale programmes of support to basic education to be conducted on a narrow basis, without effective participation by civil society organizations and key stakeholder groups such as teachers. This has the effect of alienating key groups necessary to the success of programmes and may undermine the level of political support and community commitment available to sustain the subsequent programme.

Relevance to Local Context

- There are important issues concerning the relevance of certain aspects of external assistance to the administrative and organizational contexts in partner countries. As an example, support to certain types of teacher education is sometimes not appropriate to the system of teacher education and advancement in the country concerned. Similarly, external agencies supporting basic education have not been able to coordinate or rationalize their complex administrative and operational norms and standards for budgeting, procurement, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Clearly these systems are not appropriate to the administrative and management structures of many partner countries.

- More importantly perhaps, there are serious questions concerning the relevance of the focus of external support on "classical" formal, in-school primary education. This concern relates directly to the question of how primary school leavers who may not attend high school (due in part to the fact that secondary school systems have not expanded to keep pace with the increase in primary school enrolment) will fare in the world of work. The focus on UPE has not, with the exception of Bolivia's emphasis on intercultural/bilingual education, addressed the question of the content of primary schooling and how it should link to life after school.

Modalities of External Support

- Analysis of the shift from project to programme modalities in the countries participating in the Joint Evaluation suggests that the impact has not necessarily, by definition, been one of strengthening partnership. While it has been strengthened in some countries (Bolivia, Zambia), there has not, as yet, been any discernible effect to strengthen or weaken partnership in Burkina Faso or Uganda. It is the view of the team that the shift from projects to programmes is not inherently positive or negative from the perspective of partnership.

- It is clear that project support for basic education has played an important role in supporting innovation and the development of new practices. While there is some concern that this innovation may be lost in the move to programme support, there is also a strong potential for the improved effectiveness of project support as innovations and pilot projects are taken to scale in national programmes. The key problem is to ensure that project and programme support are integrated.

- There is evidence that, in some countries at least, the move towards programme approaches has either not led to a decrease in administrative burdens for the host country or has even, in the short term at least, led to an increase. Where this has occurred it has been attributed to the heavy burden of planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting faced by the host government in the transition to a sectoral approach. It is also sometimes related to a failure on the part of external support agencies to adopt coordinated and simplified procedures for programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.

- The shift from predominantly project support to basic education to an umbrella programme or SWAp (with some projects persisting, as they usually do) will be more likely have a positive influence on partnership when it includes:

    - A commitment from partner governments, programme funding agencies and project supporting agencies (including those engaged in advocacy, policy dialogue, and TA) to allow for full participation in programme processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation by project supporting agencies;

    - Mechanisms for wider consultations with key stakeholders from outside government and the external support agencies;

    - An approach to programme support which recognizes the role of projects in pilot testing innovations at regional and local levels as well as nationally;

- Explicit planning for links from projects to programmes so that innovations and pilot tests are not left isolated from national level funding and support; and

- Significant financial and technical assistance to develop the administrative and technical capacity of key units in the partner ministries of government so that they are able to design, commission and carry out programme and project planning, monitoring, review and evaluation tasks and can take overall responsibility for those functions.

IV. Conclusions and Implications

As noted, there are six key evaluation conclusions. For each conclusion, the evaluation team has identified a set of implications. These implications provide the initial framework for a discussion of the implications for the organizations represented on the ESC.

Conclusion 1:

There has been a strong tendency for external agencies to place increasing emphasis on the use of external support for accelerating progress in basic education, especially in relation to the education goals of the MDG and to the EFA goals. This tendency has been accompanied, at times, by a reliance on blueprints, templates and prescribed solutions that has been detrimental to a commitment to partnership, has been inconsistent with the capacities of partners and has sometimes limited the relevance of programmes and projects. There is a need to place greater emphasis on the relevance of external support to local needs and capacities – for more tailored local solutions within a global consensus on goals.

Implications

Clearly, the most important implications of this conclusion all concern how external agencies and national and local partners can find ways to identify, develop, design, fund, execute, monitor and evaluate programmes in basic education that are truly reflective of national and local needs and capacities while remaining true to the global commitment to provide access to all facets of quality basic education. A scan of the evaluation findings suggests that some key strategies for developing more effective programmes that are more relevant to national contexts would include:

- Ensuring wider and more meaningful participation by a more diverse group of stakeholders in the development of national programmes (including SWAp arrangements);
- Placing, in particular, students, parents and teachers more centrally in the process of programme design and development and, more specifically, avoiding measures that reduce the professional standing of teachers;
- Allowing for genuine flexibility in the scheduling of reforms and expansion in the system of basic education so that local capacities (inside and outside the system of formal schooling) are developed, which keep pace with change and which allow communities to benefit fully;
- Actively pursuing experimentation and innovation in areas outside formal, primary schooling with a concurrent commitment to follow up on successful innovation with investment at a national level so that basic education can be made more relevant to the needs of learners; and
- Recognizing that, while external agencies may be in an inherently stronger negotiating position due to their access to financial and technical resources, the policy direction and operational design of major programmes in basic education must be grounded in national and local needs and priorities.

Conclusion 2:

The movement to programme support and SWAps is one of the most significant trends in the provision and use of external support to basic education. It has been intended, at least in part, to contribute to strengthened national ownership and to improve partnership (and thereby improve the effectiveness of the provision and use of external support). In a real sense, the shift to programme support is an indication of the commitment of external agencies to strengthen partnership. However, this form of support does not necessarily improve partnerships if implemented as a blueprint rather than a process. It has, in some cases, contributed to increased tensions and divisions among distinct groups of external agencies. On the positive side, it has led to some improvements in the sense of national ownership and to better coordination of external assistance.

Implications

The major strategic shift required in the development of SWAps in basic education, so that they may better contribute to both partnership and more effective basic education, is a commitment to view SWAps as an ongoing process of cooperation rather than a blueprint for programmatic action. Application of the process approach to SWAps in basic education would include subsidiary strategies for both external agencies and partner countries, including:

- Ensuring that national stakeholders outside central line ministries of government take part in the development of SWAps relating to basic education;
- Taking active steps to include the full range of external agencies with technical expertise and policy experience in dialogue on programme development, management, monitoring and evaluation in basic education;
- Ensuring that policies on budget support, programme support and SWAps recognize the cross-linkages and compatibilities between projects and programmes;
- Providing either project or programme assistance in support of innovation integrated into the national plan and programme for basic education;
- Cooperating with governments and external agencies to harmonize administrative and operational norms and standards and to reduce their administrative burden on partner agencies;
- Allowing for full participation by all external agencies supporting basic education in coordination mechanisms and joint review processes;
- Recognizing the importance of sector-wide planning, including both secondary schooling and teaching education; and
- Ensuring that the ministry of education and other ministries involved in basic education participate in public sector reform programmes.

Conclusion 3:

The movement to supporting basic education through SWAps and other forms of programme support needs to be accompanied by an understanding of the positive role of project assistance, especially in supporting innovations and in providing targeted support to marginalized groups. There is considerable evidence that project forms of support can be more effectively integrated into programme approaches with the consequent effect of strengthening the positive aspects of both modalities.

Implications

The potential positive interrelationship of project and programme support to basic education was a common theme in all four of the countries participating in the evaluation, and was further reinforced by the results of the document review. Surprisingly, there is a persistent tendency for some host governments and external support agencies to more or less automatically view project support as a negative factor in the transition to effective programmes. There is also a sometimes

arbitrary approach to the assessment of which situations best favour programme or project support on the part of some external agencies. What is clearly required is a more pragmatic approach which recognizes the positive role of project support in the development of innovative strategies and approaches and in reaching marginalized groups.

On the other hand, project proponents must also recognize the limitations of the project form in supporting basic education on a national or regional scale and the dangers, pointed out in the Burkina Faso case study, of a culture of continuous pilot projects which are never taken to scale. In a certain sense, the development of programme approaches to supporting basic education may be seen as an important advance in the effectiveness of projects themselves since they can now be better linked to national efforts. The main requirement is for external agencies and governments alike to adopt a pragmatic approach to the mix of project and programme support and to place less emphasis on blueprints and dogma.

Conclusion 4:

The movement to programme approaches in supporting basic education has not always been accompanied, at least in the short term, by a reduction in the administrative burden for host governments. A very heavy burden of planning, coordination and monitoring has been made more difficult by uneven progress in the development of common administrative procedures among external agencies and a reluctance to accept local processes as adequate.

Implications

At first glace it seems difficult to accept that the movement towards a reduction or elimination of project support, with its requirements for host government oversight and the disparate systems of project development, approval, implementation and follow-up of the external agencies, would not be accompanied by substantial reductions in the administrative burden felt by partner countries.

In practice, however, the procedures and systems required to plan, negotiate, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes supported by multiple external agencies represent another type of administrative load for partner countries. At least during the early stages of SWAps to supporting basic education, this burden is actually very substantial. It is made even more significant when the movement towards programme support is not accompanied by a strong commitment among external agencies to simplify and harmonize their administrative and procedural requirements, including requirements for monitoring and evaluation.

It is important that external agencies which are committed to a move to programme support as a key strategy in more effective external support to basic education make a similar commitment to simplifying and harmonizing their administrative requirements and procedures with other external agencies and with partner governments.

Conclusion 5:

Although there is agreement on the broad range of components included in basic education, in reality the focus of most activities of both external agencies and national partners has been placed on formal primary schooling with negative effects on other areas of basic education. Further, while progress has been made in providing access to primary schooling, there are serious persistent problems in improving the quality of basic education.

Implications

Meeting the international commitment to the broad scope of basic education requires the support of both external agencies and national partners. They must ensure that the policy environment,

within a specific external agency and at the partner country level, promotes and encourages all components of basic education and progress towards the EFA goals.

For the first element of this problem, expanding beyond formal primary schooling, strategies may include:

- Reiterating the emphasis on the full range of EFA goals in statements and guidelines on policy and practice in education and basic education;
- Advocating for the full range of EFA goals in international conferences and meetings and in inter-agency negotiations on programmes. In particular, while the MDGs should be supported, external agencies and national partners should advocate to ensure that the education goals of the MDGs are not used to discourage support for other EFA goals;
- Increasing financial and technical support to areas of EFA beyond primary schooling;
- Ensuring that funds to non-formal education and adult literacy are not entirely channelled through NGOs;
- Re-emphasizing the importance of gender parity in policies on basic education; and,
- Providing capacity development and other TA to agencies responsible for non-formal education and adult literacy.

National partner governments may seek strategies to ensure that the national context is amenable to developing all components of basic education. These may include:

- Encompassing early childhood education, youth and adult life skills education, and adult literacy goals in national policies and strategies for education;
- Supporting and advocating for the full range of EFA goals in international meetings and conferences and in negotiations with external agencies; and
- Ensuring national agencies responsible for non-formal education and adult literacy are included in the programme and SWAp arrangements.

Within the current focus on formal primary schooling, external agencies and national partners are being exhorted to address not only the supply side, but also the demand side of basic education. This requires additional attention to questions of quality and relevance. Typical strategies may include:

- Continuing to fund projects and TA within the framework of programme or sector-wide support that allow for the testing of innovative ideas to address quality and relevance;
- Providing financial and technical support to better use monitoring and evaluation in the improvement of the relevance and quality of basic education; and
- Supporting research efforts and reviews of promising initiatives that allow for more explicit links between basic education and poverty reduction in the development of policies.

Partner countries may seek to implement strategies to better integrate external support into national efforts to address the quality and relevance of basic education, including, among other things:

- Ensuring that national policies on basic education emphasize quality and relevance, in addition to access;
- Developing and implementing policies requiring the use of monitoring and evaluation for the assessment of pilot projects in basic education;

- Making the approval of pilot projects conditional on their relevance for national policy and programming;
- Using monitoring and evaluation to assess promising initiatives and link project results to national programmes and SWAps;
- Promoting a culture of innovation and change within ministries of education that supports efforts to improve quality based on the results of formative and mid-term evaluations; and
- Strengthening programme components aimed at supporting participation in school management and accountability structures by parents and learners in an effort to ensure the relevance of basic education provided in schools.

Conclusion 6:

There has been a sustained agreement within the international community, including external agencies and national partners, on the priority of basic education, but funding levels from the external agencies have not kept pace with expectations or implied commitments. This is, at least in part, a reflection of the complexity of planning and resource allocation processes surrounding the provision of external support and to problems in the absorptive capacity of partner governments.

Implications

In order to overcome the apparent gap between the national and external financial resources needed to provide quality basic education to all and the volume of resources currently available, external agencies and partners together will need to find strategies to overcome the apparent problem of the longer term sustainability of expanded systems of basic education. While this challenge continues to prove extremely difficult, as shown in the experience to date of the FTI, it is possible to suggest some elements of a strategic approach to securing the needed resources. These might include:

- Recognition by external agencies and national partners alike that investments in capacity development must be linked to increases in both external and national resources dedicated to basic education – thus providing a strategy for overcoming absorptive capacity limitations which, in turn, inhibit the flow of external resources;
- Placing increased emphasis on the feasibility and stability of national policies in basic education as a direct incentive to increased flows of external resources;
- Greater recognition by both external agencies and national partners of the link between governance, civil service reform and the volume of external assistance to basic education (and to other sub-sectors of education);
- International recognition of the need to link goal-setting at a global and national level more directly to the duration of external commitments so that longer term goals are not subject to dramatic fluctuations in short-term external support;
- Efforts to simplify the process of planning national strategies and programmes along with reducing the burden of programme planning imposed by external agencies; and
- Efforts to broaden the base of projects, programmes and activities in basic education so that resources can be used outside the system of formal schooling.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

This report presents the results of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education (Joint Evaluation) commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 support agencies with the participation of four developing countries.[2] Representatives from Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia joined representatives of the 13 support agencies to form an Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC met at important points in the evaluation cycle and served as the ultimate decision-making body for the evaluation.

A consortium of private firms with experience in evaluation and in basic education carried out the evaluation. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) was the lead organization in the consortium, which included Goss Gilroy Inc. of Canada and Education for Change Ltd. of the United Kingdom.

The Joint Evaluation included case studies of external support to basic education in the four participating countries. It also encompassed a global review of documents on the subject of external support to basic education. The work was carried out between February 2002 and July 2003. The basic material for this Final Report is thus drawn from the five products of the Joint Evaluation:

- Volume 1: Document Review Report;
- Volume 2: Country Study Report – Bolivia;
- Volume 3: Country Study Report – Burkina Faso;
- Volume 4: Country Study Report – Uganda; and
- Volume 5: Country Study Report – Zambia.

1.1 Background to the Study

Following the World Education Forum held in Dakar in April 2000, a Consultative Group of Evaluation Departments was formed, representing 12 (later 13) international and national funding and technical assistance (TA) agencies active in supporting basic education. As noted in the *Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education – Framework Terms of Reference* (hereafter referred to as the *Terms of Reference* – see Annex 2), their intentions were to "develop a strategy for assessing the combined contributions of external support to basic education in selected partner countries in order to draw lessons for policy and programme improvement" (*Terms of Reference*, 2001, p. 1).

A preparatory study was conducted for the evaluation and its results summarized in a paper by Joel Samoff (2001) entitled: *When Progress is Process – Evaluating Aid to Basic Education: Issues and Strategies.* This paper was presented to the Consultative Group of Evaluation Departments in January 2001.

[2] The Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is sponsored by: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida, Denmark; European Commission (EU); Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.

Discussions were carried out among the Consultative Group members (and the invited partner countries) throughout the first half of 2001, resulting in the development of the *Terms of Reference* by October of the same year. The *Terms of Reference* thus became the touchstone document for the remainder of the evaluation. It has served the members of the ESC, the Evaluation Management Group (the Netherlands, Canada and UNICEF) and the consulting team as the primary guiding document for all subsequent work on the evaluation.

1.2 Focus of the Evaluation

The time frame for the Joint Evaluation covers the period from the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in 1990 (Jomtien) to the present day including, as a reference point, the Dakar Forum on Education for All in 2000 (Dakar).

The Joint Evaluation faced some inherent problems of complexity in that it represented a collaborative, multi-agency, multi-country assessment of external support to all components of basic education. Thus, it was essential for the *Framework Terms of Reference* to establish clearly the architecture of the evaluation, including the major components of the study, the different levels of analysis and the approaches used to address these.

1.2.1 Components of the Evaluation

There are three main components, or subject matter areas, addressed in the evaluation:

- The nature and evolution of external support to basic education;
- Externally supported basic education; and
- Partnership for basic education development.

As the *Terms of Reference* made clear, these three basic components of the study were not to be addressed in isolation. The evaluation was to explore the linkages across the three and address the experience of external support agencies and their partners in each component. The *Terms of Reference* describe the interrelationship of the three components as follows:

> The first component focuses on the **nature and evolution of external support to basic education.** While the primary concern in this component is to explore the ideas, policies, practices, and results of the funding and TA agencies, that exploration must address not only the agencies' perspectives on their own work but also how their work is perceived by others and how it is reflected in the content and form of their support. The second component shifts the focus from aid to education. Here the primary concern is to assess the **effectiveness and efficiency of basic education activities in selected countries** – specifically, those activities that have received external support. These two components – external support and basic education – are intended to be complementary, each informing and strengthening the other. The key questions for these two components will overlap, thereby permitting regular cross-checking of findings and interpretations.
>
> Bringing these first two components even more closely together, the third component will review efforts to re-conceptualize foreign aid as **partnerships for basic education development**. In that way, partnership (content and forms) is both an explicit focus for evaluation and a lens through which to examine external support to basic education (*Terms of Reference*, 2001, p. 5) [Emphasis added].

1.2.2 Levels of Analysis

One important concern of the evaluation has been to separate rhetoric from reality at global, national and local levels. The participating agencies and countries shared a concern that it was important to examine not only intentions but also actions (and the results of those actions). For that reason, the *Terms of Reference* pointed out that each component of the evaluation should be addressed at three different levels:

- Intents, policies and strategies;
- Practices; and
- Results and consequences.

The resulting architecture of the evaluation means that specific evaluation issues and questions could be developed in nine distinct areas: the three components of the evaluation and, within those components, the three levels of analysis of intents, policies and strategies, practices and results.

The key to using this architecture, from the perspective of the evaluation team, was maintaining enough structure to guide the work of consultants and analysts in the field (and to organize their reporting) while exploring the linkages across the different components and levels.

1.2.3 Methods of the Evaluation

Each evaluation component (external support to basic education, externally supported basic education, and partnership) has been addressed through two distinct methods: a) a global review of documents relating to basic education, and b) case studies of external support to basic education in four countries (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia).

The review of documents was originally intended to be completed in the first phase of the evaluation and to inform the development of the *Terms of Reference* and operational plans for the country case studies. A first draft of the document review was prepared during the spring of 2002 and some use was made of its contents in the field work that followed. It also became clear that a new approach was needed to the preparation of the document review (as agreed at the ESC meeting in Ottawa, in September 2002) and, as a result, a second document review report was developed and reviewed by the ESC meeting in New York, in March 2003, at the same time as the draft Country Studies. For a full discussion of the methodologies used in the document review see the Document Review Report (hereafter referred to as the Document Review).

The four country case studies were carried out between April 2002 and July 2003. The teams for each case study consisted of four persons, always including two consultants based in the country itself. Internationally based evaluation consultants carried out either three or four evaluation missions to the countries, while nationally-based consultants continued to participate in information collection and analysis between the field missions. As with the Document Review, the methodologies used in the country case studies are presented in considerable detail (along with discussions of their strengths and weaknesses) in the Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia Country Study Reports (hereafter referred to as the Country Studies).

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the country case study teams worked, as much as possible, in an integrated fashion with team members sharing in planning, data collection, analysis, and presentation of evaluation results. Each country team also relied on systematic consultations with key stakeholders (most often through a formal Country Reference Group) and the methods of

each country study included a formal workshop to review and discuss preliminary results thoroughly prior to development of the draft reports.

The Joint Evaluation of Basic Education had a number of important organizational and methodological features. Three of the most important included:

- The active participation in the ESC and in the overall guidance and governance of the evaluation of four partner countries, which were the focus of the field phase of the evaluation;

- An attempt to fully integrate consultants, based in each of the participating countries into teams conducting each of the country case studies; and

- The attempt to develop a global assessment of external support to basic education through the mechanism of an extensive document review structured around the key issues outlined in the *Framework Terms of Reference*.

While these characteristics imparted important strengths to the evaluation, it is important to note that, in conducting the study, the evaluation team encountered some difficulties and problems, which included:

- First and foremost, the extreme difficulty of determining the financial volume and shape of external support to basic education due to the differences among external agencies in the way that they classify, encode and report on disbursements to education. This problem remains pervasive at both a global and national level;

- While the information base accessed through the document review process was an extremely rich one, the necessity of a second effort to successfully complete the document review gave rise to problems in timing. It was more difficult than anticipated for the results of the document review to inform the work of the country case study teams in "real time," as they prepared or carried out their work in each country; and

- While the country case studies were intended to be illustrative rather than representative, it soon became clear that some of the most important and striking results of the evaluation were found at that level of enquiry, which made it important to link the results at country and global levels to ensure a wider validity for the country case study results.

In the main report, the evaluation team has attempted to show very clearly how the global evidence gathered through the document review strongly reinforces the results of the country case studies in support of the findings and conclusions reported below.

1.2.4 The Evaluation Team

While it was commissioned and guided by the ESC with support from the Evaluation Management Group, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Joint Evaluation remain the responsibility of the team of external evaluators working together in the consortium.

The evaluation team members based outside of the four partner countries included Vindu Balani, John Berry, Sheila Dohoo Faure, Ted Freeman, Annette Isaac, Margery Leach, Richard Maclure, Ernesto Schiefelbein, Steven St. Michael, and John Wood.

Team members based in the partner countries included: Lilian Goytia Marín, José Subirats Ferreres, and Enrique Ipiña Melgar in Bolivia; Kadiatou Ann Dao Sow and N'gra-zan Coulibaly in Burkina Faso; Kupuliano Odaet and Titus Balemesa in Uganda; and Geofrey Tambulukani, Anne L. Sikwibele, and Joe Kanyika in Zambia.

Project management, coordination and support were provided by Vindu Balani, John Coleman, Tom Heffernan and Stephen St. Michael, all of AUCC.

1.3 Purpose of the Final Report

Generally speaking, a report of this kind serves two main purposes:

- To present a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the different individual evaluation products. In the case of this evaluation, these were the Document Review and the Country Studies; and

- Develop and present an analysis (complete with findings, conclusions and recommendations) based on the patterns and linkages apparent only when considering all of the evaluation products. In doing so, the Final Report deepens the analysis in the evaluation and, potentially at least, develops a different order of evaluation findings and lessons learned.

A final report should balance these two purposes with a special emphasis depending on the overall study *Terms of Reference*, the needs of the audiences using (or potentially using) the report and the actual content of the different products of the evaluation. In the case of this Final Report, the evaluation team has attempted to place the greatest emphasis on the second purpose– deepening the analysis by seeking to highlight patterns across all five products so as to reach a different order of findings and a deeper understanding of the implications of the evaluation for policy and programmes in external support to basic education.

The reasons for choosing to emphasize the analytical, rather than the descriptive, purpose of this Final Report include:

- The guidance received from the ESC calling on the evaluation team to build on the rich material presented in the case studies and document review and to deepen the analysis to address more directly some of the larger issues in external support to basic education;

- The fact that the Country Studies are meant to stand on their own as detailed evaluations of external support to basic education in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia and, indeed, are being used by key stakeholders in discussions of future policies and programmes in those countries. In other words, the Country Studies are intended to serve not only as inputs to the overall evaluation but to provide value added for policy and programme development in each country studied; and

- The strong opinion of the evaluation team members that the Final Report can do more than summarize the content of each of the five evaluation products.

On this latter point, review and analysis of the five core products of the Joint Evaluation has led to a strong conviction among the team members that the evolution and nature of partnerships are critical to the provision of effective external support for basic education. Indeed, one of the most

important lessons of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education concerns the relationship between meaningful partnership and the effective use and provision of external support to basic education. Factors weakening or impeding partnership are often associated (in the experience of the evaluation team, as documented below) with less effective provision and use of external support to basic education. Thus, the continuing search for meaningful (although not necessarily symmetrical) partnerships in external support to basic education is also directly related to the search for more effective provision and use of external support.

The executive summaries of each of the five evaluation products are provided in Annex 1.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The Final Report is structured as follows:

- Section 1.0 presents this introduction and background to the Joint Evaluation;
- Section 2.0 presents the methodology and analytical approach used by the team in synthesizing the evaluation results;
- Section 3.0 discusses the findings of the evaluation relating to the evolution of external support to basic education;
- Section 4.0 analyzes the findings of the evaluation in the area of externally supported basic education;
- Section 5.0 assesses the evolution of partnerships for basic education not only as a component of the evaluation but for its contribution to the effective provision and use of external support to basic education;
- Section 6.0 discusses conclusions and implications for policies and programmes in basic education; and
- Section 7.0 outlines the policy and programme implications for both external agencies and national partners.

Material in this Final Report is based entirely on information contained in the five products of the Joint Evaluation – the Document Review and the four Country Studies. All these products contain extensive references to other documents, including policy statements, research papers and evaluations, all of which are identified in the report bibliographies. These references are not specifically identified in this Final Report.

2.0 Analytical Approach and Methodology for the Final Report

2.1 Analytical Model

2.1.1 The Basic Model

In keeping with the outlook of the *Terms of Reference*, the analytical framework used by the evaluation team to prepare this Final Report attempts to bridge any implied gap between external support to basic education and basic education itself, by focusing clearly on the interaction between them. The data gathered during the evaluation suggests strongly that the ***nature*** of the ***interaction*** between external support to basic education (including funding, policy support and TA) on the one hand, and the systems and processes engaged in basic education in partner countries, on the other, is a key determinant of both efficiency and effectiveness.

This framework points to a hypothesis concerning external support to basic education: the extent that interaction between external agencies and partner countries can be categorized as a ***partnership*** is an important factor levels of efficiency, which are achieved in the provision and use of external support to basic education. The evaluation team is well aware that this will need to be demonstrated with some authority in the following chapters if the hypothesis is to evolve into a conclusion.

2.1.2 Evaluation Components and the Compound Lens Approach

In reviewing the Document Review and the Country Studies, the evaluation team members adopted the concept in the *Terms of Reference* that each component of the evaluation (external support to basic education, externally supported basic education, and partnership) could be seen as a lens for assessing external support. The material in the reports also suggested, however, that the lenses could be used together, as well as one at a time.

The analogy is the idea of a compound lens. This argues that, when one combines the three main components of the evaluation, partnership becomes the most important influence on the effectiveness of external support because it has a profound effect on the other two.

If one were projecting an image of external support to basic education on a wall one could first pass the image through a lens called the evolution of external support and get a fairly blurry image in that it would present a profile of external support without placing that support in the context of national programmes and projects. In other words, it would not address how national efforts responded to the provision of external support.

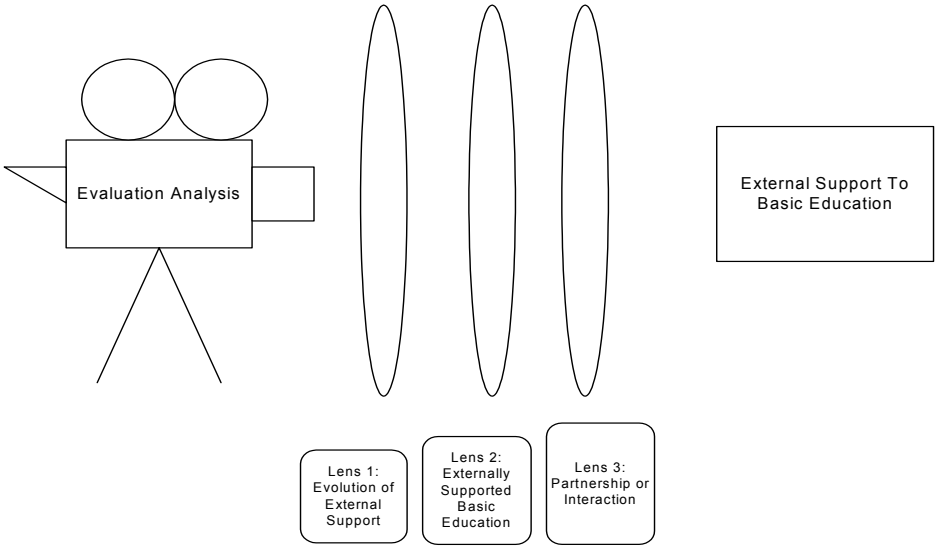
The projected image of external support to basic education would improve somewhat if one then passed it through another lens called the effectiveness of externally supported basic education. This second lens would add to the profile of the first by filling in the immediate programmatic reactions of partner countries and agencies. It would provide a picture of how the resources (financial, policy advice and technical) provided by external assistance were being used.

The image of external support to basic education would only become clear when one added the third lens called interaction or partnership (since interaction might happen, which is not partnership). This would add to the first two components or lenses by concentrating on how external support agencies and national partners reached agreement (or failed to do so) on the goals, forms, and operational realities of external support and its integration into national efforts.

It could also be used to explore whether partnership is an essential component in the effective provision and use of external support.

This analogy is illustrated in Figure 1. Since we are not talking about photons here this is only an analogy or, to use an older word, a "conceit." It allows us to explain that we think the best way of evaluating external support to basic education is to look at how each of the two somewhat static parts of our model (external support and basic education) are shaped by the dynamic part: interaction.

Figure 1: The Compound Lens



2.1.3 Partnerships for Basic Education

If the results reported in the five evaluation products point to partnership as a key determinant of efficiency and effectiveness, then analytically we need to identify the characteristics of partnership. The study must answer the question: how do we recognize partnership when we see it and how do we tell if external support and basic education are interacting in a way that is strengthening or weakening partnership?

A key to answering this question may be found in the concept of symmetry. Relationships and interactions that are not partnerships (for example colonial relationships) are characterized by profound asymmetries in power and influence. As the Document Review notes, analysts of the movement from projects to programmes (including sector-wide approaches or SWAps) have pointed out that this movement can represent an attempt to overcome what look like insurmountable asymmetries in power and influence between external agencies and national governments (not always successfully).

The key point seems to be, however, that partnership involves an effort to overcome otherwise inherent asymmetries in power and influence based on, for example, wealth and organizational technical capacity. Another way to look at this is to try and conceive of the characteristics of a well-developed partnership in basic education between external support agencies and actors in partner countries. It might have some or all of the following characteristics:

- Openness, Honesty and Respect

  This is more than a question of formal politeness and political correctness. It implies that external agencies and key stakeholders in the countries receiving support will exchange views on policies and programmes and will frankly state their views, beliefs, intentions, motivations and fears. It cannot happen automatically in an asymmetric relationship of power and influence because the weaker party will fear the financial or organizational consequences of expressing its views openly. A result might be a "false" or artificial statement of agreement in which one "partner" has accepted a common position but believes that it was essentially imposed and maintains grave reservations in private.

- Flexibility

  This implies that each party is willing to go some considerable way to modify corporate level policies, practices, norms and standards either to accommodate the concerns of other actors or to improve the relevance of joint action. It also implies a willingness on the part of different actors to change the common initiative over time, based on the feedback of information available to all the parties.

- An Effort to Promote Symmetry in the Interaction as a Whole

  Given the current state of global international economic relations, it is not possible for many agencies to enter into partnerships based on symmetry of influence in every dimension of interaction. Most developing countries cannot muster the financial and technical resources of even one external agency let alone the group of organizations and countries providing support.

  Indeed, the Document Review points out that some analysts and observers have noted that the relationship between external support agencies and partner governments is inherently unbalanced and that effective provision and use of external support may require recognition of the fact that symmetry cannot be achieved in these relations.

  On the other hand, the five products of this evaluation suggest that, at least to some extent, basic asymmetry in one part of the relationship (such as financial) can be offset by recognizing and valuing the contributions of the supposedly "disadvantaged" partner in other areas such as knowledge of the local context, political legitimacy or technical knowledge gained through experimentation on a local basis. The point is that an interaction between external support and basic education would be seen as moving towards a more developed partnership when efforts are made to balance real or perceived weaknesses in power and influence in one area with strengths in another (or to develop capacities where they need to be strengthened).

- Participation (Roles)

  This refers to both the intensity and the breadth of participation. Intensity is concerned with the extent that actors influence policies, practices and results. Breadth refers to the provision of internal and external legitimacy to the relationship by seeking input from a wide set of stakeholders.

Thus, the proposed analytical model defines partnership in terms of openness, flexibility, symmetry (when the interaction is looked as a whole, not necessarily in every dimension) and participation. These dimensions would increase as a partnership develops over time.

But this still does not solve the problem of how partnerships evolve. That is, the factors that promote or impede partnership. It is in the analysis of these factors, that the evaluation team addressed the question of how the aid relationship is changing in basic education and is tending to become more efficient and effective over time.

2.1.4 Factors Promoting Partnerships in Basic Education

In reviewing the evaluation products for this Final Report, the evaluation team members identified the most clearly evident factors that promote development of relationships in basic education towards partnerships. These include:

- **Continuity** of policy direction, funding, technical and administrative staffing, representation, political will, and leadership;
- A relative balance of **administrative and technical capacity**, or at least a sufficiency of capacity on the part of key stakeholders in partner countries;
- Effective **participation** by stakeholders so that their interests and needs are reflected in resulting policies and programmes;
- **Relevance and adaptability** of external support and externally supported basic education to local conditions; and
- The use of chosen **aid modalities** in a process that deepens partnership and promotes ownership and avoids the creation of programmes and projects where external agencies are seen as the primary drivers.

Each factor can be defined as promoting or impeding partnership, as Table 1 illustrates.

Table 1: Factors Promoting or Impeding Partnership in Basic Education

Factor	Characteristics Promoting Partnership	Characteristics Impeding Partnership
Continuity	• Continuity in political support to policies and programmes • Continuity in allocation of financial resources by government and agencies • Continuity in personnel • Civil service reform • Personal leadership and commitment by key actors	• Fluctuating policies and priorities for external agencies and governments • Disruptions in budget allocations and external assistance • Rapid rotation of external agency and partner government personnel • Politicization of the civil service • Lack of consistent leadership
Administrative and Technical Capacity	• Strong technical and administrative capacity of Ministries of Education, Planning and Finance • Harmonized administrative processes for external support	• Rigidities and delays in processes of both external agencies and governments • Imbalances in capacity for preparation for policy dialogue and in technical resources between national partners and external agencies

Factor	Characteristics Promoting Partnership	Characteristics Impeding Partnership
Roles and Participation	• Recognized roles for all key stakeholders • Open mechanisms for coordination • Participation by all parties in different forms of dialogue on funding, policy, TA	• Exclusion of stakeholders including national organizations and external agencies • Lack of transparency in coordination mechanisms • Narrow policy, technical and administrative dialogue • Weakened political legitimacy
Relevance and Adaptability to Context (National and Local)	• Integration of external assistance into ongoing operations of the basic education system • Adaptation of global and regional approaches to local situations • Use of feedback mechanisms to promote change in assistance and in basic education practices • Perceived relevance to learners and families	• Limits on external agency flexibility arising from core mandates and/or organizational cultures • Direct execution of activities by external agencies • Resistance to change on the part of key stakeholders • Weak monitoring systems
Modalities	• Mix of projects and programmes • Policy framework with national ownership supporting a move to programme modalities • Flexible application of SWAp or other programme modalities • Emphasis on process modifications to ensure participation	• Imbalance in the technical capacity of government and external agencies • Exclusion of some external agencies from partnerships • Absence of linkages from projects to programmes and vice versa • Application of a template or formula for content of programme approaches

In fact, the various evaluation products suggest (see Sections 3.0 to 5.0) that the state of partnership as it relates to these five factors (continuity, capacity, roles, relevance and modalities) is in itself a strong indicator of effectiveness in the provision and use of external support.

Information on each of these five factors identified in the Document Review and the Country Studies was summarized to provide an assessment of the quality of partnership and, in turn, the effectiveness of the provision and use of external support to basic education. The results are presented in Section 5.0.

2.2 Challenges

The strengths of the methodologies applied in the Document Review and each Country Study are described in detail in their respective reports. This section deals with some challenges specific to the Final Report and the measures taken by the evaluation team to address them.

2.2.1 Global and National Perspectives

Since each evaluation component is addressed through two main methods (the review of global documents and the four country case studies), there is a constant tension in the synthesis process. On one side is the reality represented by the global collection of policy statements, research papers, position documents, and global, regional, and national evaluations summarized in the Document Review. On the other is the reality as examined by each country case study team and represented in the Country Studies.

When the conclusions of these two methods are largely in agreement (assuming no major divergence among the Country Studies) they have the effect, at least at first glance, of reinforcing each other and raising the level of confidence in the reported results of the evaluation. Where they disagree, however, they raise the question of the extent to which the case study countries selected are representative of larger realities at a global level.

The evaluation team's response to this problem has been to clearly point out not only which report (or reports) is used to support a given finding but to provide the evidence from each in the most clear and concise way possible. Thus, in the case of contradictory evidence, the reader should be able to judge whether the ultimate conclusion of the evaluation team is appropriate and defensible.

2.2.2 Issue of Consistency and Reflection of the Local Context

One main function of a synthesis is to identify patterns across the different evaluation products, in this case the Document Review and the four Country Studies. To the extent possible, the commonalities in the findings and conclusions of these five documents should form the analytical backbone of the Final Report. On the other hand, external support to basic education in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia is inextricable from the national and local context in which it occurs and, hopefully, which it supports. When lessons are extracted from those contexts and combined or aggregated they may lose much of their richness and meaning.

Similarly, the differences in context may influence the nature of the lessons learned in each country study and thereby make it difficult to discern patterns across the four countries.

To provide just one example of how context may heavily influence findings, each of the four partner countries studied by the evaluation team has planned or implemented a major reform of basic education in the past decade or so. The Education Reform Programme (*Programa de Reforma Educativa* – PRE)[3] in Bolivia, the 10-Year Plan for the Development of Basic Education (*Plan décennal de développement de l'éducation de base* – PDDEB) in Burkina Faso, the decision to implement free universal primary education and the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) in Uganda and the Basic Education sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) in Zambia. All, in different ways, represent major efforts to realign policies and programmes in basic education in the four countries studied. Furthermore, all four initiatives were developed in some form of dialogue with external support agencies.

On the other hand, all four occurred at different times. As just an example, the key policy and technical developments underlying the PRE in Bolivia occurred in the very early 1990s. Yet in Burkina Faso, the PDDEB, while it has antecedents in the past decade, came together very recently.

This means that the historical pattern of policy development in Bolivia and Burkina Faso is very different. In Bolivia, Jomtien was the most recent international impetus to planning in Education for All (EFA) at the time of the most significant reform of the basic education system in the country. In Burkina Faso, Dakar and its sequels, including the MDGs and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), form the international backdrop to the development and implementation of the PDDEB. It would be extraordinary if there were no important differences in the way that external agencies

[3] For terms specific to Bolivia and Burkina Faso, the acronyms used are, in most cases, those that come from the Spanish or French titles and terms.

interacted with their national counterparts in the development of those two major policy and programme frameworks in basic education.

The evaluation team has responded to this challenge by continually weighing the influence of national context, and especially of the historical trends in external support and in basic education in each case study country. Thus, the analysis attempts to point out those areas where differences in national context seem to be the major factors in differences in findings and conclusions across the four Country Studies.

2.2.3 Selection of the Four Countries for Case Studies

Finally, before discussing the evaluation findings, it is important to acknowledge some strengths and limitations of the selection of countries for the Joint Evaluation. The selection of countries was made by the ESC for illustrative purposes and was identified in the *Terms of Reference* for the evaluation. It was never intended to be representative of all countries receiving external support for basic education. However, this selection has important implications for understanding the results of this evaluation.

On the positive side of the ledger, the four countries do provide a rich mosaic of situations and problems encountered in the joint effort to address basic education and achieve EFA. It is worthwhile to list the features of these four countries as illustrations of the effectiveness of external support to basic education:

- As noted, all four have entered into major reforms of basic education in the period under study and/or have planned and negotiated new frameworks for programming national resources and external support;

- All four have dealt with major economic upheavals in the 1980s and, in varying ways, have had to deal with issues of structural economic adjustment;

- All four have tended to focus on Universal Primary Education (UPE) as the predominant goal in their efforts to achieve EFA;

- Two of the four (Zambia and Uganda) have had to confront issues arising from the impact of HIV/AIDS on basic education capacity and the role which basic education may play in combating HIV/AIDS;

- All four are engaged in processes of decentralizing different aspects of administration and governance relating to basic education;

- In the specific area of basic education, all four participating countries are dealing with very important issues relating to:

    - The role of teachers' unions in the development and legitimacy of change policies in basic education;
    - The professional development of teachers at a time when governments are emphasizing efficiency and lower unit costs;
    - The role of learners and parents in management and governance of the system of basic education;
    - The problem of effective and affordable pre-service and in-service teacher education;

- The role of basic education in democratic development and, within that framework, the role of intercultural/bilingual education in basic education; and
- The balance of effort and investment across the different components of basic education, including adult literacy and alternative education; and

- All four countries have agreed-upon Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and an "effectively implemented education sector plan" (World Bank, 2003, p. 10). Hence all four countries were among the eighteen invited to join the World Bank-led FTI in June 2002. Interestingly, from the group of four case study countries, only Burkina Faso was included in the seven countries for which the FTI funding was announced following the FTI donors' meeting in Paris, in March 2003.

There is no shortage of rich and illustrative material for an assessment of external support to basic education in the four countries that chose to participate in the Joint Evaluation.

On the other hand, it is important to look at these four countries in the wider context of global developments in support to basic education and see what **is not present** in these four countries. In other words, what does the globally focused Document Review tell us about how these four countries may differ from general experience so that we should be cautious about over-generalizing from even the most common results reported in the Country Studies?

Table 2 below presents an overview of some dimensions of the four countries that make them different from the wide range of countries receiving external support for basic education. It also notes some significant global dimensions of external support to basic education not illustrated in the experience of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia. Finally, Table 2 presents ways in which the evaluation team attempted to address these differences.

Table 2: Areas Where Case Countries Differ from Global Experience

Category of Representation	Details	Evaluation Team Response
Volume of External Financial Support	Document Review reports volume of external financial support to basic education stable or declining slightly in the period from 1990 to 2000. In contrast, case countries report increasing external support.	To the extent possible the evaluation team has relied on the Document Review to include experience of "unpopular" countries receiving lower levels of support. It is also worthwhile to focus on countries with higher volumes of support in an effort to see how much difference this support can make.
Aid Modalities	Case countries are in different states of movement towards programme funding (but with persistence of project mode). Thus partnership experience may not be similar in countries without the experiment of programme support to basic education.	The Document Review makes clear the strong trend among external agencies to use of programme modalities. Presence of this trend in the four countries represents a strength in terms of providing illustrations of different stages in the shift from project to programme support.
Institutional Roles	In all four case countries, the movement to programme modalities has seen an increase in the leadership role of the World Bank in coordinating dialogue on policies in education. It has also caused some	While it is true that the four country studies point out a strong leadership role for the World Bank in policy dialogue and coordination around moves to programme support, the roles of other actors (national and international) have

Category of Representation	Details	Evaluation Team Response
	re-alignment in the technical and policy support role of other agencies. In countries without this programmatic shift, institutional roles may differ.	responded in very different ways from country to country. This is a global phenomenon noted in the Document Review, with citations from a number of authors. What is interesting is to assess the reaction of different multilateral and bilateral agencies.
Large Population Countries	The four case countries provide a good mix of experience for smaller population countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Andean zone of South America, although they do not include very small population countries. They also do not include any of the very large population countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and Indonesia), which encompass the majority of primary school age children who are out of school.	In some ways this is a problem without a solution since none of the large population countries invited to participate in the evaluation agreed to do so. There is some coverage of the large population countries in the general literature and some of that is reflected in the Document Review. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that the majority of countries facing real difficulties in meeting the EFA goals have characteristics very similar to the four countries participating in this evaluation.

In summary, by design, the four countries participating in the Joint Evaluation are not representative of all countries receiving external support in basic education. They are illustrative only.

At the same time, the participating countries are representative of a very important group of countries indeed – countries with very strong challenges in meeting EFA goals but with a history of intensive and sustained external support.

The four participating countries do provide excellent illustrations of the interrelationship between relatively high levels of external support to basic education and the different resources, capacities and contexts within each country. In that sense, the case study countries represent examples of the "winners" in the competition for external support to basic education. They should, consequently, provide lessons on what happens when there are significant levels of external support.

Therefore, problems found by the evaluation teams in the effective provision and use of external support to basic education in these four countries are not likely the result of a severe shortage of external resources. To the extent that there are problems, they are more likely the result of the way in which external support is provided and used, including the ways in which it meshes with national resources.

2.2.4 Emerging Issues and Approaches

During the course of the evaluation, some important issues arose that had not been explicitly included in the key issues arising from the *Framework Terms of Reference* and, thus, were either not covered to the extent they might have been if the work were to be launched in 2003 instead of 2001 or, in some instances, were not addressed at all.

In the first category was the issue of the role of conditionalities and their positive or negative consequences. This issue was encompassed in the *Framework Terms of Reference* but took on more and more importance as the evaluation went on. It is covered, to some degree, in Section 3.2.4 below, but not to the level of detail and completeness that it perhaps deserves.

In the second category one would place the emergence among a number of external agencies of a human-rights-based approach to programming. The document review report made it clear that many external agencies are emphasizing very strongly in their policy documents on basic education that it represents a right in and of itself and should not be viewed as an instrumental goal mainly to be used to achieve other social goods such as poverty reduction. Some agencies, in particular some United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, have gone further in this area and have implemented programmatic approaches that attempt to frame all of the support they provide to partner countries in the context of human rights and the fulfillment of international human-rights commitments and conventions.

A question that inevitably arises is the comparative effectiveness of human rights based approaches to programming (such as UNICEF's) in basic education when compared to models used by other agencies. While the evaluation teams in each country acknowledged the different programming approaches of different agencies, the evaluation did not include any systematic effort to assess the effectiveness of human-rights-based approaches to providing external support to basic education.

PART TWO: FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the Joint Evaluation as presented in the Document Review and the Country Studies for Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia. Like them, it is structured around the three main components of the evaluation:

- External support to basic education;
- Externally supported basic education; and
- Partnership.

In the Document Review and the Country Studies, each component was also addressed at the level of intents and strategies, practices and results.

For the Final Report, the evaluation team has chosen a slightly different approach. This was not an attempt to replace the three levels of analysis (which were a strong basis for the organization of the five core products of the evaluation). Rather, the evaluation team felt that a thematic approach would allow for a deeper cross-analysis of the results reported in each evaluation product.

For that reason, the Final Report presents the analysis and findings of the evaluation in the following format:

- Section 3.0 describes the main developments in the evolution of external support to basic education over the period under review. In general terms it compares and contrasts the commitments made at a global level to the actual resources provided, the different types of external support provided and the forms or modalities of external support to basic education;
- Section 4.0 explores nine important themes in the effectiveness of externally supported basis education; and
- Section 5.0 provides an analysis of five key factors, which the Document Review and Country Studies identify as having had a major affect on the quality of partnerships for basic education.

Each section in Part Two includes an introduction, an analysis, and a summary of key findings.

3.0 External Support to Basic Education

The Document Review and each Country Study developed fairly detailed portraits of the evolution of external support to basic education. It is not necessary to provide the level of detail here that is available in these reports. Rather, this section deals with the following major developments in external support to basic education over the past 12 years:

- The volume of external support to basic education in relation to global and national commitments by external agencies;
- The nature of external support and its influence on policies and programmes; and
- The form of external support to basic education and its evolution from mainly project support to support in the form of larger programmes and SWAps.

3.1 The Volume of External Support to Basic Education

3.1.1 The Document Review and the Global Perspective

The Document Review points out that basic education was a priority in many countries (and among many external agencies) in the decade before Jomtien. In Burkina Faso, for example, basic education was already a key feature of national education policy. While in Bolivia, UPE had been a core goal of the national education system for almost 40 years. Nonetheless, the World Conference on Education For All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, represented an important watershed because the Conference declaration set out agreed global goals, shared by external agencies and national partners and accompanied by a process of planning, follow-up and reporting at national and global levels.

Box 1: EFA Goals

Education For All: The Six Dakar Goals

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
4. Achieving a 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to basic education of good quality; and
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Not surprisingly, given the clarity of the Jomtien declaration and the EFA goals (see Box 1), there was a strong expectation that both national expenditures and the financial volume of external support to basic education would rise in the decade that followed. This became a major concern of the preparatory work for the Dakar conference on Education for All in 2000. Indeed, by the time of the mid-decade review, those charged with the follow-up to Jomtien were pointing out problems in the availability and comparability of data on financial flows to basic education.

In preparation for the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000, the participants commissioned a comprehensive study of the flow of resources to basic education over the decade. At the end of the decade, Bentall, Peart, Carr-Hill and Cox (2001) in *Education for All 2000 Assessment Thematic Studies: Funding Agency Contributions to Education For All* encountered the same problems with the quality, clarity and comparability of data that had been of concern throughout the decade.

Nonetheless, based on a combination of donor responses to a questionnaire survey and available Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee data on aid flows to education, they developed an analysis of trends in funding to education that concluded that volumes of aid to the basic education sector had been stable or had risen slightly over the previous decade. As external observers in the Non-governmental Organization (NGO) community commented at the time, this was not the substantial re-allocation of aid resources to basic education that had been expected after Jomtien.

After Dakar, the next major effort to assess external flows to basic education was reflected in *Education for All – Is the World on Track? EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (hereafter referred to as *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002*), commissioned by UNESCO under its responsibility for EFA monitoring. The report pointed to the same pattern of very modest, if any, gains in the volume of external support to basic education and went on to estimate the very large gap between the external resources needed to achieve the EFA goal of UPE by 2015 and those currently flowing to partner countries (UNESCO, 2002).

Total assistance to education from all bilateral and multilateral sources combined stood at an estimated US$5.98 billion in 1999 and at US$4.72 billion in 2000. As regards its composition, the more optimistic estimates shown in the table suggest that external funding to basic education was about US$1.34 billion in 1999 and approximately US$1.45 billion in 2000... this is equivalent to only about one-quarter of the additional external assistance likely to be needed each year to 2015 in order to achieve universal primary education alone. Thus, aid to primary schooling would need to be quintupled, much of it concentrated in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in order to achieve universal primary education alone (UNESCO, 2002, p. 172).

Because this EFA goal only takes into account UPE with gender equity, external funding agencies would need to increase aid for basic education still more, if all six Dakar goals are to be achieved.

The Document Review notes that there have been significant efforts since Dakar to increase the flow of external resources to basic education. The most high-profile of these has been the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) involving a number of external agencies but operationally led by the World Bank. FTI has sought to identify countries with a proven track record and provide them with increased, longer term resources for accelerating progress towards the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – Universal Primary Completion (UPC) and gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment.

The progress of the FTI (see Box 2) is discussed at some length in the Document Review. It has encountered difficulties in attracting long-term funding from external agencies and linking that funding to adequate proposals from partner countries. The World Bank's report on accelerating progress towards achieving the EFA goals submitted to the Spring 2003 meeting of its Development Committee notes that concerns over absorptive capacity have been cited by external agencies as a factor in their relative unwillingness to commit long-term funds.

Box 2: Education for All Fast Track Initiative

The Fast Track Initiative (FTI)

All four of the participating countries were in the first group of 18 identified and invited to participate in 2002 in the FTI. Interestingly, only Burkina Faso was among the first seven countries endorsed for funding under FTI in November 2002. The Bolivia Country Study makes it clear that early drafts of a Bolivian proposal for the FTI participation were strongly opposed by the Vice Ministry of Public Finance and External Cooperation due to the unsustainable expansion in primary school teaching hours proposed and the fear that funds would not be available over the longer term. The Zambia Country Study noted that there was a concern in Zambia over the administrative burden of another planning process and the ultimate relationship between the FTI proposal and the national strategic plan. The Burkina Faso Country Study reports that government officials felt pressured to prepare a proposal in 2002.

The Bolivia and Burkina Faso Country Studies provide an interesting contrast in reactions to the FTI. Bolivia has not (as of May 2003) so far participated, although it was invited to do so. Bolivian officials reported to the evaluation team that the Vice Ministry of Public Finance and External Cooperation was strongly opposed to early drafts of the proposal because it felt that the increase in recurrent costs (to increase teaching hours) could not be sustained if external-agency funding was not committed over at least a 10-year time frame. Burkina Faso, on the other hand, participated in the FTI – at least in part as a result of encouragement from the headquarters of some external agencies and an interest on the part of the Government of Burkina Faso to access this funding, even if the development of the FTI proposal put the ministry responsible for basic education under additional time pressures, as it was launching the new national plan for basic education.

The Education For All Fast Track Initiative is reflective of another important phenomenon in external support to basic education, its tendency to concentrate on UPE. Since the FTI explicitly focuses on primary school completion (and gender parity), it may have the effect of confirming at a global policy level, the observed tendency for external support (and national government priorities) to concentrate on UPE to the detriment of the other EFA goals, especially those relating to early childhood education, life skills and adult literacy.

The experience of the FTI as reported in the Document Review, points out an important paradox in the relationship between global flows of external resources to basic education and the perceived absorptive capacity of partner countries. If external agencies perceive that constraints in absorptive capacity will severely limit the effective use of both external and national resources in basic education, they find it difficult to commit sufficient resources to allow even the most effective countries to provide basic education for all.

This can be further complicated by the planning burden associated with, for example, PRSPs, United Nations Development Frameworks (UNDAFs), Comprehensive Development Frameworks (CDFs), and even national EFA plans of action. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* questions the value of the EFA national planning process, given the burden of planning already experienced by most at-risk countries (UNESCO, 2002). In defence of the FTI it should be pointed out that the initiative aims to integrate plans for accelerating progress towards the MDG education goals into ongoing sectoral plans and into the PRSP process.

3.1.2 Volume of External Support: The Country Studies

The Country Studies show a picture that contrasts to the global view that external resource flows to basic education in the decade from 1990 to 2000 were essentially stagnant. While there are real difficulties in data availability in some countries (especially in the first half of the 1990s), there is

a consistent pattern of substantial support for basic education in each of the countries in the study in the latter half of the decade:

- In Bolivia's case, the dollar volume of external support rose steadily from 1994 to 2001 (the last year full data was available) and had reached the level of $US50 million annually by 2000;
- In Burkina Faso, external support for basic education, as a percentage of all external support, doubled in the period from 1996 to 2000;
- The Uganda Study notes that the share of education in international development assistance jumped from under 5% before 1997 to the 15% range after that year; and
- Zambia reports an even bigger jump, with external support to basic education increasing four-fold between 1998 and 2000.

Thus, it is clear that while the rise in external financial support began earlier in Bolivia, it was reflected in similar rises in Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia. In that sense, as noted earlier, the four countries participating in the evaluation did experience the significant rise in post-Jomtien external resources in support of basic education (although delayed to the latter half of the 1990s).

3.2 The Shape of External Support

Throughout the period under evaluation, external agencies in all four participating countries continued to provide assistance in the shape of policy dialogue, TA, and direct funding to both projects and programmes.

3.2.1 Technical Assistance

Much (although by no means all) of the TA and policy dialogue support was provided in conjunction with national efforts to develop an overall strategy, plan and programme for reform in basic education. Policy dialogue in all four countries has been linked in many cases to the effort to move from a predominantly project basis for external support to one based on jointly funded sub-sector programmes or various types of SWAps.

Table 3, below, shows the pattern of intensive TA in the four countries with an eclectic mix of United Nations Agencies (especially UNICEF and UNESCO), the World Bank and a range of bilateral agencies, all either providing assistance directly or financing it through the use of consultants. In the case of Bolivia and Zambia, external agencies have often relied on national or regional expertise in the provision of TA (although, in a very direct form of conditionality, some bilateral agencies still insist on the use of national experts from their home countries).

The general pattern illustrated in Table 3 is one of continuous involvement by external agencies in either directly providing or in funding technical expertise in the development of projects and programme proposals and in the refining of methods for planning, managing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating larger programme initiatives in basic education.

The cast of leading agencies has not been entirely stable in each country as larger programmes of external support have evolved. There have been shifts in the role of different agencies in providing TA. In Bolivia, for example, UNICEF's influence on national basic education policy was probably at its highest levels during the late 1980s and early 1990s and subsequently reduced during the mid-decade. It is now rising again as it collaborates with Danida and the Ministry in a large programme of intercultural/bilingual education in Amazonia.

Table 3: Technical Assistance Roles of External Agencies[4]

External Technical Assistance to Basic Education in Four Countries			
Bolivia	**Burkina Faso**	**Uganda**	**Zambia**
• World Bank funding and TA to Planning Unit, which prepared content of the education reform programme (1990-1992) • UNESCO regional office assistance to needs assessments in late 1980s • UNICEF pioneering support to bilingual education in early 1990s • GTZ direct support to teacher education development • Sida/Netherlands support to non-formal education	• UNESCO, EU, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Japan and other United Nations agencies all providing key elements of TA in the preparation of the 10-year plan for development of basic education (PDDEB) • TA for carrying out the PDDEB monitoring and evaluation to be provided by a single agency on behalf of other external agencies	• DFID provided TA for the development of the Education Strategic Investment Programme • TA was funded through an ear-marked pooled fund managed by the Ministry of Education and Sports • Individual agencies retained some funds to manage TA directly (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, DFID), in a departure from the pooled funds concept	• Previous use of area specific specialists in projects • TA to preparation of BESSIP (World Bank, DFID and others) • Ongoing TA for BESSIP in key areas such as accounts, management and building supervision • Consultancies managed by the Ministry of Education (MOE), and some agencies, using procedures to encourage regional and national firms • A commercial consulting sector emerging to meet these needs • Individual agencies retain option to use TA for additional activities

In recent years we see a trend under pooled funding arrangements in Uganda and Zambia for TA projects to be directly managed by the Ministry of Education, including the hiring of consultants and experts. At the same time, some external agencies have retained the capacity to commission TA directly.

The trend towards increased use of programme funding mechanisms, including SWAps, as a key modality for providing external assistance to basic education has been noted in the Document Review and in all four Country Studies (see Section 3.3, below). The movement towards programme approaches has been associated with shifting roles in TA, sometimes formally accounted for in the designation of a single agency with lead responsibility for TA in evaluation and monitoring (Burkina Faso) or the pooled funding arrangement for TA under the management of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) (Uganda).

A key part of this trend has been a shift, noted in all five evaluation products, towards TA in basic education, which focused on support to programme planning, development, management, monitoring and evaluation, sometimes provided directly in the form of sub-programmes or projects and sometimes associated with the annual review process.

[4] In this section, the evaluation team has focused on Technical Assistance or TA in an effort to track the changing roles of external agencies. In most cases, project-related TA is provided in the form of external (or regional) experts working alongside national counterparts in such areas as curriculum development or teacher training. There are, of course, other forms of TA and, more importantly, other roles such as policy dialogue. The role of different external agencies in supporting policy change and in negotiating, for example, the terms of program support are dealt with more extensively under the topic of partnership in Section 5.0, below.

This trend, however, should not be overstated as bilateral and multilateral agencies in all four countries have maintained a strong presence in the ongoing support of TA provided by experts recruited internationally, regionally, and locally. In each of the four countries studied, bilateral and multilateral agencies have continued to provide TA in teacher training, curriculum development, materials development and logistics. In the two African countries (Burkina Faso, Uganda) TA tends to be sourced on an international basis while in Bolivia and Zambia there is more extensive use of regional expertise from neighbouring countries.

Zambia provides a particularly interesting example of an attempt to use locally managed TA funds under the direction of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to develop and support national and regional consultancies operating on a commercial basis and providing TA in education.

In summary, the evolution of TA in basic education over the past five to seven years has the following three main characteristics:

- A tendency, under programme funding mechanisms and SWAps to be concentrated in managerial and administrative aspects of basic education, including programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation;
- A move (as evidenced in the Uganda and Zambia case studies) to development of pooled funding arrangements for the financing of TA under the management of the Ministry of Education and capable of supporting use of local and regional expertise; and
- The persistent use by many external agencies of direct funding of focused TA.

For some agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO, the ability to directly fund specialized TA in such areas as adult literacy training is seen as essential to the proper fulfillment of their mandates. For bilateral agencies, it is most often a question of planning TA support on a targeted basis so that it may benefit, for example, aboriginal peoples, girls or street children.

3.2.2 The Narrow Focus of External Assistance to Basic Education

While external assistance to basic education has increased dramatically in volume over the past six to seven years, it has also had a narrow focus in most case study countries. There has been an increasing concentration of external assistance (and national resources) on the challenge of expanding access to primary schooling in pursuit of UPE.

In Bolivia, this concentration of external support and national action on primary education has been associated with a national commitment to intercultural/bilingual education as one means of increasing the participation of indigenous peoples in the economic, political and cultural life of the country. In the other three countries studied, the greatest emphasis has been on expanding the formal primary schooling system in support of much higher levels of enrolment and completion.

The Country Studies indicate that this trend over time for external support and national resources to be concentrated in primary schooling can be traced to a number of factors:

- The long experience of external agencies in providing support to formal “classical” school systems;
- The political importance for national governments of demonstrating their ability to provide primary schooling for all citizens;
- The fact that increases in primary school enrolment rates are quantifiable and progress is fairly easy to track and report;
- The post-Dakar concern that even UPE goals are not being met, even with the consequent higher priority they receive globally;

- The emergence of the education goals in the MDG; and
- The FTI concentration on universal primary school completion.

There is no indication in any of the Country Studies that primary schooling is not a genuine national priority. Rather, the studies point to a trend, in the latter half of the 1990s, for this priority to emerge more and more clearly in national programmes and in the support provided to them from external sources. This had a parallel effect in some countries of a reduction of external support to other EFA goals, including adult literacy (Uganda and Zambia), or of the relative neglect of the government agencies charged with non-formal education (Bolivia) by external agencies and national governments alike.

This is not to argue that no effort has been made to support alternative education. UNICEF in particular has been a continuous supporter of adult literacy training. Similarly, bilateral agencies including Sida, Danida, and the Netherlands have continued to support alternative education, often outside large national programmes, often through NGOs.

There is also an emerging counter-trend to this relatively exclusive concentration on UPE that is evident in negotiations for the latest round of programme (and project) support to basic education in the four countries concerned. On one hand, some external agencies are increasing their support to ministries and agencies responsible for adult education and other forms of non-formal education outside of the scope of current programmes. At the same time, as sub-sector programmes evolve in the future to encompass the whole education sector, there is an opportunity to bring alternative education "into the house" and ensure it receives a greater share of external support and national resources.

Notwithstanding this incipient trend to provide some increased support to areas outside primary schooling, the past half decade, both globally, and in the four case study countries has been characterized by a strong tendency for national effort and external support to concentrate on primary schooling to the detriment of EFA goals relating to early childhood education, life skills education and adult literacy.

3.2.3 Conditionalities

The Document Review notes that recent papers on conditionality have suggested that it has failed to produce sustainable improvements in economic policies and institutions and is unlikely to prove successful in moving partner governments in directions to which they are not already committed. This is totally in keeping with the findings of the World Bank 1998 report, *Assessing Aid*, which also questioned the medium- and long-term utility of externally imposed conditionalities as a means of changing partner government policy directions and institutional orientations.

The **Bolivia** Country Study notes that, nonetheless, conditionalities have been a feature of external support to basic education throughout the period from 1990 to 2002. The main examples of conditionalities examined in Bolivia concerned the negotiation of the main policy elements of the Education Reform Programme and the condition imposed by some external agencies that the Ministry of Education must participate in the Institutional Reform Programme aimed at modernizing and professionalizing the Bolivia civil service.

Most importantly, the Bolivia Report points out that Bolivia officials have often been able to mount a strong technical and policy-based response during the negotiation surrounding conditionalities and has been willing to "walk away from the table" if the conditions imposed

seemed to run counter to its perception of national interests. This seems to have mitigated any negative effects of conditionalities over the longer term. On the other hand, it also seems clear that conditionalities did not change the policy direction of the Bolivian government in relation to basic education, rather they were brought into line with the direction sought by the government in the first place.

The **Burkina Faso** Country Study also points to the use of conditionalities by external agencies to influence the policy framework for basic education, citing in particular: the encouragement of community participation; measures to address the high cost of teachers salaries; accelerating decentralization; accelerating the use of common reporting procedures; and, promoting linkages from basic education to poverty reduction programming.

The Burkina Faso case study also reports the use of strict conditionalities and tying arrangements by some external agencies. It concludes that, for the most part, the government of Burkina Faso has been quite open to the conditions applied by external agencies, which may be one of the reasons that officials report a relatively diminished sense of national ownership and a perception that external agencies have a high level of control over the national programme of basic education.

The **Uganda** Country Case Study notes that the Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP) includes special conditionalities that cannot be linked to the requirements of a specific external agency given the programme's pooled funding arrangements. Rather, there are important "undertakings" relating to financial commitments, strengthening of government financial management, attaining quality of education indicators, achieving gender parity, teacher recruitment and monitoring and evaluation.

These "undertakings" are used both as monitoring mechanisms and to trigger the release of funds so they represent a very direct form of conditionality. They are adjusted during each semi-annual sector review. The external agencies report strong satisfaction with these conditionalities as a steering mechanism while the review from the Government of Uganda side is more mixed. In the words of the Uganda Country Study:

> It would be unfair to say that the undertakings are imposed by external agencies. They are the result of mutual agreement between the Uganda Government representatives and the EFAG members. However, it is certainly the perception of MOES officials that the negotiations are complex and that, while they get a fair hearing, they often have to "bend to the will of external partners" (Uganda Country Study, p. 20-21).

The **Zambia** Country Study points to a similar set of performance requirements associated with the BESSIP agreement having to do with teacher numbers in rural schools, capacity building, budgetary commitments to education, learning assessment at a national level, district level education boards and a framework for analysis of quantitative data. These requirements are characterized as both realistic and conforming to the aims of the Government of Zambia.

In summary, Bolivia and Zambia appear to have experienced conditionality regimes that have been basically in line with national government policies and intentions (in the case of Bolivia due mainly to the strength of Bolivia's negotiating position). In Burkina Faso and Uganda on the other hand, there is a strong sense that the conditionalities in place, while not necessarily unreasonable, are as much instruments of external control as mutually supported operational goals. This perception may contribute, in turn, to the strong sense in Burkina Faso and Uganda that ownership resides as much or more with external agencies as with the partner government.

3.3 The Form of External Support: Projects and Programmes

The Document Review points out that basic education (along with other social programme areas) has been one of the areas where external resources are increasingly provided in the form of large, multi-donor funded programmes or SWAps. This movement is intended to overcome some of the main problems of project support (administrative complexity, lack of coordination among external agencies and government, poor integration of external resources into national systems).

It also has a positive goal relating to the need for governments and external agencies alike to reach agreement on a common national policy, strategy and programme in basic education that are "owned" by the country concerned and supported in a coherent way by external agencies.

Clearly, if these positive goals of the movement to a programme approach or SWAp can be met, this mode of programming national activities and external support has the potential to strengthen considerably partnerships in basic education.

Each of the four countries participating in the evaluation has seen external support to basic education move from predominantly project support in the early 1990s to some form of sub-sector programme support or to a SWAp in the later half of the decade. Table 4 provides a schematic overview of the progress towards the SWAp modality in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia in recent years.

Table 4 clearly shows that there has been considerable progress towards a programme approach or SWAp in each of the four countries. The main limitation seems to be that only the Uganda programme covers the entire sector and full participation in all four cases is limited to a core group of external agencies with the "outer" group of supporting agencies including some who work within the overall policy and programme framework and some who do not.

Three of the four Country Studies suggest that the host governments have a strong sense of ownership of the resulting programme (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia) while three of the four (Burkina Faso, Uganda, Zambia) also point to the fact that the core group of agencies participating have attempted to harmonize administrative procedures. All point to some improvements in coordination. The apparent affects of the move to programme funding are analyzed further in Section 5.0 on partnership.

Table 4: Steps Towards a Programme Approach or SWAP in Basic Education

Country	SWAp Characteristic			
	Basis of Analysis	**Approach is Sector-wide**	**Based on a Clear, Strategic Framework**	**Ownership by the Recipient Country Government**
Bolivia	The *Programa de Reforma Educativa* (PRE) followed the *Law on Education Reform* in 1994 and covered 1995 to 2002.	The Law covers non-formal education but PRE is limited to pre-primary and primary education.	Has a clear set of priorities and operational plans (revised annually) and is linked both to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme and to national initiatives in decentralization (the *Law of Popular Participation*) and to a national system of grants to municipalities for infrastructure investment.	PRE has been endorsed by four successive national governments and key stakeholders – not that Bolivian officials lobbied very hard in discussions with external agencies to ensure that the PRE included intercultural/bilingual focus and national development of curriculum, texts and materials.
Burkina Faso	*Plan décennal pour le développement de l'éducation de base* (PDDEB) – approved in 1999 and launched in 2002.	Covers sub-sector only.	Provides the framework for basic education but the first phase of the PDDEB does not resolve the issue of number of experimental pilot projects being promoted by key external agencies. Will be addressed in subsequent phases. Objectives are consistent with PRSP. New conditionalities for macroeconomic budget support are consistent with the PDDEB.	PDDEB was developed by the Ministry – primarily at the central level. Limited contribution by, or understanding of the PDDEB, at the regional and local levels. Some suggestion that regional/local levels have not accepted the PDDEB as a framework for basic education. Considerable influence of external agencies on conditions for funding of the PDDEB.
Uganda	Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) – launched in 1997.	Covers the entire sector, but with the highest priority to basic education. In the future, may enhance focus on secondary education.	Provides the framework for basic education within a common vision and objectives. Linked to the PRSP and supported through the Poverty Action Fund. Clear integration with government-wide poverty reduction plans and CDF.	ESIP was developed by the Ministry, and the Government has demonstrated a strong level of ownership. UPE was a precursor of ESIP and was a presidential declaration. Strong and enhanced dialogue with agency partners. Some see this as unduly steering some aspects of the strategies according to external priorities rather than Ugandan needs.

Country	SWAp Characteristic			
	Basis of Analysis	**Approach is Sector-wide**	**Based on a Clear, Strategic Framework**	**Ownership by the Recipient Country Government**
Zambia	Intentions of full sector investment programme in 1996, then Basic Education sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) – launched in 1998. Also Ministry's National Plan 2003 to 2007.	BESSIP covers the sub-sector only. Ministry's National Plan covers the whole education sector.	BESSIP is an umbrella programme under which all external agencies work towards agreed-upon priorities and targets. New plan provides a comprehensive, clear framework.	Strong national ownership is evidenced by the Government role in reviews and in the planning process. Integration of BESSIP administration into ministry was partial but with good access and communications with senior officials and other ministry staff.

Country	SWAp Characteristic			
	Development of Framework Included all Sectors (Government, NGOs, Communities and Private Sector	**Framework Takes Long-term Perspective**	**Participation of all External Agencies**	**Activities are Implemented by the Recipient Country**
Bolivia	Main development was in the technical unit of the Planning Ministry. Consultations were held with NGOs and civil society organizations during a national education conference in 1993, but key stakeholders strongly objected to the final product of the Law and programme, and felt their views had been excluded – especially in terms of education for marginalized groups.	PRE was funded by two overlapping five-year credits from the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. Bilateral support covered a seven-year period. The *Law on Education Reform* is still in effect. National medium-term strategy in education is under development. May be associated with SWAp.	Only a core of four lead agencies provide direct funding to the PRE. Other agencies provide project support, but some are clearly situated inside the policies and priorities (and operational plans) of the PRE as run by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECyD).	Almost all core activities of the PRE are implemented by the vice ministry responsible for education, with support from the Ministry of Public Finance. Agencies providing project funding are a mix with some providing TA but with national execution. Others still engaged in project execution.
Burkina Faso	Development of the PDDEB involved government and NGO sectors at the central level. Limited understanding of the PDDEB beyond the central levels of government and non-government stakeholders, including communities.	The PDDEB is a 10-year plan, and core external agencies have made commitments for 10 years. Formal financial commitments are sometimes for a	Most external agencies made a commitment to work within the PDDEB, but only some committed to common funding. Extent to which all external agencies will work	Activities to be implemented by the Ministry – particularly for those providing common funding. Those agencies not providing common funding are committed to

Country	SWAp Characteristic			
	Development of Framework Included all Sectors (Government, NGOs, Communities and Private Sector	**Framework Takes Long-term Perspective**	**Participation of all External Agencies**	**Activities are Implemented by the Recipient Country**
		shorter period of time.	within the PDDEB remains to be seen.	implementation by the Ministry, as the situation allows.
Uganda	Development was primarily the responsibility of the Ministry at the central level. Decisions to decentralize to local government had been taken and ESIP development involved widespread consultation and had to incorporate pre-existing decentralization modalities. Other ministries (such as the Ministries of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and Gender, Labour and Social Development, responsible for adult education and the promotion of women) involved through links to the CDF and PRSP. All non-government sectors were involved but the level of involvement was limited. Attempts to spread understanding of the SWAp beyond key government and external agencies have been limited but are being strengthened.	ESIP is a five-year plan (1998 to 2003). Second phase now being prepared. Commitments of external agency funding is, for the most part, only three years, but some agencies are moving to extend this, on the recognition that long-term commitments are needed.	All external agencies have committed to work within ESIP, but only some have committed to budget support to fund implementation. Others accept coordination of their project support within ESIP.	Activities are to be implemented by the ministry. Much of this is the disbursement of funds to local government. Substantial monitoring challenges thus arise.
Zambia	Considerable involvement of external agencies in development of BESSIP. External agencies supporting the involvement of civil society at BESSIP reviews/meetings and other international fora. Ministry's National Plan 2003 to 2007 produced after intensive consultation with partners and stakeholders and covers the whole education sector and encourages pooled funding or budget support	First phase of BESSIP was five years. Now planning second five-year phase.	Some agencies provide "pooled" funding for BESSIP implementation. Others were accommodated under BESSIP programme umbrella, but participate in different ways – some with funding under Ministry control, some are not; some are using a project approach. BESSIP defined a hierar-chy of funding and management	Implementation of BESSIP was mainly integrated into line functions of the Ministry. Financial management is separate from the Ministry's financial function and supported by TA consultants, but integration will occur in the subsequent phase.

Country	SWAp Characteristic			
	Development of Framework Included all Sectors (Government, NGOs, Communities and Private Sector	Framework Takes Long-term Perspective	Participation of all External Agencies	Activities are Implemented by the Recipient Country
			modalities to allow all agencies to participate.	

Country	SWAp Characteristic		
	External Agencies Adopt Common Implementation Procedures	Existence of Good Agency Coordination	Procedures and Systems for Results Monitoring
Bolivia	No evidence of common administrative procedures except in relation to the quarterly assessment process.	Coordination improved, but with limitations for some project support agencies who are sometimes excluded from the main coordination mechanism (annual and quarterly assessment reviews).	Direct monitoring is done through the quarterly assessment process using either data gathered by Vice Ministry for Initial, Primary and Secondary education (VEIPS) or special studies commissioned by the review group members.
Burkina Faso	Agencies providing common funding have developed common administrative procedures. Others are in the process of developing common procedures – in the meantime, these external agencies are using their own procedures.	Coordination improved considerably since the mid-1990s. Coordination focuses primarily on the PDDEB. Different funding relationships under the PDDEB have established "core" and "non-core" agencies, but the impact of this on agency coordination remains to be seen.	Procedures for monitoring the implementation of the PDDEB were developed, including joint review missions currently involving all external agencies (not only those providing common funding). Separate unit was established within the Ministry for monitoring implementation and liaison with external agencies.
Uganda	Agencies pooling their funding through budget support use the semi-annual ESIP review process as a planning, reporting and accountability tool. Other external agencies accept the planning and coordination discipline of the ESIP review, but implement their project funding separately. Coordination of TA is still not entirely successful.	Coordination has improved considerably since the mid-decade, with the establishment of an external agencies' group. Process is well harmonized with that of government, in cooperation with government/agency Education Sector Consultative Committee. Perception of "inner" and "outer" circles of agencies, but no evidence that the division is doing any harm.	Monitoring is within the ESIP review using an agreed-upon set of education indicators for access, quality and efficiency, as well as "undertakings," which represent the conditionalities required by agencies to trigger release of budget support. Established a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with government on government-agency dialogue, cooperation, coordination and harmonization. Some agencies are still concerned about meeting their headquarters' results reporting requirements.
Zambia	All external agencies are involved in joint monitoring of BESSIP through semi-annual reviews and a recent joint mid-term evaluation of BESSIP.	Improved coordination since mid-decade. BESSIP provided the framework for liaison and discussion between government and external agencies. Some	Moving towards harmonization and information sharing as a result of BESSIP. Formal agreement between external agencies on

Country	SWAp Characteristic		
	External Agencies Adopt Common Implementation Procedures	Existence of Good Agency Coordination	Procedures and Systems for Results Monitoring
	Agencies involved in "pooled" funding are using common procedures. Other agencies are using alternative funding modalities and accounting systems but are using a limited set of cases.	perception of "inner" and "outer" group of agencies in the relationship with the Ministry. Inter-agency coordination occurs.	operational practices and joint MOU to be signed by agencies and government. Also agencies with an umbrella harmonization agreement.

3.4 Summary of Findings: External Support to Basic Education

Volume of External Support

- The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in 1990 represented a watershed for the international community because the conference declaration set out agreed-upon goals that were shared by external agencies and national partners and were accompanied by an agreed-upon process of planning, follow-up and reporting at both the national and international levels.

- Yet, at a global level, the volume of external support to basic education did not increase in the period from Jomtien to Dakar at the rate that could have been expected from the nature of the commitments made. By 2002, there remained a very wide gap between the estimated amount of external assistance required to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals for 2015 and the amount being provided. This gap may, in part, be explained by external agency perceptions of the absorptive capacity of partner countries as well as the complexity of programme planning and development processes at a global and national level.

- Despite repeated calls for improvements in reporting of external flows to basic education, external agencies do not code their support to the basic education sector in a consistent way. Those charged with monitoring progress still must deal with substantial flows that are essentially not identified with specific uses within the education sector.

- There have been significant efforts since Dakar to increase the flow of funds in support of basic education (including the FTI). These efforts have not yet resulted in increased disbursements and they encounter problems in attracting sufficient long-term commitments from external agencies. This is often related to concerns over absorptive capacity.

- The four countries participating in the Joint Evaluation have experienced a pattern of funding that is quite different from the global pattern reported in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002*. They have seen substantial and sustained increases in the mid to latter part of the 1990s and extending into 2001. This pattern has been associated with the approval of national policies, strategies and programmes in basic education.

Nature of External Support

- There has been continuous involvement in policy dialogue and TA by a wide range of agencies in each of the four countries participating in the evaluation. The intensity and range of external agency involvement in TA varies over time, as does the role of the lead agency in each area of activity. In particular, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and selected bilateral agencies have provided important TA at different points in time in each country studied. The movement to a programme or SWAp is often accompanied during the planning stages by an increase in the volume and intensity of TA.

- In the four countries there was a shift in focus of TA away from education-specific expertise, such as teacher education and curriculum development and towards programme development and improved management.

Modalities of External Support

- As noted, a number of global and national factors have contributed in each of the countries studied to an ongoing narrowing of the focus of external support and national resources to concentrate almost exclusively on UPE to the detriment of non-formal education, including adult literacy. Where support is provided to these areas, it is often directed through NGOs with a consequent weakening of the government ministries charged with the responsibility.

- There has been substantial progress towards a programme approach or SWAp in each of the four countries. The main limitation seems to be that only the Uganda programme covers the entire sector and full participation in all four cases is limited to a core group of external agencies with the "outer" group of supporting agencies including some who work within the overall policy and programme framework and some who do not.

- Three of the four Country Studies suggest that the host governments have a strong sense of ownership of the resulting programme (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia), while three of the four (Burkina Faso, Uganda, Zambia) also point to the fact that the core group of agencies participating have attempted to harmonize administrative procedures. All point to some improvements in coordination.

- At a global level, there is considerable evidence of the concurrent use of both a rights-based and an effectiveness/efficiency-based rationale for allocating external resources in support of basic education. While these two rationales remain in considerable tension, there are no definitive grounds for one to prevail over the other and they will continue to guide decisions of external agencies (with some agencies applying both rationales in differing circumstances). This co-existence in tension of both rationales is mirrored in the decisions made at country-level regarding the allocation of external and national resources to different areas of basic education.

- Conditionalities have been a feature of external support to basic education in all four countries. In two of the four countries (Bolivia, Zambia) they have reflected national priorities and goals while in the other two (Burkina Faso, Uganda), conditionalities appear to have played a role in weakening the national sense of ownership of sectoral programmes in basic education.

4.0 Externally Supported Basic Education

This chapter examines the "so what" question: what has been achieved in basic education through the use of external support? After decades of external support to different aspects of basic education and with Jomtien over the past 12 years, what are external agencies and their national partners achieving in basic education, globally and in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia?

This section does not focus on the volumes and modalities of external support to basic education (which form a large part of the content of Sections 3.0 and 5.0). Rather it focuses on the use made of external support, whether the nature of that support is policy dialogue, TA or funding. The first two sub-sections provide information on the focus of the external support and the extent to which that support has contributed to the achievement of the EFA goals. The third sub-section provides an overview of the challenges associated with externally supported basic education and their impact on the extent to which the EFA goals can be achieved.

4.1 Focus of External Support

The Document Review and the four Country Studies make clear that external assistance is used in partner countries in a diverse, but not unlimited, number of applications. Table 5 below identifies some of the diverse uses made of external assistance to basic education, whether the nature of that support is funding, policy dialogue or TA and, in order to provide a link back to the previous section on support modalities, identifies the most common forms in which that support is provided.

Table 5: Activities in Basic Education Receiving Significant External Support

Activities in Basic Education Most Commonly Receiving External Support	Most Common Nature of Assistance (Funding, Policy Dialogue, Technical Assistance)	Most Common Modalities (Project or Programme – Including SWAp)
Development of National Policy and Strategy	Policy dialogue and TA are most common but small amounts of funding are sometimes provided.	Project assistance from multilateral and selected bilateral agencies are most commonly used; increasingly linked to the development of national strategies and programmes of assistance, including SWAps (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia).
Institutional Strengthening of Ministry Responsible for Basic Education	TA provided to specific units involved in planning, human resource development, communications, and accountability. Often also supported by external funding. Linked to Public Sector Reform Programmes in many cases.	Formerly mainly provided as project assistance but, more and more, tends to be included in programme funding. The latter does not imply exclusion of the project form. One issue is the integration of supported units inside the MOE.
Monitoring and Assessment of Achievements in Basic Education	Technical assistance and direct funding are used together in most instances.	Support to monitoring and testing units can be either, but tends to be in programme support form in the four countries studied. Strongest in Bolivia and perhaps weakest in Zambia.

Activities in Basic Education Most Commonly Receiving External Support	Most Common Nature of Assistance (Funding, Policy Dialogue, Technical Assistance)	Most Common Modalities (Project or Programme – Including SWAp)
Development of New Pedagogic Approaches	Predominant form has been in TA with limited amounts of direct funding.	Mainly project format.
Curriculum Development	TA and funding.	Project and programme.
Development, Production and Distribution of Materials	Mainly funding but with some TA.	Project and Programme
Institutional Development of Teacher Education Colleges	Mainly TA but with direct funding out of larger programmes.	Programme funding but project format for TA.
Pre-Service Training		
In-Service Training		
Planning Infrastructure Investment (Siting)	TA has been provided both directly and indirectly (sometimes external agencies provide funding for siting studies by local experts).	Predominantly project assistance.
Infrastructure Construction and Maintenance	Mainly funding support from both bilateral and multilateral external agencies.	May be either project or programme.

The main point of Table 5 is to demonstrate that external assistance in different forms and modalities is used in most of the core activities of basic education systems in partner countries. Virtually all of these activities were receiving external support in all four of the participating countries during the period under review.

In many ways, this should not be surprising. As external agencies move increasingly to use SWAps or other non-project forms of external support to basic education, the resources (financial and technical) provided are used across the full spectrum of activities implemented by partner countries.

Thus the Country Studies (and the evaluations of assistance to basic education reviewed for the Document Review) found it difficult to identify activities in basic education that were **not** receiving and using some form of external assistance. It is very difficult indeed, when assessing external support to basic education, to avoid assessing the national system of projects, programmes and institutions in basic education.

4.2 Volume of External Support

The Country Studies provide some information on the volume of external support for basic education. However, identifying this information in a consistent fashion across all countries proved to be a significant challenge. Table 6, below, reflects areas in which information is available from the Country Studies. Not all teams were able to get information on support specifically to basic education and not all teams were able to separate the support provided to recurrent and investment costs. For example, the Uganda County Study provides only information on external support to education, not specifically to basic education, and the information in the Zambia Country Study does not distinguish between recurrent and investment costs. In Burkina Faso, even the data provided is known to not include all external support. The subsequent tables

reflect what is known about external support at the various levels identified in Table 6. There are separate tables reflecting the support to:

- Education (Table 7);
- Basic education (Table 8); and
- Basic education programmes (as opposed to the whole basic education sub-sector) (Table 9).

Table 6: External Support to Education

Country	Support to Education (Table 7)		Support to Basic Education (Table 8)		Support to Basic Education Programme (Table 9)	
	Recurrent	Investment	Recurrent	Investment	Recurrent	Investment
Bolivia	X		X	X	X	X
Burkina Faso			X	X		
Uganda	X		X			
Zambia	X		X		X	

The information in the following tables is not comparable country to country. However, it does provide an overview of the trends in terms of external support across the four Country Studies, including:

- In three countries (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia), there is a clear indication that the level of support for basic education increased with the advent of programme- or sector-wide support. It is too early to draw this conclusion in Burkina Faso because the programme-wide approach has only recently been launched. However, the level of external support in that country, even before the start of the programme-wide approach, has been increasing;
- In two countries (Burkina Faso, Zambia) there is evidence of increased support specifically for basic education within the education sector; and
- Two Country Studies (Burkina Faso, Uganda) indicate a strong dependency on external support for some, if not all, components of basic education or education.

Table 7: External Support to Education

Country	Support to Education	
	Recurrent	Investment
Bolivia	Almost all of the recurrent budget in education is provided directly by the Government of Bolivia. A very small volume of external support was provided as an incentive to teacher performance but only a very small proportion of that was ever disbursed.	The bulk of the investment budget in basic education is provided from external sources. National budget does provide a larger proportion of investment in post-secondary and secondary sectors than in basic education.
Burkina Faso	n/a	n/a
Uganda	Project funding to education ranged from just under US$600 million in 1990 to about US$750 million in 2001.The share of overall Official Development Assistance (ODA) going to project funding for education was in the 6% range prior to 1997. After 1997 and the introduction of UPE, it increased to between 14% and 16%. There was a substantial, but not complete, shift from project funding to budget support after the mid-1900s. Between 1998 and 2002, overall budget support to education grew by nearly 25% (from US$120 million to US$148 million).	

Country	Support to Education	
	Recurrent	Investment
Zambia	Overall expenditure on education was rather flat going from US$97million in 1996, dropping until 1998 (US$69 million) then up to US$93M. (This is partially the inflation of the Kwacha cost of teachers' salaries.) Salary increases in 2001 increased local costs. Emoluments (salaries) are about 65% – a ratio that has stayed fairly constant, overall. Highly Indebted Poor counties (HIPC) money was provided in 2000 (US$73 million) and 2001 (US$93 million).	

Table 8: External Support to Basic Education

Country	Support to Basic Education	
	Recurrent	Investment
Bolivia	External support to basic education was very low until the beginning of the education reform programme. External funding to basic education increased to just under US$30 million in 1995 and 1996, dropped back to just above US$20 million in 1997 and 1998 and increased rapidly to over US$50 million in 2001 but was mostly applied to the investment budget.	Investment expenditures are primarily through separate funds. Total of US$201 million was disbursed through these funds – the vast majority of the funds were from external sources.
Burkina Faso	Percentage of external support going to basic education (as a percentage of total external support) rose from 3.7% in 1996 to 10.5% in 2000.	External support provided through the Public Investment Plan (PIP)[5] rose steadily through the first half of decade, but declined in the late 1990s only to rise sharply in 2000 (as a result of significant expenditures on school and non-formal education centre construction). Over the decade, external support through PIP accounted for over 80% of total investment budget of the ministry responsible for basic education.
	External support accounted for an increasing share of the overall budget of the ministry responsible for basic education and literacy – rising from about 19% in 1991 to 37% in 1998.	
Uganda	Total volume of external support was fairly level at about US$200 million between 1998 and 2002. External support over that period accounted for between 54% and 61% of expenditures in basic education delivered through primary schools. While the Government of Uganda's proportion of total expenditures in basic education was gradually increasing, the concomitant reduction in external support was small.	
Zambia	Basic education as a percentage of total educational expenditure has increased from about 60% in 1996 to 80% in 2002. There were cost increases in 2001.	

[5] The Public Investment Plan does not include all external support for investment expenditures.

Table 9: External Support to Specific Basic Education Programme (Sector-wide support)

Country	Support to Basic Education Programme	
	Recurrent	Investment
Bolivia	Programme support (disbursements) through the Education Reform Programme (PRE) began in 1995. With the exception of two years, PRE accounted for half to at least two-thirds of support to basic education between 1995 and 2002.	
Burkina Faso	n/a[6]	n/a
Uganda	n/a	n/a
Zambia	After 1998, external support all channelled through basic education programme (BESSIP) and accounted for as capital or development expenditure. Clear growth, but much is about money coming on stream. Prior to BESSIP, external support was about US$7 million. In the first year of BESSIP (1998), support was at US$19 million. This rose quickly to US$40 million in 2001 (with US$45 million estimated for 2002). Commitments for 2003 onwards show similar trend.	

A key question in the four countries has been the trend in the overall volume of external support to basic education over time and the response of the national government, either in dollar terms or as a percentage of the national budget and/or gross domestic product (GDP).

In the case of **Bolivia,** increases in external resources to basic education have generally been matched by strong increases in both recurrent cost expenditures and investment by the Government of Bolivia. In 1990, recurrent cost expenditures on basic education in Bolivia stood at just under US$100 million while disbursements of external support stood at US$20 million in the same year. By 2002, recurrent expenditures by the Government of Bolivia had risen to US$250 million, while disbursements from external assistance rose to US$50 million.

The **Burkina Faso** Country Study was not able to develop a reasonably accurate picture of the annual volume of external financial support to basic education due to problems in data availability. It does indicate, however, that the percentage of all external support that goes to basic education has risen considerably in the period 1996 to 2000 – rising from 3.7% in 1996 to 10.5% in 2000. In a similar time frame, the national budget for basic education as a percentage of all expenditures on education rose from about 40% in 1995 to just over 60% in 1998. Unfortunately, the information on basic education expenditures (as opposed to budgets) is either incomplete or contradictory. Given the serious gaps and contradictions in the data from Burkina Faso on both external support and national expenditures, it is difficult to reach any definitive conclusions on trends or on the extent of external dependency. However, qualitative information suggests that the basic education system is heavily dependent on external support.

The **Uganda** Country Study notes that the total annual volume of external support to basic education remained fairly steady over the 1998 to 2002 period, hovering in the range of US$200 million. In the same time period, the Government of Uganda share fluctuated in the range of US$100 million with the lowest point in 1998 and the highest in 2002. There was a fairly severe drop in Government of Uganda expenditures in the 2000 to 2001 transition, but this rebounded to over US$110 million in 2002. Based on the data reported, external support to basic education has consistently accounted for over 60% of total expenditures in the 1998 to 2002 time frame.

The **Zambia** Country Study shows a trend of rising disbursements of external support to basic education over the period from 1998 to 2002, although with wide fluctuations from year to year.

[6] As the sector-wide support approach in Burkina Faso has only just begun there is no comprehensive data yet available on sector-wide support.

Nonetheless, the reported volume more than doubled from US$25.3 million in 1998 to over US$61 million estimated for 2002. In the same time frame, the Zambia Case Country Study shows overall national expenditures on education rising from under US$300 million in 1998 to over US$500 million in 2002 (estimated). The share of Ministry of Education expenditures going to basic education was reported as 44.8% in 1996 and 58.9% in 2000 (although UNESCO in 2002 estimated it at 43.2%).

In summary, the four countries are characterized with differing levels of dependency on external resources for funding. Bolivia and Zambia seemed to have matched a rising trend in external funding for basic education with a similar rise in national expenditure so that external resources, while significant, have not dominated expenditures. The situation in Burkina Faso is not at all clear due to problems with data availability; while Uganda reports a situation in which external resources clearly dominate expenditures on basic education.

4.3 EFA Goals: Commitment and Progress

As Table 10 below illustrates, the qualitative and quantitative story on progress towards the EFA goals at both the global level (the Document Review) and in the case countries is one of progress but at a pace that threatens their achievement by 2015.

Table 10: EFA Goals, Commitment and Progress

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data	Quantitative Data
Document Review	• Evidence of external agency and partner government commitment to EFA goals • Government focus on UPE and on system-wide support to education • Expansion in basic education systems, especially in pursuit of UPE, has resulted in many more children in schools but has not kept up with growth in population	• 83 countries have achieved the three quantitative measures of EFA goals by 2002 (universal primary net enrolment, 50% reduction in adult literacy and gender parity in primary school gross enrolment) • 43 countries have made progress but will likely miss at least one of the three by 2015 • 28 countries are in serious risk of not reaching any of the three • 125 million school age children outside school in 2000
Bolivia	• High level of commitment to some of the EFA goals by government (especially UPE) • Enrolment goals basically achieved at national level • Persistent regional differences • Major issue is girls' attendance in later years of primary and early secondary school	• Net primary school enrolment rose from 85.6% for girls in 1998 to 86.3 % in 2000 • Net primary school enrolment for boys is 87.7% in 1998 and 87.6% in 2000 • National data masks problems in girls' participation, especially in rural areas
Burkina Faso	• External resources flowing to government • Government commitment to EFA goals is high • EFA goals unlikely to be met by 2015 • Goals of 10-year plan for the development of basic education are too ambitious	• School age population rose from 1.8 million to 2.2 million children between 1992 and 2001 • School construction and expansion more than kept pace with gross enrolment rising from 29.9% in 1990 to 43.4% in 2001 • Regional rates are as low as 17% in some area;

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data	Quantitative Data
	• School construction and teacher recruitment needs are too high • Limited capacity of the ministry responsible for basic education to absorb and use external resources	• Net enrolment rates for girls rose from 23% in 1994/95 to 29% in 2001 (for boys from 34.6% to 38.6%)
Uganda	• Strong national commitment to UPE • Dramatic increase in primary school enrolment • Uganda close to achieving UPE assuming momentum generated since 1996 is maintained • Expansion resulted from strong government leadership, supported by enhanced policy dialogue, TA and increased funding support	• Enrolment increased from 2.9 million children in 1996 to 7.3 million in 2002 including 700,000 students in private and community schools • Boys' net attendance ratio is 70% in 1995 and 87% in 1995 • Girls' net attendance ratio is 67% in 1995 and 87% in 2000 • Combined boys' and girls' rural attendance ratio rose from 67% in 1995 to 87% by 2000
Zambia	• Enrolments are beginning to increase slowly, and (particularly in urban areas) the ratio of boys to girls is nearing parity • Equity and access differences between rural and urban areas are most significant • Zambia identified as a country at risk of not reaching the EFA goals	• Enrolment and intake ratio data is problematic because of uncertainties about population estimates • Literacy levels increased from 54.8% in 1990 to 67.8% in 1996 • High repetition and abandonment rates are in higher grades of primary school

At a global level and in each of the four case countries, efforts have been focused on expanding participation and achievement of UPE through the construction of schools, development of supplies and materials and recruiting, training, and deployment of teachers. The three quantifiable EFA goals (universal primary completion,[7] gender parity in primary and secondary education and a 50% reduction in adult illiteracy) represent one way to assess progress towards the EFA goals. Using these three, the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* concluded that 83 countries had met the goals by November 2002 but 43 countries will likely miss at least one by 2015 and 28 countries are in serious risk of not reaching any of the three (UNESCO, 2002).

An indication of where the four case countries fit in this matrix of achievement is provided in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* through an analysis of UPE, which is defined as attainment of a 95% net enrolment ratio in primary school. Using this measure:

- Bolivia was deemed to have attained UPE as of 2002;
- Burkina Faso was classified as having a low chance of achieving UPE by 2015 but at least of moving towards it;
- Uganda was classed as moving towards UPE and with a high chance of achieving the goal; and
- Zambia was classed as having a serious risk of not attaining UPE and moving away from its attainment at the time of writing (UNESCO, 2002).

[7] The *Education for All – Is the world on track? EFA global monitoring report 2002* devotes an entire page to a detailed explanation of the measure of universal primary schooling, including the relations between gross and net enrolment rates and the differences between enrolment and completion rates. It notes that the indictors selected by the international community for the purpose of monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal for primary education are Net Enrolment Rates of 99% and Grade 4 completion rates of 99% by 2015 (UNESCO, p. 55).

The problem is especially serious for countries in sub-Saharan Africa:

> It can also be seen that the countries far from the goal are mainly in the Arab States and North Africa, but especially sub-Saharan Africa. The sample contains thirty sub-Saharan countries; twenty-two are still far from the goal, and for eleven, the distance from the goal has risen in recent years. Latin America as a whole is much nearer to the goal than other developing regions (UNESCO, 2002, p. 91).

As of 2002, worldwide there are an estimated 125 million school age children out of school, with almost all of them in developing countries.

In each category of the quantifiable EFA goals one can find progress over the past decade or so but almost always this progress is offset to a greater or lesser extent by population growth so that, as pointed out in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, even while the available data on adult literacy rates shows them rising at a steady, if unspectacular, pace, because of population growth, the increase in the rate does not translate into an increase in the number of people who are literate (UNESCO, 2002). The number of illiterate adults was estimated at 880 million in 1990 and by around 2000 had been reduced to roughly 860 million. At this pace there would be around 800 million illiterate adults by 2015, which would be far above the target (UNESCO, 2002, p. 61).

In the area of gender parity in primary schooling, by 2005 and in primary and secondary schooling by 2015, the available global research is perhaps even more pessimistic. In the report *Accelerating Progress*, presented to the World Bank's Development Committee, Bank staff wrote, "The goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 will not be met. The gender gap for low-income countries is, on average, 11 percentage points at the primary level and 19 percentage points at the secondary level" (World Bank, 2003, p. 2).

The same report makes the point that more than two-thirds of the low-income countries at risk of not achieving goals in primary completion rates would reach the goal if they could match the rate of progress (3% increase per year) of the best performing countries in their group (World Bank, 2003, p. 2).

Turning to the four Country Studies, it is clear that the main focus of both commitment and progress has been in the area of improving access to primary school, expanding the primary schooling system where needed and increasing the system's capacity to retain students. It is striking just how concentrated national effort and external assistance has been and how it has focused on in-school, primary education.

Burkina Faso and Uganda have made the most apparent and significant improvements in rates of enrolment for both boys and girls, while Bolivia has consolidated earlier gains and made incremental improvements in promotion, retention and abandonment rates over the period under review.[8]

Table 10, on commitment and progress towards the EFA goals as reported in the five evaluation products, highlights several key points.

[8] Note that the data from Zambia was too unreliable to draw conclusions on enrolment and intake ratios.

1. *The issue of how much progress is enough and should the same goals be sought in the same time frame in each country?*

In Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Uganda there are significant rates of increase in enrolment and completion rates in primary schooling. In Bolivia the measurable increases are smaller, mainly because the starting point is very high. In Burkina Faso, the rate of expansion is very high but from a low base. Nonetheless, gross enrolment rates increased by over 45% in the 11 years from 1990 to 2001 in a major expansion of the coverage of the national system of primary schooling. In Uganda, progress was even more spectacular, with the population of children in schools more than doubling and attendance ratios reaching nearly 90%.

In each of these three countries, the achievements in access and retention in the primary school system are highly valued. Given their different starting points and different resources (human, organizational, and financial), the EFA goals would seem to have very different meanings for each. Bolivia is viewed as having essentially achieved UPE and has begun to concentrate on the issue of how to ensure full and meaningful participation by aboriginal peoples in a truly intercultural system of primary education. Uganda is perhaps the ideal case for accelerating progress with a good probability of meeting the EFA goals.

Burkina Faso, on the other hand, has very little chance of attaining the goals not only of the EFA, but also even of it's recently adopted 10-year plan. It seems highly questionable that a country that has expanded participation in primary school education (gross enrolment rates) by just over one percentage point a year over the past decade can expand it by 28 percentage points in the next decade. In the words of the Burkina Faso Country Study, the country may have been "set up to fail" through the specification of unrealistic goals.

At a global level, there is no question that the EFA goals are a valued set of signposts and an implied contract between external support agencies and partner governments. They are also a means of stimulating both external financial support and national commitments. It is important at a country level, however, to place at least as much emphasis on what has been achieved as on the gap between the pace of achievement and global goals.

2. *The predominance of goals relating to primary school enrolment and completion rates.*

In the global literature surveyed for the Document Review and in the experience of the four case study countries, one finds evidence of the very strong predominance of formal primary schooling as the main arena in which both external actors and national governments are working to achieve the EFA goals. This is explored in more detail in Section 4.4.1, but it is worth noting at this point that national governments and most external agencies are more comfortable in concentrating their efforts at expanding access to primary education than in the other areas of basic education. This is not to say that they have abandoned other areas, but rather that one sees a sharpening focus and concentration over time in efforts to deal with primary schooling.

At global level, some evidence for this can be found in the focus of the FTI directly on the MDGs as they relate to Universal Primary Completion Rates and gender parity. At the national level, the Country Studies for Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia all document a tendency for both external agencies and national governments to give overwhelming (but not exclusive) priority in basic education to formal primary schooling.

3. *The persistence of problems in achieving gender parity.*

As pointed out in the Document Review, girls and boys have both benefited from the expansion of school systems and the improvements in access made during the period from 1990 to 2002. In many of the countries surveyed by the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002,* girls' gross and net enrolment rates have been rising, sometimes (as noted in the Burkina Faso report) at a rate faster than boys (UNESCO, 2002). Nonetheless, as already pointed out, the goal of gender parity in primary school net enrolment rates by 2005 will not be met.

To some extent this is not surprising given the Document Review's finding that while external agency policy statements on basic education place great emphasis on gender equality as a goal, national EFA plans and programmes are less likely to place a strong emphasis on gender parity and rarely include concrete efforts to improve girls' and women's access to basic education (despite efforts such as the United Nations' Girls' Education Initiative).

The Country Studies present contrasting fortunes in efforts to address gender parity in basic education. Bolivia, for example, reports a very narrow gap in net primary school enrolment for girls and boys (about 1.3% nationally). Yet evaluations of girls' access to the later years of primary school in rural areas show a strong tendency for girls to leave primary school after the early grades at a much faster rate than boys. This may relate to the very structure of rural schools, where a nucleus or central school will include the full range of primary grades and is often co-located with a secondary school. The satellite schools are located in the villages and most often only include the early grades (1 to 4, or 1 to 5). When girls finish the course of study at the satellite schools, rural families are often reluctant to see them travel the seven or eight kilometres to attend the nuclear school for security reasons. Indeed, since the nucleus schools cannot accommodate all those who complete the course of grades in the satellite schools, there is almost an automatic rate of attrition associated with the later grades. When poor, rural families need to choose which child will attend the nucleus school or go on to secondary schooling, they are much more likely to send a boy. Visits to rural schools by the Bolivia team demonstrated a consistent pattern of worsening imbalance between boys and girls as they progressed through the middle and later years of primary school and on to early secondary school.

This pattern also persists in Burkina Faso where girls' primary school enrolment rose from 23% in 1994/1995 to 29% in 2001. Nonetheless, the gap between boys' and girls' participation rates was about 10 percentage points (29% for girls to 38.6% for boys) in 2001. In other words, net enrolment rates for boys were about one-third higher than for girls (although both were still very low) in 2001.

The exception is clearly Uganda where the massive effort to open access and expand coverage of the primary system seems to have had a dramatic effect on parity. Where boys' net attendance was slightly ahead of girls' in 1995 (70% compared to 67%), by 2000 the reported rate for both was 87%, as presented in the Uganda Country Study. Apparently, the introduction, in Uganda, of free universal primary education has been successful in ensuring that girls had at least parity of access to primary schooling.

4.4 Effectiveness of Externally Supported Basic Education

The five evaluation products identify a number of challenges to the effectiveness of externally supported basic education activities and impact on whether or not EFA goals are likely to be achieved. These include:

- Universal primary education in relation to other areas of EFA;
- Quality in basic education;
- Monitoring, assessment and evaluation of basic education;
- The role of teachers;
- Decentralization;
- NGOs and community involvement;
- After primary schooling;
- Sustainability and the risk of external agency disengagement; and
- Reform issues.

4.4.1 UPE and Other Components of Education for All

There is a strong pattern across all five reports of the Joint Evaluation of the relative neglect of those areas of basic education outside formal primary schooling. This pattern applies equally to external support and to the efforts of national governments. On the other hand, the picture is not one of total neglect. Most external agencies do provide some support to alternative education and to adult literacy, and national governments do have programmes and structures to address adult literacy and education for out-of-school youth among others.

In particular, both UNESCO, in advocacy and TA, and UNICEF, in advocacy, TA and direct programming, have made significant efforts to raise the profile of literacy in particular and non-formal education in general.

Nonetheless, there is a strong tendency for non-formal education and other areas of basic education beyond formal primary schooling to be treated as "Cinderella before the ball" in the words of one education researcher interviewed by the evaluation team. Some of the important characteristics of this pattern of relative neglect can be seen in Table 11:

- A general tendency for governments and external agencies to concentrate national programmes and external support to formal primary schooling to the relative detriment of other components of basic education, including adult literacy;

- The fact that many national reform programmes in education are defined to include only formal pre-primary, primary (and sometimes secondary) schooling (Bolivia);

- The fact that, even when the national strategy and programme encompasses areas such as literacy, these programmes are run by ministries other than the Ministry of Education, resulting in isolation from both external support and government priority in the allocation of resources (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia);

- The tendency for bilateral and multilateral external agencies to provide support to adult literacy and non-formal education through NGOs, which, while it may improve relevance and efficiency of delivery, may further weaken the government structures charged with implementing programmes (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda);

- The perception that delivery of non-formal education services, especially to hard-to-reach target groups, may be effective but has high unit costs (Uganda); and

- The national and international political role of primary education in attracting support to basic education. For national governments, the ability of the state to provide a universally accessible primary school education of reasonable quality is a major test of its legitimacy. For the international community, primary school coverage is the easiest measure of progress and a major rallying point for resources. It is not surprising that Oxfam International and the Global Campaign for Education focus so clearly in their advocacy literature on the estimated 125 million school age children outside school in 2002. In summary, both globally and nationally, primary schooling serves as both a powerful lever for rallying resources and a political litmus test for the legitimacy of the EFA effort.

Table 11: UPE and Other Components of Education for All

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• Partner governments have tended to focus on universal primary education and formal, in-school primary education as a priority • Agencies have supported governments in this concentration while providing project support to other areas such as non-formal education and adult literacy • Need to protect the legitimacy of areas of basic education beyond formal primary schooling
Bolivia	• External agencies have the opportunity to bring alternative education into the education reform programme (PRE) in subsequent rounds • Lack of Government priority for alternative education reflected in its absence from PRE and its lack of support to the Vice Ministry for Alternative Education (VEA) • Perceived weakness of the VEA and its exclusion from the PRE has discouraged external support and meant that institutional results have been limited • External support to alternative education and adult literacy is mainly channelled through NGOs, which government sees as weakening VEA mandate and capacity • External agencies are beginning to plan stronger support for alternative education
Burkina Faso	• Attention of government and external agencies has been devoted to the expansion of the primary school system • Bulk of assistance is allocated to the construction of schools, the production and distribution of materials, and the augmentation and training of primary schools' teaching force • Alternative forms of basic education are not strongly supported; support for functional literacy training by the ministry responsible for basic education and literacy is small • Support for adult literacy is channelled largely through NGOs
Uganda	• Areas of basic education outside primary schooling work well but the number of students is low and unit costs are high • External agencies have evaluated alternative education programmes as effective but found them costly • Non-primary school areas of basic education, such as early childhood, alternative basic education and functional adult literacy are not well served by external support • Support to non-primary areas of basic education are mainly from bilateral agencies and channelled through stand-alone projects and through NGOs

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
	• Support to alternative primary school programmes (outside the public school system) has been weak • Adult literacy has received relatively little outside support, which flows mainly through NGOs • Adult literacy is isolated somewhat because it is managed from a different ministry
Zambia	• Focus of external agencies and the Ministry of Education is on primary schools and has been perceived as shifting attention and support away from early childhood care and adult literacy • Early childhood education and adult/continuing education are responsibilities of different Ministries • Most early childhood development work gives priority to health and nutrition over education per se • External support for adult literacy has decreased • Experience in Zambia reflects, to some extent, that early childhood and lifelong learning goals are being "squeezed out" at a global level • There is recognition of the role that non-traditional community schools play in reaching marginalized children; the challenge is to articulate them with the formal system without invalidating their special role

Despite these factors, the Document Review and the Country Studies point to some real (and growing) counter-trends. In each of the four countries, bilateral and multilateral external agencies continue to provide support to programmes in non-formal education, especially adult literacy. Agencies like UNICEF have persisted in all four countries in supporting government (and non-government) agencies in strengthening adult literacy education and training for youth. In some countries (Uganda, Zambia), UNICEF's focus has shifted to activities in health, nutrition and the empowerment of parent groups in a way that may effectively, albeit indirectly, support the goals of basic education.

There is also a growing recognition among external agencies and governments that the other components of basic education (and the government ministries that include them in their mandate) require increased support and priority. There is some indication that the next generation of SWAps will take a more integrated approach to supporting areas of basic education beyond formal primary schooling.

4.4.2 Quality in Basic Education

It would perhaps not be an overstatement to say that, in different ways and to different degrees depending on the country, achieving quality in basic education has been the most difficult problem for externally supported basic education efforts. Discourse on EFA (but not the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002*) often focuses so much on easily quantifiable goals that it entirely misses the point that the first five of the Dakar goals were intended to be influenced by a sixth: improving all aspects of quality (see Box 3).

Quality is about learning and covers both cognitive and affective learning. Yet quality tends to be measured by examination results and, therefore, all other aspects of quality are given short shrift, since examinations are only one limited method of measuring some aspects cognitive learning. There are many other aspects of cognitive learning that are not assessed by examinations. In addition, examinations do not measure in any way affective learning.

Box 3: Dakar Goal VI: Quality

Dakar Goal VI: Quality

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The globally focused Document Review and each of the four Country Studies reiterate very strongly that efforts to expand access and improve coverage with the use of national and externally provided resources have met with much more apparent success than efforts to improve quality at each level of the system (see Table 12).

Table 12: Quality in Externally Supported Basic Education

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• More success has been achieved in expanding access and in improving infrastructure than in improving quality of instruction • Teacher education, curriculum development, materials development have all been used as strategies to improve quality but with uneven success • Learner-centred education has proven to be difficult to implement in an effective way • Urgent need for programme design to be better linked to systematic analysis of what works in local context • Innovations in initial and in-service training, curriculum reform, improved materials, learner centred approaches, bilingual education, and adult literacy education need to be assessed for impact on quality and then go to scale
Bolivia	• There is mixed evidence on quality with in-class testing suggesting little change in quality of learning achievement (despite improvements in retention, promotion and reduced repetition and abandonment) • In-class assessments of qualitative changes suggest students in reformed schools are more animated and independent, more likely to become capable citizens • On quality, government and others assert that purpose of the reform is to use intercultural and bilingual education and modern teaching methods to reverse ancient pattern of internal colonization and to promote democracy
Burkina Faso	• Evidence of concern about quality of basic education because of high levels of repetition and drop-out rates • Concerns about the lack of relevancy of basic education in the lives of young Burkinabè – “classical” forms of curricula and standardized assessment measures not preparing children for life in the workforce • Various external agencies have provided TA aimed at improving the quality of teaching, enhancing methods of assessment and inserting new subjects in the school curriculum • Many innovative projects have been tried but external agencies and/or government have been unable or unwilling to “go to scale”
Uganda	• Nearly universal perception that the quality of primary education has suffered through a period of rapid expansion • Effects of recent efforts to improve professional development of teachers, provide increased volume of textbooks, and reform curriculum are not yet substantively apparent in classrooms • Large primary schools seem to be detrimental to quality – need for smaller, child-friendly schools – need to innovate perhaps through new models such as satellite classroom clusters • Need for better assessment tools to gauge quality in the classroom – classroom-based continuous assessment • Need to de-link primary school completion and exams for entry into secondary school

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Zambia	• Little evidence on quality but wide perception of low quality and relevance to all pupils • Some innovative approaches have shown improvements and are to be taken to scale • School leaving exams at the end of grade 7 increase repetition and loss of the students from the system

Indeed, in Burkina Faso and Uganda there is some perception that increased coverage and access and problems with repetition and drop-out rates have come at the expense of a decrease in quality. In Bolivia, testing on expected gains in students' abilities in the areas of reading and mathematics have not found substantial improvement after seven years of the national Education Reform Programme. The Document Review and the Country Studies on Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia all reiterate this point. Just a few of the reasons why quality issues continue to bedevil externally supported efforts in basic education include:

- Weak linkages between programme designs and systematic analysis of what works in the local context especially regarding teacher education, curriculum reform, materials development, pedagogical approaches and the internal management of schools;
- The prevalence of "pilot study cultures" in which innovations are carried out with project funding and studied at a local level, but never linked to larger programmes for national funding and "going to scale,"
- The perceived lack of relevance of classical, formal schooling for many learners, especially in rural areas. As the Burkina Faso report points out, external agencies support and government efforts seem to concentrate on the area with which they are most familiar, including "classical" forms of curricula and standardized assessment measures, which do not prepare youngsters to participate in the workforce; and
- Overly large primary schools that seem to be detrimental to quality.

Indeed, many themes dealt with in this section, such as the use of monitoring and evaluation, the role of teachers, dealing with decentralization, school management, participation and community involvement, and the question of what comes after primary school relate directly to the question of quality in basic education.

Before moving on to those themes and how they relate to quality it is important to point out here, that quality can have more dimensions than measurable outcomes in literacy and numeracy. In Bolivia, in particular, the pedagogical initiatives (group learning and learner-centred progression through the system) and changes in content (intercultural/bilingual education) are not mainly centred on a quest to raise standardized test scores. They have the main goal of bringing into the education system, and the democratic life of the country, the majority of its citizens who, as it happens, do not speak Spanish in their home environment. If the goal of education reform is to increase independence of thought and action and the full realization of democracy for many citizens, it is not always easy to measure the outcome. Those who have tried in Bolivia contrast the perceived lack of progress in raising standardized test scores with the animation and independence of mind of learners in the reformed classrooms.

Likewise, in Zambia, the integration of Primary Reading Programme into the BESSIP shows how a "quality focus" during implementation and a willingness to tackle the constraints can yield positive results.

4.4.3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

The move to provide external support to basic education in the form of jointly funded programmes and SWAps has also seen increased support for monitoring, evaluation and research functions in Ministries of Education. It seems that the focus on programme support and on SWAps tends to highlight problems of data gathering, analysis and reporting in basic education, indeed in the whole sector of education. As a result, agencies providing pooled funding support are often more than willing to provide external support to improving the information base on progress.

For example, the Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia Country Studies all point to significant external support to the development of specialized units with a mandate to gather, analyse, and report on data on the effectiveness and quality of basic education. (See Table 13.) The evaluation teams working in the four countries all reported that the availability of data on inputs, outputs and outcomes improved with the development of large programmes of external support in the mid 1990s.

Table 13: Monitoring, Evaluation and Research in Basic Education

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• Need for policies on basic education and how best to improve it to be better grounded in research on effective interventions to improve quality at reasonable cost • Evaluations by a wide range of agencies indicate that innovations in teacher education and improved pedagogical techniques need to be assessed for their impact on quality on a regular basis • There is also an important problem of receptivity and willingness to change on the part of national partner agencies (and external support agencies) • Organizational culture impedes the effective use of evaluative information, even where it has been developed
Bolivia	• Monitoring and evaluation capacity has been developed and improved within the Ministry as a result of external assistance • Data management and publication capacities have been greatly improved • Problems remain in linking evaluation and research results to changes in the administration and delivery of services in basic education
Burkina Faso	• Data availability on expenditures and activities in basic education improved in the development of the 10-year plan for the development of basic education
Uganda	• Recent establishment of the Education Standards Agency (ESA) is intended to improve the monitoring of educational quality • ESA also intended to strengthen partnerships in inspection, monitoring, and assessment between the centre, district and local levels
Zambia	• System-wide information support has been poor • Validity of data from the early 1990s is poor • Efforts in BESSIP have improved the collection of raw data from schools and consolidation by the Ministry of Education • Validation of data and school monitoring is weak • Formative evaluation needed to improve important processes particularly teacher training and capacity-building exercises • Pre-service teacher training system needs to assess the extent and cause of loss of trainees from the system • Recent steps to coordinate research activities

External support has been successfully used by a number of partner countries to improve their ability to gather, organize, analyze, and report on inputs, outputs and outcomes in basic education. This may have its most significant impact in the area of partnership and the annual reviews that are such a common feature of programme support modalities. By strengthening their ability to gather, analyze and present information, partner governments are able to take a more active role in the ongoing assessment of large national programmes receiving support in SWAps or SWAp-like modalities. Thus, investments in monitoring and evaluation capacity help partner countries overcome the advantages of large external agencies in the area of information management and analysis.

Notwithstanding the gains made in capacity for monitoring, evaluation and research, many countries are still faced with the crucial problem of how to make more effective use of the evaluative information they have gathered. Linking research to action is the most significant problem in the use of monitoring and evaluation in support of basic education.

Improvement in the quality and quantity of monitoring and evaluation of basic education activities in partner countries over the past seven years or so does not always seem to result in improvements in the management and administration of basic education services. The factors limiting the effectiveness of joint efforts by external supporters and national governments to improve monitoring, evaluation and research include:

- Problems in the willingness of system managers to receive and act on "bad news" or even to re-calibrate programmes and projects in light of evaluation results (Document Review, Bolivia);
- General resistance to change and system reform on the part of key stakeholders (Burkina Faso);
- A certain lack of flexibility in the use of monitoring and evaluation data so that, for example, there is little use of formative evaluations to re-assess and re-direct programmes of innovation in their early stages (Zambia); and
- A disconnect between pilot projects and systematic evaluation efforts so that even successes are rarely taken to scale at a national level (Burkina Faso).

4.4.4 Teachers: Roles, Support and Morale

Teachers are obviously at the centre of national efforts to use external support to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals. It would be hard to find any aspect of teachers' working lives (pre-service and in-service training, pedagogy, curriculum development and content, professional assessment, working conditions in schools, housing, and financial rewards, to name just a few) unaffected by external support.

At the same time, the Document Review and the four Country Studies point to an important paradox in both external support and externally supported basic education. While these efforts rely on teachers for their realization and success, efforts to improve basic education receiving external support most often fail to take account of the needs and interests of teachers.

In other words, teachers seem to be more *acted-upon* than *acting in* efforts to improve basic education. They are viewed fairly often as an asset to be managed more effectively or an impediment to be overcome, rarely as change agents at the centre of efforts to improve basic education. This is a recurrent and strong theme in virtually all evaluation products. It is likely a consequence of thinking about education as "service delivery" and the teachers as those who

"deliver" services developed by others; rather than seeing the teachers as an integral part of the design and development of approaches to education. It is also related to political and economic tensions between governments and teachers' unions, in which external agencies are reluctant to get involved.

Table 14, below, points out just a few of the apparent weaknesses in how teachers are supported and their morale considered in efforts to improve the use of external support for basic education:

- Reform programmes are most often developed by technical staff of the Ministries of Education or Planning, in dialogue with external experts from the agencies providing support. Perhaps because of the difficult employee/employer relations between teachers' unions and governments, teachers seldom play an important role in the development of reform programmes (Document Review, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Zambia);

- Teacher education is often theoretical and fails to provide sufficient practical and concrete methodological tools for implementing education reforms (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia);

- The call for increased efficiency in the basic education system has resulted in pressures to reduce the numbers of teachers and their salaries. But another important issue is management of issues such as teacher attendance, time spent in the classroom and teacher performance in order to improve learning conditions. External agencies, especially if they do not fund recurrent expenditures, have been slow to get involved in these issues (Burkina Faso, Zambia);

- Teacher advisors have such large case loads, covering such wide areas, that they cannot provide effective support to classroom teachers. At the same time, their higher pay can breed resentment among front-line teachers (Bolivia);

- Efforts to expand system coverage rapidly often include measures to reduce the duration of teacher education, introduce new categories of younger, less trained and lower paid teachers, and/or reduce the job security and pay rates of established teachers. These are, not surprisingly, interpreted by serving teachers as an effort to reduce their professional stature and living standards (Burkina Faso); and

- Since most countries confront great difficulties in providing children, especially girls, in rural areas with adequate access to primary and secondary schooling, it is essential that teachers be encouraged to locate in rural areas. Yet, the conditions of housing, pay and professional development are often most difficult in the rural setting. Most important of all perhaps, teachers in rural areas are far from the opportunities for advancement to higher positions in the inspectorate and, ultimately, to a position in the administration of the Ministry of Education (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Zambia).

Table 14: Role, Support and Morale of Teachers

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• Literature questions durability and chance of success of reform programmes when teachers are excluded from effective participation in development and plans • Teachers (and especially teachers, unions) are often considered impediments to system reform by governments and external agencies • Governments face a difficult challenge in incorporating teacher views into change programmes while in employer/employee relationship
Bolivia	• Need to improve teacher education in the teacher education colleges to make it more practical and to ensure uniform level of support to different teachers' colleges • System of teacher advisors has difficulty in providing practical, methodological support to teachers • Teachers resent higher paid cadre of teacher advisors and question their utility • Continued opposition by teachers unions to the Education Reform Programme (PRE) linked to their perceived exclusion from its development and to the perception that the PRE is linked to external agency goals in economic liberalization and globalization • Teachers' housing and terms of employment in rural areas are a major challenge
Burkina Faso	• Widespread anxiety and declining morale among many in the teaching profession • This occurs despite a rapid increase in the number of teachers and investment of resources • Expanding primary schooling will involve curtailment of levels of per-capita recurrent spending, which threatens teacher salaries • Proposals to reduce duration of training, decentralize hiring, introduce employment contracts may increase cost-effectiveness, but they are perceived as an attack on teachers' professionalism and pride • Greater credence must be given to the principle of teachers as partners and owners in the development of primary education in the country • Ongoing dialogue and concrete commitment to ongoing teacher development and support are needed
Uganda	• Need to place increased emphasis on the provision of professional development for both new and experienced teachers • Need to facilitate the deployment of teachers to rural schools • Terms of services and benefits, especially teachers' housing in rural areas need urgent attention
Zambia	• Low morale, and recent industrial action over pay and conditions of service • Teacher supply, especially to rural areas, is very difficult • New form of pre-service preparation for teachers that places many students in rural schools • Delays in the appointment of teachers and weaknesses in the management of teachers in schools • HIV/AIDS affects teachers disproportionately; conspires with emigration to work in nearby countries to produce the problem of maintaining teacher supply

The Document Review points out another factor in the link between externally supported basic education and the role of teachers. In Latin America at least, efforts to reform basic education are often associated, in the view of teachers' unions, with externally supported efforts to reform economies and make them more open to international competition and trade. Thus they associate reform with reductions in national deficits, layoffs in the public service, sale of state-owned

enterprises, reductions in trade barriers and tariffs, opening of the economy to foreign direct investment and other aspects of economic liberalism. For teachers' unions in Bolivia, for example, reform of the education system can be criticized as one more element of "globalization."

Whatever the political and social context of efforts to reform the education system and improve the effectiveness of basic education using external support, the Joint Evaluation points to a need to encompass better the needs and viewpoints of teachers if externally supported basic education is to be more effective.

As pointed out in the Burkina Faso Country Study, greater credence must be given to the principle of teachers as partners and as "owners" in the development of primary education. If efforts to improve efficiency continue to undervalue and alienate teachers, they cannot be readily expected to improve effectiveness at the same time.

Limited participation of teachers in the development of policies, and in particular the design of reform programmes, has important consequences for the effective provision and use of external support to basic education. As noted in Table 14 above, some of these consequences include:

- Weakened political legitimacy for the subsequent long-term programmes of education reform and the entrenchment of serious and organized opposition by teachers, unions, often resulting in increases in strikes and industrial action;
- Widespread anxiety and decline in morale among teachers and, at least, a perceived decline in teachers' economic and professional status;
- Weakening of the management and planning capacity of the cadre of senior educators over time, as the teaching profession undergoes a perceived "deprofessionalization,"
- Teacher training programmes and approaches that are overly theoretical and do not provide practical support to teachers in their day-to-day activity; and
- The impact on addressing the issue of the poor conditions of housing and declining terms of employment for teachers in rural areas.

It is difficult to know whether these effects could be overcome by a higher level of teacher participation in policy-making, but such a shift could represent an important step in placing teachers in a more central role in programmes to reform education systems and accelerate progress in attaining EFA goals.

4.4.5 Decentralization

In the international literature on basic education, and the Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia Country Studies, there is a clear cross-linkage between externally supported basic education (especially formal primary and early secondary schooling) and the challenge of decentralization in the management and, sometimes, even the ownership of significant components of the system for basic education (see Table 15).

Table 15: Decentralization (Progress, Challenges and Constraints)

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Bolivia	• Decentralization in Bolivia has a special character with ownership of schools by local municipalities but management of teaching resources through the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECyD) and its district education administrators • Municipalities require considerable development and support as they move to municipal education plans and projects • Centralized funds provide resources for infrastructure investment directly to municipalities, but only on approval of the proposal and project by MECyD
Burkina Faso	• Strong arguments for genuine decentralization and increased engagement of civil society in decision-making and administration, especially in primary education • Administrative decentralization is neither a panacea nor a technocratic solution to be implemented overnight • Schools are state-administered vehicles of modernity and passing them over to be administered by very poor communities is problematic • Many village societies are ill prepared to undertake substantial ownership of their schools • A steady process of decentralization should be judiciously pursued • Effective decentralization requires ongoing sensitivity to perspectives and evolving aspirations of local communities
Uganda	• Decentralization mechanisms pose their own challenges of capacity development at the district and local school level • Significant transfer of transaction costs to the district level • District offices face real problems in managing their responsibilities including monitoring individual schools • Resources need to be found at district level for more effective monitoring and quality assurance • Complementary roles of coordinating centre tutors and school inspectors need to be clarified
Zambia	• Decentralization process to district level is ongoing but resources, the capacity of personnel and of the district organization is a cause for concern for monitoring and accountability • Decentralization increases the complexity of the dialogue between headquarters of the Ministry of Education and the external agencies • Decentralization requires the investment of significant resources for capacity-building • In Zambia there is a feeling that external agencies have “deserted” the provinces • Districts require better information support for supervisory and administrative roles; the education management information system bypassed them

It is a truism to say that decentralization poses challenges to partner countries as they utilize external support to basic education. It stands to reason that any major change in the organizational structure of a system that is, at the same time, trying to reach new levels of performance and to secure priority goals associated with expansion produces special challenges.

The Country Studies do, however, point to some specific underlying problems in decentralizing functions and organizational elements in basic education receiving external support:

- The decentralization of some functions, such as project planning and development of investment proposals to the municipal level, creates problems in the different capacities of the municipalities concerned. It may also introduce partisan politics into the assessment of projects. There is a clear need for capacity-development assistance at the municipal level in project planning and development (Bolivia);
- Passing over substantial ownership of schools to poor village communities is problematic as they are unequipped and ill-prepared (Burkina Faso);
- Decentralization can result in a significant transfer of transaction costs from the central to the district level (Uganda);
- Resources need to be found at district level for more effective monitoring and quality assurance (Uganda);
- The capacity of district level personnel and organization has been a cause for concern, particularly for accountability and the use of funds (Zambia); and
- A feeling that external agencies have "passed over" the provinces to work directly with the district level, which had less institutional capacity in the beginning (Zambia).

Interestingly, none of the four Country Studies suggests that decentralization either can or should be reversed or abandoned. The demands of democratic development and the need for local communities and governance structures to have an important role in planning, managing and assessing basic education efforts is a given in all four reports. The overall lesson seems to be that over-hasty or forced decentralization can do as much damage as good. As the Burkina Faso Country Study emphasises, a steady process of decentralization should be judiciously pursued because effective decentralization requires ongoing sensitivity to the perspectives and evolving aspirations of local communities.

What still needs to be worked out between external agencies and partner governments is how external support can best be used in the judicious pursuit of a steady process of decentralization. Ways need to be found to recognize the direct contribution external agencies can make to the development of local capacities under decentralized regimes for basic education. At the same time, this needs to fit with national governments' overall planning and management responsibilities.

The Zambia report notes that, ironically, the shift to sector-wide support has possibly had a negative effect on opportunities for external agencies to support capacity-building at decentralized levels. Innovative projects that support direct activities have all but disappeared, resulting in fewer opportunities for projects that favour grassroots innovation, local empowerment and capacity-building. On the other hand, the Bolivia Country Study identifies an interesting way in which municipalities in that country can access external funds for school infrastructure development through the Social Productivity Fund (FPS). Their plans are submitted to the central structure of the FPS directorate and funds are allocated based on a formula that provides more grant portion when projects are in pursuit of national priorities in social development, including basic education. At the same time, the municipal plans and projects in education are not approved by the FPS unless they receive the approval of the MECyD.

4.4.6 NGOs and Community Involvement

Participation is examined in the Document Review and the four Country Studies mainly through two different perspectives:

- How NGOs (and other civil society organizations) take part in the planning and delivery of programmes and services in basic education; and
- How external support is used in the development of mechanisms and process for greater community participation in the management and governance of schools.

The Document Review and the Country Studies point out that NGOs most often have access to external support for the direct delivery of non-formal education, particularly adult literacy training (see Table 16). They also point out that partner governments are most comfortable with a direct role for NGOs in provision of educational activities in the same areas.

The main difficulties arise when dealing with the problem of developing a national strategy and programme. The Document Review and Bolivia Country Study noted that civil society organizations often feel excluded from the dialogue on national plans and priorities, especially when it is associated with programme funding. The Burkina Faso Country Study, on the other hand, indicates that national NGOs located in the capital did take part in the development of a national plan of education and were reasonably positive about their role (although it was a problem for regional organizations within Burkina Faso). It is also important to note that external agencies often advocate a greater role for national NGOs in the development of strategies and plans in basic education.

Each of the four countries taking part in the evaluation have used external support in efforts to increase the role of local communities in the support, management and governance of the school system. Some, such as Bolivia, have also developed special mechanisms for aboriginal peoples to be represented in the governance of the education system.

For most of these countries, these efforts, though ongoing for some time, have not yet realized the goal of truly effective community participation. The Zambia and Uganda Country Studies emphasize the potential of communities to provide greater support to local schools and the potential for school management committees to be more active. The Bolivia report emphasizes the fact that parent school councils are still serving more in administrative and support roles than in the governance and management roles that the plans suggest they should take.

Nonetheless, in at least three of the four countries (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia), the mechanisms for greater social participation in the governance and management of schools have been established. They form the basis for a potential strengthening of community involvement and perhaps, represent one means to address the problems of relevance discussed under different themes in this section.

Table 16: NGOs and Community Involvement

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• Reform efforts need to involve key stakeholders more closely in planning, management, and evaluation • Policy development at a national level needs to take better account of views of teachers and other stakeholders
Bolivia	• The dialogue between Bolivian and international technical experts was not reflected in an open national dialogue once decisions were taken on the content of the PRE • Closed dialogue contributed to some political and social isolation of the PRE • Parents' councils have the potential to lay the basis for real local participation, but improvement is dependant on converting them from administrative make work bodies to real instruments of school governance • Participation of key stakeholders in policy-making can create conflict, but will provide a stronger political base and assure external agencies that resulting policies retain support of civil society in Bolivia • Communication with communities needs to be improved to better convey the actual accomplishments of investments in reform • Support to education councils for aboriginal peoples by external agencies is a major contribution to greater social participation
Burkina Faso	• NGOs are extensively involved in the delivery of adult literacy programmes – there has been more involvement in formal primary education • Involvement of communities in primary education has been primarily as a source of funding (school construction, parent association fees) • Involvement of NGOs in the development of national plan for basic education was primarily at the central level through involvement of national NGOs represented in the capital
Uganda	• Schools need encouragement to build on the local support of parent associations and school management committees and, more broadly, the community • Potential of community support remains largely untapped • Negative impact of "local politicians" suggests the need for an improved and non-partisan dialogue between parliamentarians and the Ministry of Education and Sports officials concerning the best ways to strengthen the provision of education at a local level
Zambia	• NGOs, including representatives of Community Schools are increasingly organized to represent their position, and involved in policy-making • However, NGOs, particularly those working in adult education and community development, are not coordinated and are competing for funding • Agencies supply less direct funding to Zambian NGOs • There has been rapid growth of the Community School sector, and an MOU ensuring some government support for such schools • Decentralization actions increase the role of school boards, but local community accountability, for example, public reporting on the use of school funds, has yet to develop • No fees primary school may be reinforcing the view that education is solely state owned with a reduced parental propensity to contribute funds or to be otherwise involved in schools • Some agencies have been actively developing school-community links in their work

4.4.7 After Primary School

In the international literature and in the Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia Country Studies, there is recognition of the fact that basic education is a proposed strategy for addressing poverty. The PRSPs in the four countries all have segments dealing with components of basic education. At the same time, the literature on basic education as summarized in the Document Review raises the important issue of how completion of basic education links directly to the experience of individual learners as they cope with the issue of poverty in their lives and communities.

In the Country Studies, this question arises most directly in relation to primary school leavers and their fates. As primary school systems have been expanded and participation rates have climbed, the resultant "bulge" in the volume of primary school leavers is often more than the secondary school system can manage. It raises fundamental questions about the main purpose of primary schooling, as a means of entrance into secondary school or as preparation for the world of work.

As Table 17 makes clear, this issue of what happens to primary school leavers if they are not to be absorbed in the secondary school system is an urgent problem in externally supported basic education for these four countries. Key aspects of this problem include:

- Basic education programmes that do not take explicit account of the different paths taken by school leavers after completing primary school (Document Review);
- The need for explicit linkages to be developed from primary school curriculum and content to employment opportunities and the challenges children face when they are no longer in school (Bolivia, Burkina Faso);
- Limited options for school leavers in the job market when the secondary school system has not kept pace with expansion in primary education (Burkina Faso);
- The need for plans and programmes to address post-primary education and training (Burkina Faso, Uganda); and
- The concentration of resources on primary education creates problems in expanding secondary schooling to deal with the "bulge" of primary school leavers, especially in light of the fact that the teachers in the secondary school system are, in turn, produced in post-secondary institutions, which have not received the same priority support (Zambia).

Table 17: After Primary School

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• Both national partners and external agencies accept the overall vision of basic education, but they reserve the right to focus on universal primary education • National partners also express concern over the need to address other components of the formal public school system (secondary and post secondary) • Programmes in basic education are often not operationally linked to poverty reduction strategies and mechanisms (except in general terms in PRSPs) • Basic education programming does not take account in planning for the different paths followed by primary school students on graduation, which will be necessary if it is to be effective in addressing poverty and in maintaining relevance

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Bolivia	• Programming in basic education in Bolivia in the next five to seven years will need to encompass more explicit linkages from primary education to both secondary schooling and employment • Government and external agencies alike are more and more concerned with developing strategies for alternative education and for improvements in secondary and post-secondary education as primary schooling has been strengthened
Burkina Faso	• Primary schooling has come to be regarded as a sector unto itself, partly due to the division of ministerial jurisdictions and partly to the enormous international, post-Jomtien attention to basic education • Options confronting many primary school leavers are limited with only a very small proportion being absorbed into the secondary school system, which has not kept pace with the primary school system • For the most part, primary school leavers are expected to be absorbed into society as productive citizens, yet, due to a contracting labour market and their young age, prospects for immediate employment are very limited for the vast number of primary school leavers • There appears to have been little attention to the connection between schooling of children and the challenges that confront most of them when they are no longer in school • Achievement in primary school when followed by prolonged unemployment and uncertainty about personal futures can in fact be a source of profound frustration • There may be a solution in transforming the community literacy training centres into community education centres that aim to facilitate youngsters' transition schooling to the world of work
Uganda	• Success in expanding primary enrolments has created a "bulge" that will soon be putting pressure on secondary schools • Plans are being developed to address Post-primary Education and Training (PPET), and there will be pressure on the external agencies to increase support for this level and beyond basic education • Greater integration of basic education into the education sector as a whole is thus emerging as a strategic issue • Programmes to increase the provision of post-primary education (such as the components of the PPET strategy) will be needed very soon • It will be necessary to recognize the connections between basic education and other components of the education sector • Senior managers in the Ministry of Education and Sports benefited from advanced education abroad with scholarship support from external agencies – this has been much less available to the cadre of managers developed during the 1990s • Similarly, capacity building in Uganda's post-secondary institutions has slipped badly. This, and the above point, raises concern over the development of leadership in the areas of administration, curriculum development, design of training courses, etc.
Zambia	• The transitional arrangements for incorporating grade 8 and 9 into basic education are disruptive and create unintended hierarchies of schooling. While policy includes grades 8 and 9, reality is that basic education for many students and parents is grade 1 to 7 • The demand for secondary education is high; entrance is regulated by end-of-phase examinations

Thus the problem of primary school leavers in all four countries is two-fold. In the first instance, there is the question of how secondary school systems can be expanded to take account of those students in the "bulge" who will be able to go on to secondary education. The second, and perhaps even more urgent question, for the many students who not attend secondary school

concerns how primary schooling (and any subsequent or parallel training) can better prepare them for the world facing them after school. This is a critical problem in the relevance of basic education. It can undermine parents' and students' confidence and, in turn, reduce the demand for basic education services.

4.4.8 Sustainability and the Risk of Disengagement

For many countries, progress made in terms of expanding access and improving coverage has been accompanied by very significant levels of external financial and technical support. As the gap between current performance and the EFA goals became more evident following the Dakar conference, new resources were made available and new mechanisms developed such as the World Bank-led FTI.

The Document Review and the Country Studies point out that this rising volume of external support to basic education has resulted in high risks for many partner countries. In Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia, external support has been used to finance a major expansion of the primary schooling system and, as a result, the basic education system has become highly dependent on external funding. In effect, this means that these three countries now have systems of primary education they cannot sustain without continued, long-term external funding. In Bolivia, the case is less extreme, since national resources are able to fund most of the recurrent costs in the primary education system. On the other hand, infrastructure investment and organizational innovation in Bolivia's basic education system are highly dependant on external funding.

What the detailed points listed on Table 18 below add up to is a recognition that even the current rate of progress towards EFA goals in primary education, gender parity and adult literacy are dependent on continued, sustained, predictable flows of external financing over the medium- to long-term. To some extent, this is recognized in the very nature of both the Dakar EFA goals and the MDGs since they apply over a 15-year time frame.

Table 18: Sustainability and the Risk of Disengagement

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• Important progress has been made in terms of access but there is a looming gap between performance and the EFA goals for 2015 • An ongoing concern among national partners for the problems of financing and managing the entire education system • FTI represents an effort to address the resources gap for selected countries, but it has had difficulty in attracting the needed volumes of funding, especially longer term funding • Expansion of formal primary schooling systems to attain EFA goals relating to UPE necessitates commitments to longer term external support • One of the constraints to providing longer term financing among external agencies is the perception of limited absorptive capacity
Bolivia	• Vice Ministry of Public Finance and External Cooperation objected strongly to the early draft proposals on the FTI because of their view that the planned expansion in teachers' hours to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals was financially unsustainable for the Bolivian state • As the FTI financial commitments were for a three-year rather than a longer term, government concerns about sustainability were made worse • External agencies have only infrequently supported recurrent costs, but they have provided the bulk of non-recurrent investment resources • MECyD data shows that virtually all of the recurrent cost budget is accounted for by personnel salaries with most innovation in the system financed with external resources
Burkina Faso	• A strong sense, on the part of all stakeholders, that the current emphasis on expanding and improving the quality of basic education is generating a system that is unsustainable since it continues to depend substantially on the support of external agencies • Burkina Faso will not be able to achieve the EFA goals – or even the 10-year plan for the development of education (PDDEB) targets – in spite of the external resources being proposed under the PDDEB • Serious consideration should be given towards long-term support for recurrent expenditures, including the use of HIPC funds to cover recurrent costs • External agencies must re-assess their aversion to helping underwrite recurrent costs that are invariably mounting as the system expands, otherwise concerns about systemic sustainability will be well founded
Uganda	• A policy concern relates to the sustainability of the achievements in primary education through the Education Strategic Investment Programme • Around 60% of the funding of basic education comes from external support. This represents a high-risk strategy for the government of Uganda since it presupposes that the funding agencies will assume at least the current levels of support for many years to come • There needs to be some recognition, by those agencies committing to budget support, of at least an implicit commitment to be in for the "long haul" and this discussion should take place openly with the government • The government is acutely aware of the risk of being left with an unaffordable education system if external funding were to be prematurely reduced or withdrawn and this is a source of tension between the Ministries of Finance and Planning on one hand and of Education on the other
Zambia	• There is concern about the level of student achievements in primary education • Economic context makes Zambia reliant on financing for primary education from external support • No one is prepared to estimate the date by which external support to education will no longer be necessary, but agencies and the Government seem to agree that the time scale is at least 10 and maybe 20 years

Unfortunately for partner countries, the existing mechanisms for providing external resources must mesh with the budgeting cycles of the countries providing the funding (since countries fund bilateral and multilateral agencies alike) and most of these cannot be formally committed over even a medium-term time frame.

The FTI attempts to respond to this by asking external agencies to commit longer term funds in support of plans for accelerating progress towards the education goals of the MDG by countries with a proven track record.

Unfortunately, the FTI has had difficulty in attracting sufficient medium- and long-term resource commitments from external agencies, reportedly based on external agency concerns over absorptive capacity. This absence of longer term funding has been a factor in resistance to the FTI proposals from Ministries of Finance in developing countries. For Ministries of Finance, the FTI proposals that expand the public system and incur increased recurrent costs are too high a financial and political risk if they are not accompanied by long-term (i.e., 10-year) commitments of funds.

Finally, it is worth noting that the movement to programme support and SWAps implies willingness on the part of external agencies to stay in for "the long haul." Major national efforts to develop and implement sector-wide programmes often mean short-term increases in administrative and other costs, which can only be recouped over the longer life of these programmes.

In summary, the history of support to basic education over the past few years (and even longer in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia) suggests that external agencies are going to have to sustain the current or even increased levels of funding in support of basic education for a period of more than 10 years. If they are not able to do so, the risk taken by partner countries in expanding systems of schooling in pursuit of UPE will have proven to be unsupportable.

4.4.9 Education Reform

The last key challenges in the effectiveness of externally supported basic education concerns the issue of reforming education systems (especially primary education systems) and the problems encountered in these reforms (see Table 19).

Table 19: Education Reform Issues

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Document Review	• External agencies and partner governments are ambivalent to the participation of key stakeholders, especially teachers, in the development of important programmes of educational reform • The dialogue between core external support agencies and government in the development of education reform programmes is seen as exclusionary by other stakeholders, including NGOs and national civil society organizations • If there is a genuine local impetus for reform in basic education, which results in national (as opposed to external) ownership of the reform process, capacity building activities will be more effective • The issue of reform in basic education (and especially in formal public schooling) is closely linked to efforts to reform the civil service at a national level, especially as it relates to reducing political influence in staff appointments and firing through institutional reform programmes

Evaluation Document	Qualitative Data
Bolivia	• External assistance was important in facilitating the impetus for reform in Bolivia • The location of the technical unit that developed the plans for the PRE in the Ministry of Planning was an important factor in overcoming the resistance of more the more conservative Ministry of Education and Culture • Efforts to define a new policy in education were encouraged by the expectation of significant external funding, which could be linked to a new strategy • The experience of implementing the PRE, gained over seven years, has been invested in a cadre of key technical staff at VEIPS, which has been very stable and which can contribute to the development and implementation of the next phase of reforms • There is a need for commitment to a culture of change through the development and, more importantly, utilization of research on quality
Burkina Faso	• Primary schooling, while expanded, is largely unchanged after many years • In response to longstanding concerns about quality and relevance of primary schooling, external agencies have provided TA aimed at improving teaching, enhancing methods of assessment and inserting new topical subjects • The track record of efforts to engender substantive school reform is not good • Rarely do reform initiatives move beyond the pilot project stage • Primary schooling consists of a large core of conventional "classical" schools and a patchwork of other modalities of schooling that have been sponsored by various external agencies, but are unlikely to fundamentally alter the overall structure of the system • Most of the major stakeholders of basic education are not able or willing to shoulder responsibilities for institutionalizing major reforms to scale, and national governments appear unable to provide the necessary political leadership to generate fundamental changes to primary schooling • External agencies continue to demonstrate profound reluctance to commit themselves to long-term recurrent expenditures that sustained support for primary school change would entail • Consequently the familiar road of "classical" primary schooling prevails
Uganda	• At the district level there is a need for greater local flexibility in curriculum, in order that particular material of local relevance can be included to catch students' interest and encourage them to remain in school • The standardization pressures of the primary school leaving examinations tend to make district level flexibility in curriculum difficult
Zambia	• The pressure of examinations, required for places in secondary schooling distort the school experience in the later years of primary school • HIV/AIDS requires more far-reaching approaches for prevention and for coping with the effects of the pandemic • A rights-based approach to basic education would suggest the need for some emphasis on abolishing the use of corporal punishment alongside more concerted approaches to tracking other abuses of children in school • Children need to be given more opportunity to take part in evaluations and reviews and to otherwise have a proper voice in the education system

Neither the Document Review nor the Country Studies question the need for reform if national systems of basic education are to make effective use of external support. Often reform, including basic reform of the national civil service, represents a minimum pre-requisite for effective externally supported basic education programmes.

As the Bolivia Country Study points out, the availability of external funding, combined with TA and policy dialogue, can be a significant element in facilitating the move to meaningful education reform. Bolivia also seems to provide the best example of an education reform process that was externally supported but "owned" by the national government. This ownership by the Government of Bolivia was, in turn, crucial to effective capacity development support by external agencies. Nonetheless, as the evaluation products point out, there are enduring problems in the effective use of external support in the reform of basic education systems:

- Reform programmes are often developed in a technical and policy dialogue which is too narrow and does not represent the interests of key stakeholders, especially teachers (Document Review, Bolivia, Burkina Faso);
- Traditional ways of doing things, including continued emphasis on "classical" primary schooling are very persistent and end up frustrating efforts at reform (Burkina Faso);
- There is a need for greater flexibility in curriculum in order to ensure the relevance of the material (Burkina Faso, Uganda);
- External agencies are reluctant to commit themselves to long-term support of recurrent expenditures which would be necessary for fundamental change in the primary school system (Burkina Faso);
- National governments are often unable to provide the necessary sustained political leadership (Burkina Faso); and
- There is a need for commitment to a culture of change through the development and use of externally funded and other research (Bolivia).

In the end, perhaps the main question with regard to efforts to use external assistance in the reform of basic education systems is one of ownership. If there is a genuine national commitment to reform of the education system, and it can be sustained over time, the different forms of external support to basic education can be more effective. As an example, the Document Review points out that a sense of national ownership of the main components of reform both contributes to, and is sustained by, continuity of national technical and management staff, which further contributes to effective capacity development using external support. Section 5.0, immediately following this section, deals explicitly with the issue of partnership and how to use external support to promote national ownership of reform efforts in basic education.

4.5 Summary of Findings: Externally Supported Basic Education

Given the high level of detail in the information presented in this chapter, it is worth providing a brief summary of findings on externally supported basic education at this point.

The key findings of the Joint Evaluation regarding the externally supported basic education are summarized around several themes:

Focus on Primary Education and Issues of Gender, Quality and Relevance

- Externally supported basic education at a global level, and in the four participating countries, has made important progress towards achieving the EFA goals, especially in the area of expanded enrolment in primary schooling. On the other hand, the pace of expansion means that achievement of the EFA goals and the MDG by 2015 remains at risk.

- The goal of achieving gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment is proving more difficult than expanding overall levels of enrolment. It tends to receive less explicit attention in programme planning and implementation. Addressing gender parity is especially difficult where, among other things, the very structure of the primary school system discourages girls' participation.

- Given the previously noted concentration of external support to basic education on the goal of UPE (mainly through formal primary schooling), the tendency for non-formal education to be dealt with by different administrative structures than primary and secondary schooling contributes to its isolation, as does the tendency for external funds to be provided to non-formal education through NGOs. On the other hand, it is worth noting that external agencies and governments alike are placing more emphasis on non-formal education and on EFA goals outside UPE in the planning of new-generation programmes.

- Improving the quality of externally supported basic education efforts represents an enduring problem for partner countries, a problem that limits the effectiveness of external support. In some cases, expansion of the system to improve access is seen as a cause of declines in quality. It seems more likely that quality issues persist due to an inability to make use of available research and monitoring tools and because organizational cultures resist innovation and change. This, in turn, contributes to problems in the perceived relevance of externally supported basic education, particularly for primary school leavers.

- Quality is about learning and covers both cognitive and affective learning. Quality has more dimensions than measurable outcomes in literacy and numeracy. Yet, quality tends to be measured by examination results and, therefore, all other aspects of quality are given short shrift, since examinations are only one limited method of measuring some aspects of cognitive learning. There are many other aspects of cognitive learning that are not assessed by examinations. In addition, examinations do not measure in any way affective learning.

Governance Issues

- In order to make effective use of external support (and of national resources) partner countries often need to undertake basic reforms of their systems for planning, managing, and delivering basic education services. There are often significant roadblocks and impediments in the reform process, including tradition and organizational cultures, which are highly resistant to change. The most significant factors undermining reform may be the exclusion of key stakeholders from the planning of reform efforts and the absence of a strong sense of "ownership" of the reforms on the part of national governments. Both of these are related to evolving concepts of partnership.

- Decentralization has been a constant theme and a continuous challenge in the use of external support to basic education. There is no suggestion that decentralization can or should be abandoned or reversed since it has an important role to play in ensuring greater relevance of the basic education system to local communities. What seems most important, however, is for decentralization efforts to proceed at a judicious pace so that local needs and capacities can be taken into account and strengthened.

- There have been important efforts to use external support to improve monitoring and evaluation systems. These have contributed to a better information base and have strengthened the capacity of partner governments to take part in joint assessment

missions associated with SWAps and with programme support. On the other hand, there are problems in linking the results gathered through monitoring and evaluation to changes in programmes and in systems for delivering basic education. Most important, perhaps, have been problems in assessing pilot projects and special initiatives so that they can "go to scale."

Participation in Design and Development of Basic Education System

- Efforts to use external support to increase the efficiency of basic education systems, especially formal schooling, have often not taken adequate account of the interests, needs and viewpoints of teachers or provided for their ongoing professional development. Some programmes to expand coverage and improve efficiency include measures perceived as an attack on teachers' professional status and pride, such as changes in teacher status, salary reductions or reductions in the length of teacher education, with insufficient attention to the principle of teachers as partners and as "owners" in the development of primary education.

- The isolation of teachers from the programme design and development process has the effect of weakening the political legitimacy of many reform programmes in basic education and, further, tends to result in programmes that lack relevance and practical application in such areas as teacher training, materials development and curriculum reform.

- Efforts to develop mechanisms for local participation in the administration, management and governance of local school systems have laid the basis for increased participation of parents and communities through, for example, parent associations and school councils. They need to be further developed and to go beyond their current use as administrative support bodies. Their potential to link schools to communities better should not be underestimated.

Sustainability

- As primary school systems expand and the size of the annual cadre of primary school leavers increases, the question of what happens to those who complete primary school becomes more and more acute. Secondary school systems lack the capacity to absorb all those who qualify, and primary school achievement is seen as failing to equip children for the work world. This is a major issue in the relevancy of basic education for learners and their parents.

- The history of increasing external support and expanding systems of public schooling in partner countries gives rise to considerable risk of non-sustainability. Despite efforts such as the FTI and the implied long-term commitment associated with SWAps, most funding of external support to basic education is provided on a relatively short-term basis. There is a need, at least in some countries, for recognition on the part of external agencies of the need for high levels of sustained, predictable, funding for both the recurrent and investment costs of basic education over a long-term period. At the same time, it is important to recognize that many partner countries (for example, Bolivia and Zambia) have matched increases in external resources provided by external sources with comparable increases in national budgets and expenditures.

5.0 Partnership

5.1 Background

5.1.1 A Commitment to the Search for Effective Partnerships for Basic Education

Section 2.0, on the analytical approach and methodology used for this Final Report, argued that the question of partnership and its evolution is central to the understanding of the effectiveness of external support to basic education. The findings detailed in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 have also illustrated to some extent how questions of ownership, respect and cooperation have influenced the different outcomes of both external support to basic education and externally supported basic education itself.

This section will argue that the period under evaluation has been characterized by an impressive search for effective partnerships by external agencies and partner countries alike. Further, it makes the point that both external agencies and partner countries have made an ongoing commitment to the principle of partnership and can be shown to have made sacrifices and compromises in order to achieve it.

Of course, the story is not entirely one of achievement. In some specific areas explored below, there are continuing constraints and barriers. There have also been repeated setbacks in the search for more developed and effective partnerships. Most importantly perhaps, the situation is different across the four countries participating in this evaluation.

The members of the Country Study teams met on several different occasions to discuss many different aspects of partnerships for basic education in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia. They often were able to point out imbalances in the partnership or imperfect efforts to reduce those imbalances. Similarly, team members gave examples of the interests of one group of partners apparently prevailing over the interests of others (for example, the phenomenon of an "inner' and an "outer" group of external agencies in a number of countries).

At the same time, there was little evidence of bad faith or unwillingness of different parties to at least seek a more developed and more symmetrical partnership. Naturally, there are examples in this section of diverging organizational interests and some examples of "turf battles." There is even an enduring question of who "owns" national strategies and programmes in basic education.

Some problems, such as the wide gap in the capacity to gather data and to develop and present analysis of policies and programmes in basic education between external agencies on one hand, and partner governments on the other, may seem intractable. At the same time, the Country Studies can report on significant efforts to bridge this gap through funding and TA and to a growing national and regional capacity for analysis in some countries.

All of this argues that truly effective partnerships for basic education have not been achieved in many countries. That is not a reason to call off the search. It also does not mean that the history of the almost 13 years since Jomtien is one of wasted effort.

This section shows that external assistance to basic education, despite its documented faults, is more effective as a result of efforts to improve partnership. It also identifies those factors encouraging and impeding the development of partnerships in basic education as one modest way for the evaluation to contribute to improving the effectiveness of external support to basic education.

5.1.2 The Problem of Causality and Factors Promoting Partnership

In the development of the analytical model presented in Section 2.0, the evaluation team members identified five factors promoting partnership.

- **Continuity** of policy direction, funding, technical and administrative staffing, representation, political will, and leadership;

- A relative balance of **administrative and technical capacity**, or at least a sufficiency of capacity on the part of key stakeholders in partner countries, that allows them to "hold their own" in policy and technical dialogue with external support agencies;

- Effective **participation** by stakeholders so that their interests and needs are reflected in resulting policies and programmes;

- **Relevance and adaptability** of external support and externally supported basic education to local conditions; and

- The use of chosen **aid modalities** in a process that deepens partnership and promotes ownership and avoids the creation of programmes and projects where external agencies are seen as the primary drivers.

There is a problem, however, in being sure which way the causal relationships run for each of these factors in terms of partnership. For each factor one can question whether the factor strengthens partnership or whether partnership leads to an improvement in the factor. For example:

- Does **continuity** in a cooperation relationship contribute to a more developed partnership or does a well-developed partnership between external agencies and national partners make it easier to maintain continuity in policies, strategic direction, funding and personnel for both external agencies and their partners?

- Does an effort by external agencies and national partners aimed at **reducing disparities in capacity** contribute to the development of a stronger partnership for basic education or is it a sign of partnership itself?

- Does partnership require specific **roles** and a given level of **participation** by key stakeholders as partners or does it contribute to their ability to play their rightful role and to participate in a meaningful way?

- Do efforts to ensure that external assistance is more **relevant to local context** represent a concomitant effort to achieve partnership or do they flow from the partnership itself?

- Finally, are the different **modalities of support** to basic education, found in the literature and the case study countries, a sign that partnership has been attained or an element in the search for partnership?

These kinds of questions are important to evaluators and methodologists, but in the end they may not be particularly relevant to the task of searching for more effective partnerships in basic education. The evaluation team would argue that the first four factors (continuity, reduced

disparities in capacity, more symmetrical participation, and greater relevance to local context) have an important dual benefit if effectively managed by external agencies and partner countries. They deepen and develop the partnership and they improve the effectiveness of external support to basic education.

Further, there is no reason why the pursuit of arrangements for external support to basic education cannot pursue the parallel goals of a more-developed partnership and a strengthening of the factors listed here. It is possible that agencies and national partners could regularly assess the areas of Continuity, Capacity, Participation, and Relevance as one means of checking on the state of health of partnerships in basic education.

5.1.3 The Fifth Factor: Modalities of Support

The fifth factor (modalities of support) is somewhat different from the others. The team argues that it cannot, in any real sense, be seen necessarily to indicate either deepened partnership or a measure of effective support. One can argue, for example, that efforts to improve the relevance of external support to local contexts necessarily contributes to both partnership and to more effective external support. Unfortunately, the movement from one modality of support (such as project support) to another (SWAps, for example) does not necessarily imply the same thing.

In fact, this has been one of the problems with the discourse on modalities of external support to basic education in the global literature and in the four countries taking part in this Joint Evaluation.

Like committed revolutionaries of an earlier time, proponents of SWAp, perhaps inadvertently, have created a sense of inevitability in the language used to describe "progress" from the project to programme modality for external support. External assistance is classified (not only by proponents, but by researchers, including this evaluation team) along a continuum in which the final evolutionary stage seems to be a sector-wide programme of support.

While its proponents readily agree that the SWAp modality is not suited to all circumstances and cannot achieve all things, they have arrived at a situation where they almost do not need to analyze its strengths and weaknesses in relation to project support. One wonders whether we have almost arrived at a kind of shorthand where "project" is equated with "bad" and "SWAp" with "good."

The evaluation team does not argue the opposite. The Document Review points out that the SWAp form (and all forms of programmatic support) arises, at least in part, out of an effort to address some of the key problems in partnership and to make external assistance more effective through the promotion of ownership within a national planning framework.

The Document Review and the Country Studies seem to argue, however, that the basic fact of a programme support framework or a full-blown SWAp does not provide evidence one way or the other of effective partnership. Until the processes behind a SWAp's development and implementation have been examined, there is very little that can be said of whether it promotes or discourages partnership. Indeed, movement towards a SWAp, if carried out in a heavy-handed way, might actually reduce the level of partnership in the development cooperation relationship and might substitute a core group of external agencies for the ownership that should be taken by governments. In fact the literature is clear that this approach to a SWAp would not be consistent with the underlying principles of a SWAp – transparency, mutual respect and trust – and that it would be tantamount to seeing a SWAp as a "blueprint" rather than a process.

For that reason, this section pays particular attention to the question of how different modalities of assistance work in each of the participating countries and how they may or may not improve both partnership and aid effectiveness. In the words of the Burkina Faso Country Study, when it comes to aid modalities, it is not so much what you do, but how you do it.

5.2 Factors Promoting or Impeding Partnership

This sub-section examines each of the five factors across the reports on the Document Review and the Country Studies in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia to present an analysis of how these factors have interacted to affect the evolution of partnerships.

5.2.1 Continuity

The Document Review and the Country Studies approach the question of continuity and its impact on partnership in the areas of:

- Policy and strategic direction;
- Funding (external and national); and
- Staffing and representation.

Continuity of Policy and Strategic Direction

The Document Review points to the development over time (even pre-dating Jomtien) of a common vision of basic education and its main goals as expressed in the EFA goals of Jomtien and Dakar.

The Document Review goes so far as to suggest that Jomtien established a worldwide movement focusing on basic education, and on international cooperation among all stakeholders and that this has been maintained and re-affirmed at Dakar. It also points out that the policies of external support agencies tend to link basic education to human rights, poverty reduction, promoting equality (including gender equality) and combating HIV/AIDS.

National governments have participated in the development of this global consensus on major policies and goals, but they have reserved the right to concentrate on sub-sets of the goals and to use external agency support across the full range of their education systems.

There is one important factor at a global level, which seems to represent at least a potential discontinuity in the global policy environment: the emergence of Universal Primary Completion (and gender parity) as the overriding concern of so much external support. In principle, the MDGs with their narrower focus in education are not in conflict with the EFA goals of Dakar, but they do have the potential to accelerate the trend noted in Section 4.0 above, for formal primary schooling to "crowd out" the other areas of action necessary to address the EFA goals. This trend has been given further impetus by the fact that the FTI, at least conceptually if not always in practice, focuses on the MDGs.

In Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia the struggle to define a coherent and consistent national strategy in basic education is never totally static. The development of national strategies and policies is inherently bound up in at least three processes: the development of national programmes of education reform, the negotiations of programmes and projects of external support and political processes in the countries concerned.

This interrelationship of factors comes to the point of defining a national policy and strategy at different times in each of the countries. In Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia, national directions and strategies were made very clear by mid-decade. The Bolivian *Law on Education Reform* was in place by 1994 and the programmes to support it began in earnest in 1995. In Uganda, the decision to implement free universal primary education was made in 1996 and is described in the Uganda Country Study as a "bold stroke" that focused national and external efforts on UPE. It was followed by the development of the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) in 1997. Similarly in Zambia, the Basic Education sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) has provided a framework for the national strategy since 1998. In contrast, although national policies and strategies on basic education were in place throughout the 1990s in Burkina Faso and the development of the new national plan and strategy (PDDEB) began in 1997, the plan was only officially launched in 2002.

It is interesting to note that in all four countries, continuity in the national policy and strategy in basic education has been related to consistent and growing external financial support. In Bolivia, for example, external agency representatives contrasted the situation in the education sector to the relative lack of stability in national policies and programmes in other social sectors. They felt that continuity and commitment to basic education policy on the part of the Government of Bolivia was a key factor in ensuring continued (and growing) external financial support.

The Uganda Country Study also provides a clear example of how consistent national policy commitment can be linked to external agencies' views on the level and form of financial support to basic education:

> The shift by many funding agencies to budget support, for example, was driven primarily, it seems, by policy decisions taken at head office. However, the decision to implement that shift in Uganda in particular, reflects two significant factors, cited by agencies that were Ugandan initiatives:
>
> - Clear messages from the highest levels of authority in the government that created a strong climate of sustainable national commitment and leadership; and
> - The development of an appropriate enabling environment by the [Government of Uganda] itself that raised external agencies' comfort level about using Uganda as a "test-bed" for the new policy directions (Uganda Country Study Report, p. 54-55).

In each of the four countries, in fact, there were strong elements of a continuous priority to basic education in national policy over the past decade or so. In Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia there was a clear emphasis on UPE as the core EFA goal, with some increased room for dealing with non-formal education and adult literacy emerging in the 2000-2002 period.

Continuity of Funding

In this area there is a strong contrast between the Country Studies and the picture at the global level. The Document Review points out that the international conferences on basic education held at Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 naturally gave rise to the expectation that more resources would flow from external support agencies to national partners in order to accelerate progress towards achieving the EFA goals. The Document Review (working with data from the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002*) points out that just the reverse happened. External financial flows to basic education were at best stagnant in the period from 1990 to 2000 and, according to some estimates at least, may actually have declined slightly. Dakar has served as a wake-up call and resulted in at least new statements of intent to provide more resources but, as pointed out in Section 2.0 and in the Document Review, some global innovations such at the FTI are having difficulty securing commitments of funds.

In the four Country Studies, we see a very different picture with, for the most part, sustained increases in external financial support to education in general and basic education in particular over the latter part of the 1990s and into the current decade.

In each of the four countries, this has given rise to serious concerns over sustainability, dependency and risk:

- Bolivia has responded to the rise in external support by greatly increasing its allocation of national resources to cover the recurrent costs of basic education but concern remains that external funds cover much of the cost of infrastructure investment and virtually all of the costs of innovation in the system. Bolivia was included in the original group of countries designated for the FTI but the original proposals were resisted by the Ministry of Public Finance and External Cooperation as unsustainable due to the high recurrent cost exposure the government would face;

- Burkina Faso remains highly dependant on external financing. As noted in the Burkina Faso Country Study, there is a strong sense on the part of all stakeholders that the current emphasis on expanding and improving the quality of basic education is generating a system that is unsustainable since it continues to depend substantially on the support of external agencies;

- The Uganda Country Study points to the fact that external support funds between 60% and 65% of activities in basic education and that this represents both a huge risk to the countries if external supporters were to disengage and an obligation to external agencies that extends well into the future; and

- In the words of the Zambia Study:

  No one is prepared to make estimates about the date by which external support to education would no longer be necessary in Zambia but agencies and the [Government of the Republic of Zambia] seem to agree that the time scale is at least 10 and maybe 20 years. Perhaps this supportive partnership is an even longer term scenario, balancing global economic inequalities for the sake of a universal minimum standard of basic education (Zambia Country Study Report, p. 65).

Nonetheless, it is worth re-iterating that continuity in external financial support, with some exceptions, has been a reality for each of the four countries. Some external support agencies have come and gone in each of the four countries over the past decade, but, since the mid-1990s, they have been able to rely on sustained high levels of external financial support. The Country Studies argue that the commitment of resources over the longer term needs to be recognized by external agencies, at least implicitly and preferably explicitly.

The only discontinuity in funding has been noted in the Zambia Country Study in relation to the trend to concentrate more and more external funding support on primary schooling, which causes discontinuities in support to non-formal education and adult literacy.

In general terms, however, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia have received sufficient sustained external funding over the period from 1995 to 2003 to provide the basis for the process of working out effective partnerships in basic education. In this sense, their experience may not be typical of many countries.

Continuity in Personnel

This is one area where discontinuities have tended to prevail in three of the four countries participating in the evaluation. Bolivia seems to be an important exception:

- In Bolivia, the national *Law on Education Reform* and PRE, passed in 1994, gave rise to a period of exceptional stability in the technical and administrative staff of the Vice Ministry of Initial, Primary and Secondary Education. This period extended until at least 2002 and continues (with some perturbations) to the present time. The period was also characterized by long-term involvement by key representatives of external agencies who provided leadership and coordination;

- Burkina Faso and Zambia report discontinuity problems in technical and administrative staff in the Ministry of Education and other partner agencies of government. They also point to problems in the frequent rotation of external agency education sector experts. Uganda reports some problems in continuity caused by the "politicization" of the UPE goal and disruption to the central/local partnership; and

- Uganda also reports that the creation of the Education Funding Agencies Group (EFAG) has improved the cohesiveness and continuity of representation among external agencies in Uganda.

In many ways, the problem of continuity in technical and administrative staff in the partner governments is not unique to the basic education sub-sector, or even to the education sector as a whole. Nonetheless, it represents a major impediment to the ability of national governments (and their district and local components) to participate in effective partnership. This, in turn, means that there is a strong link between the pursuit of effective partnerships in basic education and efforts to depoliticize and reform the public sector in each of the four countries.

In fact, the Country Studies for Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia all point to links between national programmes of public sector reform (to address problems of staffing, retention and promotion in the civil service) and effective external support to basic education. In a number of cases they point to external agencies that have made Ministry of Education participation in public sector reform programmes a condition of continued support to components of basic education.

In overall terms, therefore, all four countries participating in the evaluation can point to a fairly consistent national strategy and policy in basic education, with an emphasis on universal primary education and support to formal schooling. They also have experienced sustained high levels of external funding since the mid-1990s with indications that this will continue in the medium-term.

In the area of continuity of personnel, however, there is a strong difference between the four countries with Bolivia apparently experiencing greater continuity in the cadre of technical staff in the key cooperating Ministry and in the representation of external agencies, although Uganda reports that EFAG has helped external agencies to present a more coherent policy face in discussions with government partners.

5.2.2 Administrative and Other Capacity Constraints

The imbalance between the administrative and technical capacity of external agencies on the one hand, and national governments on the other, has been a major concern (and a major impediment) to the pursuit of effective partnerships in basic education, both globally and in the countries taking part in the Joint Evaluation. Some observers have argued that the asymmetry evident in partnerships is most often based on the financial power of external agencies, but one could argue that this question of technical and administrative capacity is at least equally important.

Before considering the situation in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia, it is worthwhile pointing out some of the key points made in the Document Review regarding imbalances in administrative and technical capacity:

- External agencies have linked their reluctance or inability to substantially increase the flow of external funds to basic education to the question of "absorptive capacity," which is defined both in terms of the capacity of the delivery system on the ground (schools, teachers, inspectors and teacher trainers) to the capacity of national and local government agencies to plan, implement, administer and report on projects and programmes in basic education;

- The international discourse on policies and programmes in basic education tends to be framed in terms set by the international and national agencies providing external support because of their ability to both carry out and to fund key research work; and

- Efforts by external agencies to harmonize their technical and administrative requirements through such innovations as programme approaches and SWAps have not yet proven that they, in fact, result in reduced administrative burdens for partner countries and other stakeholders.

Table 20, below, presents an overview of the findings of the Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia Country Studies as they examine the problems of administrative and technical capacity imbalances and the way they, in turn, affect partnerships.

Table 20: Imbalances in Administrative and Technical Capacity

Country Study	Findings
Bolivia	• Regional sources of expertise help in supplementing government technical capacity • External agencies have strongly supported TA and capacity building, particularly in administration, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation • Government has increasing access to modern resources in information management and presentation, although this remains uneven across ministries • Decentralization impacts local capacity and some TA is provided at regional levels • Problem of politics and probity
Burkina Faso	• Government administrative capacity remains weak with negative impact on partnership • Asymmetries in preparation and influence of government and external actors • Turnover in government hampers intensive support of capacity building by external agencies • Too early to tell if the PDDEB impacts on capacity
Uganda	• The rationale of the SWAp was to reduce administrative burden on government • Short-term effect of the SWAp, however, has been to increase administrative burden on government • A high level of harmonization in external agency requirements has been achieved through the EFAG • Nonetheless, these arrangements are not yet uniform
Zambia	• External agencies are better prepared than the government for the international meetings • HIV/AIDS has had a major impact on middle management • Decreasing opportunities for study scholarships impact leadership • SWAp-related semi-annual review process reduces administration overall, but concentrates it • Agencies have provided resources to undertake some of the administration • Improvement in the harmonization of requirements

It is evident that the problem is perhaps least difficult in Bolivia, or that Bolivia has been able to make considerable progress in building technical and administrative capacity in basic education with the direct support of external partners. The fact that Bolivia has had the highest level of stability in its staff complement in technical and administrative units at headquarters in the Ministry of Initial, Primary and Secondary Education has had a major positive effect on the results of capacity-building projects and programmes.

Similarly, Bolivia has been able to draw on technical and research capacity in the Andean zone, especially from researchers in university faculties dealing with intercultural and bilingual education. Also, on the positive side of the ledger in Bolivia, one must count the generally high capacity of the Bolivian civil service in the area of data collection, data management and use of modern, computerized methods of information management.

On the downside of the ledger of technical and administrative capacity in Bolivia, one must consider the problem of political party influence on programmes and projects at central and municipal level and the problem of accountability for the use of funds. In the mid-1990s, the Education Reform Programme included direct support from GTZ in the form of a technical unit for procurement and reporting – Unit for Support of the Education Reform Programme. It was successful in improving transparency and accountability, but at some cost to the speed of programme implementation.

In the other Country Studies the problem of administrative and technical capacity and the imbalance between external agencies and partner countries seems much more severe. The Burkina Faso study, for example, notes that Government of Burkina Faso administrative capacity remains weak and, more importantly, that this weakness on the part of the Government means that external agencies have a disproportionate influence in discussion on programme and project content and on policy directions. External agencies are better prepared for these negotiations than their Burkinabè counterparts and have more technical backup during the discussions that take place.

External agencies have not ignored this problem and have tried to support the development of technical and administrative capacity in the basic education components of the Government but these efforts have faced an inherent limiting factor in the high rate of turnover of officers of the ministries. Finally, the PDDEB represents, at least in part, an effort to introduce more cohesion and predictability into both the national strategy and programme and external support. As such, it has the goal of reducing the problem of limited technical and administrative capacity on the part of the government but the Country Study points out that it is simply too early to tell whether the PDDEB will have this hoped for effect.

The Uganda Country Study points to two key developments aimed at reducing the imbalance between external and national technical and administrative capacity: the development of a SWAp and the convening of the EFAG. The first was intended to reduce the administrative burden faced by the Government of Uganda in dealing with the many different forms of external support to basic education. As the Uganda Country Study makes clear, there is a strong consensus of opinion in Uganda that the short-term effect of the move to a SWAp has been an increase in the administrative burden felt by the Government – perhaps related to the much more stringent planning and reporting requirements of a SWAp.

On the other hand, in Uganda the convening of the EFAG seems to have contributed to at least some harmonization of administrative and operational norms and standards among the group of agencies supporting basic education. Divergence and contradiction in these norms and standards remains a major element in the administration burden of partner countries in Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Zambia. Also, in both Zambia and Uganda, the capacity of decentralized agencies to administer and manage has risen.

The situation in Zambia is similar to Uganda and Burkina Faso in that specific imbalances in capacity are identified in the Country Study (for example, preparedness for international conferences). Zambia also notes the extremely negative impact of HIV/AIDS on the national technical and administrative (and direct delivery) capacity of the national system of basic education. With regard to the use of SWAps, the Zambia report indicates that the semi-annual review process has helped to save administrative costs for government and external agencies alike.

The Zambia Country Study also notes that there are capacity issues within the external agencies. The work demands for staff of external agencies are changing. The shift to SWAps has lead to a change in the tasks for external agency staff towards more sector-wide analysis, policy formulation and planning, negotiations and a greater understanding of the "politics" of external agency coordination, which are not part of the traditional skills of education section experts at the country level. These changes were also noted in the Document Review.

In summary, the imbalance in technical and administrative capacities is one of the most serious constraints on the development of effective partnerships in basic education, both globally and in the countries under study. Bolivia has had a longer period of stability in staffing of key headquarters positions than the other three countries and has benefited more from external support to capacity development efforts. It has also been able to draw on regional sources of expertise and experience.

Finally, funding of external support to basic education through larger programme modalities and SWAps has been a strategy used in all four countries to reduce the administrative burden on the national and local governments. Evidence of the result of this strategy is quite mixed with some countries reporting reduced administrative burdens through better harmonization of, in particular, reporting requirements (Zambia). Others report either that the short-term administrative burden has risen or that it is too early to tell (Burkina Faso, Uganda). In addition, the Document Review calls into question whether, in the short-term at least, SWAps have resulted in a reduced administrative burden. In some cases, it suggests that the burden may have increased or at least the nature of the burden has changed.

5.2.3 Roles and Participation

The past decade of external support to basic education has been characterized on both sides (external agencies and partner countries) by efforts to better delineate the roles and responsibilities of external agencies, government agencies and the broader education community (global organizations, NGOs and community groups) in the process of cooperation. This search has included the global and national definition of goals in EFA, as well as experimentation with different forms of project and programme assistance, including SWAps. At a global level, the Document Review points out the following key findings on roles and on participation:

- The movement to programme funding and SWAps has been accompanied by an increase in the role and influence of the World Bank, not only in funding, but also in policy dialogue and TA. This has occurred not only because the Bank has normally provided very significant loan funds to support programme approaches and SWAps in basic education but because of the support provided by bilateral agencies to Bank-led technical and administrative initiatives at the country level;

- The rise in the role of the World Bank has been accompanied in many countries by the emergence of a group of "core" funding agencies supporting SWAps and other programme forms with direct funding;

- United Nations agencies and other agencies with either mandate issues or corporate policies against participation in programme funding arrangements have had to make an accommodation with these new forms, with varying levels of success. UNICEF is pointed to as an agency that has had some success in working out ways of innovating with project support so that it can work well within the framework of programme funding and SWAps;

- Problems have occurred in the movement towards large programmes of support to basic education in relation to key stakeholders outside of the government agencies (such as NGOs or churches) and external agencies most closely involved in negotiations; and

- As external and national resources have increasingly been focused on formal, in-school, primary education, the roles of NGOs and community organizations have been diminishing, at least within the boundaries of large programmes. On the other hand, external agencies have continued to provide direct support to national and international NGOs in areas such as alternative education and adult literacy.

The four Country Studies have the main effect of reinforcing the two themes noted above, the emergence of an "inner" and "outer" group of external support agencies and the question of how to bring civil society more directly into the dialogue on national policies and programmes in basic education (see Table 21).

Table 21: Roles and Participation

Country Study	Findings
Bolivia	• World Bank leadership of the core programme process, shared with key bilateral agencies • Inner/outer agency group with a fluctuating relationship • Perceived exclusion of outer agency group and of NGOs and community organizations from policy/technical dialogue • External support to both formal and non-formal education, but emphasis on UPE • Role of teachers' unions is very difficult to deal with • Open dialogue is hampered somewhat by political tensions "legacy" of external support for economic liberalization policies
Burkina Faso	• Teachers' status is a major issue as is the role of teachers' unions • Government focus on formal schooling, and NGOs on non-formal education • External support to both, but concentration on formal education • Different levels of commitment to common funding among agencies • Inner/outer group of external agencies • Some national organizations are happy with the level of dialogue • Lack of consultation with local education system representatives
Uganda	• External agencies are committed to a more developed partnership • Yet, external agencies are seen as wielding more power than national counterparts • Some external agencies outside the core group feel peripheral to key processes • Civil society organizations and NGOs are marginalized in policy and technical dialogue
Zambia	• World Bank leadership in SWAp process • UNICEF has a unique role – integrated project support for cross-cutting actions for girls • Tensions between agencies in the core group and the "outer circle" • UNESCO has a very low presence • External agencies encourage NGO involvement – government is more resistant

In the cases of Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Uganda, the evaluation teams have reported that the sense of "partnership" has not extended to national and global organizations outside the government/external agency nexus.

In Bolivia, the churches and national teachers' organizations complain that the Education Reform Programme (PRE) is essentially a pact between external agencies and the Ministry of Education. Similarly, the community outreach components of the PRE have been evaluated as lacking meaningful roles in the management of local education systems. While the Burkina Faso report notes that national NGOs were reasonably happy with the level of dialogue they achieved in the

planning of the 10-year education plan, it also indicates that representatives from local education systems were not as effectively consulted in the process.

The Uganda Country Study makes a strong case that NGOs and community organizations tend to be marginalized in the process of policy and technical dialogue around programming in basic education, while the Zambia report observes that NGO involvement in policy and programme development is advocated by many external agencies, but tends to be resisted by the national government.

It is important to note, however, that international and national NGOs have an important role in providing financial and technical support in all four countries. International NGOs provide direct financing and TA for infrastructure development while community organizations are often partnering with the ministry of education in providing services or in-kind support in such areas as school feeding. NGOs and community organizations also play an important role in direct delivery of non-formal basic education services in all four countries (often with external support).

In summary, with some limited exceptions, NGOs and community organizations are able to act in all four case study countries as service delivery providers, but they are much less welcomed by governments and external agencies into the process of policy and technical dialogue.

The Core Group Problem

All four Country Studies (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Zambia) make the strong point that the emergence of programme funding mechanisms has contributed to the development of a perceived "inner" and "outer" group of agencies providing support to basic education. Those in the "inner" group, because they provide funding directly to wider programmes of sub-sector or sector support, enjoy much greater access and influence on policy and programme issues than do their "outer" counterparts.

For those in the "inner" group this can seem only just. After all, by providing direct funding to a large programme of support they are, in their view, giving up parts of the aid relationship that have been highly valued by external agencies for a very long time, including:

- Visibility, allowing the agencies' contribution to be readily identified and communicated to their domestic constituency;
- Focus, allowing the agencies' contribution to be concentrated on a specific activity, geographic location or target group with greater apparent (if more localized) impacts; and
- Accountability, allowing the agencies to track the use of resources to specific activities and to know "where their money is being spent," which is another important constituency value.

Thus, those agencies providing direct funding to large programmes of support are foregoing certain elements in their aid cooperation that are normally very important in the political economy of development cooperation. In a similar vein, for example, if agency policy calls for tying aid to procurement of domestic resources, this is more or less impossible in the context of a common funding mechanism.

In the view of some external agencies (and some governments), organizations not willing to forego these benefits should not have access to the collective benefits of participation, including

the same level of influence during the development of national strategies and programmes in basic education.

The problem with this approach is that it may have a more negative impact on the partner country than on the agencies categorized in the outer group. There are many reasons why it may be in a partner country's best interest that agencies constrained from providing pooled funding should enjoy as high level of access and influence on policy. For example:

- UNESCO's regional offices have had some capacity in policy development along with technical capacity for participating in dialogue on both policies and programmes. UNESCO staff have a history in the development of policies in basic education and a mandated role in EFA follow-up. They can and should provide an alternative perspective on many of the issues surrounding the development of national plans, strategies and programmes in basic education;

- UNICEF often plays a very strong advocacy role with regard to children's rights, the provision of basic education to marginalized social groups, the right to mother-tongue education and the need for adult literacy training. It is also involved in innovative co-funded programmes with, for example, Danida and has important experience in key areas such as bilingual education; and

- Technical assistance agencies such as GTZ have taken a strong role in the development of techniques and approaches in basic education at a regional level. They can make important contribution to the development of national plans and programmes.

The point is that efforts to exclude these types of organizations from joint planning, coordination, management and review mechanisms do more harm to the country than to the organizations, since they may mean that important sources of information and expertise are excluded from the key debates.

The Question of Civil Society

The Country Studies approach this question of participation mainly in the area of who gets to participate in efforts to develop a national policy, strategy, plan and programme of development of basic education. Most findings reported in the case studies also focus on the question of how the relationship between project and programme funding (as it moves seemingly inexorably to the SWAp modality) affects participation in this process by different groups.

All four Country Studies note that the dialogue on national policies and programmes tends to change during the development of a SWAp. They note a tendency for the process to broaden within a specific government to include, for example, Ministries of Planning and Finance as well as Education, but, at the same time, to narrow down to a dialogue between specialists and experts in the national government and their counterparts in external support agencies. The Zambia report, supported by the Document Review, noted that effective participation in a SWAp required a different skill set on the part of the locally based education specialists of external agencies than those used in dealing with projects.

In general terms, however, the Country Studies point to the problem of how to broaden the national dialogue on policies and programmes in basic education to comprise key stakeholders including, for example, teachers' unions, parents' organizations, and representatives of

indigenous peoples. There is a theme of exclusion and marginalization of these groups from policy and technical dialogue running through the four Country Studies.

If this were just a question of political correctness, it might not matter, but it runs much deeper than that. If effective ways are not found to bring key stakeholders into the national dialogue on policies and programmes in basic education, there is a major risk of reducing the social and political legitimacy of the resulting programmes. There is also the readily apparent risk (noted in Section 3.0 above) of alienating groups key to the success of the programme, such as teachers, teacher trainers and community groups.

The Country Studies also acknowledge, however, that participation by key stakeholder groups is not that easy to arrange and may result in conflict. Teachers' unions, for example, are both owners of the system and employees of government. They bring to the discussion their own special interests as employees, as well as their knowledge of what works and what does not at the classroom level. In some countries they have been viewed by governments and external agencies alike as more of an impediment to reform and increased effectiveness in basic education, than as an ally.

Nonetheless, there is a clear need for all parties in external support to basic education to pay particular attention to these two phenomena (the inner and outer group of external agencies and exclusion of key stakeholders) in order to ensure that policies and programmes are based on the best technical advice available and that they enjoy a reasonably high level of support across the groups of stakeholders, which are crucial to their success.

5.2.4 Relevance to Local Context

It is clear that there are important cross-linkages among the five factors examined by the evaluation in the area of partnership. For example, greater participation by key stakeholder groups (including, especially, local communities and representatives of learners and their parents) has a role to play in improving the relevance of external support to basic education to the national and local contexts in which it is used.

The Document Review noted continuing important issues in the relevance of external support to basic education in the national and local contexts for which it is provided:

- The tendency for governments and external agencies supporting them to focus on UPE to the detriment of other EFA goal areas, such as early childhood education and adult literacy which seems to dismiss the possibility that other areas of the EFA goals may be highly relevant in certain contexts;

- The absence of sufficient attention to the link between primary education and poverty reduction has been discussed in some detail in Section 4.0 but is worth re-emphasizing under the heading of relevance since parents in particular raise the issue of what is to happen to those who achieve primary education but are not able to attend secondary school;

- The continued problem of external assistance not suited to the local traditions and conditions of work so that, for example, teacher education models are imported from different countries based on an external agency's knowledge of those systems, whether or not they are suited to local conditions; and

- The persistence of imposed administrative and operational norms and standards by external agencies, which conflict with national practice and with similar standards imposed by other agencies, clearly represents a failure to respond appropriately to local contexts when it increases the administrative burden on systems that are already struggling.

The Country Studies identify similar themes in the relevance of external support to basic education, but they place special emphasis on the primary use of external support and national resources and some priorities that have apparently been missed (see Table 22).

Table 22: Relevance to Local Context

Country Study	Findings
Bolivia	• Persistent quality issues are a focus of some resistance to the education reform programme • Relevance is often seen in concentration on intercultural/bilingual education as a counter to "internal colonization" of indigenous people • Relevance of external support to girls' participation problems
Burkina Faso	• Questions of relevance of primary schooling in job search • Classical primary classroom schooling being of questionable relevance • Experimenting and pilot project culture, with distinct lack of "going to scale," results in a patchwork • New literary fund encourages non-formal education
Uganda	• External agencies/government concur in focus on UPE (mainly through formal primary education) • Tensions with some external agencies may rise as government shifts to focus on other components of the education system
Zambia	• Due to capacity and structural issues, BESSIP backed away from full SWAp • BESSIP led to cutbacks in external support to non-UPE work, including community-based adult literacy • Agencies responded to national priority for UPE • External agency support not addressing HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting issue for primary schooling • External agencies' support not addressing children's rights, for example to be free from corporal punishment

The Bolivia and Uganda Country Studies, in particular, point to the general agreement among external agencies and national governments that primary schooling should have the greatest national priority and receive the bulk of external support. In Bolivia, this has the special feature of being directly related to the effort to use intercultural/bilingual education as a means of bringing indigenous peoples more fully, not only into education, but also into the functioning of Bolivian democracy. Thus, the relevance of much of the content of the Education Reform Programme (PRE) in Bolivia is bound up in the need to make pre-primary and primary education more relevant linguistically, culturally and socially to the majority of citizens who are indigenous.

It should not be assumed, however, that all Bolivians, even those from indigenous communities, accept this definition of relevance. There is continuing resistance from many communities to the idea of bilingual education (some of which is politically organized). Some indigenous parents are convinced that their children's chances of social and economic advancement would be better served by unilingual Spanish primary education.

This concern of Bolivian parents relates directly to the major question on relevance raised in the Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia reports: the fate of primary school leavers. Burkina Faso

illustrates this point most directly, but all four Country Studies raise the issue, one way or another, of how primary schooling (which receives so much of the national and external resources devoted to basic education) can be said to be relevant to the world that awaits school leavers.

As noted in the Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Zambia reports, the major gains of the past seven or eight years in the coverage of the primary school system have not been met with a similar expansion in available secondary school spaces. The Uganda Study also points out that the planned programme for post primary education and training is still in its infancy.

This problem of the "bulge" of primary school leavers raises further questions relating to relevance:

- What, if anything, has or could be done to modify the content of primary schooling or to couple it with other forms of education and training so that it would be more relevant for those children who will not attend secondary schooling?
- What measures are being taken to increase the capacity of the secondary school systems for those students who are qualified and can access secondary schooling?
- What are the implications of this problem for non-formal education given that it seems to be so neglected by the clear concentration of national and external assistance on goals in primary enrolment and completion?

The Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia Country Studies emphasize all three of these problems in relevance and point out that it is made worse when areas outside primary education are subject to relative neglect.

As already pointed out, external agencies do provide support to non-formal education, especially in the area of adult literacy training (usually funded through NGOs). The Country Studies make the observation that external agencies are increasingly emphasizing the development of strategies, plans and programmes in non-formal education and are beginning to direct more of their support (usually as project funding) there. In fact, the Uganda Country Study suggests that the consensus between the Government of Uganda and external agencies on the priority of primary education may come under some strain as agencies advocate more attention to non-formal education.

On the other hand, the same report notes that the Government of Uganda (GOU) is beginning to focus on other components of the education system. As the priorities of the GOU change from focusing on basic education to other aspects of the education sector (secondary, tertiary), there are indications of tensions between the GOU and external agencies. In other words, external agencies have supported the Government's priorities to the extent that they are mutual but this will be tested as they change over time.

In summary, the key problem in the relevance of external support to basic education as it relates to local context concerns the apparent over-concentration on primary education and the question of how relevant that education may be for those school leavers who are not able to attend secondary school.

There are other important issues of local relevance including the relevance of some technical support to local systems of teacher education or, for example, curriculum development, but the core relevance of the content of basic education as supported in many countries is the major concern.

One might question how this relates to partnership since there is such strong agreement between external agencies and their national partners on the priority of primary schooling. This could just be a case of partners agreeing on the wrong priority.

In fact, however, one can argue that this results from too narrow a definition of partnership and the problems in relatively closed dialogue. If parents, learners, teachers and other key stakeholders find themselves excluded from the dialogue on the content of basic education, we should not be surprised when there are various serious concerns raised over the relevance of that content.

5.2.5 The Modalities of External Support and Partnership

As already noted, the question of which modalities are used to fund external support to basic education (usually contrasted in terms of project or programme funding, including SWAps) may not have predetermined impact on partnership. That is to say, projects and programmes alike may be partnership-friendly or the reverse.

Notwithstanding such an assertion, at a global level and within the four countries participating in the evaluation, there was an expectation that moving from one to the other would improve partnership by:

- Increasing the national sense of ownership over a coordinated programme of external support that is brought into line with national basic education policies, plans, and programmes;
- Allowing for more open coordination of external support; and
- Reducing administrative complexity and the burden on partner governments, not least by promoting harmonized accountability and reporting requirements.

As shown in Table 23, the Document Review points to these three rationales but also notes the significant body of literature on SWAps that suggests that the modality is not a template for achieving national ownership, and a stronger partnership in support to basic education. Rather, the literature suggests that the development and implementation of a SWAp should be viewed as a process that, like all processes, may be inclusive or exclusive, balanced or unbalanced.

Table 23: Modalities of External Support

Country Study	Findings
Bolivia	• Programme/project debate persisted throughout the full seven years of the Education Reform Pprogramme (PRE) • Projects reported to support experimentation; programmes to strengthen going to scale • Movement towards SWAp in next generation proposed by agencies and favoured by governments • Government favours programme modalities, but works with project funders • Tensions between project and programme rise and fall over time • Projects provide external agencies with a means of supporting non-formal education outside of the PRE
Burkina Faso	• SWAp mainly an external agency initiative • Perception remains of external agencies in the “driver’s seat” • There are examples of burgeoning SWAp-like mechanisms prior to the 10-year plan for the development of basic education (PDDEB) • Introduction of the PDDEB intended to be partnership-friendly, but may not work out that way – the PDDEB still not well understood at the field level

	• The PDDEB did contribute to improved coordination • It also included common funding and harmonized accountability requirements accepted by three agencies • Included development of a tripartite (government, NGOs, private sector) literacy fund • SWAp is not a goal state nor a mechanism, but a process – how it is done matters
Uganda	• SWAp has not strengthened inclusion of NGOs and civil society in policy dialogue so far • Projects have an important role in experimentation • Ugandan partners still feel they are not the ones in control and are subject to many conditionalities • Projects have the potential to increase levels of participation at the local level as they are more responsive to disadvantaged local communities • Agencies have used the project form to provide support to early childhood education, alternative education and adult literacy • Budget support tends to favour some practice areas in education over others – specifically allowed for concentration on UPE in a common framework
Zambia	• Basic Education sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) administered outside MOES (done to ensure strong financial management for BESSIP) – to be integrated in next phase • Evidence of ownership in the increasing management capacity supported by TA under BESSIP • External agencies need staff with very different skill sets in a SWAp environment, for example, in system-wide analysis, policy formation, planning, negotiation • Legacy projects brought under the umbrella of BESSIP – such at the Primary Reading Programme – have been able to institutionalize and "go to scale" • Withdrawal of some agencies from project mode reduced TA and capacity development support to provinces • Some concern at the loss of opportunities for innovation

At the time of completion of the Document Review and without testing the situation in each of the participating countries, evaluation team members would have said that the "jury was still out" in terms of international research on SWAps and their impact on partnership.

Interestingly enough, as reported in Section 3.0, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia all moved during the past decade from a predominantly project support approach to one where programme support dominates the volume of external resources provided (or planned) to basic education.

At the same time, the emergence of programme approaches and SWAps has not meant the demise of projects in any of the four countries. The project support modality has proven surprisingly resilient in all four countries. The Country Studies also seem to support the idea that this is a good thing.

Specifically, the Country Studies make the following key points about project and programme support modalities and their influence on partnership.

On the negative side of the ledger:

- The movement from mainly project to programme funding in the mid-1990s coincided with, and to some extent facilitated, greater concentration by external agencies and partner governments alike on UPE, with negative consequences for other areas of basic education, especially early childhood education, non-formal education and adult literacy (Bolivia, Uganda);

- As already noted, the movement to a programme fund or SWAp created inner and outer groups of external supporters with consequent tensions (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Zambia);

- The development of large scale sub-sector programmes and SWAps has meant a certain withdrawal from direct support to regions and districts, with a consequent feeling on their part that they have been both abandoned by external agencies and excluded from policy and technical dialogue (Uganda, Zambia);

- SWAps and programme approaches seem to contribute to the exclusion of NGOs and civil society from national dialogue (Bolivia, Uganda);

- SWAps often result in a reduction of funding and TA for innovation (Uganda, Zambia); and

- Despite the general intent that SWAps should encourage ownership, national governments remain convinced that external agencies are in the "driver's seat," especially in terms of conditionalities (Burkina Faso, Uganda).

On the positive side, with regard to movement from projects to programmes:

- In some countries, programme support arrangements have been viewed by government as essential in strengthening national ownership (Bolivia);

- There is some evidence of the programme approach being used to harmonize accountability requirements (Burkina Faso, Uganda, Zambia);

- Programme approaches have been flexible enough to encompass projects and to utilize their results in going to scale at a national level (Bolivia, Zambia);

- The process of annual or semi-annual review has reduced administrative burdens and costs (Zambia); and

- Projects brought into the umbrella of the programme approach have benefited from closer links to the Ministry of Education and/or have been taken to scale at a national level (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia).

On the last point, the Zambia Country Study points to the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) as an example:

> The Primary Reading Programme (PRP), a large and important project that pre-dates BESSIP but was taken under the BESSIP umbrella, has benefited from being inside the planning and monitoring regime of BESSIP. Consequently, personnel at all levels have built good working contacts with the MOE and professionals, and integrated PRP with other aspects of BESSIP, such as the curriculum revision (Zambia Country Report, p. 13).

In summary, at least as applied in the countries participating in the evaluation, the shift from project to programme support has probably been partnership neutral, strengthening it in some countries (Bolivia, Zambia) and perhaps with no discernible effect, or at least not yet, on strengthening or weakening partnership in Burkina Faso or Uganda. It is the strong consensus of

the evaluation teams for all four countries that the shift from projects to programmes is not inherently positive or negative from the perspective of partnership.

Much more important from the perspective of partnership is the question of how the shift is made and what efforts are made to accommodate the benefits of the project support modality within the wider framework of the programme or SWAp. The shift from a predominantly project support approach to basic education to an umbrella programme or SWAp (with some projects persisting, as they usually do) will more likely have a positive influence on partnership when it includes:

- A commitment from partner governments, programme funding agencies and project supporting agencies (including those engaged in advocacy, policy dialogue, and TA) to allow for full participation in programme processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation by project supporting agencies;

- A commitment to the principles of transparency, mutual respect and trust;

- Mechanisms for wider consultations with key stakeholders from outside government and the external support agencies;

- An approach to programme support that recognizes the role of projects in pilot-testing innovations at regional and local levels, as well as nationally;

- Explicit planning for links from projects to programmes so that innovations and pilot tests are not left isolated from national level funding and support; and

- Significant financial and technical assistance to develop the administrative and technical capacity of key units in the partner ministries of government so that they are able to design, commission and carry out programme and project planning, monitoring, review and evaluation tasks and can take overall responsibility for those functions.

Most important of all perhaps, and most difficult to quantify, will be the attitude of leading agencies engaged in the process of developing and implementing the programme approach to external support. For external agencies, this means balancing their policies, technical positions and accountability requirement with the need for the partner government to assume ownership of the subsequent programme. For partner governments, it means being more open to wider participation in the programme development, planning, monitoring and evaluation, not only by external agencies providing project support, but also by key national stakeholders.

5.2.6 Critical Issues in the Transition from Projects to Programmes

A number of critical issues arise from the experience of the four countries studied as they move from a mainly project approach to external support to basic education to predominance of sub-sectoral and sectoral programmes. These include:

- The relative advantages and disadvantages of project and sectoral approaches and the circumstances in which each is deemed preferable;
- The managerial and administrative burden associated with the transition to sectoral approaches; and
- The consequences of developing sectoral approaches based on different models, typically phrased as a blueprint or a process model.

Each of these issues is worth some further exploration.

1. Relative Advantages and Disadvantages of Project and Sectoral Modalities

There is no definitive evidence reported in any of the five evaluation products that would suggest that project or programme support for basic education have any **inherent** relative superiority, one over the other. The different forms have, however, been associated with different strengths across the four case study countries. Table 24, below, illustrates the pattern of differing comparative advantages and disadvantages of the two forms of aid to basic education.

Table 24: Comparative Strengths/Weaknesses of Project and Programme Approaches

Country Study	Project Approach	Sector or Programme Approach
Bolivia	• Supported experimentation in curriculum and teaching approaches • Targeted to geographic locations and specific target groups • Directed through NGOs as well as government agencies • Supporting non-formal education outside the national Education Reform Programme • Demonstration effect of key projects • Difficulties in going to scale	• Promoted sense of ownership by government • Allowed for some harmonization of monitoring and review process • Better coordination of external assistance • Promoted going to scale with initiatives tested through projects in the early to mid-1990s • Negative effect in terms of smaller group of external agencies with policy influence
Burkina Faso	• Projects promoted experimentation and innovation • Negative effect in the promotion of "pilot project culture" • National patchwork of local systems and approaches promoted by projects • Larger projects taking on elements of a programme approach over time	• PEDDEB contributed to improved coordination • Common funding and harmonized accountability arrangements for three agencies • Tripartite literacy fund with government, NGO, and private sector literacy fund • Negative perception of external agencies "in the driver's seat"
Uganda	• Projects have important role in experimentation • Projects are more responsive to disadvantaged local communities and have the potential to promote local participation • Projects support alternative education, early childhood education and adult literacy	• Negative effect is persistence of too many conditionalities and perception that Ugandan partners are not the ones in control • Budget support tends to favour some practice areas over others – specifically allowing for concentration on UPE using a common programme framework, which is both a strength and a weakness
Zambia	• Projects had a strong role in supporting innovation • Projects were used to provide TA and capacity development support to provinces	• Ownership improved through the local management of TA under BESSIP • Legacy projects brought into BESSIP have been able to be taken to scale at the national level

As Table 24 illustrates, project support for basic education in the four countries is mainly valued for its contribution to innovation and experimentation, as well as its ability to be targeted geographically and in terms of different areas of basic education, such as alternative education, adult literacy and early childhood education. The down side of the project support, as reviewed in the four Country Studies, is its tendency to promote a patchwork effect of different methods and approaches to basic education in a given country and the difficulty of taking lessons to scale at the national level.

This latter point (ability to take innovations to scale at the national level) is one of the key strengths of the programme approach as assessed in three of the four case study countries (Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia). Similarly, the sectoral approach is seen to have key advantages in promoting improved coordination of external support, as well as promoting ownership, despite the fact that two of the four countries (Uganda, Burkina Faso) reported that the national governments did not feel in control of the subsequent programmes. In other words, the SWAp may have the potential to improve the sense of national ownership but did not do so, or has not yet done so, in two of the four case study countries.

In fact, a main message of the Country Studies seems to be the need to find arrangements that allow the co-existence and positive interaction of the project and programme format.

2. Management and Administrative Burden Associated with the Sectoral Approach

One rationale behind the movement to programme approaches, including SWAps, has been the effort to reduce the administrative and managerial burden faced by partner governments as they dealt with a myriad of different, and sometimes conflicting, demands for project development, design, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation requirements.

It seems reasonable to expect that the SWAp form, with its emphasis on pooled funding and coordinated processes for review and accountability, would result in a net decrease in the administrative burden of external assistance to basic education as faced by the partner government.

In fact, the Document Review and the Country Studies suggest that the evidence on this point is mixed and that, while some gains are made in coordination of external support agency requirements for accountability and review, the burden of negotiating and coordinating a SWAp may, at least in the short-term, be as heavy or even heavier than dealing with projects.

As noted in the Document Review, researchers and evaluators have commented that the planning instruments and processes for many SWAps in education have been top-down and have relied too much on external consultants, with a resulting lack of national ownership of the analytical studies used to prepare the approaches. They have, in fact, relied on instruments that are familiar to external technical support agencies, but not necessarily to partner governments.

Similarly, the report of the *Evaluation of EC support to the education sector in ACP countries: Synthesis report*, while concluding that the SWAp has been shown to be the optimal way to implement education programme aid, also points out that "Its disadvantages **can** include high transaction costs, dominance by the strongest donors, concentration on macro-level policies and limited local participation" (Mercer, Gosparini, Orivel & Kayonga, 2002, p. x) [Emphasis added].

Table 4, in Section 3.2.2, is entitled *Steps Towards a Programme Approach or SWAp in Basic Education* and it illustrates how the movement towards a programme approach in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Zambia may have effected administrative burdens through common implementation procedures, improved agency coordination, and strengthened common processes for implementation and monitoring.

In **Bolivia**, there is very little evidence of an effort to develop common administrative procedures with even the "core" group of agencies supporting the Education Reform Programme maintaining different budgeting, procurement and accountability requirements. There is cooperation in the quarterly review process by the core agencies with other agencies taking part as observers but many important agencies are excluded from this coordination mechanism. There is no evidence that the administrative burden has increased as a result of the PRE, but the persistence of conflicting and overlapping administrative and operational requirements from project and programme supporting agencies strongly suggests there has been no dividend in the form of a reduced administrative burden resulting from the shift to programme support.

In **Burkina Faso,** the agencies participating in the common funding pool have developed common administrative procedures and at least some of those outside the core group are also developing similar procedures; in the meantime, however, a number of external agencies are continuing to use their own procedures. This perhaps provides an important clue to the short- and medium-term problem of the administrative and managerial impact of a move to a SWAp. There are clearly important transaction costs in the planning, negotiation, and implementation of a common system of procedures for procurement, disbursements, and monitoring and evaluation in the early period of a SWAp. At the same time, those agencies that are wholly outside the SWAp process (and those that are both in and out, in that they may provide programme funding to a core programme and project funding outside the programme) will often persist with administrative and operational requirements that are not harmonized with those of the SWAp. In the short-term at least, partner governments are thus burdened with all the effort of negotiating and implementing SWAp arrangements and procedures while maintaining the diverse management and reporting relationships associated with the project model.

Uganda and **Zambia** have experienced the most concentrated and consistent efforts to harmonize procedures and coordinate operations (especially in the form of common review processes) under the movement to a SWAp. The Uganda Country Study noted, however, that coordination of TA inputs was still not entirely successful and that the development of the SWAp had, in the view of Ugandan government officials, been associated with very heavy transaction costs for government, at least in the early stages.

In summary, the Document Review and the Country Studies point out that the promised savings for partner governments in administrative and managerial burden have, so far at least, been difficult to realize. This seems to arise from two distinct phenomena: the intensive burden of planning and negotiation associated with the movement towards a SWAp and the parallel problem of dealing with those agencies (both inside and outside the programme funding arrangement) who persist in maintaining distinctive, and often contradictory, administrative, operational and reporting requirements.

3. Blueprint or Process Perspectives on Sectoral Approaches to Supporting Basic Education

The Document Review points out the dangers of a "blueprint approach" to the development of SWAps in basic education. Using analytical tools and planning processes developed largely by external agencies with the strong role played by the same agencies in negotiating the details of a SWAp arrangement, a situation can arise where, despite the different national contexts, many SWAps in basic education seem to follow a common "blueprint" with little adaptation to local context. The consequence of this approach can be a very weak sense of national ownership and a sense that the external assistance provided under a SWAp is always subject to withdrawal due to problems with conditionalities.

It is significant that the Burkina Faso and Uganda Country Studies both noted that partner government officials felt strongly that the SWAp arrangements were largely in control of external agencies and that they, themselves, were not setting the direction of the resulting programmes.

This is in direct contrast with the documented role of government officials in Bolivia who were involved in intensive negotiations on the shape, content and delivery mechanisms of the Education Reform Programme from its beginnings in the early 1990s, and could provide examples of their ability to overcome substantial resistance from key external agencies on important points of programme design and direction.

In a process model of sectoral approaches, the SWAp itself is not a specific programme design or phase, but a commitment to joint planning on the part of domestic and external actors. The planning process would be ongoing and the agreed-upon common programme could be expected to change and evolve considerably over time. It seems, from that perspective, the Bolivia Country Case Study has reviewed a programme approach viewed by participating agencies as more of a process than a blueprint. This is perhaps attributable to the longevity of the Education Reform Programme with its beginnings over a decade ago. It may be that, as governments in Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia gain experience and confidence over time, they can shift the evolution of the programme approaches into a process approach and begin to have more influence and ownership.

5.3 Summary of Findings: Partnership and the Factors Supporting Partnership

The findings in this sub-section suggest that truly effective partnerships for basic education have not been achieved in many countries. Yet the analysis also suggests that this is not a reason to call off the search. Nor does it mean that the history of the almost thirteen years since Jomtien is one of wasted effort. However, the sub-section does identify a number of factors that contribute to more developed partnerships in basic education, and that those factors can be described under the headings of continuity, capacity, participation, and relevance. Under those headings and the heading of aid modalities, the following main findings can be identified.

Continuity

- The emergence of the MDGs in education and the formal concentration of the FTI on those goals has tended to reinforce the trend for external support to focus on UPE, diverting attention away from partnership with a focus on all the components of basic education.

- Basic policy continuity in partner countries (including all four studied for this evaluation) has been a contributing factor in encouraging significant levels of funding and other forms of external support.

- In the four countries, there are very serious concerns over the sustainability of the current level of funding. External agencies need to recognize that the commitments implied by their support of major expansions in primary school systems are long-term. The risk to each of the partner countries of substantial disengagement by the external support agencies is very high and the consequences would be devastating.

- In some countries (including Burkina Faso and Zambia) problems in staff rotation and discontinuities in public sector management have very important detrimental effects on partnership since they undermine the capacity of the partner country to hold its own in discussions and negotiations on policies and programmes. They also undermine externally supported efforts at capacity building. In contrast, Bolivia has been able to maintain a fairly high level of stability in the managerial and technical staff of the Ministry and has benefited more from capacity development efforts.

- The shift to SWAps has resulted in a change in the work demands for the staff of external agencies. They are required to be more involved in sector-wide analysis, policy formulation and planning, and negotiations; and require a greater understanding of the "politics" of external agency coordination. Yet, these are not part of the traditional skills of education experts in external agencies at the country level.

- Programmes of public sector reform aimed at improving human resource management and professionalizing and regularizing processes for staffing, training, promotion and retention have been linked by external agencies, in their policies and plans, to their continued commitment to provide support to key ministries involved in basic education. However, the extent to which these overarching reforms have, in reality, had an impact on basic education is not yet clear.

Constraints in Administrative and Technical Capacity

- The problem of imbalances in administrative and technical capacity between external support agencies and their national partners continues to seriously undermine efforts to develop effective partnerships in basic education. Some countries have been able to maintain a stable cadre of managerial and technical staff and have benefited from external support to capacity development. As in the case of Bolivia, some have also been able to access expertise and experience in the region (with the help of external support).

- The movement towards programme forms of support to basic education, including SWAps, has not yet resulted in a notable reduction in the overall administrative burden faced by national agencies involved in basic education. In fact, there is some suggestion that, in the short-term at least, the burden may have increased. There have been gains in the area of common assessment processes and harmonized reporting requirements, but, on balance, the programme mode has not been the solution to the problem of unbalanced administrative and technical capacities between external agencies and national partners.

Roles and Participation

- The movement to programme forms of support to basic education has often involved the emergence of two distinct categories of external support agencies: an inner group providing support to the common programme and an outer group providing project support. It is essential that the many agencies constrained from participation by their mandates and structures (including United Nations agencies and TA agencies) not be excluded from participation in key policy development and programme assessment structures. Their active involvement will strengthen the variety and quality of support available to national partner governments as they deal with the demands of programme support.

- There is a tendency for the dialogue surrounding the development, implementation and assessment of large-scale programmes of support to basic education to be conducted on a narrow basis, without effective participation by civil society organizations and key stakeholder groups such as teachers. This has the effect of alienating key groups necessary to the success of programmes and may undermine the level of political support and community commitment available to sustain the subsequent programme.

Relevance to Local Context

- There are important issues concerning the relevance of certain aspects of external assistance to the administrative and organizational contexts in partner countries. As an example, support to certain types of teacher education is sometimes not appropriate to the system of teacher education and advancement in the country concerned. Similarly, external agencies supporting basic education have not been able to coordinate or rationalize their complex administrative and operational norms and standards for budgeting, procurement, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Clearly, these systems are not appropriate to the administrative and management structures of many partner countries.

- More importantly perhaps, there are serious questions concerning the relevance of the focus of external support on "classical" formal, in-school primary education. This concern relates directly to the question of how primary school leavers who may not attend high school (due in part to the fact that secondary school systems have not expanded to keep pace with the increase in primary school enrolment) will fare in the world of work. The focus on UPE has not, with the exception of Bolivia's emphasis on intercultural/bilingual education, addressed the question of the content of primary schooling and how it should link to life after school.

Modalities of External Support

- Analysis of the shift from project to programme modalities in the countries participating in the Joint Evaluation suggests that the impact has not necessarily, by definition, been one of strengthening partnership. While it has been strengthened in some countries (Bolivia, Zambia), there has not, as yet, been any discernible effect to strengthen or weaken partnership in Burkina Faso or Uganda. It is the view of the team that the shift from projects to programmes is not inherently positive or negative from the perspective of partnership.

- It is clear that project support for basic education has played an important role in supporting innovation and the development of new practices. While there is some concern that this innovation may be lost in the move to programme support, there is also a strong potential for the improved effectiveness of project support as innovations and pilot projects are taken to scale in national programmes. The key problem is to ensure that project and programme support are integrated.

- There is evidence that, in some countries at least, the move towards programmatic approaches has either not led to a decrease in administrative burdens for the host country or has even, in the short term at least, led to an increase. Where this has occurred it has been attributed to the heavy burden of planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting faced by the host government in the transition to a sectoral approach. It is also sometimes linked to a failure on the part of external support agencies to adopt coordinated and simplified procedures for programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.

- The shift from predominantly a project support approach to basic education to an umbrella programme or SWAp (with some projects persisting, as they usually do) will more likely have a positive influence on partnership when it includes:

    - A commitment from partner governments, programme funding agencies and project supporting agencies (including those engaged in advocacy, policy dialogue, and TA) to allow for full participation in programme processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation by project supporting agencies;

    - Mechanisms for wider consultations with key stakeholders from outside government and the external support agencies;

    - An approach to programme support that recognizes the role of projects in pilot testing innovations at regional and local levels, as well as nationally;

    - Explicit planning for links from projects to programmes so that innovations and pilot tests are not left isolated from national level funding and support; and

    - Significant financial and TA to develop the administrative and technical capacity of key units in the partner ministries of government so that they are able to design, commission and carry out programme and project planning, monitoring, review and evaluation tasks, and can take overall responsibility for those functions.

PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.0 Conclusions

This section provides an overview of the conclusions reached by the evaluation team in light of the findings reported in Sections 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 on external support to basic education, externally supported basic education and partnership.

The overriding conclusion of the evaluation concerns the ongoing search for meaningful partnership as a road to the effective provision and use of external support to basic education, and hence to improvements in basic education in partner countries. The commitment to partnership is evident in the efforts of both external agencies and national and local partners over the period from 1990 to 2002. What is most lacking, however, is a willingness and determination to improve basic education through locally developed solutions that are most relevant to the particular contexts of partner countries and that are built from the "ground up" rather than through the application of blueprints and templates developed at a global level.

The key evaluation conclusions are summarized in Box 4 below. Further explanation of each conclusion is provided in the separate sub-sections that follow.

Box 4: Key Evaluation Conclusions

Key Evaluation Conclusions

1. There has been a strong tendency for external agencies to place increasing emphasis on the use of external support for accelerating progress in basic education, especially in relation to the education goals of the MDGs and to the EFA goals. This tendency has been accompanied, at times, by a reliance on blueprints, templates and prescribed solutions that have been detrimental to a commitment to partnership, has been inconsistent with the capacities of partners and has sometimes limited the relevance of programmes and projects. There is a need to place greater emphasis on the relevance of external support to local needs and capacities – for more tailored local solutions within a global consensus on goals.
2. The movement to programme support and SWAps is one of the most significant trends in the provision and use of external support to basic education. It has been intended, at least in part, to contribute to strengthened national ownership and to improve partnership (and thereby improve the effectiveness of the provision and use of external support). In a real sense, the shift to programme support is an indication of the commitment of external agencies to strengthen partnership. However, this form of support does not necessarily improve partnerships if implemented as a blueprint rather than a process. It has, in some cases, contributed to increased tensions and divisions among distinct groups of external agencies. On the positive side, it has led to some improvements in the sense of national ownership and to better coordination of external assistance.
3. The movement to supporting basic education through SWAps and other forms of programme support needs to be accompanied by an understanding of the positive role of project assistance, especially in supporting innovations and in providing targeted support to marginalized groups. There is considerable evidence that project forms of support can be more effectively integrated into programme approaches with the consequent effect of strengthening the positive aspects of both modalities.
4. The movement to programme approaches in supporting basic education has not always been accompanied, at least in the short term, by a reduction in the administrative burden for host governments. A very heavy burden of planning, coordination and monitoring has been made more difficult by uneven progress in the development of common administrative procedures among external agencies and a reluctance to accept local processes as adequate.
5. Although there is agreement on the broad range of components included in basic education, in reality the focus of most activities of both external agencies and national partners has been placed on formal primary schooling, with negative effects on other areas of basic education. Further, while progress has been made in providing access to primary schooling, there are serious persistent problems in improving the quality of basic education.
6. There has been a sustained agreement within the international community, including external agencies and national partners, on the priority of basic education, but funding levels from the external agencies have not kept pace with expectations or implied commitments. This is, at least in part, a reflection of the complexity of planning and resource allocation processes surrounding the provision of external support and to problems in the absorptive capacity of partner governments.

6.1 Accelerating Progress Through Local Solutions Not Blueprints

1. There has been a strong tendency for external agencies to place increasing emphasis on the use of external support for accelerating progress in basic education, especially in relation to the education goals of the MDG and to the EFA goals. This tendency has been accompanied, at times, by a reliance on blueprints, templates and prescribed solutions that have been detrimental to a commitment to partnership, has been inconsistent with the capacities of partners and has sometimes limited the relevance of programmes and projects. There is a need to place greater emphasis on the relevance of external support to local needs and capacities – for more tailored local solutions within a global consensus on goals.

One of the most positive findings of the evaluation concerns the willingness of external agencies providing support to basic education to continue efforts to develop more fully formed and more effective partnerships with national partners. Indeed, there is commitment from both sides to continue searching for new ways of cooperating and accessing new support modalities to improve the effectiveness of both the provision and use of external support to basic education.

The evaluation points to four important factors in efforts to assess the quality of partnerships and to improve their effectiveness: continuity, capacity, participation, and relevance. The review highlights how these factors are in turn, negatively, affected by the tension between partnership on the one hand and, on the other, pressure to accelerate progress towards the achievement of quantifiable goals in basic education through the application of blueprint solutions or templates developed at a global level.

An important symptom of this pressure can be found in the narrowing of both the policy priority and the available external funding in the four Country Studies to a near total concentration on primary education. The excessive turnover in key technical staff of partner countries and, to a lesser degree perhaps, of local education specialists of international agencies has also made it more difficult to adopt global approaches to local contexts. New players come onto the scene in each country infused with the clear objectives of the international community, which drive support for basic education, and with the obligation to address the requirements of the external agencies' headquarters. At times it is difficult for the local representatives of external agencies to meet the agenda of the international community while still being sensitive to the local context.

The volatility of national personnel also relates to imbalances in capacities between national partners and external agencies. It undercuts external agency efforts to provide effective support to capacity development and weakens the national partners' ability to "hold its own" in representing local priorities and needs in dialogue and negotiations with external agencies.

Participation has been addressed in partner countries mainly through efforts to involve local communities in support to, and governance of, local schools. Efforts have also been made to involve NGOs and other stakeholders in the development of national policies, plans and programmes in basic education, including SWAp arrangements. However, this dialogue still tends to be restricted to technical experts from external agencies and government ministries of partner governments, to the exclusion of key groups of national stakeholders. Where policy and technical dialogue is channelled in this way opportunities are lost for building support at a national and local level and, more importantly perhaps, an opportunity to influence programme design with local contextual concerns is lost.

Finally, pressures to meet the quantitative goals of EFA or the MDGs have detracted from addressing the issues of the relevance of externally supported basic education in the national and local contexts in which it is provided.

Relevant basic education facilitates students achieving their full potential as participating members of society. Yet there is evidence that the focus on formal, primary schooling (with reduced attention to other components of basic education), the absence of sufficient links between primary and secondary schooling and the lack of attention to the links between schooling and the work world, limit the relevance of the externally supported basic education in the countries participating in the Joint Evaluation. The evaluation recognizes, however, that there are inherent contradictions in these different views of relevance. Different stakeholders (government, teachers, parents and students) have different aspirations and hence different views of what is relevant. These are not easily reconciled within the formal school system.

6.2 Relationship between Sector-wide Support and Partnership

2. The movement to programme support and SWAps is one of the most significant trends in the provision and use of external support to basic education. It has been intended, at least in part, to contribute to strengthened national ownership and to improve partnership (and thereby improve the effectiveness of the provision and use of external support). In a real sense, the shift to programme support is an indication of the commitment of external agencies to strengthen partnership. However, this form of support does not necessarily improve partnerships if implemented as a blueprint rather than a process. It has, in some cases, contributed to increased tensions and divisions among distinct groups of external agencies. On the positive side, it has led to some improvements in the sense of national ownership and to better coordination of external assistance.

The search for more effective partnerships in basic education has included experimentation with different modalities and a strong movement towards programme funding and SWAp arrangements. These have shown some success in improving coordination, harmonizing reporting requirements and other administrative processes, and strengthening national partner governments' sense of ownership of the policy development and programme planning and implementation process.

The evaluation suggests, however, that SWAps do not necessarily contribute to greater partnership. There is a risk in situations where the SWAp is seen more as a "blueprint" for external support, than as a process, that greater partnership will not be achieved. More intensive specific attention needs to be paid to factors that promote partnership – continuity of personnel, capacity building, participation of all key stakeholders, and addressing the relevance of basic education. In addition, more openness in the development of programme approaches and more explicit planning for links from projects assistance to programmes would increase the partnership impact of SWAps.

SWAps and other programme approaches also have a negative tendency to give rise to a segmentation of external agencies with a core group of programme funding agencies enjoying closer relations with government and greater influence over policy and programme development. This reduces the scope of external input to the policy process and makes it harder to develop the linkages that allow innovations identified through project support to be taken to scale in national programmes.

6.3 Integrating Project and Programme Support

3. The movement to supporting basic education through SWAps and other forms of programme support needs to be accompanied by an understanding of the positive role of project assistance, especially in supporting innovations and in providing targeted support to marginalized groups. There is considerable evidence that project forms of support can be more effectively integrated into programme approaches with the consequent effect of strengthening the positive aspects of both modalities.

The potential positive interrelationship of project and programme support to basic education was a common theme in all four of the countries participating in the evaluation and was further reinforced by the results of the Document Review. Surprisingly, there is a persistent tendency for some host governments and external support agencies to more or less automatically view project support as a negative factor in the transition to effective programmes. There is also a sometimes arbitrary approach to the assessment of which situations best favour programme or project support on the part of some external agencies. What is clearly required is a more pragmatic approach that recognizes the positive role of project support in the development of innovative strategies and approaches and in reaching marginalized groups.

On the other hand, project proponents must also recognize the limitations of the project form in supporting basic education on a national or regional scale and the dangers, pointed out in the Burkina Faso case study, of a culture of continuous pilot projects that are never taken to scale. In a certain sense, the development of programme approaches to supporting basic education may be seen as an important advance in the effectiveness of projects themselves since they can now be better linked to national efforts. The main requirement is for external agencies and governments alike to adopt a pragmatic approach to the mix of project and programme support and to place less emphasis on blueprints and dogma.

6.4 The Administrative Burden of Programme Approaches

4. The movement to programme approaches in supporting basic education has not always been accompanied, at least in the short term, by a reduction in the administrative burden for host governments. A very heavy burden of planning, coordination and monitoring has been made more difficult by uneven progress in the development of common administrative procedures among external agencies and a reluctance to accept local processes as adequate.

At first glance, it seems difficult to accept that the movement towards a reduction or elimination of project support, with its requirements for host government oversight and the disparate systems of project development, approval, implementation and follow-up of the external agencies, would not be accompanied by substantial reductions in the administrative burden felt by partner countries.

In practice, however, the procedures and systems required to plan, negotiate, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes supported by multiple external agencies represent their own administrative load for partner countries. At least during the early stages of SWAps to supporting basic education, this burden is actually very substantial. It is made even more significant when the movement towards programme support is not accompanied by a strong commitment among external agencies to simplify and harmonize their administrative and procedural requirements, including requirements for monitoring and evaluation.

It is important that external agencies committed to a move to programme support as a key strategy in more effective external support to basic education make a similar commitment to simplifying and harmonizing their administrative requirements and procedures with other external agencies and with partner governments.

6.5 A Narrow Focus on Expanding Access to Formal Primary Schooling

5. Although there is agreement on the broad range of components included in basic education, in reality the focus of most activities of both external agencies and national partners has been placed on formal primary schooling, with negative effects on other areas of basic education. Further, while progress has been made in providing access to primary schooling, there are serious persistent problems in improving the quality of basic education.

Concentration of external support, and national resources, on formal primary schooling may reflect the necessity to make hard choices in the use of scarce national and international resources, but it risks making a mockery of the commitment of external agencies and national governments to education as a human right for all members of a society, including youth and adults. The Dakar Framework of Action clearly rejects the notion of any kind of generational triage sacrificing today's uneducated youth and adults so that a generation of young children could be provided with universal access to education.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that external agencies are providing support to non-formal education, including adult literacy, and they are working with national partners in the process. There are examples of important and successful projects and programmes in the countries participating in the Joint Evaluation. But, too often, the government organizations administering non-formal education programmes are relatively weak compared to the line ministries charged with primary education and often they stand outside the umbrella of large, national programmes receiving external funding. In response, many external agencies support non-formal education through NGO channels in a move that governments complain further weakens the government organizations involved. In addition, the support that is being provided to non-formal education does not negate the impact of the concentration of external resources on primary education.

It is important to recognize that despite constraints in national and international resource availability, and despite the concerns over the pace of change, there has been important progress towards many EFA goals. Information from the monitoring of the EFA goals in the four countries suggests that there have been either dramatic advances in the coverage of the primary school system (Burkina Faso, Uganda) or increased retention of students (Bolivia), attributable to some degree at least to the increased relevance of intercultural/bilingual education to the majority of Bolivians who are indigenous. These represent tangible achievements and should not be associated with failure if they do not proceed at a pre-determined pace or on a pre-specified track.

However, progress in expanding access for many children previously excluded from primary schooling should not obscure two enduring concerns: the quality of the basic education receiving external support and the relevance of this education in encouraging students to achieve their full potential as participating members of society. In some countries, where there have been significant improvements in access to basic education, the quality of education has suffered, making the need to address these issues even more acute.

In addition, it is important to recognize that quality continues to prove a very difficult area of collaboration for national efforts and external support. It is apparently much easier to expand

systems and improve infrastructure than to make meaningful changes in how education is delivered in the classroom and to monitor the gains that are made. The evaluation results suggest that two factors have a positive influence on the search for quality improvements: greater use of formative and mid-programme evaluation and research on pilot projects and a willingness to change national programmes (and "go to scale") when research results and evaluations of pilot projects support qualitative change.

The relevance of the content of much basic education is a major theme of the evaluation. In particular, there are important concerns over the relevance of classical primary schooling for students who will not find places in the secondary system. There is a distinct lack of attention to the question of how primary education (and related training programmes) equip students for life after school.

Where there is a need to address issues of quality and relevance (and often efficiency) in national systems for basic education, the required response is often one of system-wide reform. Unfortunately these reform processes, as necessary as they may be, often fail to take account of the needs and viewpoints of key stakeholders, especially teachers, parents and learners. The relative exclusion of these groups from the process of developing reform programmes seems likely to undercut their short-term prospects of success and their long-term political stability.

Finally, the important gains noted in access and participation in primary schooling in all four participating countries come at some considerable risk since the resulting educational systems are not sustainable without continued high levels of external financial support for the foreseeable future.

6.6 Consensus on the Importance of Basic Education but Apparent Lack of Follow-through on Funding Expectations

6. There has been a sustained agreement within the international community, including external agencies and national partners, on the priority of basic education of basic education, but funding levels from the external agencies have not kept pace with expectations or implied commitments. This is, at least in part, a reflection of the complexity of planning and resource allocation processes surrounding the provision of external support and to problems in the absorptive capacity of partner governments.

The international community entered into a set of mutual commitments at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in 1990 and re-asserted those commitments at the World Education Forum in 2000. The goals associated with those commitments under the heading Education for All were very specific. They encompassed early childhood education, free and compulsory primary education of good quality, meeting the learning needs of youth and adults, improvements in adult literacy, elimination of gender disparities and improving all aspects of the quality of education.

From Jomtien to Dakar and beyond, there has been a recognition that achieving the EFA goals would require increased levels of investment and recurrent expenditures by countries in the developing world if they were to have a reasonable chance of success. There has also been a clear recognition that this would need to be accompanied by improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of national systems for providing basic education. At the same time, this increased effort on the part of national governments would need to be matched with increasing and sustained levels of external support.

By 2002, the gap between the amount of external assistance required and the amount available was estimated at between four and five times current annual flows, if the most readily quantifiable goals were to be met by 2015.

Despite innovations and new commitments made since Dakar, external agencies are apparently not able to secure and provide the level of support necessary for the EFA goals to be met. It is important to recognize at least three important factors apparently limiting the financial volume of external support to basic education over time. These include:

- The complexity of systems and procedures for developing large-scale programmes of external support and national action, which place a significant planning burden on partners governments and which are linked to development planning at a national level through such vehicles as PRSPs, UNDAFs, EFA plans, etc. When combined with the process for developing SWAps, these planning processes must be coordinated with the resource allocation mechanisms of a host of external, as well as internal agencies;

- Perceptions among external agencies, sometimes fully justified, of limited absorptive capacity in the public administration systems of partner countries; and

- A recognition by some national partner countries of the risk of expanding basic education systems based on relatively short-term commitments of external resources so that the resulting expanded systems may not be sustainable in the medium- to long-term.

If one can characterize continued efforts in the achievement of the EFA goals as a search for partnership, it seems that securing sufficient flows of long-term funding from external sources continues to elude the partnership.

7.0 Implications for Policies and Programmes

This final section takes each of the major conclusions from the evaluation and identifies the policy and programme implications, for both external agencies providing support and for national partner governments, which arise from these conclusions. These implications provide the initial framework for a discussion by the members of the Evaluation Steering Committee of the implications for their own organizations.

7.1 Accelerating Progress Through Local Solutions

Clearly, the most important implications of the main finding of this evaluation – the emphasis on global goals with less attention to local needs and capacities – all concern how external agencies and national and local partners can find ways to identify, develop, design, fund, execute, monitor and evaluate programmes in basic education, which are truly reflective of national and local needs and capacities while remaining true to the global commitment to provide access to all facets of quality basic education. A scan of the evaluation findings suggests that some key strategies for developing more effective programmes that are more relevant to national contexts would include:

- Ensuring wider and more meaningful participation by a more diverse group of stakeholders in the development of national programmes (including SWAp arrangements);
- Placing, in particular, students, parents and teachers more centrally in the process of programme design and development and, more specifically, avoiding measures that reduce the professional standing of teachers;
- Allowing for genuine flexibility in the scheduling of reforms and expansion in the system of basic education so that local capacities (inside and outside the system of formal schooling) are developed, which keep pace with change and which allow communities to benefit fully;
- Actively pursuing experimentation and innovation in areas outside formal, primary schooling with a concurrent commitment to follow up on successful innovation with investment at a national level so that basic education can be made more relevant to the needs of learners; and
- Recognizing that, while external agencies may be in an inherently stronger negotiating position due to their access to financial and technical resources, the policy direction and operational design of major programmes in basic education must be grounded in national and local needs and priorities.

7.2 Improving the Relationship between Sector-wide Support and Partnership

The evaluation proposes that sector-wide support does not necessarily lead to strengthened partnerships. Yet, there are many things that both external agencies and partner governments can do to strengthen this relationship.

The major strategic shift required in the development of SWAps in basic education, so that they may better contribute to both partnership and more effective basic education, is a commitment to view SWAps as an ongoing process of cooperation rather than a blueprint for programmatic

action. Application of the process approach to SWAps in basic education would include subsidiary strategies for both external agencies and partner countries, including:

- Ensuring that national stakeholders outside central line ministries of government take part in the development of SWAps relating to basic education;
- Taking active steps to include the full range of external agencies with technical expertise and policy experience in dialogue on programme development, management, monitoring and evaluation in basic education;
- Ensuring that policies on budget support, programme support and SWAps recognize the cross-linkages and compatibilities between projects and programmes;
- Providing either project or programme assistance in support of innovation integrated into the national plan and programme for basic education;
- Cooperating with governments and external agencies to harmonize administrative and operational norms and standards and to reduce their administrative burden on partner agencies;
- Allowing for full participation by all external agencies supporting basic education in coordination mechanisms and joint review processes;
- Recognizing the importance of sector-wide planning, including both secondary schooling and teaching education; and
- Ensuring that the ministry of education and other ministries involved in basic education participate in public sector reform programmes.

7.3 From Formal Primary Schooling to Quality Basic Education

In spite of the global commitment to all components of basic education, the tendency has been to focus external support on formal primary schooling. Shifting this to meet the international commitment to the broad scope of basic education requires the support of both external agencies and national partners. They must ensure that the policy environment within a specific external agency and at the partner country level promotes and encourages all components of basic education and progress towards the EFA goals.

For the first element of this problem, expanding beyond formal primary schooling, strategies may include:

- Reiterating the emphasis on the full range of EFA goals in statements and guidelines on policy and practice in education and basic education;
- Advocating for the full range of EFA goals in international conferences and meetings and in inter-agency negotiations on programmes. In particular, while the MDGs should be supported, external agencies and national partners should advocate to ensure that the education goals of the MDGs are not used to discourage support for other EFA goals;
- Increasing financial and technical support to areas of EFA beyond primary schooling;
- Ensuring that funds to non-formal education and adult literacy are not entirely channelled through NGOs;
- Re-emphasizing the importance of gender parity in policies on basic education; and
- Providing capacity development and other TA to agencies responsible for non-formal education and adult literacy.

National partner governments may seek strategies to ensure that the national context is amenable to developing all components of basic education. These may include:

- Encompassing early childhood education, youth and adult life skills education, and adult literacy goals in national policies and strategies for education;
- Supporting and advocating for the full range of EFA goals in international meetings and conferences and in negotiations with external agencies; and
- Ensuring national agencies responsible for non-formal education and adult literacy are included in the programme and SWAp arrangements.

Within the current focus on formal primary schooling, external agencies and national partners are being exhorted to address not only the supply side, but also the demand side, of basic education. This requires additional attention to questions of quality and relevance. Typical strategies may include:

- Continuing to fund projects and TA within the framework of programme or sector-wide support that allow for the testing of innovative ideas to address quality and relevance;
- Providing financial and technical support to better use monitoring and evaluation in the improvement of the relevance and quality of basic education; and
- Supporting research efforts and reviews of promising initiatives that allow for more explicit links between basic education and poverty reduction in the development of policies.

Partner countries may seek to implement strategies to better integrate external support into national efforts to address the quality and relevance of basic education, including, among other things:

- Ensuring that national policies on basic education emphasize quality and relevance, in addition to access;
- Developing and implementing policies requiring the use of monitoring and evaluation for the assessment of pilot projects in basic education;
- Making the approval of pilot projects conditional on their relevance for national policy and programming;
- Using monitoring and evaluation to assess promising initiatives and link project results to national programmes and SWAps;
- Promoting a culture of innovation and change within Ministries of Education that supports efforts to improve quality based on the results of formative and mid-term evaluations; and
- Strengthening programme components aimed at supporting participation in school management and accountability structures by parents and learners in an effort to ensure the relevance of basic education provided in schools.

7.4 Securing Adequate, Long-term Funding

In order to overcome the apparent gap between the national and external financial resources needed to provide quality basic education to all and the volume of resources currently available, external agencies and partners together will need to find strategies to overcome the apparent problem of the longer term sustainability of expanded systems of basic education. While this challenge continues to prove extremely difficult, as shown in the experience to date of the FTI, it

is possible to suggest some elements of a strategic approach to securing the needed resources. These might include:

- Recognition by external agencies and national partners alike that investments in capacity development must be linked to increases in both external and national resources dedicated to basic education – thus providing a strategy for overcoming absorptive capacity limitations which, in turn, inhibit the flow of external resources;
- Placing increased emphasis on the feasibility and stability of national policies in basic education as a direct incentive to increased flows of external resources;
- Greater recognition by both external agencies and national partners of the link between governance, civil service reform and the volume of external assistance to basic education (and to other sub-sectors of education);
- International recognition of the need to link goal-setting at a global and national level more directly to the duration of external commitments so that longer term goals are not subject to dramatic fluctuations in short-term external support;
- Efforts to simplify the process of planning national strategies and programmes along with reducing the burden of programme planning imposed by external agencies; and
- Efforts to broaden the base of projects, programmes and activities in basic education so that resources can be used outside the system of formal schooling.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Executive Summaries of Document Review Report and Country Study Reports

Executive Summary: Document Review

Introduction

This report presents the results of a Document Review carried out for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 support agencies with the participation of four developing countries[9].

The document review was designed from its beginnings as an integral part of a process with three key elements: the document review itself, case studies of external support to basic education in developing countries, and a synthesis of the evaluation material gathered in the first two processes.

Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia joined the 13 support agencies to form an Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC meets at important points in the evaluation cycle to provide overall governance to the evaluation process. The ESC was the ultimate decision-making body for the evaluation.

A consortium of private firms with experience in evaluation and in basic education carried out the evaluation. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) was the lead organization in the consortium. The consortium included Goss Gilroy Inc. of Canada and Education for Change of the United Kingdom.

Methodology

The preparation of the document review report involved the completion of the following steps in a planned methodology:

- Development of a master list of all documents;
- Review and classification by priority of over 500 documents on the master list;
- Development of a document review grid to be completed for high priority documents;
- Assignment of 107 documents for completion of document review grids;
- Completion of the grids and preparation of thematic papers on key subject matter areas; and
- Synthesis of the material in the documents, the completed document review grids and the thematic papers into this draft report.

[9] The Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is sponsored by: the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida, Denmark; European Commission (EC); Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.

External Support to Basic Education

Section 3.0 of the main report discusses in detail the documents reviewed. Based on this material, the main messages from the document review regarding external support to basic education can be summarized as follows:

Defining Basic Education and Assigning Priorities

One of the enduring controversies over basic education seems to be how to define its core vision, its content, and its priority uses. The controversy also seems to imply that each element of the "definition" of basic education must be shared by all key stakeholders at all times if cooperation is to be effective.

The documents reviewed make it clear that there is a fairly well accepted definition of:

- **The core vision of basic education** – meeting basic learning needs of every person: child, youth and adult;

- **The main functional components of basic education** – early childhood care and development, primary schooling, and alternative education are to provide the same content as primary schooling, early secondary education, and education for out-of-school youth and adults, including literacy programmes but also life skills training; and

- **The core priorities** – which drive basic education and which basic education may in turn address including basic education as a human right, as an element in poverty eradication, as a core area in which gender equality can be sought and expressed, as a means for overcoming other social inequalities, and as a means to address the problems associated with HIV/AIDS.

In fact, the consistency of this general definition of basic education can be seen as one of the achievements arising from Jomtien.

Of equal importance, the documents reviewed illustrate that the establishment and re-commitment to Education for All (EFA) goals at Jomtien and Dakar (and the creation of a forum for consultation and follow-up) really has resulted in a worldwide movement focused on education for all. This movement encompasses bilateral and multilateral agencies, international Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), partner governments and, to some extent, civil society.

If all external agencies, partner governments and key stakeholders were then to act in ways consistent with these three elements of the definition of basic education at all times in policy-making and programming, then the implementation of a global model of basic education could be reasonably said to be complete.

However, as the documents point out, moving from a generally accepted definition of basic education to an operational model that is consistently acted on has proved much more difficult. For example:

- External support agencies have not been able to achieve consistency in how they code expenditures to basic education and report them to either UNESCO or the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD). As a result, it remains extremely difficult to monitor the financial component of external resource flows in support of basic education in developing countries. This problem has been noted by virtually every report that has tried to develop a systematic overview of external support to basic education, up to and including the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b);

- Partner countries, while accepting the general definition of basic education, have emphasized their need to address problems across their entire education system or to concentrate on a specific sub-set of basic education, normally, formal in-school primary education; and

- The relationship between the EFA goals and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in education remains problematic since there is a tendency for some agencies and governments to overlook the fact that the MDGs do not replace the goals of EFA. An example of how this might happen is found in the EFA Fast-Track Initiative, with its emphasis on the MDGs.

With regard to the latter point, it is important to indicate that the EFA goals do not in themselves represent a total definition of basic education. On the other hand, the EFA goals do relate to most of the commonly accepted components of basic education: early childhood development and education, primary schooling, life skills training and adult literacy, for example. In contrast, the MDGs in education focus only on primary school completion and gender parity. As a result, there is a risk that a strong focus on attaining the MDGs in education will lead to a narrowing of activity and to relative neglect in supporting those other elements of basic education acknowledged in the EFA goals.

The problem seems to be in ensuring that agencies and countries are encouraged to be flexible and set priorities in how they will cooperate to advance basic education, without surrendering to a seemingly continuous tendency for basic education, and the EFA goals to be reduced in operational terms to a much more limited framework of formal primary schooling (and, to some extent, gender parity in primary and secondary school). This tendency should not be exaggerated since many agencies and governments are active in other areas of basic education. Nonetheless, the documents seem to illustrate the need to continuously reinforce the central tenet that basic education is more than formal primary schooling.

Forms of External Support to Basic Education

As the literature illustrates, basic education (and education in general) has been one of the key fields in which external agencies have sought to shift aid modalities from project to programme forms, especially Sector-wide Approaches (SWAps), as a matter of both policy and practice (although the project form has proven remarkably resilient during this shift).

The stated motivations for this shift have included reducing the administrative burden on partner countries, making policy dialogue more explicit and, especially, promoting partner country ownership thereby, deepening partnership. In each of these areas, it can be said that, up to this point in time, success is only partial. In the first place, for many external agencies in many countries, the project form has proven advantages and shows every sign of persisting. Also, as the literature points out, the movement to SWAps and other programmatic approaches has to be judged in terms of the continuous development of longer term relationships – as a process of

deepening partnership over time, rather than a blueprint for a one-time solution to problems of cooperation.

Finally, the documents reviewed call into question whether, in the short term at least, the SWAp mode of cooperation has resulted in a reduced (some suggesting even an increased) administrative burden.

Conditionality

The documents reviewed dealing explicitly with conditionality have tended to emphasize the negative impact of policy and strategy related conditionalities on the level of national ownership of programmes. They have also questioned the utility of conditionalities in securing meaningful changes in policies and strategies on the part of partner countries. Some authors have suggested a post-conditionality model of external support to basic education with an emphasis on dialogue, shared goals and joint ex-post assessment of progress towards agreed indicators of achievement. This model is put forward as one means of avoiding external controls and, thereby, increasing national ownership of basic education programmes.

The Volume of External Support to Basic Education

There have been at least two major systematic attempts to quantify the flow of external support to basic education in the past three years: one as a preparatory document to Dakar and one for the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b). Both make it very clear that the expectation of a substantial rise in the financial component of external support to basic education following Jomtien has not been met. To date, the best efforts to measure external flows to basic education in the period of1990 to 2002 have concluded either that it remained stable or rose very slightly or, in the latest document, that it may have declined slightly. Whichever is chosen as definitive, what is clear is that Jomtien and Dakar have not yet resulted in the significant increases in the flow of external financial resources (at a global level) to basic education that could reasonably be expected given the commitments made there.

It is difficult to be definitive about why this problem persists, but some of the documents reviewed point to continuing concerns among external agencies regarding the absorptive capacities of many partner countries. They also point to the persistence of historical patterns of development cooperation and the reluctance of external support agencies to provide funding in countries where they do not have a tradition or experience of support, and over reasonably long time frames.

Whatever the reasons for the limitations in the response, there remains a substantial gap between the needed and the expected increases in both national resources and external support devoted to basic education, if even the single goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) is to be achieved.

This problem seems especially intractable when viewed from the perspective of the World Bank led EFA Fast-Track Initiative (FTI). FTI continues to encounter problems of limitations in financial commitments from supporting governments, especially in securing long-term commitments of funds.

It seems that the international community is faced with a major challenge in the area of recognizing and securing the needed long-term commitment of external resources to meet the single commitment that no country should fail to meet – the EFA goals – due to lack of

resources. There is clearly an associated challenge in ensuring that the needed resources can be absorbed effectively and, therefore, produce accelerated progress towards the EFA goals. These two challenges are inter-linked in that each seems to have the direct result of making the other more intractable.

Dependency

The most detailed estimates encountered during the document review indicate that, in 2000, external sources provided 13.5% of expenditures on primary schooling in a significant sample of 47 key developing countries. In addition, for the same countries, the total volume of domestic spending on primary education would need to rise an average of 7.5% each year of the 15 years to 2015 for enough resources to be available to achieve UPE. This is more than twice the annual weighted average real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in sub-Saharan African countries during the 1990s. If developing countries are not able to sustain very significant increases in domestic resources allocated to primary education, the overall level of dependency on external resources may be expected to increase (if, of course, external agencies provide increased resources to fill the gap needed to achieve UPE).

While efforts to improve efficiency and reduce unit costs may reduce levels of dependency over time, they have already been assumed in the studies reviewed. Many efforts to improve efficiency (such as reducing teachers' salaries) may be very difficult to achieve given the structural characteristics of markets for professional services, for example, in the countries concerned.

External Agency Roles

There is considerable discussion in the literature reviewed on the different roles of the external agencies (bilateral and multilateral) involved in supporting basic education. Much of this discussion centres on the question of how roles may be changing in the shift to greater use of programme forms of external support, including SWAps. As noted repeatedly in the literature, observers see this movement as being accompanied by the rise in both the policy influence and technical assistance role of the World Bank.

There is also considerable discussion in the documents reviewed of how the United Nations (UN) agencies, including UNESCO as the lead agency in education, may have fared in terms of profile and roles during this shift. There seems to be no de facto reason why an increased role for the World Bank should lead to a diminished role (or, rather, roles) for UN agencies, although the literature indicates such a shift has occurred. There should be continuing space for advocacy, policy dialogue, and technical assistance in basic education for each UN agency with a mandate in the area.

Externally Supported Basic Education

The tendency for basic education to be reduced in practical and operational terms to formal, primary schooling is noted consistently in the literature reviewed. The factors promoting this tendency include:

- A desire to maximize the impact of national and external resources by concentrating their use in a relatively easily defined domain of action;
- The scale of the challenge in primary education facing many partner countries;

- A belief that expenditures in primary education may be more demonstrably effective than in other areas of basic education;
- Experience on the part of external support agencies in direct support to activity areas in primary education, such as school infrastructure, supplies, curriculum development and teacher training (doing what you know how to do); and
- The apparent priority of formal primary and secondary schooling rising from the MDGs in education.

This is not to deny that external agencies and national governments alike have invested considerable resources and effort in other areas of basic education, including adult literacy and non-formal education. Rather, it points to a continuing need to remain vigilant in protecting the legitimacy, in both policy and programme terms, of action in areas of basic education outside formal primary schooling.

The problem of integrating external assistance to basic education into the policies, programmes and institutional structures of partner countries continues despite such efforts as the movement to sector-wide approaches in a number of countries. Clearly, external agencies remain committed to disparate and uncoordinated operational requirements in budgeting, procurement, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Surprisingly, these problems seem to persist whether external assistance is in project or programme form. Indeed, there seems to be a convincing argument that project forms of assistance are not only appropriate in many organizational contexts, but that they can be developed, designed, implemented and evaluated in a way that integrates them as closely into national systems as is the case for programme support. The key factor seems not to be the form of external assistance (project or program) but the nature of the relationship it supports.

The documents reviewed reinforce the thesis that basic education can be a strong element in an effort to combat poverty. They do not challenge the idea that a poverty-reduction strategy or programme must include initiatives in basic education. They do question, however, the relevance of the content of many basic education programmes and systems in terms of combating poverty. The documents reviewed present the challenge to educators (and policy makers) of determining how to demonstrate that what is learned in basic education will contribute to poverty reduction at both the individual and the societal level. It is a question of urgent importance to many parents and children in developing countries, and is inextricably bound up with issues of quality in basic education.

The documents reviewed do point to significant gains in access and participation in basic education at a global level and in many countries during the decade of the 1990s. The same documents, however, point to the looming gap between current performance in improving access and participation and the goals set for 2015. In other words, the world is not currently on track to achieve the EFA goals according to many of the documents reviewed. More financial resources, better monitoring and feedback, better dissemination and use of best practices and other ideas in education, and a host of other changes seem to be required if the rate of progress is to be accelerated (regardless of whether the goals can or cannot in fact be met).

At the same time, evaluations reviewed by the team point to positive results in specific outcome areas, such as infrastructure development, teacher training, student and parental participation, curriculum development, and monitoring and evaluation. They demonstrate that, despite persistent problems, these activities have contributed to improvements in the institutional capacity of partners and the learning environment for many students.

On the other hand, the same evaluations point out that there are enduring problems in how externally assisted basic education may be improved from a quality perspective. Efforts at measuring learning outcomes often seem to show limited gains from quality improvement activities. Clearly, efforts to expand basic education systems have had more success than those to improve quality. Central to this problem seems to be the issue of teacher training, teacher compensation and the professional and social status of teachers.

The documents point out that there is an inherent limitation to reform efforts if they do not include teachers as meaningful participants in programme development. They further emphasize the paradox of efforts to improve the quality of education while reducing teacher salaries and attacking their professional and social status.

Finally, the documents reviewed make an attempt to assess the impact of basic education from the perspective of girls and women[10]. They have noted significant efforts in programmatic terms to move towards gender parity and promote gender equity through such initiatives as the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. The evaluations reviewed have reported gains in access and participation for girls, mirroring those for the populations as a whole. On the other hand, the same studies note that continued population growth in countries where education performance is lowest means that the absolute number of girls without access to basic education has risen since 1990.

In fact, the World Bank (2003) states plainly, "the goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 will not be met. The gender gap for low income countries is, on average, 11 percentage points at the primary level, and 19 percentage points at the secondary level". (p. 2). The same document goes on to say that the goal of gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015 can be achieved, but only with country-specific attention and support.

At the same time, it is important to point out that the documents reviewed indicate that the discourse on gender equality and the role of basic education has improved and now focuses on the empowerment of girls and women, rather than preparing girls for reproductive roles.

Nonetheless, the pace of change in basic education systems seems to be much too slow to suggest that attainment of gender parity can be achieved in the time frames envisaged.

Partnership in Basic Education

One of the key questions of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education concerns the evolving concept and practice of partnership in development cooperation for basic education, and how that may in turn affect both practices and results in basic education.

Most of the documents reviewed do not directly address concepts and practices in partnerships as such. Rather, they focus on problems or achievements in external support to basic education. These, in turn, illustrate the depth and quality of the partnerships under review.

[10] It is important to distinguish between gender equality, gender equity and gender parity when discussing the impact of basic education for girls and women. It is possible to see gender equality as a goal stated at a societal level achieved when the socially determined meanings of gender will not disadvantage either boys or girls, men or women. Gender equity is a positive normative value to be sought in relations between boys and girls and men and women. Gender parity is one mathematical indicator used to assess whether a given system is moving towards or away from one of greater gender equity.

One of the most important elements of partnership can be found in a common vision of the goals to be achieved and the priorities shared by external agencies and partner countries (including different key stakeholders in partner countries). As already mentioned, there is a basic core vision of the goals of basic education and its component activities shared by most partner countries and external agencies. As also noted, however, there are continuing pressures that seem to narrow the range of agreed activities and sub-sectors, so that the partnership between external agencies and partner countries may focus on formal primary schooling to the detriment of other elements of basic education.

The literature seems to locate much of the evolution of concepts and practices of partnership in the shift from project to programme modalities, and especially to SWAps. There is an implied assumption in much of the discourse that this shift is both inevitable and, inevitably desirable. At the same time, many of the documents reviewed have pointed out that moving from projects to SWAps has not necessarily meant an improvement in the depth and quality of partnerships. Indeed, unless very carefully planned and implemented, these shifts can sometimes weaken partnerships.

The most readily apparent area where SWAps may cause problems in partnership, as presented in the documents reviewed, is in narrowing national participation. SWAps may have the effect of opening dialogue within a specific government to include non-traditional actors such as the ministries of finance, planning, and external cooperation. At the same time, they may deepen the quality of dialogue between external agencies and the core group within a given national government. The documents point out, however, that this process may exclude both those external agencies outside the tent of the SWAp and large swaths of civil society in the partner country. The resultant partnership may have a strong technical base and commitment within the bureaucracy, but be fragile from a wider social perspective.

Nonetheless, the documents reviewed, including policy documents, academic research papers, evaluations, press releases, and presentations by NGOs provide an indication that external agencies and their partners recognize the essential role that improved and deepened partnership must play if external support to basic education is to be effective.

Whether external agencies and their partners can overcome the asymmetries implied in the aid-provider/aid-recipient relationship by changing both concepts and practices in external assistance remains an open question in the literature.

Implications for Policies and Programs

As noted in the Evaluation Steering Committee meeting in March 2003, a document review report does not produce conclusions capable of supporting recommendations for action. The Synthesis Report of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is the appropriate place for presenting any recommendations for changes in policies and programmes supported by the results of the evaluation as a whole.

This section attempts to present just a few implications of the material presented throughout the document review report. The most important of these seem to be in the form of challenges identified in the documents reviewed. The challenges identified include:

- Ensuring that basic education encompasses the full range of activities and goals envisioned at Jomtien and Dakar, while recognizing the need for partner countries and external agencies to concentrate resources where they will be most effective;

- Improving the information base on external and domestic resources flows to basic education at a global and national level, so that the international community can at least monitor trends and assess the level of commitment of different actors;

- Ensuring sufficient external and domestic resources are available (and dependable) over the longer term, to achieve the needed acceleration in EFA goal achievement;

- Overcoming problems in absorptive capacity;

- Using research and other tools, to identify effective measures to improve quality in basic education and making the necessary organizational changes and investments to take those measures to scale;

- Ensuring that the content of basic education is not only of high quality but relevant to the needs of children, youth and adults, especially in terms of combating poverty; and

- Improving the depth and quality of partnership at a global and national level through direct efforts to reduce the asymmetry in the relationship between those who provide external resources and those who use them. This implies not only continued commitment to evolving concepts and practices in partnership, but knowledge of those factors that contribute to more fully realized partnerships in areas such as continuity, administrative capacity, participation, and relevance to local context.

These challenges do not stand alone as products of the document review process. They resonate in the experience of the country case study team and can be re-visited in more detail in both the country case study reports and the synthesis report, where the team tries to present suggested viable responses.

Executive Summary: Bolivia

Introduction

This report presents the results of the Case Study of External Support to Basic Education in Bolivia for the period of 1990 to 2002. It is one of four case studies carried out for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 external support agencies, with the participation of four developing countries.

Methodology

The work for this case study was carried out between April 2002 and January 2003 by a team of four consultants: two Bolivia-based consultants and two international consultants. The international consultants made four different trips to Bolivia in April, July and October 2002 and January 2003. Between those visits, the Bolivia-based consultants had meetings with many individuals and gathered data, opinions and information. They also prepared analysis documents, which have been synthesized in this report.

The Bolivia team received important advice and guidance from a meeting of the Country Reference Group (CRG) held on October 10, 2002 in La Paz with participation by 21 education experts from the Government of Bolivia (GOB), external support agencies, local researchers and civil society organizations in Bolivia. A similar group also provided important inputs to the evaluation process during a two-day workshop of key stakeholders hosted by the evaluation team in La Paz, on January 22 and 23, 2003. As much as time would allow, the Bolivia team liaised both formally and informally with the other three country case study teams to try and ensure consistency of methodologies and of the treatment of evaluation data across the four studies.

External Support to Basic Education

Policy Development

In the early 1990s a combination of external and internal forces gave a strong impetus to the development of a systematic national policy, strategy and programme in education reform which was also the main (but not the exclusive) means for promoting Education for All (EFA) in Bolivia from 1994 to 2002. External forces promoting change included the 1990 *Jomtien Declaration of Education for All* and a 1992 report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on education and social equality.

Another important external stimulant to change was the apparent readiness of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank to provide very large commitments of loan funds if a concrete policy and programme of education reform could be established. Sweden and the Netherlands also made it clear during the 1990 to 1993 period that substantial grant funds would be made available in support of a reform programme. A long history of regional and national pilot programmes in intercultural/bilingual education supported most notably by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) helped prove that some of the main components of a proposed reform would be workable.

On the Bolivian side, preparations for education reform had begun in the mid 1980s and continued through a series of diagnostics and national plans, often prepared with the support of

the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) office for Latin America and the Caribbean located in Santiago de Chile. These plans had not been implemented in part due to the social and political resistance of the teachers' unions and the conservative nature of the Ministry of Education and Culture and Sports (MECyD).

The GOB responded to this impasse by creating the Technical Support Team for Education Reform (ETARE) and locating it within the Ministry of Planning while drawing on financial support from the World Bank. The financial support was provided through the "Japan Fund" established in the World Bank by the Government of Japan.

By 1993 ETARE submitted a technical proposal for reform to the President of the Republic who in turn made it available in draft form to the National Council on Education in a consultative forum to consider national policy in education. After intense debates in the National Congress, the *Law on Education Reform* was passed in 1994 following very closely the recommendations made by ETARE.

Volume of External Support

For Bolivia, 1994 was a pivotal year in the history of external support to basic education, as it marked the establishment of the policy, strategy and programme of education reform as the stated policy of the Bolivian State. This provided a legal and institutional framework for much of the external support to basic education to flow to Bolivia over the next seven years (1995 to 2002).

In 1994 and 1995, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, Sweden and the Netherlands followed through with commitments of loan funds and donations forming the core of a programme approach to supporting basic education in Bolivia over the next seven years.

The immediate effect of the *Law on Education Reform* and the Education Reform Programme (PRE) was to create conditions of policy and institutional stability in the education sector in Bolivia. This, in turn, encouraged a sustained increase in the volume of external funding. There was also a noticeable increase in the number of external agencies willing to commit funds and technical resources to basic education in Bolivia. The GOB matched the increase in external funds with an increase in its expenditures on initial and primary education.

The bulk of external financial and technical assistance (TA) to basic education in the 1994 to 1997 period has been dedicated to infrastructure investment, the development of curricula and materials in support of learner-centred intercultural/bilingual education, capacity development in the teachers' colleges (INS), in-service teacher training by teaching advisors and improvements in the capacity of the Vice Ministry of Initial, Primary and Secondary Education (VEIPS) to monitor the performance of the education system and support improvements in quality.

Notwithstanding the concentration of external support within the PRE, a number of external agencies have insisted on remaining active in alternative and non-formal education, especially relating to adult literacy training. UNICEF, with support from The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), has been particularly active in supporting adult education.

Form of External Support

The form of external support to basic education in Bolivia (project or programme) has continued to evolve since the period of preparation of the PRE. Since 1995, a substantial and growing proportion of the volume of external funding to basic education in Bolivia has been provided in the form of programme funding by the "core" agencies. At the same time, a significant number of agencies have provided funding and technical support in the form of projects with varying degrees of integration into the operations of the GOB.

The GOB has consistently lobbied external agencies to provide as much of their support as possible through the PRE. It views programme support to the PRE as more closely aligned to the priorities of the Bolivian State and more conducive to local ownership. This view on the part of the government was re-stated in interviews across a wide range of Bolivian agencies and from managers involved in every stage of the PRE from 1995 to the present. At the same time, however, the GOB has been able to work with agencies providing project support within the overall policy (and indeed the operational) framework of the PRE.

There are significant examples of project support being well integrated into the operations of the GOB in basic education. Among the strongest has been the funding support provided by Germany and directed through the centralized national funds providing matching resources for municipal investments in education. GTZ, Danida, and UNICEF have also demonstrated a capacity to provide TA integrated into the operations of the VEIPS. As an example, GTZ's programme of support to INS active in intercultural/bilingual education is based on a regional programme developed by local experts and well integrated into the operations of the Ministry.

UNICEF's early work in the development of intercultural/bilingual education, GTZ's technical support of colleges providing bilingual and intercultural teacher training, and Danida's support of bilingual/intercultural education for indigenous peoples in Amazonia all provide examples of the use of project support in line with the policies and priorities of the GOB.

These projects also demonstrate that the project format can be more effective when it occurs in the context of a strong programme of external support since the programmatic funding can be used to assist national governments in taking innovations to a national scale.

The divergence of views between the core agencies, the GOB, and agencies providing project support to basic education has tended to oscillate over time, depending, among other factors, on the views of key individuals in the agencies concerned. One indicator of this changing relationship is participation in the review process for the PRE. Before 2001, there was fairly broad participation in the annual review process by external agencies outside the core group. In 2001, VEIPS insisted on confining participation to the four core agencies. In 2002, there was a return to somewhat broader participation with non-core agencies taking part. Nonetheless, participants in the key stakeholder workshop hosted by the Bolivia case study team in La Paz in January 2003 point out that there is still scope for a more coordinated review process with full participation by external agencies with the strong proviso that the MECyD should retain the leadership role.

Norms and Standards in the Administration of External Support

From the perspective of the GOB, the distinction between project and programme support may not even be the most critical factor in how it views external support to basic education. At least

as important are the difficulties encountered with overlapping, conflicting and diverse norms and standards imposed by external support agencies in the areas of project (and programme) budgeting, procurement, disbursement, monitoring and evaluation.

Interviews at key GOB ministries – including VEIPS, the Vice Ministry of Alternative Education, (VEA) and the Vice Ministry of Public Investment and External Finance (VIPFE) – and with agencies providing both programme and project support to basic education supplied examples of the way that differences and internal contradictions in external agency operational and administrative requirements had impeded the efficient use of external resources. There is essentially a unanimous view among external agencies and Bolivian partners that reducing the negative impact of these arrangements is an important challenge for external support to basic education.

Conditionality

Conditionality has been a feature of most external support to basic education since 1990, including specific internal conditions applied to project support and broader conditions of policy and strategy associated with programme support. The most recent example of conditionality can be found in the association of further support by several external agencies with participation by the MECyD in the Institutional Reform Programme (PRI). The PRI aims to strengthen public administration to be more efficient, more professional and less corrupt.

Bolivian Government officials have been open and frank in presenting Bolivia's policy response to discussions on conditionality. In several cases they have been able to make very significant changes in the conditions applied by external agencies, including local development of curriculum and materials for the PRE. Finally, Bolivia has shown a willingness to not go forward with programmes and projects where the basic conditions do not meet its requirements. Most recently, Bolivia decided not to go forward with participation in the first round of the Fast Track Initiative due, in part, to concerns over the sustainability of the financial commitment.

Externally Supported Basic Education

Results: Development of Institutional Capacity

Financial and technical support from external agencies has contributed to important improvements in the institutional capacity of the system for planning, monitoring, and implementing services in basic education in Bolivia over the past seven years. These improvements include:

- Improved technical and administrative capacity within MECyD, especially in the areas of planning and monitoring. Funding of the PRE by the "core agencies" has contributed to the development of research units such as the Education Quality Assessment System (SIMECAL). Project support from GTZ, Danida and UNICEF has contributed to the development of methods for instruction and to improvements in capacity for curriculum and materials development and teacher training. On the other hand, evaluations of classroom practice indicate that problems persist in linking research and evaluation work to changes at the classroom level;

- Improvements in the institutional capacity of the INS, especially those involved in intercultural/bilingual education provided through projects such as PINS/EIB. On the other hand, considerable effort is still required to make the education of teachers by the INS more practical and to ensure a more uniform level of support across the different INS;

- Infrastructure improvements funded either directly by external agencies or through the central funds have kept pace with the expansion of the system, but there remain extreme imbalances in the quality of infrastructure;

- Improved availability of materials in support of the new curriculum and teaching methods is apparent but still needs to be improved. Particularly urgent is the development of curriculum and support material for teaching Spanish as a second language;

- The establishment of the cadre of teacher advisors (APs) has been a significant accomplishment but there is a great deal of work required to ensure that the APs make a strong contribution to the work of teachers. Indeed, some researchers and external agencies have questioned whether the instrument of the APs is the most effective way for providing in-service teacher training;

- The establishment of the School Councils (*Juntas Escolares*) and the Education Councils of Indigenous Peoples (CEPOS) has laid at least the basis for real improvement in social participation, but that improvement is dependant on converting the *Juntas Escolares* from administrative make-work bodies to real instruments of school governance.

It is important to re-iterate that these areas of institutional development have all benefited from external support to basic education in two distinct forms. MECyD has made use of the direct core support of the PRE in each of these institutional development areas over the past seven years. GOB accounts show that the bulk of investment financing provided over the period has been from external agencies. At the same time, each of these key areas has benefited from some form of project support, either in the form of funding, TA, or a combination of the two.

While the area of formal, in school, initial and primary education has been assisted strongly by external agencies and has experienced some important gains in institutional capacity, the same cannot be said of government institutional structures in non-formal education. The institutional benefits of external support to non-formal education have been largely missed because of the clear absence of non-formal education as a significant priority the GOB in the period from 1994 to 2001, at least when compared to formal primary education.

Some key stakeholders point out that those external agencies supporting alternative education and adult literacy have tended to fund Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) or to be engaged in programme delivery themselves. This in turn has tended to weaken government structures. It is not clear if the lack of support weakens the GOB structures or whether weak structures fail to attract external support. At any rate, recent developments in the VEA have encouraged at least some external agencies (Sida and the Netherlands) to begin working with them on the development of a strategic plan and supporting programmes.

Results for Learners

With regard to results for learners, review of the available data by different and independent researchers in the past year demonstrates that there has been a significant improvement in the system's ability to retain students through primary school as measured in national promotion, retention and abandonment rates. On the other hand, girls in rural areas continue to lag boys in their participation rates. Simple observation by case study team members showed considerable (and unequal) attrition for rural girls as they progress through the later years of primary schools[11].

Notwithstanding the continuing serious problem of girls' participation in basic education in rural areas, the Bolivian education system was retaining more students at each grade level in 2000 than it did in 1997. Indeed, the abandonment rate in Grades 6 to 8 dropped by one third in the same time frame (from 12% to 8%).

On the other hand, there are strong indications that the quality of basic education provided in the formal primary system continues to resist efforts at improvement. Tests conducted by SIMECAL indicate that it is difficult to detect statistically significant differences in reading and mathematics achievement when comparing schools with and without access to the reforms of the PRE.

Against that finding, it must be noted that students in schools where the PRE has been implemented exhibit greater animation, enthusiasm and independence. Observers note that the PRE curriculum and approach may have an important effect in terms of promoting the formation of independent and capable citizens. Many stakeholders view one central purpose of the PRE as encouraging the full participation of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia in education, in democratic governance and in society at large.

Partnership

The model of partnership that evolved over the past dozen years in Bolivia might best be called a hybrid model in which four core agencies worked in a programme format with direct links to policy dialogue and technical developments in the PRE. Around this core support, a set of agencies have provided project assistance, which has been, to varying degrees, working in concert with the policies and priorities of the GOB.

The working model of partnership established during the planning and early programming for the PRE has had mainly positive results for the effectiveness of external support to basic education. These results include:

- A fairly strong consensus among external support agencies that the priorities and strategic directions of education reform provided a strong framework for the provision of external support to basic education. This had the subsequent result of increased flows of external support and entry into the field of new external agencies;

- The early indication of significant flows of financial support from the core programme support agencies provided ETARE and the VEIPS with strong backing in seeking increased national resources from the Ministry of Finance, so that GOB funding allocations were able to rise in concert with external resources; and

[11] In this area Danida points out that, for reasons of personal security, many girls in rural areas will only attend primary school until they must leave the satellite school (usually a multi-grade/single-teacher school) and travel each day to the nuclear school. This effectively limits their participation beyond the third to fifth year of primary school.

- As the partnership model evolved (core programme funding with a satellite system of project supporters) agencies constrained from programme funding by their mandate or by their priorities were mostly able to integrate their TA activities into the priorities, policies and operational strategies of the PRE (with some exceptions).

On the other hand, the potential positive aspects of the Bolivian model of partnership have not all been realized. Areas where the model has not delivered on its full potential have included:

- The exclusion of key elements of basic education from the PRE has limited the effectiveness of external support to these elements. UNICEF, Sida, the Netherlands and others have continued to support adult literacy training and other elements of "alternative education" in Bolivia. Nonetheless, the comparative historical weakness of the VEA, the absence of a strategic plan for the VEA, and the low priority assigned to this area by the GOB in the past decade have made it difficult for those providing external assistance to alternative education to achieve much in the way of capacity development at the central level;

- The degree of integration of agencies providing project support to basic education continues to vary considerably. While coordination and monitoring mechanisms within the GOB, such as the National Compensation Policy (PNC), tend to enforce further integration, VEIPS has sometimes resisted efforts to make collective coordination mechanisms more inclusive. It has preferred to work closely with the core support group rather than attempt to extend coordination out to those acting as project supporters;

- At a purely administrative and operational level, external support agencies (including some of the core support agencies) have not been able to coordinate their respective norms and standards for programme and project budgeting, disbursements, procurement, monitoring and evaluation. The duplicated, overlapping and sometimes conflicting requirements of external support agencies in these areas continue to limit the ability of the GOB to execute activities in basic education which are receiving external support; and

- While the partnership modes in Bolivia have generally worked well between external agencies and government, many observers feel they have not included strong enough links from the basic education system to civil society[12]. There is a strong perception among civil organizations in Bolivia that the dialogue on basic education has been something of a closed shop. In turn, this may eventually weaken the strongly consistent support provided by different national governments to the PRE.

On balance, this pragmatic model of partnership in support of basic education in Bolivia has to be viewed as a success. It needs to evolve into a more open system with stronger links to civil organizations in order to sustain public support. It also needs to develop a more open and positive dialogue between the core support agencies and the providers of different types of project support if the integration of project support is to be improved over time.

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[12] Most of the civil society agencies interviewed, while they may generally support the objectives of the PRE, trace the problems of consultation back to the 1993 National Education Council and the fact that the government of the day opted to implement a reform package, which ran counter to many of the recommendations of the Council. In fact, teachers' unions in particular, still see that development as a major reason for their sense of isolation from the process. This view is strongly countered by those of VEIP staff, past and present.

Executive Summary: Burkina Faso

This report presents the results of the case study of external support to basic education in Burkina Faso for the period of 1990 to 2002. It is one of four case studies carried out for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 external support agencies, with the participation of the four case study countries.

The work for this case study was carried out between April 2002 and January 2003 by a team of four consultants: two Burkinabè and two Canadian consultants. The Canadian consultants made three trips to Burkina Faso, in April and October 2002 and January 2003. Between those visits, the Burkinabè consultants had meetings with many individuals and continued the data collection. They also prepared analysis documents that have been synthesized in this report.

The Burkina Faso team benefited from the advice and guidance of the Country Reference Group (CRG), which included representatives of the ministry responsible for basic education – *Ministère de l'Enseignement de Base et de l'Alphabétisation* (MEBA) – external agencies, local researchers and civil society organizations in Burkina Faso. A similar group also provided important inputs to the evaluation process during a one-day workshop of key stakeholders hosted by the study team in Ouagadougou. As much as time would allow, the Burkina Faso team liaised both formally and informally with the other three country case study teams to encourage consistency in the methodologies across the four studies.

The following sections reflect the case study findings, the study team's analysis of these findings and its conclusions with respect to the three evaluation issues: external support to basic education; externally supported basic education; and partnership. The summary concludes with a discussion of the policy and programme implications for national partners and external agencies.

External Support to Basic Education

Throughout the 1990s, the external agency policies and intentions with respect to external support were consistent with international trends. In the latter half of the decade, the external agencies and the government became increasingly aware of the weaknesses of various external support modalities – project funding, targeted budget support and technical assistance. The current status of external support has been largely influenced by both the government's and external agencies' perceptions about the limitations of external support over the first half of the decade. In the mid-decade, there was a clear transition in the discourse of the external agencies towards programme, as opposed to project, support. This mirrored the shift that was occurring in the international community. However, only some elements of what is being proposed as programme support are, in fact, new. Some projects implemented over the past decade have also been programmes, in that they were broader in scope than traditional projects (i.e., covered more components of basic education and were implemented in a number of geographic areas), were funded by multiple external agencies, and were managed through the government either as projects (albeit through special project units) or budget support.

Three external agencies (World Bank, the Netherlands and Canada) are committed to common funding for the recently launched 10-year plan for the development of basic education in Burkina Faso – *Plan Décennal de Développement de l'Education de Base 2001/2010* (PDDEB)[13] – and it

[13] The 10-year plan was initially developed in the late 1990s and the dates on the plan itself indicate a time frame of 2000 to 2009. However, as implementation has been delayed, the Ministry is now referring to this as a plan for 2001 to 2010.

is expected that other agencies (Belgium, France and Sweden) will join this core group. Other key external agencies (UNICEF, Switzerland and the European Union) have expressed their intent to work within the framework of the plan, but are not currently committed to participating in the common funding. These are all included among the 14 key agencies, comprising multilateral and bilateral agencies and non-government organizations, that have signed a partnership agreement with the government, which defines the relationship between them and their commitment to work within the 10-year plan. Some agencies committed to common funding will continue to finance existing projects. Other agencies will continue supporting basic education through projects, but within the framework of the plan. Yet, all external agencies have expressed, in recent years, their intention to change the way in which they provide support – whether it be programme or project support. They are committed to working within the government's framework; ensuring that the government plays a bigger decision-making role in the design, implementation and monitoring of projects; and increasing the involvement of nationals in the execution of projects.

However, whether there will be a fundamental shift in the reality of the nature of, and approach to, external support remains to be seen. Based on its development and launch, the PDDEB exhibits some characteristics of a Sector-wide Approach (SWAp) to external support. However, scepticism on the part of some stakeholders, some remaining characteristics of the project approach in the support being provided to PDDEB, and the lack of clarity on how project support will be integrated with programme support all suggest that the shift is not yet complete. It is certainly too early to assess the impact of the shift to programme support and the extent to which this constitutes a SWAp.

One thing that has not changed over the decade, though, is the country's heavy dependence on external support. All indications from the interviews point to the fact that there is a heavy dependence on external support specifically for the basic education system. Nonetheless, only partial information on external support to the investment budget was available. Over 80% of MEBA's investment budget is financed by external support channelled through the Public Investment Programme (PIP). External support for basic education was increasing (from 3.7% in 1996 to 10.5% in 2000) as a percentage of all external support. It was impossible for the team to develop a complete profile of the volume of external support to basic education, since neither the government nor the agencies themselves had complete information.

The major external agencies providing financial support include Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union (EU), France, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), the African Development Bank and the World Bank. There have also been key international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting basic education – notably, Catholic Relief Services (Cathwell), Oxfam International and PLAN International.

In addition, key external agencies have provided technical assistance and engaged in policy dialogue over the decade, including Belgium, the European Union, France, Japan, the Netherlands, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank.

This financial support, technical assistance and conditionalities associated with these have been instrumental in contributing to policies that have shaped the development of Burkina Faso's basic education system. However, the dependence on external agencies continues to have implications for power relations between the external agencies and the MEBA and long-term programme sustainability.

Externally Supported Basic Education

Over the course of the last decade, the government reflected, in its policies and the organizational structure of education, a strong commitment to basic education – a commitment that preceded the international conference on basic education held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. This commitment was also reflected in the MEBA budgets that increased gradually over the latter half of the decade. However, there is contradictory information on whether actual expenditures have increased or decreased during the decade.

On the other hand, external assistance to basic education has been considerable and has been instrumental in facilitating substantial growth in the basic education system. Yet, most of the government's attention has been devoted to expanding the primary school system. Pre-schooling is marginal and undeveloped. It is a small sub-sector that is sustained mainly through private means and the interest of UNICEF and some NGOs. Likewise, support for functional literacy training by the MEBA is limited compared to public expenditures on primary schooling.

By and large, multilateral and bilateral external agencies have maintained the focus on formal primary education, with the bulk of external financial and technical assistance being allocated to construction of primary schools and teacher education schools, to the production and distribution of material and equipment (mainly for new schools), and to support for the training of primary school teachers. At the same time, however, external support for literacy training has been sizeable, but rather indirect, since most of this assistance has been channelled through national and international NGOs, all of which rely heavily on external funding and technical assistance for their operations. The key agencies providing support through NGOs include Canada, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and UNICEF. Considerable support has been directed to key national NGOs working in basic education – notably, *Oeuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière* (OSEO) and *Association Tin Tua (Tin Tua)*.

Given the preoccupation of external agencies and the government for rapid expansion of basic education (mainly primary schooling), there has been a tendency for external agencies to focus on specific aspects of the system within certain regions of the country. External support to educational expansion has thus been conducted in a fragmented, uncoordinated fashion.

Over the last 10 years, primary schooling in Burkina Faso has come to be regarded as a sector onto itself, rather than as a sub-sector of a more comprehensive, multi-faceted educational system. While substantial effort has been devoted to expanding school access and enrolments, to reducing repetition and abandonment rates, and to raising examination achievement levels, there seems to have been limited dialogue and reflection on the long-term aims of primary school expansion. In effect, the primary school system has not substantially changed from its longstanding classical forms of academic curricula and standardized assessment procedures. As well, there appears to have been little attention to the connection between schooling and the challenges that currently confront many young people in Burkina Faso.

The attention devoted to primary schooling reforms tends to be largely in response to resource constraints. Specific innovations, such as multi-grade classrooms, double cohort teaching and satellite schools have been introduced not as ways to fundamentally change methods of teaching and learning, nor to alter the purposes of schooling, but rather as ways of coping with disparities between the supply and demand of schooling. Unfortunately, however, the track record of substantive school reform in Burkina Faso is not good. Rarely do such initiatives move beyond limited pilot project stages. Largely this is because none of the major stakeholders of basic

education is able or willing to shoulder responsibility for institutionalizing major reforms on a national scale. Government appears unable to provide political leadership or generate the necessary consensus to institute fundamental changes in the primary school system. Local communities have neither the resources nor the knowledge base to maintain sustained support for primary schooling, let alone new primary school initiatives. External agencies, while eager to promote reforms and support pilot projects, continue to demonstrate profound reluctance to commit themselves to the long-term recurrent expenditures necessary for sustained support of major primary school reform. While primary schooling has received, and will continue to be the object of, the greatest proportion of state and external basic education expenditures, it is clear that given present levels of population growth and existing resource constraints, universal access to formal primary education will be difficult within the time frames foreseen in the new 10-year plan or even by 2015.

In contrast to primary schooling, non-formal literacy training is highly decentralized, is subject to much more diverse systems of management (often by NGOs and by community associations), is open to all age groups, tends to be more reasonably well-connected to the norms and rhythms of local life, and can be effectively integrated within the context of a host of other forms of education. However, despite much rhetoric about enhancing literacy levels, overall government efforts remain relatively small in this area. In effect, literacy training has been left largely to the non-governmental sector. The creation of the new literacy fund – *Fond pour l'alphabétisation et l'éducation non formelle* (FONAENF) – within the framework of the government's new 10-year plan for development of basic education is a significant step towards enhancing the valorization of non-formal literacy training as a key component of basic education in Burkina Faso.

Partnership

There has been a lot of dialogue about partnership over the past decade with a shift in the second half of the decade to "renewed" partnerships. This, in part, reflects the commitment at Jomtien to partnership with all stakeholders – government, external agencies, private sector, NGOs and civil society. Commitments are reflected in the policy and planning documents of both government and the external agencies.

There have, in fact, been some significant achievements, particularly during the latter half of the decade, in the various partnership arrangements. Renewed partnership between external agencies and government has been reflected in the development of the 10-year plan for basic education, the establishment of the new literacy fund and the implementation of new conditionalities for budget support. These changes also reflect better coordination among external agencies. There is a general sentiment that partnership between government and the external agencies is more tangible today than it was during the first years of the past decade. However, there is still an overwhelming sense that government is not "in the driver's seat" when it comes to setting the direction for basic education in Burkina Faso. There are still concerns about the sustainability of external support and indeed the entire Education for All (EFA) agenda – which has been strongly influenced by the World Bank and other major external agencies. There are questions about the extent to which there can be a true partnership when the partners are so unequal, in terms of capacity and resources.

Partnership between levels of government has also just begun to change. Despite the commitments to the necessity of decentralization, policy decisions have remained firmly centralized with the central offices of the ministry responsible for basic education. Decentralization of decision-making power and resources is a key component of the new 10-year

plan and has just begun to be felt at the regional and provincial levels. Regional and provincial staff are cautiously optimistic about the changes.

Government and external agencies have long talked about the importance of civil society (including NGOs) in the basic education system. For most of the decade the role ascribed to civil society was one of implementation and/or funding of basic education activities. Communities were asked to pay for schools without having a strong voice in decision-making. NGOs (most of which are extensively funded by external agencies) were responsible for implementation of basic education projects, particularly in non-formal education. Towards the end of the decade, there have been some signs of a shift in the role of civil society. The new literacy fund – jointly managed by government, external agencies, civil society and the private sector – formalizes the role of civil society in at least this part of basic education.

Policy and Programme Implications

On the basis of the findings of this case study, and in light of the PDDEB – which was recently adopted following years of discussion and reflection, and is now the framework for basic educational development in Burkina Faso for the next 10 years – the team has identified a number of implications for national partners and external agencies with respect to basic education policy and programmes. These implications are in the areas of partnerships, long-term financing, governance and reforms in the basic education system.

Partnerships

As a whole, external agency influence on the system for basic education has been significant and, in many respects, quite positive. However, as a result of the limitations of the project approach, the external agencies and the government have developed an alternative approach to external support to basic education – the programme approach. The PDDEB provides the framework for this support and signals improvements in aid modalities for basic education. Nevertheless, effective longer term commitments to institutional partnerships will only be realized if all external agencies work consistently towards the objective of putting the government "in the driver's seat".

Long-term financing

There is a strong sense, on the part of all stakeholders – government, external partners and the non-governmental sector – that the current emphasis on expanding and improving the quality of basic education is generating a system that is not sustainable since it continues to be heavily supported by the external agencies. The case study suggests that Burkina Faso will not be able to achieve the EFA goals – or even the PDDEB targets – in spite of the external resources being proposed under the PDDEB. On a more hopeful note, though, the case study has revealed that by promoting and endorsing the PDDEB, key external agencies have demonstrated a growing commitment to enhance coordination, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of external assistance to basic education. It will be necessary, however, for those involved in this approach to external aid to continue to work closely with other multilateral and bilateral agencies, which have not as yet demonstrated the ability or willingness to embark on this type of approach, to ensure the adequate integration of projects into the new programme approach.

Governance of basic education

It is clear that current systems and processes of educational governance present serious obstacles to effective expansion and qualitative improvements in the primary school system. Many capable, motivated individuals working in the basic education system are hampered by an administrative system and an organizational culture that make it difficult for qualified individuals to do their best to achieve the goals for basic education. Organizational and human resource management policies of the government have tended to undermine the implementation and sustainability of basic education. In line with a recent organizational review, commitments have been made to undertake a number of structural changes within the MEBA and to modify administrative procedures. These are positive steps forward. Nevertheless, despite the provision of funding for purposes of capacity building within the framework of ministerial reorganization, there have been delays in the implementation of the results of the organizational review. This suggests that improvements in administrative structures and procedures will require considerable political will on the part of senior politicians and bureaucrats.

In addition, only recently has attention been devoted to the decentralization of planning, decision-making, and financial disbursements. Administrative decentralization is a process that requires strong political commitment, particularly from politicians and bureaucrats in the centre, ongoing efforts to strengthen knowledge bases and technical capacities at regional levels, the development of strong partnerships among regional government offices, NGOs, and community groups, and greater latitude for regional initiatives and for structural flexibility.

At the same time, however, effective decentralization will require ongoing sensitivity and attention towards the perspectives and evolving educational aspirations of civil society in Burkina Faso. Without the appropriate technical capacities, institutional foundations, and resource bases, many village societies in Burkina Faso are ill-prepared to undertake substantial ownership of schools to which they are enjoined to send their children. The conundrum for government is that, for the foreseeable future, expansion of primary schooling, while conceivably a long-term investment in children and in Burkina Faso's socio-economic development, will also remain an increasingly heavy financial burden for the state and for external agencies.

Reforms in basic education

A key challenge that has long affected the way that the MEBA responds to the need to reform the basic education system is the lack of political will to take the necessary decisions to expand and change the system in a cost-effective way. Over the past decade various external agencies have sponsored innovative approaches designed to reform to aspects of the system. Although the government has accepted such projects, largely because of the external financial and technical support that accompanies them, the state has been reluctant to undertake new initiatives on its own, or to assume full responsibility for administering pilot projects and eventually integrating innovations into the system as a whole.

Within the entire system of basic education in Burkina Faso, teachers constitute the critical human factor. The level of anxiety and declining morale among many in the profession is a significant challenge. Some provisions of the PDDEB worry teachers, many of whom fear that, as a profession, they will be downgraded in relation to other professions. This, then, is an issue not just of salary scales but also of fundamental professional pride. It is vital, therefore, that the government and its external partners strive to foster a culture of trust and re-invigorated professional commitment among primary school teachers. In order to do so, greater credence

must be given to the principle of teachers as partners and "owners" in the development of primary education in the country. This will necessitate extensive, ongoing dialogue and a concrete commitment to sustained professional development and support.

External agencies and government have focused primarily on the expansion and qualitative improvement of primary schooling. There is growing concern, however, that such attention has rendered primary schooling a discrete target of assistance, with the result that insufficient heed is being paid to the dilemmas confronting young post-primary school leavers. But, it is all too clear that, for the vast majority of children who complete primary school and who find themselves unable to continue on in other forms of education, the "competencies" they have gained in primary school do not readily facilitate their transition into the next stages of their lives. On the contrary, there is strong indication that achievement in primary school, when followed by prolonged unemployment and uncertainty about personal futures, can in fact be a source of profound frustration. While there is no question about the importance of basic education as a social right to which all children are entitled, more attention must be paid to covering the gap between children's completion of primary school and the assumption of adult responsibilities.

There has already been discussion about the option of extending formal basic education from the end of the primary school cycle up into the third year of secondary schooling. Unfortunately, the implications of this would mean massive expansion of "junior" secondary schooling. Apart from the voluminous rise in expenditures that this would incur, there is no likelihood that three more years of essentially academic schooling would resolve the problems of post-school integration that many adolescents face. Another option is to strengthen and expand the functions of the many literacy training centres – *Centres permanents d'alphabétisation et de formation* (CPAFs) – transforming them into community education centres that aim to facilitate youngsters' transition from primary schooling to the world of work.

In comparison to primary schooling, both the possibilities and the current limitations of literacy training in Burkina Faso are instructive. While primary schooling has received and will continue to be the object of the greatest proportion of state and external basic education expenditures, it is clear that given present levels of population growth and existing resource constraints, universal access to primary education will be difficult within the time frames of the PDDEB or even by 2015. It is a costly enterprise, difficult to reform, and remains an uncertain social investment in light of the bottlenecks to post-primary education and the restrictions of labour markets. The literacy training centres, despite their variability in structure and quality, nonetheless appear to comprise great potential for further development.

Executive Summary: Uganda

This report presents the results of the case study of external support to basic education in Uganda for the period of 1990 to 2002. It is one of four case studies carried out for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 external agencies, the participation of the four case study countries.

The work for this case study was carried out between April 2002 and November 2002 by a team of four consultants: two consultants from Uganda and two international consultants. The international consultants made three field visits to Uganda, in April, October and November. Between these field visits, the Uganda-based consultants had many meetings with individuals and organizations in Uganda, gathered data, opinions and information. They also participated in the seventh and eighth Education Sector Reviews (ESRs) conducted in April and October of 2002. During the second field mission in October, the four consultants visited several rural districts. Interaction with stakeholders at the district and local school levels added important elements of grassroots input to this report.

The team received useful advice and support from the Country Reference Group (CRG) established in Uganda by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), which brought together approximately 20 education experts who met on several occasions throughout the period of the study. As well, the team liaised both formally and informally with the other three country teams to ensure consistency and the sharing of common issues and ideas among the four country case studies. Periodic quality assurance workshops and meetings helped to integrate the four studies into a coherent part of the overall evaluation.

As in each of the other products of the evaluation exercise, this report is organized around three key themes: external support to basic education, externally supported basic education, and partnerships. Each theme is examined at three levels: intents, policies and strategies; practices; and results.

External Support to Basic Education

External support agencies have cooperated with the MOES in Uganda to support basic education throughout the period under review. However, until 1996, this cooperation, whether in the form of funding assistance, technical support, or policy dialogue tended to be one-on-one – not located within an overall strategic framework. Uganda itself had "bought in" to the global Education for All (EFA) movement, as far back as 1989, with an Education Commission report leading to the 1992 White Paper. In 1996 the government announced that primary school fees would be abolished for up to four children in each family to encourage Universal Primary Education (UPE).

Following that, the cooperation between external support agencies and the government accelerated dramatically in support of basic education. Accelerated policy dialogue led to a shared vision, under the leadership of the MOES, in developing the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP). Shortly thereafter the external agencies established the Education Funding Agencies Group (EFAG) and, in parallel, the MOES established the Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC). These structures contributed to enhanced levels of collective and coordinated policy dialogue, planning, management and monitoring of externally supported basic education.

Together, the partners in this process conduct semi-annual ESRs, in which all aspects of ESIP and external support targets are carefully monitored. The ESR process also affords an opportunity for intense multi-stakeholder discussion about policy, priorities, and the planning of future activities.

At the beginning of the review period, virtually all external funding was delivered through individual stand-alone projects. After 1996, several external funding agencies made a substantial shift towards budget support. At a macro level, this was assisted by Uganda's development of their Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (1997), which, through agreement with external agencies, became their Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). External financial support for basic education has increased steadily since 1996, as has the proportion delivered through budget support. There are now signs that the rate of increase is flattening out. Overwhelmingly, the focus of external support has been to support increasing access to primary schooling. Other areas of basic education: alternative basic education, early childhood education, and Functional Adult Literacy (FAL), receive much more modest levels of external support, delivered through project modalities.

The focus of external support within ESIP, delivered mainly through budget support, makes Ugandan education the very prototype of a Sector-wide Approach (SWAp). The stages of evolution through the 1990s provide a valuable model of how external agencies and a government department can move towards closer and more strategic cooperation. Nevertheless, success is not without limitations. First, although ESIP is indeed sector-wide, external funding is almost entirely focused on primary schooling. Second, although SWAps are intended to reduce the administrative burden on partner governments, there is little evidence of this in Uganda. On the contrary, there appears to be a massive transfer of administrative work from the external agencies to the MOES, which is seriously overstretched. Third, there is a continuing level of support for project modalities as well as for budget support often for good reasons. There is a sound basis for believing in the validity of both budget support (programme) modalities and individual project approaches in the evolving Ugandan context for basic education.

Approximately 60% of basic education financing is now from external sources. Since the future date when basic education can be financed by domestic sources is unknown, but clearly a long way off, there is concern in some quarters about the degree to which the large flow of external support has encouraged Uganda to expand its system to a level that is so heavily dependent on external funding. The period in question goes well beyond the time scale for which external agencies can make formal contractual commitments. All stakeholders share an assumption that external funding agencies have made an implicit commitment for a much longer period.

Externally Supported Basic Education

Strong national commitment to UPE, led by the President of Uganda, and supported by increased funding through external agencies, has led to a dramatic increase in primary school enrolment, which doubled in 1997 and continued to increase after that. It now stands at over 7 million as compared to 3 million in 1996. This surge has put incredible strain on the physical capacity of the primary education system. Substantial external funding has been devoted to classroom construction, as well as the provision of enrolment-driven grants to individual schools to replace the revenue lost through the abolition of school fees.

The MOES manages this support in a context of government decentralization. Administratively, funds are transferred to the district offices and disbursed to individual schools. The mechanisms tend to encourage the addition of classrooms to existing schools, rather than the establishment of

new schools. As a result, some primary schools are becoming very large, which is not conducive to either improving quality or access (by reducing the distance children must travel). Moreover, the decentralization mechanisms pose their own challenges of capacity development at the district and local school levels. While public sector reform has resulted in some downsizing at the centre in the MOES, there has been a significant transfer of transaction costs to the district level. District offices face real problems in managing their increased responsibilities, including the monitoring of what is happening in individual schools; they lack the resources to carry out the task effectively.

There is a nearly universal perception that the quality of primary education has suffered through the period of rapid expansion. Recognizing this, attempts are being made to improve the professional development of teachers, as well as to provide a greater number of textbooks linked to a recently reformed curriculum. However, the effects of these inputs to address quality have not yet materialized substantially in the classrooms. The recent establishment of the Education Standards Agency (ESA) is intended to improve the monitoring of educational quality, as well as strengthen partnerships in inspection, monitoring and assessment between the centre, district and local levels.

Retention of children in school remains a problem, particularly for girls in the upper grades. While Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) results indicate almost universal support among parents for both boys and girls completing primary education, there appear to be persistent systemic barriers to achieving this result. A disturbing 13% (DHS estimate) of children remain out of school, in spite of UPE. Districts report the need for greater local flexibility in curriculum, so that particular material of local relevance can be included to catch students' interest and encourage them to remain in school. However, the standardization pressures of the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE), tend to make this difficult.

In parallel to the expansion of primary schooling, the provision of alternative forms of basic education has received attention from some external partners, through project mechanisms. These alternative programmes have been evaluated as very successful, but the number of students targeted has been modest and unit costs are relatively high. As well, the success in expanding primary enrolments has created a "bulge" that will soon be putting pressure on secondary schools. Therefore, there are plans to address Post-primary Education and Training (PPET), and there will be pressure on the external support agencies to increase support for this level, beyond basic education. Greater attention to the integration of basic education into the education sector as a whole is thus emerging as a strategic issue.

Partnerships

The partnership between the external support agencies and the MOES is managed, as noted above, by the ESCC and the EFAG. These groups come together twice each year for the ESR process, which, over a period of several days, reviews achievement to date, current plans, challenges and problems – all in the context of the ESIP agreements. Agencies providing financing through budget support mechanisms address accountability during the review, by monitoring a series of "undertakings" negotiated collectively with the Government of Uganda (GOU). For example, the key undertaking that ensures their contributions are targeted to basic education is currently that at least 31% of overall discretionary recurrent government spending be on education, at least 65% of which on basic education. Stakeholders agree that these processes of review and accountability work well.

Beneath the surface, however, there is some degree of tension about the relative division of power in setting priorities and determining strategic directions. While the external support agencies tend to believe that they have put the GOU "in the driver's seat", this perception is not fully shared by their Ugandan partners. The power of the cheque-book is still very real.

Furthermore, the administrative requirements assumed by the MOES, more specifically in the management of budget support flows, are substantial. There is some concern that key units in the MOES, particularly the planning department, have been forced to shift their workload too much away from the planning and management of education, to the planning and management of Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows. It is clear that many of them are overstretched, and that this is related in part to the management of the semi-annual sector reviews.

Outside the bilateral and multilateral partnerships with government, non-governmental agencies are important players. To some extent they have been, and continue to feel marginalized in the processes described above. Efforts are being made to reduce this problem. For example they are now invited to participate in the sector reviews.

The Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are also a channel, to a degree, through which external financing flows into basic education. Funds flow through international NGOs that work with local partners at the grassroots level. They are involved in classroom construction, community schools, school feeding programmes, and other community projects in support of basic education. They are the main channel for support to adult literacy programmes. It is their local NGO partners who come to the table as dialogue participants with the government and the external support agencies. One of the effects of the budget support movement has been the perception, at least, that funding for NGO efforts in basic education is being reduced. However, as there is no system for tracking these funding flows, accurate data is not available. It is clear, nonetheless, that greater involvement of NGOs (both international and Ugandan) in policy dialogue would be helpful. Their own efforts would benefit from greater coordination in the overall strategic planning for basic education. NGOs, however, have a continuing challenge to find the right balance between involvement with the MOES and, at the same time, retaining their traditional independence.

The shift from external support through projects to budget support mechanisms thus lies at the heart of all discussions about partnership. While the GOU would prefer all external support to come through budget support mechanisms not all stakeholders agree that this would be beneficial. Both budget support and project mechanisms, they argue, have a part to play.

Channelling external financing through budget support on a large scale clearly makes a strong contribution to sustainable basic education. At the same time, individual projects often provide the mechanisms for piloting new approaches and experimenting on a modest scale before major national commitment are made to a particular course of action. As well, there are strong perceptions that projects operate more quickly and efficiently in response to local needs with fewer layers of bureaucratic approval necessary before action can be taken. Therefore, there would seem to be good arguments that while the bulk of external financing should flow through budget support, some room (and funding) should remain for project approaches.

Executive Summary: Zambia

This report presents the results of the case study of external support to basic education in Zambia for the period of 1990 to 2002. It is one of four case studies carried out for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education that was commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 external support agencies, with the participation of four developing countries.

The evaluation is concerned with:

- The nature and the evolution of external support;
- Basic education in receipt of external support; and
- Partnerships for developing basic education.

Under each of these areas the evaluation considers:

- Intents, policies and strategies;
- Practices; and
- Results.

The work for this case study was carried out between April 2002 and December 2002 by a team of two international consultants and three Zambian consultants. The international consultants made visits to Zambia in April, June, October and December 2002. Between those visits the Zambian consultants held additional meetings and gathered opinions and information. They also analyzed documents that have been synthesized in this report.

The team is grateful for the advice and guidance of the Country Reference Group (CRG), of education experts from the Government, external support agencies, local academics, researchers and representatives of civil society organizations in Zambia. The CRG provided important help to the evaluation for identifying issues and sources of information.

The team went to Southern and Western Provinces of Zambia to visit education offices, teacher training institutions and schools and to meet stakeholders, including parents and children.

The evaluation coincided with an important step in the cooperation between external agencies and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ). December 2002 was the end of Phase 1 of the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) that has been the framework for development cooperation since 1998. The evaluation team was able to observe the planning for the next phase, from 2003 to 2007, in a process that set new targets for education in Zambia and the establishment of new modalities of cooperation between the GRZ and its external partners.

The evaluation team presented preliminary findings to a consultation meeting of representatives of the GRZ, the education profession, external agencies and civil society organizations on December 17, 2002. This consultation meeting was held as part of a major planning and review exercise. Comments received from participants have been incorporated into this report.

Background

From the mid-1970s Zambia suffered dramatic social and economic effects of the fall in copper prices and by the beginning of the 1990s witnessed a serious decline in the education system, manifested by shortages and poor state of facilities with stagnant indicators of enrolment and performance. Poverty, particularly in the rural areas, increased.

Zambian officials attended the Jomtien conference in 1990 and signed the *Declaration of Education for All* (EFA). Following a change of government in 1992, education was prioritized and, after consultation, the Ministry of Education (MOE) published, in 1996, a policy document titled *Educating Our Future: National Policy of Education*. This set a priority for basic education (defined as Grades 1 to 9, inclusive, of primary school) to increase access and quality.

Most of the primary schooling in Zambia is provided in government schools, but recent years have seen the growth of the CS, which offer a more flexible education.

Around 21.5% (UNAIDS website, 2002) of the population is estimated to have HIV/AIDS, with much higher numbers of professionals, including teachers, infected. The impact of HIV/AIDS on the education system is difficult to quantify and includes the loss of teachers to the illness, and large numbers of children who are orphaned or caring for sick relatives.

Zambia has also suffered from the protracted southern African drought and consequent food shortages in 2000 to 2003, worsening the plight of poor people.

External Support to Basic Education

During the early 1990s Zambia received support to education from the bilateral agencies for a variety of projects. Agencies often managed this support on a provincial basis and provided a portfolio of synergetic inputs to education in "their" province. Other agencies identified manageable project targets, such as development of individual institutions, or sub-sectors, such as teacher education. The beneficiaries were from all parts of the system, with substantial support going to secondary schooling, higher education and adult education.

The 1996 policy document identified basic education as the top priority. This accorded with the emerging policy of external agencies, post-Jomtien, in which basic education was identified as part of the long-term approach to poverty alleviation and children's rights.

In the mid-1990s, there was also pressure on the external agencies to develop better modalities for implementing support and harmonization of the different agencies' activities. Their aim was to ensure that interdependencies were recognized and addressed, and to ensure that governments took management responsibilities for implementing development. These intentions are characterized as a Sector-wide Approach (SWAp) and set an agenda for a different partnership with government, away from discrete projects managed by external funding agencies.

This accorded with government's policies in the mid-1990s. The discussions leading to the education policy paper had identified incoherent, uncoordinated interventions in the education system that had made the government less able to manage development activities, or to be properly informed of what was happening.

Thus in 1996, the GRZ, the World Bank and the majority of external agencies shared the intention both to focus on primary education and to adopt ways of working that built on a sector-wide scope and integration into the GRZ line management and financial structures.

The move from shared intentions to a working programme proved complex, and it took three years before the resulting programme, BESSIP, started. Obstacles included the fact that responsibility for the education sector is split among four ministries, and that the agencies had different constraints to adopting new management and funding modalities. Some also had

reservations about the GRZ's capacity to manage and account for a programme in ways that would satisfy the agencies' internal procedures. All these factors were cited in the decision to simplify the planned Education Sector Investment Programme (ESIP) to two sub-sector programmes, BESSIP and the Technical Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (TESIP).

BESSIP emerged as an umbrella programme under which all the cooperating partners would work towards the agreed priorities and targets, with joint monitoring. Cooperating partners in BESSIP were encouraged by the GRZ, the World Bank and a group of agencies, to fund BESSIP as part of a "pool", separate from the MOE recurrent budget, but managed by the MOE according to the activities of the BESSIP plan, rather than earmarked for selected line items. Those external agencies that were not able to commit to pool funding were accommodated under the BESSIP programme umbrella by alternative funding modalities and accounting systems.

At the start, only four external agencies were willing to commit to pool funding, and some as only a small part of their support framework. However, over the last three years, increasing confidence in MOE procedures and the realization that pool funding is beneficial have persuaded other agencies to increase their support to the pool and make commitments to future pool funding. The MOE's National Plan 2003 to 2007, which was produced at the end of 2002 after intensive consultation with partners and stakeholders, is another step on the road to a SWAp, in that it covers the whole education sector and encourages pooled funding or budget support.

Even where there is commitment to SWAps, external agencies have recognized the value of maintaining a reserve of "off-budget" and technical assistance (TA) funds to allow a flexible and rapid response to newly identified needs.

External agencies have been supporting the inclusion of civil society organizations in basic education policy and practice. Some strategic support has been provided to representative Non-governmental Agencies (NGOs) to bring a civil society voice to BESSIP reviews, other policy meetings, and international fora. The CS sub-sector has received similar support to develop a representative secretariat, and to reach important agreements with the MOE on cooperation and support.

Externally Supported Basic Education

In the early 1990s, the line Ministries were not able to plan, or monitor, external initiatives for basic education beyond specifying a "shopping list" for the funding. The MOE sought to take a proper planning and management overview in the formation of BESSIP. BESSIP's components covered its range of development concerns, including: infrastructure, teachers, curriculum and materials; and cross-cutting issues including: equity; nutrition and health, as well as HIV/AIDS. Annual work-planning and semi-annual reviews were undertaken jointly by the MOE, cooperating partners and other stakeholders.

The integration of BESSIP into the MOE structure was partial in that there was a separate BESSIP Coordinator and management structure. However the personnel, many of whom were on secondment, were situated in the MOE building and enjoyed good access and communications with senior-level officials and other Ministry staff.

Phase 1 of BESSIP coincided with a reform of the Zambian civil service to rationalize positions in central government and to decentralize management responsibilities. These are difficult changes and have taken longer than expected to implement. The MOE was undergoing

restructuring during this evaluation, in 2002. Civil service reform and decentralization initiatives were encouraged by the external agencies: the former as a path to increasing management efficiency and effectiveness; the latter for its perceived benefits of local responsiveness, flexibility and accountability.

Educational responsibility is decentralized mainly to district level, with a reduction in the responsibilities of the provinces, which are larger administrative units. The decentralization process is ongoing, and the capacity of district-level personnel and organization has been a cause for concern, particularly regarding procurement and accountability on the use of funds. A particular problem for the districts is the mobilization of personnel to monitor progress and undertake school evaluations and inspections.

One response to this has been to utilize external agency funding, made available on a flexible basis and outside the BESSIP pool system, to fund capacity-building initiatives, such as training sessions and organizational development studies for districts. However, the evaluation suggests that ongoing decentralization has been a complicating context for the MOE to build levels of management, accountability and ownership implied in the BESSIP design.

Procurement has also proved a test of capacity, at both MOE headquarters and decentralized levels, and there have been frustrating delays in procuring civil works and textbooks, for example. The problems included a lack of trained personnel to work with the different national and international procurement procedures, and they are being addressed.

In 2002 the Ministry of Education announced that it would abolish the fees that schools charged for recurrent costs, and other parental costs of schooling. Instead, the MOE provides each school with a regular block grant to purchase consumable items. The grants, known as “BESSIP grants”, are administered by the districts and, although the system is too new to evaluate, it seems to offer hope for increasing enrolments and retention of poor students as there is evidence that direct costs are the most important disincentive for poor parents.

System-wide information support to planning and management has been poor and the validity of data from the early 1990s is suspect. Efforts in BESSIP have improved the collection of raw data from schools and consolidation by the MOE. However, validation is weak and there are methodological difficulties in making long-term comparisons of key indicators. The data for the first half of the 1990s suggests a slow decline in enrolment and other indicators, usually explained as a result of the long period of economic decline. The evaluation suggests that Zambia is making progress to halt that decline. Enrolments are beginning to increase slowly, and in urban areas the ratio of girls to boys in schools is nearing parity. For most of the key indicators in Zambia the differences between rural and urban areas are the most significant challenge to equity of access and achievement. However Zambia is identified (UNESCO, 2002a) as one of the countries at risk of not reaching the EFA goals.

Student achievement indicators have been introduced and assessments have been carried out from 1999. The recorded changes to date are not significant, although internationally standardized results suggest that overall levels of achievement in Zambia remain low.

Field evidence is that schools are benefiting from a more coherent approach to the supply of materials and the organization of professional development activities for teachers. There has been visible investment in improving the infrastructure of primary schools and supplying furniture.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has impacted on the lives of children at home and school in ways that are impossible to quantify.

Professional personnel, including teachers, have a higher rate of HIV infection than the average. The attrition rate of primary teachers in government employment, through job dissatisfaction and emigration, as well as the effects of HIV/AIDS, has strained the teacher training system and slowed progress towards the reduction of pupil-teacher ratios. Although an innovative programme to increase the capacity of the teacher training system has been implemented under BESSIP, teacher supply, particularly to rural schools, remains problematic. There is low morale and motivation in the teaching profession over conditions of service and professional responsibility.

The focus of external agencies and the MOE on primary schooling has been perceived as shifting their attention, and support from other EFA goals, most notably for ECE and adult literacy initiatives. The provision of pre-school education now falls mainly in the private sector, and external support for training of trainers and development of materials for pre-school education, which was available in the early 1990s, has effectively dried up. Similarly external support for adult literacy has decreased: the evaluation finds both the relevant ministry and Zambian NGOs concerned at the lack of support to this area but recognizes that it is being addressed in the new planning.

Partnership

The working relationship among external agencies, and with the GRZ, has changed significantly and is a work-in-progress. All have gained confidence and trust that allows them to talk more frankly" and to tackle problems jointly. The working relationship at the semi-annual reviews was suggested as an indicator, and the evaluation team was able to confirm a significant change in the confidence of MOE officials towards representatives of the funding agencies. There is a clear commitment to take more steps in the direction of a SWAp partnership model.

However, at the same time, the cooperating partners still hold the purse strings, and there is a feeling – expressed with the same frankness – that the partnership can only be built on a recognition of the different partner roles.

The organization of partnership amongst the agencies has been complicated because of the different modalities and approaches used under the BESSIP umbrella. The agencies committed to pool funding are characterized as having a special relationship with the MOE, and others have expressed feelings of marginalization. On the other hand, the committed pool funders criticize agencies that still provide support in a project modality. But these are now dialogues underneath one umbrella, so that they are based on common directions and analysis of needs.

The period has seen NGO and civil society organizations better represented in the policy discussions. The joint reviews, and the Strategic Planning process, comprised representatives of umbrella NGOs, including those representing the community school sub-sector.

Conclusions

Zambia demonstrates how EFA goals are being implemented mainly as primary schooling, and the evaluation reminds us that primary schooling is slow to respond to initiatives and slow to deliver its hoped-for benefits in personal empowerment and poverty-reduction. Proponents of

adult education in Zambia make a strong case that it can make a more effective and efficient contribution to these aims.

The Strategic Planning process has paved the way for new forms of partnership between the GRZ and the external agencies. These will seek to establish common modalities and further harmonize approaches to reduce the management burden and complexity.

The evaluation identifies factors that have contributed to the successful developmental cooperation, and highlights the importance of stakeholder and beneficiary involvement at all stages and levels of planning, implementation and evaluation.

Implications

Zambia faces an enormous and long-term challenge but new ways of working are slowly turning round a system that was in crisis just a few years ago. Zambia is reliant on support from outside and needs confidence that this will be a medium to long-term support relationship, longer than the typical five-year cycle of agency planning.

The evaluation identifies the importance of building the culture and the information support for better monitoring of schools and evaluation of key activities such as teacher-training and capacity-building inputs.

The role of CS, and their new relationship with the MOE is recognized by the evaluation. However there is a concern if CS can retain that support while still seeking to innovate and reach out to the poorest children. In other countries government support has been a heavy hand on the freedom of CS, and this would be regrettable.

The evaluation also suggests that some agencies, notably the United Nations agencies, have a mission and management structure that is mismatched with the aims of a proto-SWAp, such as BESSIP.

Annex 2: Framework Terms of Reference

JOINT EVALUATION OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO BASIC EDUCATION

Framework Terms of Reference

18 October 2001

Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education

Framework Terms of Reference

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Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education

Framework Terms of Reference

I INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Context

1. In the sequels to the World Education for All Forum held in Dakar in April, 2000, a Consultative Group of Evaluation Departments, representing twelve international and national funding and technical assistance agencies, agreed to undertake a joint evaluation of external support to basic education.[1] Their intention is to develop a strategy for assessing the combined contributions of external support to basic education in selected partner countries in order to draw lessons for policy and programme improvement. The proposed evaluation is expected to (1) address the relevance and effectiveness of external support to national policies and their implementation from the perspective of poverty alleviation and gender equality; (2) consider issues of co-ordination and coherence of external support; (3) assess the sustainability (or potential sustainability) of the results of the various activities undertaken; and (4) in view of the relevance of the study for ongoing sector-wide approaches, investigate the understandings and practices of funding and technical assistance agencies in the development of programme and sector approaches, both those in their early stages and those with longer experience. Five partner countries have been invited to join the initiative: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia.

2. A preparatory study for the evaluation, developed in consultation with the commissioning agencies, reviewed the basic issues, highlighted potentially problematic areas, outlined the general parameters for the proposed evaluation, and provided a preliminary annotated inventory of some 214 evaluation reports and related documents submitted by the participating organizations.[2]

3. For much of its modern history education has been described in terms of three major levels or cycles: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Although the thresholds between them vary among countries, those levels are broadly understood and often used to organize not only the formal education system but also the government ministries and departments responsible for education. Recent usage, especially among those concerned with education and development, has emphasized a new categorization and thus conception: basic education. Both philosophy and experience have contributed to the birth and specification of this new category. Where very few learners can proceed to secondary and tertiary education it makes little sense to organize the first level primarily as preparation for the higher levels. Instead, the initial years of education are expected to be basic, intended to develop the skills, understandings, and perspectives that active citizens in their society will require, and should constitute a complete and coherent course of study. The notion of *basic education* gained credibility and concrete content as governments, international agencies, and other organizations met in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to commit themselves to Education for All and in the education initiatives that followed that meeting, including the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Sénégal.

[1] The initiative is currently sponsored by: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), European Commission, German Ministry of Economic Co-operation (BMZ), Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID), UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank. Other national and international funding and technical assistance agencies may join this effort.

[2] J. Samoff, *When Progress is Process: Evaluating Aid to Basic Education: Issues and Strategies* (Report prepared for the Consultative Group of Evaluation Departments, January 2001).

4. While the term "basic education" is widely used, meanings differ, sometimes sharply. In themselves, those differences need not have particular significance and may in fact serve to permit tailoring education initiatives and reforms to particular settings. For this evaluation of aid to basic education, however, those differences become important because of their consequences for (a) the scope of the evaluation, (b) the approach and methodology of the evaluation, (c) data collection and comparison. For example, the differing understandings of basic education render exceedingly difficult a systematic comparison of the volume of external assistance to basic education.

5. The global trend has been toward a broader and more inclusive specification of the domain of basic education. For this evaluation the tradeoff is between respecting each country's and agency's conception and approach on the one hand and making reasonable comparisons on the other. An appropriate compromise is to begin with a broad approach, informed by relevant international agreements and DAC guidelines, and then to organize the evaluation to structure comparability into the process of gathering and analyzing data. Thus, the divergence of current practice and the converging trend suggest that the evaluation should (1) adopt a pragmatic and inclusive specification of basic education, intended to incorporate all activities that recipient countries and aid providers categorize as basic education (including early childhood development, formal and non-formal elementary or primary education, adult education, alternative forms of teaching basic knowledge to diverse groups, as well as investments in and reforms of the education system directly related to these components, for example teacher education, curriculum development, production and distribution of instructional materials, management and funding systems); (2) for the purposes of document review and empirical study, respect each country's and agency's definition of basic education (which are likely to differ in important respects); and (3) gather data and organize reports in a manner that permits systematic and reliable comparisons notwithstanding the country and agency differences. Beyond the evaluation, doing so may support progress toward a common reporting system for externally aided activities.

6. External support to basic education is both multi-dimensional and changing. Historically, foreign aid has been directed toward specific activities and generally organized in projects. In practice, some projects were quite extensive and included numerous sub-projects. Recent aid practice has emphasized both the importance of the government role and a holistic approach to aid, expected to take the form of broad support to the education sector. As well, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of policy environments at the macro level, which may provide incentives to the development of basic education or hamper expansion and improvements. Effective external assistance is likely to take many forms, including finance, technical support, individual and institutional capacity building, and coordination. Sector Investment Programmes and Sector Wide Approaches are among the forms of external support that have received increased emphasis. It is also important to understand that external support generally carries explicit (and often implicit) expectations for policies and practices, commonly termed conditionalities.

7. While it is tempting to look for direct answers to the question, What has aid accomplished?, unambiguous links between external support and basic education outcomes may be difficult or impossible to establish. In most countries, external support is a small part of total spending on education, though of course its leverage and impact may exceed its volume. Readily measurable outcomes, for example examination scores, are the result of multiple influences that cannot easily be systematically distinguished. Where there has been measurable progress–more competent teachers, imaginative new curriculum, up to date and available textbooks, improved achievement measures–available evidence may not permit reliable statements about the contribution of aid to that progress. Similarly, only rarely will it be possible to attribute education outcomes to the support provided by a particular country or agency. The attribution problem becomes more complex if not insurmountable when the outcomes of interest reach across the society, like poverty reduction. This evaluation will focus on inputs, outputs, and outcomes and highlight attribution wherever that is feasible and reasonable.

8. A multi-agency, multi-issue, multi-focus evaluation has the potential to break new ground, both in understanding the relationship between aid and education and in figuring out how to assess it. The evaluation itself is thus an important initiative in development cooperation among agencies and between agencies and their development partners. It provides an extraordinary opportunity for development dialogue that is frank, focused, and grounded. Partnership will be both a subject for study and a means of studying it.

9. In addition to their assessment role, evaluations can be powerful learning tools, both for those involved in the activities being evaluated and for those who have commissioned the evaluation. All of the participating organizations have many years experience with evaluating projects and programmes, some very extensive and complex. What distinguishes this evaluation is that *it is to be explicitly designed as a cooperative effort of multiple agencies,* that *it envisions the evaluation of external support to basic education broadly rather than particular projects or programmes,* and that *it is more concerned with the overall roles, process, and results of aid rather than with the specific uses of a particular country's or organization's funds.* As a cooperative, multi-national endeavor, the joint evaluation can itself contribute to and reinforce progress toward increased sectoral cooperation. Undertaken self-consciously and critically, the proposed evaluation holds the promise of improved understandings of the forms and consequences of interactions among funding and technical assistance agencies and recipient countries and of the evaluation process itself.

10. The evaluation will examine the intents, forms, uses, and consequences of external support to basic education in partner countries in the South. External support is understood broadly to include not only direct and indirect finance, but also technical assistance, individual and institutional capacity building, coordination, development advice, conditionalities, and other pressures to adopt particular policies or pursue specified activities. As well, the evaluation must address the scope and mechanisms of aid co-ordination and their effectiveness. With particular attention to the support programmes of the commissioning agencies, the evaluation will consider aid to basic education broadly. It will, of necessity, examine the results achieved in order to provide a meaningful frame of reference for understanding and interpreting these co-ordination mechanisms. It will be sensitive to differences in setting, particularly where basic education has been buffeted by crisis, civil conflict, and chronic instability. The evaluation will be essentially formative in nature and necessarily situational. Its findings and conclusions will be important both for individual national and international agencies and for partner countries and may be incorporated into the follow up strategies to the Dakar World Education Forum. The design of the study and the communication of its results must take into account the different information requirements of these broad constituencies.

11. These terms of reference are labeled Framework Terms of Reference to emphasize that (1) the evaluation strategy developed by the successful respondent effectively elaborates the objectives and procedures set out here and thereby will become part of the working terms of reference, (2) the involvement of country partners will likely lead to modifications of the evaluation strategy as the work proceeds, and (3) the objectives and process defined here will provide the framework for the development of country terms of reference, which will address the unique characteristics and particular circumstances of each case study.

B. Objective of the Evaluation

12. The objective of the evaluation is to **examine the process of external support to basic education provided by international and national funding and technical assistance agencies to partner countries in the South, including its intents, forms, uses, results, and consequences, in order to draw lessons for policy and programme improvement.**

13. That objective necessarily has three components. (1) The principal component is to assess the nature and evolution of external support to basic education (elaborated in Section II.A, page 7). For that, it will be necessary to assess (2) the effectiveness and efficiency of externally

supported basic education activities in selected countries (elaborated in Section II.B, page 8), and (3) efforts to reconceptualize foreign aid as partnerships for basic education development (elaborated in Section II.C, page 10).

C. Scope and Focus of the Evaluation

14. The starting points for the evaluation are the broad commitments of international development assistance, including the provision of education for all, the elimination of poverty, and the achievement of gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Within those broad commitments have been specific initiatives to support the development of basic education in partner countries. That support must also address, directly or indirectly, important society-wide and international influences on education, for example, poverty and exclusion, the AIDS pandemic, unstable socio-economic conditions, and the challenges and side-effects of new technologies. Some of those education support initiatives have been very broad, while others have been more narrowly defined. More recently, the trend of external support has been toward more comprehensive programme or sector support, with increased cooperation among funding and technical assistance agencies. Consequently, while some external funding for basic education continues, and is likely to continue, to support particular projects and programmes, other funding is allocated on a sector-wide basis or contributed directly to the education sector budget.

15. Several international agreements and conventions provide orientation and as appropriate, assessment targets, for this evaluation. It is important, however, to recognize that understandings of core issues, including the specification, nature, and forms of basic education and education for all, have evolved over recent years and will continue to evolve into the future. Since the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 and the Declaration on Education for All adopted in 1990 informed many of the activities to be evaluated, they can reasonably be incorporated into the assessment frames for this evaluation. More recent definitions and agreements, including those reached in 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, may provide insights into recent activities but are properly assessment standards for future, not previous programmes.

16. The evaluation is to be designed so that it (a) builds on prior work and insights and does not duplicate earlier studies, (b) assesses the combined contributions of the funding and technical assistance agencies involved in the study to basic education in a number of partner countries in order to draw lessons for policy and programme improvement, (c) recognizes both the interests of the commissioning agencies and the special interests of the partner countries involved in the evaluation, and actively (d) seeks participation of partner countries in the study.

17. The evaluation should draw particularly on the evaluations of external assistance recently undertaken by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development *(Prospects of Success of Basic Education Projects,* 2001) and currently by the European Commission (on education in African, Caribbean, and Pacific regions) and on the on-going monitoring of basic education and progress toward education for all. It should draw as well on recent and current national evaluations in the case study countries.

18. The evaluation should be attentive to cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral education activities that link, for example, the education ministry with the ministries responsible for health or social welfare.

19. Unless otherwise indicated, the Evaluation should focus on the period 1990-2001, with emphasis on 1995-2001 and with attention as appropriate to preceding and subsequent events.

D. Architecture of the Evaluation

20. Evaluating support from many different agencies to basic education in several different settings is necessarily a complex undertaking. A major challenge for the Evaluators will be to organize and manage that complexity so that broad patterns and trends emerge clearly, always understood in the context of the specific characteristics of the cases studied. To address that challenge, the Evaluation has three major components (elaborated in Section II, page 6), each addressed through two different approaches (elaborated in Section III, page 12).

21. The first component focuses on the nature and evolution of external support to basic education. While the primary concern in this component is to explore the ideas, policies, practices, and results of the funding and technical assistance agencies, that exploration must address not only the agencies' perspectives on their own work but also how their work is perceived by others and how it is reflected in the content and form of their support. The second component shifts the focus from aid to education. Here, the primary concern is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of basic education activities in selected countries, specifically those activities that have received external support. These two components-external support and basic education-are intended to be complementary, each informing and strengthening the other. The key questions for these two components will overlap, thereby permitting regular cross-checking of findings and interpretations.

22. Bringing the first two components even more closely together, the third component will review efforts to reconceptualize foreign aid as partnerships for basic education development. In that way, partnership (contents and forms) is both an explicit focus for evaluation and a lens through which to examine external support to basic education.

23. The Evaluation will rely on two major approaches, undertaken in successive phases. First, Evaluators will review the documentary record on external support to basic education, including documents provided by the participating agencies and other documents the Evaluators deem relevant. Then, the Evaluators will study five country cases in greater detail.

24. These two approaches will address essentially the same key questions. Here, too, the alternative perspectives will be complementary, each supplementing and validating observations and interpretations derived from the other. To be clear, the document review and analysis is not intended to be limited to a study of agencies and their policies and practices, and the case studies are not intended to focus only on national basic education policies and programmes. Both approaches will generate data on aid and education. Even as they highlight agency orientations and approaches, the documents also address basic education in diverse settings. Similarly, while the case studies are expected to support a detailed analysis of country-level activities, they will also provide insights into agency understandings, strategies, and practices.

E. Constituencies for the Evaluation

25. Since the findings of this evaluation will be of interest to multiple constituencies, its design and implementation must incorporate their needs and perhaps diverging concerns. At the first level, those constituencies include the commissioning agencies (field offices as well as headquarters) and the governments of the partner countries (national and as appropriate provincial, state, district, and local levels). For its results to be useful, the evaluation must also be sensitive to the interests of the broader education community -teachers, parents, students, and community and other organizations-within the partner countries. To encourage broader attention to and use of its findings and conclusions, the evaluation should at a third level also address the interests of other funding and technical assistance agencies, government officials and the education community in other partner countries, and research institutes or academic programmes that specialize in education and development.

F. Limitations of the Evaluation

26. The country case study approach has been adopted to permit detailed analysis of concrete experiences. There is, and can be, no claim that the selected countries are formally representative of their regions or of all countries with externally supported basic education activities. Accordingly, while it will seek to develop understandings, insights, and conclusions relevant to many different agencies and settings, this Evaluation must not be regarded as an all encompassing, world-wide study. Rather, this Evaluation should be understood as a study of external support to basic education in selected partner countries. As appropriate, with careful attention to the context and limitations of the findings, what is learned from studying those countries can be adapted to inform similar efforts elsewhere. In that way, the findings of this evaluation will contribute to the discussions of progress toward international development goals.

27. It is also important to stress that evaluating external support to basic education is not identical to evaluating basic education. It will certainly be necessary to examine the outcomes of specific basic education activities. That examination should be understood as a supporting dimension of this work that is intended to contribute to the evaluation of the forms, practices, and consequences of external support.

28. As indicated above, this evaluation will focus on inputs, outputs, and outcomes and highlight attribution wherever that is feasible and reasonable. Examining results requires addressing (a) education as process, (b) education as inherently contextual, (c) the risks of oversimplifying in order to generalize, (d) education practice as the result of negotiation, (e) the commonly long time horizon between education initiatives and reforms and observable and measurable outcomes, and (f) the difficulties in assessing the role of a small volume of aid in the midst of the many factors that influence education outcomes.

29. This evaluation of external support to basic education is thus most fruitfully understood as primarily a formative evaluation that requires a combination of several evaluative strategies. While the context for this evaluation is necessarily the broadly shared commitments to poverty reduction, promotion of equality and equity, and education for all, it is unrealistic to expect to be able to measure the impact on poverty of, say, support to improve first grade science textbooks. Rather, this evaluation will be most useful by focusing on:

    (a) middle-level findings (rather than grand lessons) for which the contextual conditions are clear;

    (b) process and outcomes (rather than impacts);

    (c) the settings in which it is undertaken (hence, case studies should provide both direct information and solidly supported insights about the case as well as observations that may be relevant elsewhere); and

    (d) reinforcing partnership in the development of basic education, including capacity building in evaluation.

II. KEY QUESTIONS

30. This evaluation is concerned with *external support (aid)* and *basic education,* with primary emphasis on the process that links the two. It is useful, therefore, to address each directly by focusing on a series of key questions and major issues. Doing so will occasionally lead to potentially very fruitful overlapping inquiries, since a particular question or issue may be explored from the perspective of external aid and then again from the perspective of basic education. This approach also highlights the utility of comparing another pair of vantage points, those of the funding and technical assistance agencies and the partner countries. Accordingly,

the next section (II.A, below) focuses on external support and explores the perspectives of the funding and technical assistance agencies. Section II.B (page 8) then focuses on externally supported basic education and explores the perspectives of the partner countries.

31. Through all of the key questions and issues listed below, the Evaluation will reflect the broad contextual concerns of external support to basic education, including poverty reduction and gender equity.

A. The Nature and Evolution of External Support to Basic Education

32. The Evaluation should describe and assess external support provided by international and national funding and technical assistance agencies to basic education in partner countries. While generally provided directly to governments, that support may also involve non-governmental organizations and the education community more broadly in the providing and recipient countries.

1. Intents, Policies, and Strategies

33. **What is the broad framework of ideas, understandings, and institutions within which external assistance is provided to basic education in partner countries? How have that framework, or its major components, changed over the past decade?**

34. Addressing that question requires attention to several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.)

(a) similarities and differences and convergence and divergence among funding and technical assistance agencies in basic education support policies

(b) consequences of those similarities and differences in basic education support policies, including alternative ideas and standards for assessing the relevance of external support to basic education

(c) significance of the overall foreign assistance policy framework and objectives (for example, commitment to poverty reduction and gender equality, emphasis on good governance, transparency, and accountability) for support to basic education

(d) formally specified procedures for external support to basic education

(e) influence of the international commitment to Education for All, including agreed targets and timelines, on the policies of international and national funding and technical assistance agencies in their provision of support to basic education

2. Practices

35. **How have the practices of support to basic education changed over time?**

36. Addressing that question requires attention to several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.)

(a) focus, priorities, and forms of external support to basic education, with attention to changes over time
(b) similarities and differences in practices among funding and technical assistance agencies in support to basic education
(c) formal and informal mechanisms of coordination of efforts among the funding and technical assistance agencies (including sector wide approaches and pooled funding)
(d) geographic distribution of external support to basic education (all countries, with particular attention to the case study countries)

(e) approximate allocations by funding and technical assistance agencies to basic education in partner countries (overall and in the selected case study countries, both absolute amounts and ratios to education and total spending, with careful attention to the problems of comparing the volume of external support)
(f) direct and indirect roles of the overall foreign assistance policy framework and objectives (for example, commitment to poverty reduction and gender equality, emphasis on good governance, transparency, and accountability) in support to basic education
(g) influence of the international commitment to Education for All, including agreed targets and timelines, on the practices of international and national funding and technical assistance agencies in their provision of support to basic education

3. Results and Consequences

37. **What have been the results and consequences of external support to basic education in partner countries?**

38. Addressing that question requires moving beyond description to analysis in considering several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.) Since education outcomes can have multiple causes and since the long gestation period of education reforms can obscure their origins, it is essential to assess critically claims about the relationship between external support and particular outcomes.

(a) observed results and consequences of external support to basic education and of the changing forms of that support, both for the aid relationship and for the education system

(b) effectiveness, efficiency, and utility of aid coordination mechanisms, from the perspective of the agencies, partner country governments, and the broader education community

(c) contribution of external assistance to the achievement of broad social goals, for example, poverty reduction and gender equity

(d) major factors that have contributed to or impeded achieving intended results and/or that have had other consequences

(e) consequences of the character and dynamics of the aid relationship for improving basic education in partner countries

(f) association between quality and improvements in basic education in partner countries and the extent and forms of external support

(g) assessment of the consequences of external support from multiple vantage points, including national needs, national policies, policies of the providing agencies, and international agreements and targets

(h) extent to which and ways in which external support to basic education supported or undermined national priorities

B. Externally Supported Basic Education

39. The primary focus of the first component of the evaluation was *external support* to basic education. To complement that orientation the primary focus here is on *basic education,* and specifically those elements of basic education that receive external support. Those are necessarily overlapping perspectives. The emphasis shifts, however, from aid to basic education. That change in emphasis brings with it a change in vantage point, from that of the funding and technical assistance agencies to that of the partner countries. That change in emphasis also marks a shift in accountability for the aid relationship, from accountability to the country or organization providing support to the country receiving it.

40. The Evaluation should describe and assess basic education activities in the case study countries that have been supported by international and national funding and technical assistance agencies. The primary focus of this section is the case study countries. The experiences of other partner countries will be addressed in the document review.

1. Intents, Policies, and Strategies

41. **Within the policy framework for basic education in partner countries, to what extent and in what ways has external support been integrated?**

42. Addressing that question requires attention to several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.)

(a) understandings and specifications of basic education

(b) major elements of education policy in the case study countries, with particular attention to policies relevant to external assistance and changes over time

(c) compatibility, convergence, and coherence of the national policy framework and the policy frameworks of external agencies

(d) general and clearly articulated policy framework and specific policies for receiving and managing external support to basic education

(e) similarities and differences among the case study countries in their basic education and foreign assistance policies

(f) extent to which and ways in which the national commitment to Education for All has shaped or influenced the basic education policies and practices of case study countries

2. Practices

43. **At the operational level of basic education, to what extent and in what ways has external support been integrated?**

44. Addressing that question requires attention to several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.)

(a) role of external support in basic education

(b) similarities and differences in the provision of basic education among the case study countries, with particular attention to the role of external support

(c) education management and the accountability (to whom?) of education managers, with particular attention to the role of external support

(d) management of foreign aid and the accountability (to whom?) and institutional arrangements of the management of external support to basic education

(e) formal and informal relationships between those responsible for basic education and the external funding and technical assistance agencies

(f) approximate support to basic education received by the case study countries (overall and from the agencies that have commissioned this evaluation, with careful attention to the problems of comparing the volume of external support and with attention to the context of government spending on basic education and education more generally)

3. Results and Consequences

45. **From the perspectives of those involved in basic education in partner countries, what have been the results and consequences of external support to basic education**

46. Note that this question is framed here from the perspective of partner countries and with basic education as the context. Addressing that question requires moving beyond description to analysis in considering several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.) Note here too that since education outcomes can have multiple causes and since the long gestation period of education reforms can obscure their origins, it is essential to assess critically claims about the relationship between external support and particular outcomes.

(a) observed results and consequences of externally supported basic education initiatives and reforms, both within education and more broadly (for example, gender equity)

(b) differing assessments of results and consequences (the perspectives of basic education constituencies contrasted with those of the funding and technical assistance agencies)

(c) effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in the uses of external support to basic education, with attention to whether or not some uses are systematically and consistently more effective (or more problematic or less successful) than others

(d) advantages and disadvantages of particular forms of external support to basic education

(e) evidence of improvements in externally supported basic education activities, with attention to the principal beneficiaries of those improvements

(f) association between improved basic education in partner countries and the formulation of a national education strategy or plan as a precondition for external assistance

(g) association between quality and improvements in basic education in partner countries and the effective integration of external support

(h) extent to which and ways in which national education priorities have been supported or undermined by external support to basic education

(i) other consequences, both positive and negative

C. Partnerships for Basic Education Development

47. This third set of key questions concerns partnership for basic education development. While some of the issues listed in this section have been addressed in the exploration of external support and basic education, the increasing focus on partnership, on national leadership and ownership of development activities, and of the importance of adopting programmatic or sectoral approaches, the evolving ideas and practices of partnership warrant separate attention.

48. In recent years international and national funding and technical assistance agencies have increasingly sought to conceptualize development assistance as an international partnership for development cooperation.

49. This transition in conception and recent emphasis on partnership are not themselves the focus of this evaluation, but rather are understood as an intended evolution of the process of providing support to basic education.

1. Intents, Policies, and Strategies

50. **To what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the intents, policies, and strategies of external support to basic education?**

51. Addressing that question requires attention to several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.)

(a) formal and informal statements of intent and related policy documents concerned with partnerships for the development of basic education

(b) explicit integration of each partner's broad policy objectives (for example, education for all, or gender equity, or elimination of regional inequalities, or poverty reduction) into the general approach of the other partner and into the fabric of the partnership

(c) expected patterns of coordination and cooperation among funding and technical assistance agencies, between agencies and partner country governments, and across the education community more broadly

(d) rationale for a transition from project support to programme or sectoral support

(e) funding and technical assistance agencies' understandings and specifications of programme and sectoral support, both in theory and in practice, and similarities and differences among the agencies in this regard

(f) partner countries' (including both governmental and other perspectives) understandings and specifications of programme and sectoral support, both in theory and in practice, and similarities and differences among the case study countries in this regard

(g) expectations for changes in the mode of providing assistance to basic education, including pooled funding and budgetary support

(h) interactions among two policy commitments-development cooperation partnership and agency coordination -that may be mutually reinforcing or may be in tension

(i) projected extent and forms of involvement of non-governmental organizations (international and national, large and small) in partnerships for the development of basic education

2. Practices

52. **To what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the practices of external support to basic education?**

53. Addressing that question requires attention to several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.)

(a) empirical evidence of change, if any, in the orientation and form of external assistance to basic education

(b) where they are found to exist, content, forms, and modes of accountability of partnerships for the development of basic education

(c) evidence of a transition from project support to programme or sectoral support (note that it is important to distinguish between changes in constructs and terms, which may be important in their own right, and changes in practice)

(d) evidence of changes in the mode of providing assistance to basic education and constraints and obstacles relevant to those projected changes

(e) principal obstacles to the establishment and maintenance of international partnerships for the development of basic education

(f) principal obstacles to pooled funding and direct budgetary support as the primary mode of external assistance to basic education

(g) extent and forms of involvement of non-governmental organizations (international and national, large and small) in partnerships for the development of basic education

3. Results and Consequences

54. **From the evidence available, to what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the results and consequences of external support to basic education?**

55. Addressing that question requires attention to several important issues, of which some are listed below. (Note that this list is intended to be illustrative and is not exhaustive.) Since the time required to proceed from reconceptualization to implementation is commonly long, there may as yet be limited evidence of results and consequences of changes in the concept and practice of partnership.

(a) results, consequences, and implications (for whom?) of a transition from project support to programme or sectoral support

(b) where they are found to exist, principal successes and problems in international partnerships for the development of basic education

(c) results and consequences (for whom?) of changes in the mode of providing assistance to basic education (especially pooled funding and budgetary support)

(d) observed consequences for basic education and for the education community more broadly of the apparent disinclination of particular funding and technical assistance agencies to joining agency coordination efforts

(e) results and consequences of involvement of non-governmental organizations (international and national, large and small) in partnerships for the development of basic education

III CONDUCT OF THE EVALUATION

56. It is anticipated that the Evaluation will be organized into successive and perhaps partially overlapping phases.

A. Phase I: Document Review and Analysis

57. Phase I will focus on document review and analysis and will lay the foundation for the work to follow. The principal analytic and evaluation issues and concerns to be addressed in that review are those enumerated above. That is, the collected documents, which refer to all partner countries, are one set of data to be analyzed in evaluating external support to basic education.

58. The document review and analysis will also provide an initial portrait of basic education in the case study countries, including a profile of education expenditures and external support. What have been the major elements, patterns, and trends? That portrait will then be used to inform and shape the development of the country-specific terms of reference for the case studies.

59. The core set of documents to be reviewed, primarily evaluation and project completion reports and policy statements submitted by the commissioning agencies, will be provided to the Evaluators by the Chair of the Management Group. To supplement that collection, the Evaluators will identify and collect additional documents, especially evaluations of externally supported basic education activities and relevant policy statements, with particular attention to the case study countries. It is anticipated that that collection will continue throughout the course of the Evaluation.

60. The Evaluators will maintain an integrated list of those documents and additional documents collected. To facilitate summaries and comparisons, the Evaluators will categorize documents by focus, commissioning organization, methodology used, location, date, author, and principal findings, as well as other categories the Evaluators deem important. To facilitate access to and use of that list, it should be organized in a database format that can subsequently be made available to partner countries and funding and technical assistance agencies following the completion of the Evaluation. While the Evaluation is to be an open and accessible process, the Evaluators will respect access and circulation restrictions set by the authors or providers of the documents reviewed.

61. The Evaluators' document review will be accompanied by an annotated list of documents reviewed. As appropriate, a supplementary list may identify documents that appear to be relevant to the Evaluation but that could not be consulted for the document review.

62. A major challenge for the review of evaluation studies will be to compare and then draw inferences from studies that differ sharply in approach, methodology, comprehensiveness, style, format, and setting. It is anticipated that techniques developed for meta-evaluations will be useful for this review. At the same time, the Evaluators must be sensitive to the differences among the documents reviewed and must avoid adopting an approach that obscures the situationally specific insights those documents provide.

63. Document review should begin with the inception of the evaluation, with the document review paper to be submitted 1 May 2002. That is, it is anticipated that the document review will require 6-8 person-months work and will be completed within a three month period. The document review will then inform the remainder of the evaluation.

64. Additional documents are likely to become available and to be used during the course of the evaluation. The Evaluation Final Report should include a summary of the document review, revised to incorporate the additional documents that became available following the completion of the initial document review.

65. It will also be important to review academic and applied research on the major concerns of this evaluation. The Evaluation Final Report should include a summary of major findings and a list of sources consulted.

B. Phase II: Country Case Studies

66. Primary empirical data for this Evaluation will be generated through five illustrative country case studies: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Zambia. The Evaluators will assume overall responsibility for designing and implementing the research strategy, including Country Terms of Reference, for those case studies.

1. Tasks

67. Develop a coherent and focused strategy for evaluating external support to basic education in each of the five countries (or regions within countries) to be studied. That strategy should include an active role for relevant experts from the countries studied. The major issues to be addressed are those listed above in the Tasks and Scope of the Evaluation (Section II). It is anticipated that the field studies will require 20-25 person-months' work. The strategy described in the proposal will be considered preliminary, to be refined and confirmed following of the document review phase of the Evaluation.

68. To implement the commitment that this evaluation be directly useful to the partner countries, it should be designed in a manner that maximizes partner country participation, from conception

through implementation to analysis and interpretation. The case study strategy should include regular and systematic consultation with the education community, understood broadly, in the countries studied. In addition to individual interviews and discussions, that should include appropriate workshops and seminars or similar sessions, both early in the field work and at its conclusion.

2. Process

69. While the intention of this Evaluation is to undertake comparable field work in five countries, differences in the circumstances and experiences of those countries will require an approach and methodology sensitive to each country's unique situation. The preliminary design for the case studies will be included in the proposal. Following the completion of the document review phase of the Evaluation, in consultation with the Management Group and country representatives, the Evaluators will (1) refine and elaborate that design and (2) prepare Country Terms of Reference (to be confirmed by the Steering Committee) for the work to be undertaken in each of the countries. Throughout the field work, in addition to their own inquiries the Evaluators should be attentive to capacity building, both in evaluation and in basic education and within both agencies and countries.

70. The Country Terms of Reference will incorporate the analytic tasks specified above, modified as appropriate for each country. The Country Terms of Reference will specify as well (1) the approach and methodology to be used, (2) the roles and responsibilities of experts from the countries being studied, (3) the composition and responsibilities of the Country Reference Groups, (4) the modalities for assuring regular and systematic consultation with the national education community, (5) country level workshops and seminars to be organized, (6) a strategy for using the field work and the Evaluation more generally to encourage and support capacity building in evaluation and basic education, and (7) the projected timetable for the field work. It is anticipated that the country case studies will be completed within a six month period.

71. The Evaluators will report their preliminary findings to government, funding and technical assistance agencies, and the education community in the countries studied at the conclusion of their field work.

72. Shortly after the conclusion of the field work the Evaluators will prepare reports on each of the case studies. Those reports will include an overview, findings, and analysis.

3. Country Reference Groups

73. The Evaluation should be designed to maximize partner country participation. Both to achieve that and to facilitate the country case studies, the representatives of the country concerned will constitute Country Reference Groups in each of the countries to be studied.

74. Members of the Country Reference Groups will be selected to represent the broad education community. Country Reference Groups should thus include representatives of government and other organizations directly involved in basic education, as well as local representatives of external funding and technical assistance agencies.

75. The principal functions of the Country Reference Groups will be to: (a) facilitate communication between the Evaluators and the Reference Group members' constituencies; (b) increase the awareness of and interest in the Evaluation among the Reference Group members' constituencies; (c) facilitate access to documents and personnel for the purpose of the Evaluation; (d) receive, discuss, and provide feedback on periodic progress reports from the Evaluators; and (e) assist in the organization of appropriate workshops, seminars, and other sessions during the course of the evaluation. For that, the Country Reference Groups will meet at critical points in the field work, including inception, mid-term, and conclusion.

76. The role of the Country Reference Groups is supportive, since they are expected to provide advice, guidance, credibility, and legitimacy. Enabling the Country Reference Groups to play their role will require careful and sensitive cooperation among the Evaluators, the Management Group, the government, and the funding and technical assistance agencies active in the country.

C. Phase III: Synthesis

77. On the basis of the tasks listed above, develop a general assessment of the process of external support to basic education in partner countries, including findings, analysis, and conclusions. That assessment should incorporate a clear explanatory framework that seeks to understand observed outcomes in terms of the policies and practices of funding and technical assistance agencies and their development partners.

78. The synthesis should address both funding and technical assistance agencies and their partner countries. For the former, as appropriate, the synthesis should address individual agencies, groups of agencies, the agencies commissioning this Evaluation, and all agencies involved in support to basic education.

79. It is anticipated that the preparation of the Final Report will require 2-4 person-months' work and will be completed within a three month period.

IV. METHODOLOGY

80. Evaluating external support to basic education-multiple sources, multiple forms, multiple recipients, multiple uses-is challenging and demanding. Both education and external assistance are fundamentally interactive processes and are necessarily contextually specific. The evaluation of external support to basic education is therefore most fruitfully understood as primarily a formative evaluation that requires a combination of several evaluative strategies.

81. Evaluators will be expected to develop an approach that (1) incorporates multiple and complementary evaluative strategies, (2) collects both quantitative and non-quantitative data, (3) recognizes the importance of participants' observations and self-study, and (4) seeks to make the evaluation itself a learning experience, for both countries and agencies.

82. As well, it is likely that the evaluation of aid to basic education will be most useful: (a) within the settings in which it is undertaken (accordingly, case studies should provide both direct information and solidly supported insights about the case as well as observations that may be relevant elsewhere); (b) in developing middle-level findings (rather than grand lessons) for which the contextual conditions are clear; and (c) in reinforcing partnership in the development of basic education, including capacity building in evaluation.

83. Both detached observers and active participants play essential roles in effective evaluations. The former provide a lens that is less likely to be clouded by the energy and tensions of the activity being evaluated and an impartial perspective that is less likely to be influenced by the interests, preferences, and passions of those involved in the activity. Active participants in the activity, however, can provide insights and understandings that may remain invisible or inaccessible from afar. As well, when active participants are directly involved in the evaluation, its findings and conclusions are much more likely to be communicated, assimilated, and applied. For similar reasons, while the Evaluation has been initiated by the evaluation departments of the commissioning agencies, an effective evaluation requires the active participation of both evaluators and educators.

84. Building on the specifications in these Framework Terms of Reference, the Evaluators should elaborate their overall approach and methodology, as well as data collection methods and analytic strategy.

85. To encourage and facilitate broad participation and consultation, in addition to appropriate country-level workshops or seminars, it may be useful to organize similar workshops or seminars for the funding or technical assistance agencies, either collectively or individually.

86. It is anticipated that the evaluation will lead to an international colloquium on external support to basic education, to be organized following the completion and revision of the Final Report. That colloquium will be financed separately.

V. SPECIFIC PRODUCTS OF THE EVALUATION

87. Evaluators will prepare and submit several products, described above, on the dates specified in the projected timeline below and will periodically report to the Management Group and Steering Committee:

(a) Inception report

(b) Report of the document review (final version in English, French, and Spanish); following initial review by the Management Group, Evaluators will present the results of their document review and analysis to the Steering Committee (scheduled to meet in Ottawa, 13-14 June 2002)

(c) Design for field work in the case study countries and development of draft Country Terms of Reference (as appropriate, also in French and Spanish)

(d) Presentations, seminars, and workshops, as appropriate, in the countries studied

(e) Country case study reports (for Burkina Faso, in both French and English; for Bolivia, in both Spanish and English); following initial review by the Management Group, Evaluators will present the results of their case studies to the Steering Committee

(f) Standardized database of documents reviewed

(g) Final Report; following initial review by the Management Group, Evaluators will present their findings, analysis and conclusions to the Steering Committee; with revisions as needed (in English, French, and Spanish)

(h) After completion of the evaluation and on request, presentations, seminars, or workshops for particular funding and technical assistance agencies (to be funded separately)

(i) Presentation at international colloquium on external support to basic education (to be funded separately)

VI. ORGANIZATION AND TIMETABLE

88. An evaluation of this magnitude must be carefully organized and managed. As well, it requires effective communications and timely and frank feedback. It must be transparent, credible, and accountable to both the commissioning agencies and their country partners.

89. The perspectives of partner countries on the scope, mechanisms, and effectiveness of external support to basic education are important for the design and management of the Evaluation. Therefore, the partner countries are involved at an early stage in the evaluation process. While the evaluation design should be sensitive to the special interests of the partner countries, it also seeks to define a common interest in the evaluation in order to balance the focus of the study and make it manageable.

A. Participating Organizations and Management

90. To assure broad participation in the conception and oversight of this evaluation, the commissioning organizations have constituted an Evaluation Steering Committee and an Evaluation Management Group.

91. The Steering Committee includes representatives of the participating organizations and the partner countries where case studies are to be conducted, with primary responsibility located in their evaluation departments and with associated representation of their education departments. Chaired by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Steering Committee will convene at critical junctures-milestone moments- of the evaluation for review, discussion, and oversight.

92. Composed of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chair), the Evaluation Office of UNICEF, and the Evaluation Division of CIDA, the Evaluation Management Group will be responsible for the on-going management of the evaluation. In consultation with the Steering Committee, the Management Group has prepared these Framework Terms of Reference for the evaluation and organized the tendering process through public advertisement, short listing, and competitive bidding. It will directly oversee the work of the Evaluators contracted to execute the study and prepare meetings of the Steering Committee.

93. As noted above, it is expected that Country Reference Groups will be established in each country where field studies are undertaken. Those Country Reference Groups, to include representatives of the government, researchers, and the national education community more broadly, as well as local representatives of external funding and technical assistance agencies, will advise the Evaluators and facilitate communication among the constituencies involved in and affected by basic education activities.

94. While direct liaison with the Country Reference Groups will primarily be the responsibility of the Evaluators, the Management Group may designate a representative to participate in Country Reference Group discussions and in workshops and seminars organized as part of the evaluation.

B. Evaluators

95. An evaluation group or team (Evaluators), selected through competitive proposal submission, will carry out the evaluation. The organization of the evaluation is the responsibility of the Evaluators and should be specified and explained clearly in the proposal. The Evaluators should include personnel with professional background and/or extensive experience in (1) basic education; (2) evaluation of education initiatives and reforms; (3) evaluation of public policy, especially education policy; (4) evaluation of institutional development, including organizational and financial management; (5) evaluation of external assistance, especially basic education;(6) the work of international and national financial and technical assistance agencies more generally, including sectoral approaches and multi-agency cooperation; (7) alternative evaluation methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, including both approaches that are externally managed and approaches rooted in the activity being evaluated; and (8) education and/or evaluation in the countries selected for field studies. The team must include the linguistic competencies required for field work in the case study countries. The team leader should have extensive experience in conducting complex evaluations.

96. To assure that partner country perspectives are well reflected in the evaluation and to organize the evaluation itself as a collaborative, international partnership, the Evaluators will be expected to include experts from partner countries, with priority for the countries where field studies are to be conducted.

97. Since the evaluation group may include personnel with different levels of involvement and time commitment, the proposal should indicate clearly the expertise and professional experience of evaluation group members. The proposal should also indicate the projected role(s), responsibilities, and time commitments of each member of the evaluation group. The proposal should include as well confirmation of each member's agreement to participate in this work.

98. Since the evaluation envisions review of the activities of thirteen or more international and national funding and technical assistance agencies and field studies in five countries, the proposal should indicate clearly the institutional base for the evaluation, highlighting its capacity to manage a study of the sort proposed and relevant previous experiences.

99. These Framework Terms of Reference, along with the invitation to bid, provide the basis for the Evaluators' tender of proposals. In addition, a background document will be provided along with the Terms of Reference:

- *When Progress is Process-Evaluating Aid to Basic Education: Issues and Strategies* (Report prepared for the Consultative Group of Evaluation Departments, January 2001)

100. While the Evaluators have significant latitude in the design and organization of the study, it is estimated that the document review phase of the evaluation may require 6-8 person-months' work, the field studies 20-25 person-months' work, and the synthesis 2-4 person-months' work. It is expected that the evaluation, from inception to Final Report, will be completed by April 2003, as indicated in the timetable below.

C. Proposal

101. The proposal to undertake this evaluation should be responsive to the Framework Terms of Reference outlined above. It should as well reflect awareness of and sensitivity to the complexities and perhaps occasionally conflicting expectations of an evaluation of education and external assistance in a multi-agency and multi-country context.

102. The proposal should indicate clearly the general methodological approach(es) to be used, both for the Evaluation as a whole and for its major components and phases, along with the rationale for the overall evaluation strategy and its major elements.

103. The proposal should indicate clearly the Evaluators' strategy for involving both the commissioning agencies and the partner countries in the evaluation and for communicating with both agencies and countries through the course of the evaluation, including workshops or seminars organized for that purpose. The technical proposal should not exceed 17,500 words (approximately 35 pages) plus appendices and resumes.

104. Tender submissions should follow the two-envelope procedure: one sealed envelope should contain the Evaluators' technical proposal and a second sealed envelope should contain the Evaluators' financial proposal.

105. The Final Report should be presented in English and should be no longer than 50,000 words (approximately 100 pages), plus appendices. The Evaluators will prepare French and Spanish translations of the Final Report.

106. Evaluators will provide electronic versions of reports in Word and Acrobat (pdf) formats as well as paper copies as indicated:

Inception report	10 copies
Document review report	50 copies
Field study reports	50 copies each
Final report	100 copies

107. The review and assessment of proposals will be guided by several criteria, listed in order of priority: (a) overall approach and understanding of the assignment; (b) innovativeness, comprehensiveness, and appropriateness of the methodology; (c) partnership in the design and implementation of the evaluation; (d) expertise and experience of the evaluation team; and (e) adequacy of the institutional base for the evaluation. Different weights will be assigned to these criteria. Proposals will be assessed using a scale with four grades.

108. If the Management Group determines that none of the submitted proposals adequately meets the specified criteria, those who submitted proposals may be asked to revise their submissions. Alternatively, the Framework Terms of Reference may be re-advertised and new proposals solicited.

109. If the Management Group determines that particular criteria have not been fully met, the Evaluators selected to undertake this study may be required to revise their proposal accordingly.

D. Projected Timetable

110. It is anticipated that this evaluation will be completed by April, 2003, as indicated below. Evaluators may include a revised timetable in their proposals, accompanied by a rationale for the modification of the proposed schedule.

(a)	Circulation of invitations to bid	1 November 2001
(b)	Submission of evaluation proposals	7 January 2002
(c)	Contract award	1 February 2002
(d)	Inception report	28 February 2002
(e)	Document-based analysis [Phase I]	February-April 2002
(f)	Submission of draft document review (may be revised, with final version due 30 days after presentation to the Steering Committee) and draft Terms of Reference for the Country Studies	1 May 2002
(g)	Steering Committee Meeting (Ottawa)	13-14 June 2002
(h)	Country studies [Phase II]	June-November 2002
(i)	Submission of draft country study reports (to be finalized within 30 days)	9 December 2002
(j)	Steering Committee Meeting	26-27 January 2003
(k)	Preparation of final report	November 2002 - February 2003
(l)	Submission of draft Final Report	3 March 2003
(m)	Steering Committee Meeting	14-15 April 2003
(n)	Submission of Final Report	1 May 2003
(o)	Publication and dissemination of Final Report	May 2003
(p)	International Colloquium on External Support to Basic Education	September 2003

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Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education. Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries. Final Report

This report presents the results of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries.The Joint Evaluation included case studies of external support to basic education in the four participating countries: Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia.The evaluation's major strategy for addressing these challenges was reflected in its objective, which was to examine the process of external support to basic education provided by international and national funding and technical assistance agencies. Theevaluation was thus mainly concerned with external support (aid) and basic education, with primary emphasis on the links between the two.

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