

# EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

REPORT 7/2015



## Evaluation of Norwegian Multilateral Support to Basic Education: **Synthesis Report**

### CONTENT

<b>PREFACE</b> .....	3
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	4
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	5
<b>1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND</b> .....	13
<b>2. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS</b> .....	16
2.1 Methodology of the Program Causal Path .....	16
2.2 Methodology of the Aid Management Causal Path .....	17
2.3 Methodology of the Financial Assessment .....	17
2.4 Limitations of the Evaluation .....	18
<b>3. PROGRAM CAUSAL PATH</b> .....	20
3.1 Improved Educational Outcomes: GPE .....	21
3.2 Improved Educational Outcomes: UNICEF .....	25
3.3 Assessing Interventions .....	27
3.4 Accounting for Enabling Conditions .....	31
3.5 Causal Connections and the Theory of Change (revisited) ...	33
3.6 Summary of Findings .....	35
<b>4. AID MANAGEMENT CAUSAL PATH</b> .....	37
4.1 Introduction .....	37
4.2 Organizational Structure for GPE and UNICEF .....	40
4.3 Theory of Aid Management .....	42
4.4 Enabling Conditions .....	42
4.5 Quality of the Project Cycle .....	54
4.6 Aid Management Outcomes .....	65
4.7 Summary of Findings .....	66
<b>5. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT</b> .....	69
5.1 Introduction .....	69
5.2 Characteristics and Trends in ODA funding to Education .....	70
5.3 Global Partnership for Education .....	73
5.4 UNICEF .....	81
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	90
6.1 Conclusions .....	90
6.2 Recommendations .....	90
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	93
<b>ANNEXES</b> .....	97
<b>LIST OF TABLES/FIGURES</b> .....	122
<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b> .....	123
<b>FORMER REPORTS FROM THE EVALUATION DEPARTMENT</b> .....	124

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# Preface

The current Norwegian government places education on top of the development agenda, and last year launched a white paper on global education. Much of the funding for basic education is channelled through multilateral actors, mainly UNICEF and GPE. The white paper explicitly states that better results reporting and delivery is expected. Consequently, more knowledge of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of these institutions is important for future allocations. This was the main rationale for assessing the degree to which Norwegian support to basic education through UNICEF and GPE provides quality results in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Although enrolment has increased substantially, challenges remain with close to 60 million children out of school. Poor quality schooling is a major obstacle to ensuring quality learning, and inequality in access and learning further impede the achievement of quality education for all. For this reason, this evaluation focuses on outputs and outcomes in the areas of learner achievement, equity and gender at the country

level. The team conducted desk studies of 10 countries, and added in-depth country analysis to four of them.

The evaluation team assessed program effectiveness, aid management and funding. Whereas most countries have experienced progress in gender equality goals at the early school levels, this is not the case of many countries as regards equity for linguistic minorities, disabled children and poor children. The findings show that the results are weakest in terms of learner achievement, for which only one of the 10 countries could demonstrate fully meeting its goals. As regards aid management, the evaluation team found that both UNICEF and GPE face challenges in terms of accountability. UNICEF fails to meet the quality assurance condition, and GPE meets it only partially. UNICEF also fails to meet the aid effectiveness criteria; ensuring that the aid is likely to achieve the intended outcomes. Again, GPE meets this condition only partially. None of the two organisations routinely archive their key documents on their respective websites, which decreases the transparency of their work.

With the exception of Norway, countries have reduced their funding to the education sector, and especially funding to basic education.

The evaluation was commissioned and managed by the Evaluation Department of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation with senior adviser Eva Kløve as project manager. It was conducted by the Development Management Portfolio Group. The consultants are responsible for the content of the report, including the findings, conclusions and recommendations. We would like to express appreciation to the evaluation team for good evaluation work of a complex and important topic. It will now be up to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take the findings into account.

Oslo, September 2015.



Per Øyvind Bastøe  
Director, Evaluation Department

# Acknowledgements

This report rests on the contributions of several individuals. Staff from Norad's Evaluation Department, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Norad's programmatic departments generously made time available to meet with the team and ensured that the team had access to the documents needed. The team would also like to thank the staff at UNICEF headquarters in New York and staff of the Secretariat for the Global Partnership for Education for their time.

The Development Portfolio Management Group managed the work. The DPMG core team consisted of **H. Dean Nielsen, Sue Berryman, Lance Morrell, Andrew Bennett, Juan Saavedra, Milda Nordbø, and Tarra Kohli**. **H. Dean Nielsen** (team leader) and **Sue Berryman** (deputy team leader) managed the team.

**Dean Nielsen** conducted the evaluation of the Program Causal Path, **Sue Berryman** was responsible for the evaluation of Aid Management, and **Lance Morell** for Financial Management. **Andrew Bennett** provided methodological support.

The core team was supported by country teams. The Malawi country team included **Michael Mambo** (team leader) and **Grace Chiuye**. The Ethiopia country team included **Teshome Nekatibeb** (team leader) and **Yeshihareg Damte**. The Nepal country team included **Pramod Bhatta** (team leader) and **Lynn Bennett**. Finally the Madagascar country team included **Harinosy Ratompomalala** (team leader) and **Harimanana Rakotoari-soa**. They were supported by **Yolande Raveloarison**.

**Linda Morra Imas** provided an independent peer review of the draft document. Her review was complemented by quality assurance reviews by the DPMG Director, **Xavier Legrain**.

This report is the product of its authors, and responsibility for the accuracy of data included in this report rests with the authors. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of Norad's Evaluation Department.

# Executive summary

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years the Government of Norway has channeled much of its development support to basic education through two multilateral organizations, UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). To better understand the effectiveness and value added of this modality of development cooperation it commissioned the Development Portfolio Management Group to conduct an evaluation of Norway's Support to Basic Education through these two entities over 2009 to 2013. At its core the evaluation is a synthesis of the results of desk studies in ten countries: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, **Ethiopia**, Haiti, **Madagascar**, **Malawi**, Mali, Mozambique, **Nepal**, and Zambia, and field-based case studies in a subset of four (those in bold print).

The main evaluation questions focused on:

1) “the intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of the basic education initiatives that Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded through GPE and UNICEF, giving emphasis to *learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity (program effectiveness)*, and, 2) “the value-

added to Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments” (*aid management*).

To address those questions the evaluation team developed a theory of change with two inter-related causal pathways: one covering *program effectiveness* (the Program Causal Path) and the other *aid effectiveness* (the Aid Management Causal Path).<sup>2</sup> These were used to generate sub-questions for the ten desk studies, mostly quantitative reviews of program documents; and the four case studies, designed to provide a deeper, more contextualized understanding of program effectiveness and aid management in the four countries. In addition, the report presents the results of a financial assessment of education spending in all ten countries. Triangulating across these methods provided a robust evidence base for estimating the proposed causal connections in the target countries.

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<sup>1</sup> In the full text of this synthesis report these pathways (“program effectiveness” and “aid management”) are referred to by their more scientific names, derived from our Theory of Change: Program Causal Path, and Aid Management Causal Path. These are also the labels of the two principal findings sections in the report’s full text (see Table of Contents).

As the main United Nations Agency dealing with the human rights and equitable support of marginalized children and parents in developing nations, UNICEF works in 190 countries, territories and areas through Country Programmes and National Committees. During 2009-2013 it received 74 percent of Norway’s multilateral aid to basic education. The Global Partnership for Education was established in 2002, initially as the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative. As of 2013 the GPE had endorsed 58 countries as partners. Its mission is “to galvanize and then coordinate a global effort to deliver good-quality education for girls and boys, while prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable children.” During 2009-2013 it received 24 percent of Norway’s multilateral basic education aid.

The desk and case studies of this evaluation focused on one UNICEF Country Programme and one GPE project per country, implemented within – or as close as possible – to the evaluation time period of 2009-2013.

## FINDINGS

### **Transparent and accessible documentation**

Both UNICEF and GPE lack transparent and easy access to their key documents. Neither UNICEF nor GPE routinely archive all key documents pertaining to upstream work and the program cycle on their websites by country and operation.

### **Program Effectiveness**

**Improved learning.** Of the ten desk study countries, under GPE projects, one country, Ethiopia, fully met its learning outcome goals, whereas two, Mali and Mozambique, partially met them, and two others held steady (results showed no declines). Under UNICEF, six of the ten countries focused on learning goals, but none reported learning gains (although in one, Zambia, the relevant UNICEF programme has not yet reached completion, and in others there were reported improvements in learning *conditions*).

**Gender Equality.** Two-thirds of the case and desk study countries reported data indicative of girls' progress toward equality in primary

school enrolment rates – in fact, in more than one-third gender parity was reached. Many countries also showed improved gender equality in primary school completion and learning outcomes. However, girls still lag far behind boys in many locations and in the higher age groups.

**Equity for Marginalized Groups.** Our findings show that GPE and UNICEF programs did include improved equity for marginalized groups in their basic education agendas in most of the 10 countries and were often successful in reaching marginalized children in one way or another. For UNICEF, of the five countries that measured change over time, four saw equity improvements. In addition, UNICEF has also been active in upstream work in this field, advocating more action in support of out of school/marginalized children; producing profiles and other resource materials about them; improving systems for data collection about them; and producing methodological guidelines for use in reaching them. But the fervor put into parity of girls' primary school enrollments has not yet been applied to this kind of equity. In fact, there is little sense of how close these countries are to

closing the “equity gap” since government data on this is so poor (the appropriate breakdowns – by region, urban/rural, socio-linguistic or household income group, are generally not reported by governments, even in Education Management Information Systems). A breakthrough would be the use of an “education equity index,” of the kind that Nepal is working on with the help of UNICEF.

### **Project / Program Interventions (outputs).**

The most common project/program interventions were *teacher training*, *classroom construction*, and provision of *learning materials*. Aid programs contributed substantially to increasing the quantities of these basic educational inputs. At the same time, population growth and increased enrolment rates in many of the countries studied were so large that often even sharp increases in such inputs did not translate into better ratios of teachers, classes, or materials per student (although they prevented these ratios from getting much worse). An important intermediate outcome in many countries was improved education environment, which mainly came through UNICEF's “student

friendly school” initiative or the “school improvement plan” approach often used in GPE projects. The analysis also showed that a focus on these main interventions/outputs was generally not sufficient to drive changes in learning outcomes. Other widely acknowledged parts of the mix are *student/teacher time on task*, *professional supervision of teachers*, and *use of local languages for early grade learning*, which were present in very few of the country programs studies (e.g., *time on task* by only one).

**Enabling Conditions.** With its booming economy and stable government, Ethiopia was the only country that was strong on both *national commitment to improved Basic Education quality and equity* and *a high share of the national budget for education*. In comparison, Malawi and Nepal did not devote a high share of their national budgets to education. Madagascar, which did, suffered from weakness in other key contextual variables, including *national commitment to Basic Education quality/equity*, and *institutional capacity*, both likely connected to the 2009 coup and the dysfunctional interim government that followed it.

**Unintended Consequences.** An unintended consequence of aid, observed in many countries was the diversion of funds away from education, or within education, away from basic education. This happened both at the local and at the national level. This does not appear to have been a consequence of any concerted or intentional effort at large-scale diversion or substitution at the national level. Rather, it appears to have been the result of piecemeal funding decisions and weak financial management procedures. International aid changed the incentives or tradeoffs involved in budgetary decisions, and combined with weak financial oversight and an absence of mechanisms through which donors could have monitored and prevented substitutions, this allowed actors to spend on other purposes funds that they might otherwise have spent on basic education.

#### **Aid Management**

A theory of good aid management was constructed to evaluate the value added of UNICEF’s and GPE’s aid management. The theory of good aid management consists of *enabling conditions* that result in *higher quality project cycles* that in

turn increase the chances of *good aid management outcomes*.

The **enabling conditions** for good aid management include three aspects of governance (priority-setting, Board composition, and clarity of accountabilities), the agency’s financing model, its operational philosophy, and three aspects of its management (support to the operational level, quality assurance, and staff qualifications). UNICEF and GPE differ with regard to meeting the enabling conditions, with both meeting some but not all and for different organizational reasons.

In terms of the **quality of the project cycle**, GPE programs were weakest on the design quality of the countries’ education sector plans, the development partners’ appraisal of these plans, and the quality of the GPE program design. Because GPE-funded operations are expected to be closely aligned with countries’ education sector plans, problems with GPE’s program designs partly stemmed from problems with the education sector plans on which they were based. When conducted, the External

Quality Reviews were of high quality. Given the scope and complexity of most GPE programs, the ratings for Government's implementation of the programs are higher than might have been expected. The quality of supervision was high, evidencing significant proactivity. Only half of the projects had closed, but the quality of the evaluations for those that had closed was good.

During the evaluation period of 2009-2013 UNICEF's project designs and supervision reporting (although not necessarily supervision itself) were generally unsatisfactory. In most cases UNICEF had only sketchy or limited design of its basic education initiatives. Its results frameworks for basic education initiatives were often fragmented between the upstream documents. It was usually not possible to piece together a credible causal path from activities to outputs to outcomes and development objectives. Sometimes baseline data would be available; sometimes, not. When end-of-project targets were specified, their realism varied. There were no documented quality reviews of the designs.

Supervision reporting – although not necessarily supervision – was weak. UNICEF issued annual reports against its Country Program Action Plan, and some of these were better than others. However, even the better ones did not necessarily track outputs and outcomes or use the same outcome metrics across time. Weaker annual reports had virtually no analysis.

Value-added aid is equated with achieving three outcomes: aid that is better aligned with donor and country priorities (relevance), aid that minimizes waste of resources (efficiency), and aid that is more likely to achieve intended outcomes (effectiveness). For the three **outcomes sought for good aid management**, both UNICEF and GPE achieve relevant aid that is aligned with donor and country priorities.

Both partially achieve efficient aid. There is a broad consensus that UNICEF does some things well with very few resources. However, perhaps because of resource constraints, it does not always complete activities. Weak designs, results frameworks, and monitoring and evaluation mean that often UNICEF does not know

when activities are off track and thus cannot deal proactively with failing components or activities. Factors such as these degrade the efficiency of its aid delivery.

GPE achieves powerful efficiencies with its model of donor harmonization of funding and technical support around a country education sector plan. However, in this sample of GPE countries, less than 50 percent of the education sector plans are rated as being satisfactory or moderately satisfactory, a problem that radiates outward to GPE-funded operations themselves because of their alignment. And in fact less than half of the programs had satisfactory or moderately satisfactory designs. Flaws at the design stage increase supervision costs downstream and degrade efficiency.

In terms of aid effectiveness, the point is not whether GPE or UNICEF achieved the outcomes sought in the programs for which they were responsible. Aid can be well managed and, for any number of reasons outside of the control of the aid agency, still fail to achieve the intended development objectives. The question



is whether these two agencies managed aid delivery in ways known to enhance the chances of achieving the objectives sought in their operations.

UNICEF does not manage its aid in ways known to increase the chances of achieving the intended outcomes. Components are not thoroughly designed; outcomes are often not measured; and what is measured is often not consistently measured across the lifetime of the activity. GPE partially meets the standard for aid effectiveness. The quality of supervision is strong, and the quality of implementation is respectable, given the complexity of GPE programs. However, the problems evidenced at the design stage increase the risks of failing to achieve the intended objectives.

### **Financial Assessment**

To assess the support being provided by donors and governments to basic education, the team reviewed the flows of Official Development Assistance provided by all donors from 2004 until 2013. The team also reviewed the funding provided to GPE and UNICEF as well as the

domestic financing provided by the governments in the four case study countries (Nepal, Malawi, Ethiopia and Madagascar) as part of their annual budgets. Despite expressions of support by donors and governments alike, funding for the education sector is increasing at a lower rate (33%) than that of total Official Development Assistance funding (90%) over the same period. The Government of Norway is an exception to this trend. For the period of 2004 – 2013, Norway's financing for basic education increased by 41 percent relative to a decline of 16 percent for overall bilateral support to basic education.

Over 2004 – 2013, the level of funding provided to GPE and UNICEF has been disappointing – again except for the Government of Norway. The GPE 2014 replenishment produced pledges of about \$2.2 billion against a target of \$3.5 billion. For UNICEF, the contributions to the focus area of Basic Education and Gender Equality have been declining since 2010. The exception to this is the Government of Norway. It is the largest resource partner for UNICEF's program for basic education and gender equality and the fifth largest contributor to GPE.

During the interviews and the research for the study, efforts were made to address the issue of additionality and/or fungibility of domestic and international funding to the sector especially with regard to funding being provided by GPE and UNICEF. Except for Ethiopia, budget variance is a major problem in all of the case study countries. However, there is no indication that this variability reflected governments' substituting donor funding for own funding. It seems more indicative of weak financial management procedures and perhaps a lack of commitment to the education sector. There is no evidence that either UNICEF or GPE caused additional Official Development Assistance funds to be provided to the sector. Although it is difficult to establish cause and effect, their efforts to encourage partner countries to increase the level of domestic resources allocated to the education sector are associated with additional funding by these countries.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

**Program effectiveness.** Using our program causal path, derived from our Theory of Change (see Figure 1), to address the main evaluation

question about program outputs and outcomes, we found that most countries made improvements in the *outcome* of gender equality – four of ten reaching “gender parity” in primary school enrollment; that many improved equity for marginalized groups (an exception being that for disabled children); but only one fully met its goals for improved learning outcomes. For *outputs* (i.e., “interventions”), most countries covered the basics of classrooms, trained teachers, and learning materials, and many covered improved learning environments, but many other essential ingredients of learning improvement went unaddressed, showing the basic ingredients to be necessary but not sufficient, at least for learning outcomes. The influence between the interventions and outcomes appeared to be moderated by the Theory of Change *enabling conditions*, especially “national political/commitment to improved equity and quality of basic education,” and “high share of national budget going to education,” which together seemed quite powerful. The most prevalent unexpected consequences were recipient countries diverting funds away from education (or at least basic education) and donor agencies reducing their support to basic education.

***Aid management.*** The second basic question that this evaluation was expected to answer was the value-added to Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments in basic education. The findings indicate that while both UNICEF and GPE add value, neither adds as much value as it could, particularly UNICEF.

***Financial assessment.*** The general conclusion of this financial assessment is that donor agencies and governments alike express strong commitment and support for education and basic education in particular. However, the data also shows that despite these expressions of support, funding for the sector is generally declining as funding is being diverted to other sectors. An exception to this trend is the Government of Norway where financing provided over the period of 2004 – 2013 increased by 41 percent while overall bilateral support to basic education over this same period declined by about 16 percent.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations focus on outcomes. They are addressed to the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs as the client for this evaluation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may wish to encourage GPE and UNICEF to:

1. Place a higher priority on appropriately measuring and improving learning outcomes. The efforts of donors and partner governments to expand enrolment have helped many children, but resources now need to be invested in factors that increase the main payoff from being enrolled, namely, acquiring basic knowledge and skills.
2. Give more emphasis to proximate causes of learning outcomes: student/teacher time on task, teacher supervision, and use of local language in early learning.
3. Vigilantly promote gender equity in enrolment and learning outcomes in the higher grades of basic education.
4. Strengthen the emphasis in each country on the needs of marginalized groups, particularly the disabled, at least by establishing or strengthening Education Management

Information Systems tracking of disaggregated population and outcome data on marginalized groups, including linguistic minorities and students from poor families as well as students with disabilities, and promoting the use of an “equity parity index.”

These recommendations focus on aid management. The first one is addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and refers to increasing the accountability of the agent for good aid management.

1. Agents (those creating the design and managing the implementation of aid) should be held accountable for the quality of aid design and implementation. Even if the principals (those financing the aid) delegate the responsibility to others to assure that projects that they finance meet standards, the principals have a responsibility to set standards for good practice and to enforce these standards, either through suasion or the judicious use of their financing.

Recommendations 2-7 refer differentially by aid agency. They are addressed to the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs as the client. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may wish to encourage:

2. Both UNICEF and GPE to routinely and transparently archive on their websites all key documents pertaining to upstream work and the program cycle by country and operation. The staff in both agencies now waste time trying to find documents for various purposes and not always successfully.
3. UNICEF to dramatically improve the analytic rigor, clarity, and consistency of the documentary trail for its activities. Whatever its ultimate role relative to other aid agencies, the quality of UNICEF’s upstream and downstream documents are now unacceptable. UNICEF’s Headquarters understands that to fix this deeply seated problem, the skill mix has to change at all levels of the organization and the operational culture has to change at the level of the regional and country offices.
4. UNICEF to start country program activities only when the activity is fully funded. Some UNICEF officials deny that starting with partial

funding affects the stability of objectives and activity completion rates. Those outside of UNICEF see partial funding as helping to explain why some UNICEF activities fail to complete and why some started activities change direction over time in response to new funders for the activity.

5. GPE’s Board of Directors to resolve the ambiguous accountability relationships between the Local Education Group, the Secretariat, and the Board.
6. GPE Board and the Secretariat to find ways to raise the quality of and reduce the variance in quality between Education Sector Plans. The GPE Board and its agent, the Secretariat, have ultimate accountability to the donors and their taxpayers for good aid delivery. GPE’s operations should be based on Education Sector Plans, and their strengths and flaws radiate outwards to GPE-funded operations. At the same time, GPE builds on national policy processes that must be “owned” by the in-country players. Any heavy-handed intervention by GPE will undermine this process.

7. GPE's Board of Directors to adopt a certification process for those agencies eligible to serve as Managing Entities and Supervising Entities. The risks associated with entities that have not been vetted are high. The Board's relevant Executive Committees, such as the Country Grants and Performance Committee and Governance, Ethics, Risk, and Finance Committee, and its Secretariat could advise on criteria and process.

# 1. Introduction and background

This synthesis report integrates the results of four case studies and six desk studies conducted for the Evaluation of Norway's Support to Basic Education through UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education from 2009 through 2013. The four case studies focus on Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, and Nepal. The countries included in the desk studies are Haiti, Mali, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, and Zambia.

The two main questions for the Evaluation are: 1) what are the intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of the basic education initiatives that Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) funds indirectly through two agents, GPE and UNICEF; and, 2) what is the value-added to the MFA of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments.

To address these questions the team developed a Theory of Change (ToC) having two main causal pathways: a Program Causal Path and an Aid Management Causal Path. The first elaborates a causal chain connecting inputs, outputs, and enabling conditions to the program

outcomes of interest to the MFA (learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity). The second is the team's theory of good aid management that can be expected to result in aid better aligned with donor and country priorities (relevance); aid that minimizes the waste of resources (efficiency), and aid more likely to achieve intended outcomes (effectiveness).

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a United Nations Program headquartered in New York City that provides long-term humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries. It is one of the members of the United Nations Development Group.

UNICEF was created by the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children in countries that had been devastated by World War II. In 1953, UNICEF became a permanent part of the United Nations System and its name was shortened from the original United Nations International Children's Fund

but it has continued to be known by the popular acronym based on this previous title.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) was established in 2002 as the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI). GPE, a global partnership hosted by the World Bank, "provides multidimensional support to countries for the development and implementation of sound education sector policies."<sup>2</sup> The mission of the GPE "is to galvanize and then coordinate a global effort to deliver good-quality education for girls and boys, while prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable children."<sup>3</sup>

The two organizations are distinct and independent from each other, but in reality there are numerous inter-connections. For example, UNICEF has been on the FTI/GPE board over the years and has helped to shape its mission and operations. Also, with its ubiquitous field presence in developing countries, it has also been instrumental in FTI/GPE-related country-

<sup>2</sup> Results for Learning Report 2013, Global Partnership for Education, p.xxi

<sup>3</sup> IBID, p.2

level programs and arrangements. For example; (i) FTI/GPE has relied heavily on the coordinated inputs from the donor agency community in a country; and (ii) UNICEF has acted as the Coordinating Agency for the community in 39 of 60 FTI/GPE countries; it has generally also been a member of a country's Local Education Group which is chaired by a country's Ministry of Education. Both as the Coordinating Agency and a LEG member UNICEF has been heavily involved in supporting the design of and government/partner agency funding for a country's Education Strategic Plan, which is the instrument upon which all FTI/GPE support (including funding) has been built. Once a GPE grant has been awarded, UNICEF has often also played a role, either as Managing Entity (in 9 countries, mainly fragile states) or as Supervising Entity (acting as an intermediary in releasing GPE funds and tracking their disbursement). These connections will be further described in the Aid-Management section of this evaluation. Clearly, FTI/GPE has relied heavily on UNICEF engagement and support over the years.

## **CASE STUDY COUNTRY BACKGROUND**

**Ethiopia.** Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Sub-Saharan Africa. The population grew from 81.9 million in 2009 to 94.1 million in 2013, an average annual growth rate 3 percent. Despite this large and growing population, Ethiopia's high economic growth rate in recent years, including a 10 percent increase in GDP in 2013, has helped reduce those living below the international poverty line from 40% in 2004 to 30 percent in 2011. Still, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income in 2013 of only US\$370. It is one of the largest donor recipients worldwide, receiving over \$3 billion annually. Ethiopia has been politically stable for the last fifteen years, despite a war with Eritrea at the turn of the century and civil wars in neighboring South Sudan and Somalia that have brought large numbers of refugees as well as military tensions along Ethiopia's borders.

**Madagascar.** On March 17, 2009, a coup d'état that led to the dissolution of Parliament started what became a prolonged and deep

political crisis in Madagascar. This crisis is still not fully resolved, although a political transition back to democracy began in early 2014. The crisis has had devastating effects on the economy, poverty and social outcomes. The political crisis transitioned into a severe economic downturn, exacerbated by a series of external shocks and the withdrawal of most external funding. Overall, economic growth between 2009 and 2012 averaged 0.6 percent per year, and with high annual population growth (2.9%), income per capita in 2012 fell to its 2003 level. Poverty has risen and is now among the highest in the world, with GDP per capita of \$463 in 2013 and an estimated poverty rate of 85 percent. The economic and social effects of the crisis were intensified by the suspension of many donor activities which, in a country where international aid represented 40 percent of the government budget, led to significant cuts in investments and a sharp decline in the delivery of services.

**Malawi.** Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world. The economic growth rate ranged from 8 percent in 2008 to 5 percent in 2013,

but despite this relatively high growth, Malawi's GDP per capita increased only from 236 to 264 USD during this period, and the proportion of people under the poverty line stayed near 50 percent. This was in part due to an annual population growth rate of 3 percent, which led Malawi's population to grow from 14.1 million in 2008 to 16.4 million in 2013.

The Malawian government and its relations with donors were disrupted by the so-called "Cashgate" scandal that broke out in September 2013. The scandal involved allegations that government officials embezzled an estimated \$50 million.<sup>4</sup> The scandal led to the forced resignation of the entire cabinet in October 2013, and to the freezing of Norwegian aid programs in October 2013, followed by aid freezes by other donors and Development Partners in the Education Pool totaling \$150 million in aid withheld.

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<sup>4</sup> David Smith, "Money from Malawi 'Cashgate' scandal allegedly funded electoral campaigns," *The Guardian* Friday February 13, 2015.

**Nepal.** During the evaluation period Nepal was emerging from a period of internal conflict involving a Maoist insurgency that had killed an estimated 17,000 people. Nepal was also in the midst of a transition from a monarchy to a republic. Long standing caste, gender and regional hierarchies have been fundamentally challenged by the Maoist insurgency and the collapse of the monarchy and people expect change, yet traditional elites have stalled the constitution-making process over the issue of ethnic federalism. The political uncertainty has affected the economy with frequent strikes, inflation in food and fuel prices and low job growth that has caused high levels of migration for employment. Nepal has high levels of cultural and linguistic diversity, with some 125 caste/ethnic groups speaking 123 different languages. It had a population of 27.8 million people in 2013 and a 1 percent population growth rate. Nepal's GDP per capita in 2013 was \$409, with 25 percent of the population below the poverty line. The evaluation period predates the devastating April 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

The report is organized into the following chapters: chapter 2 presents the methodology and its limitations; chapter 3 discusses the program causal path; chapter 4 presents findings regarding the aid management causal path; and chapter 5 presents the results of the financial assessment. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations.

## 2. Methodology and limitations

### 2.1 METHODOLOGY OF THE PROGRAM

#### CAUSAL PATH

Research teams carried out case studies of basic education programs in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, and Nepal. Each case study is based on multiple sources of evidence, including interviews with outside observers and the main parties that affected the GPE and UNICEF programs, such as members of the Local Education Group, supervising or managing entities for GPE programs, UNICEF staff, and Ministry of Education leaders and technical staff. The fieldwork complemented and deepened the desk reviews of documents for each case. Each case study pays particular attention to the lessons learned and potential unintended consequences of sponsored programs, both negative and positive.

Each case study assesses not only the independent variables in the theory of change, but also the contextual variables (enabling conditions) in the theory that can affect outcomes, such as national and political commitment to basic education improvement and equity, the share of national budget going to education, institutional

capacity, and private subsidies for basic education (e.g., free means and scholarships). Each case study uses process tracing, a method of checking whether the intervening steps in the theory of change were realized, to strengthen attribution of outcomes. This helps establish whether inputs and outputs were related to outcomes through the processes outlined in the theory of change.

The team conducted ten desk studies, four of which provided preliminary information for the four case study countries, and six of which addressed additional countries selected to represent a range of country contexts (Haiti, Mali, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, and Zambia).<sup>5</sup> The desk countries were selected with an emphasis on the twelve countries Norway has identified as “focus countries” for future development projects. The focus countries included are three of the case study countries (Ethiopia, Malawi, and Nepal) and the desk study countries of Haiti, Mali, Mozambique,

<sup>5</sup> The original design was for 10 desk study countries plus an addition 4 countries for both desk and field studies, but that was changed to 10 countries in total by mutual agreement between Norad and DPMG.

and Afghanistan (Norway’s other “focus” countries have not yet been GPE endorsed or were endorsed too recently to have projects that could be studied). The desk study countries were also selected with an emphasis on including a range of country contexts, particularly fragile states that experienced conflicts (Afghanistan, Mali) or natural disasters (Haiti). They were selected as well to represent geographical diversity (including West Africa, East Africa, and Asia) and to include countries in which quality, gender, and equity were important considerations in national plans and aid interventions. As sources for the desk studies for GPE Projects the reviewers used mainly World Bank Project Appraisal Documents, Implementation Status and Results Reports, Implementation Completion Reports, and Project Papers (in cases of restructuring) or the equivalent in cases where the World Bank was not the supervising entity. For UNICEF Country Programmes, the sources were the Country Programme Documents, Country Programme Action Plans, Country Office Annual Plans, and Mid-Term Review Reports, in each case with a focus on the Basic Education and



Gender Equality Programme (or simply the Basic Education Programme).

The two methodologies had distinct roles in this evaluation. The desk study was employed to systematically collect information from GPE and UNICEF program design documents and progress reports to show design features and progress on outcomes and interventions. They were also used to collect data on general country context. The case studies were built upon the desk study results, allowing researchers to fill in data gaps and to probe into the background of and reasons for desk study findings. The case study field work also allowed for the collection of qualitative data from key informants, for example on unintended consequences, perceived program strengths and weaknesses, program upstream work and contributions, and lessons learned. In the write up of the country case studies, both the desk study and field data were used. The desk studies were not deliverable products, but the filled-in desk study instruments for each country have been archived and are retrievable.

## **2.2 METHODOLOGY OF THE AID MANAGEMENT CAUSAL PATH**

The aid management evaluation draws on the case studies and desk studies, as well as interviews in the fall of 2014 with relevant staff at UNICEF's headquarters in New York, GPE's Secretariat, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and Norad (See a list of those interviewed in Annex 2).

UNICEF and GPE were interviewed about and asked for documents and statistics that:

- a) define the aid delivery model that each agency uses;
- b) outline the *formal* policies and procedures that shape each agency's program or project cycle and that assess the quality of that cycle and the results of each agency's aid investments;
- and c) identify mechanisms for measuring and reporting on program results.

Staff of the MFA and Norad were interviewed about and asked for documents and budgets that reveal:

- a) Norway's thematic and country priorities for its development aid and the grounds for these choices;
- b) considerations affecting Norway's choices of its funding conduit for aid

(bilateral versus multilateral and its choices of multilaterals); and c) its relationships with GPE and UNICEF, including its concerns about those relationships. Interviews and data collected at UNICEF and GPE had revealed that the roles of the players were highly intertwined. The MFA and Norad interviews probed for concerns about accountabilities and potential conflicts of interest.

## **2.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT**

The financial assessment included a top-down analysis of donor support to the education sector and to basic education in particular over the period 2004-2013. This analysis was based on data from the OECD-DAC database, and it provided useful information regarding the overall flows of funds, over this period, from the donors to all sectors and to the education sector. This trend information was then compared to the financial support provided to the sector by the Government of Norway. The top-down analysis then conducted financial assessments of GPE and the UNICEF programs to basic education and gender equality. These assessments

reviewed, among other things, the financial support received by these two agencies and the support provided by them to education in the member countries. The information regarding UNICEF and GPE was based on interviews with key officials and from data published by them and other secondary sources.

The financial assessment then reviewed the financial management systems in the four case study countries – a bottom-up analysis. The analysis of each of the case study countries started with a review of the public financial management (PFM) system of the country using the last two Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessments. The PEFA assessments were used because they have become an internationally accepted standardized tool to review and assess PFM systems throughout the world. While these assessments include all aspects of the public financial management system, these country analyses focused on the issues associated with Budget Credibility and the Predictability and Control in Budget Execution to provide an indication as to how reliable the PFM system is in providing predictable fiscal support

to the various sectors – such as education. These country case studies then conducted a ratio and trend analysis of the education sector in each country using data gathered both from secondary sources and interviews of key government officials using a standard questionnaire.

#### **2.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION**

The evaluation was not in a position to use an experimental or even quasi-experimental design in assessing the effectiveness of aid programs and their elements. Any causal inferences must therefore remain qualified. Educational outcomes cannot be directly or solely attributed to Government or donor-sponsored programs, as economic trends, natural disasters, and other factors can also affect outcomes.

While process tracing does provide useful evidence for causal inferences, it is not always conclusive, as relevant evidence may be missing or may fit competing but incompatible explanations. Also, in contrast to statistical or experimental methods, process tracing does not convey clear estimates of the magnitude of

the effects of each variable in the theory of change or of each enabling condition. Process tracing can help make attributions on whether variables in the theory of change operated in the ways they were intended, but when more than one variable is in operation (as is almost always the case), process tracing cannot assess with high precision or confidence the specific contributions or causal effects of each variable. Strong inferences on the causal weight of different variables require experimental methods.

Another limitation is that the cases selected for study are not necessarily representative of the population of developing countries that received aid. Indeed, the case studies and desk studies were purposively sampled to include fragile states that pose difficult challenges for successful aid to basic education. Broad generalizations therefore cannot be made directly from any one case to the population of developing countries. It is possible, however, to make narrower, contingent generalizations from one or a few cases to subsets of cases that share key similarities. The challenges common to the several fragile states in the sample, for example,

are more likely to be shared by other fragile states than by developing countries generally.

The case studies and desk studies are also constrained by the limitations of the available data and by missing documents. The programs being evaluated often tracked inputs and outputs, but they did not always have clear results frameworks, nor did they consistently measure baselines and outcomes.

Some key documents were missing because neither UNICEF nor GPE routinely and transparently<sup>6</sup> archives all key documents pertaining to upstream work and the program cycle on their websites by country and operation. The staff in both agencies worked hard to locate the documents needed for the evaluation, but not always successfully.

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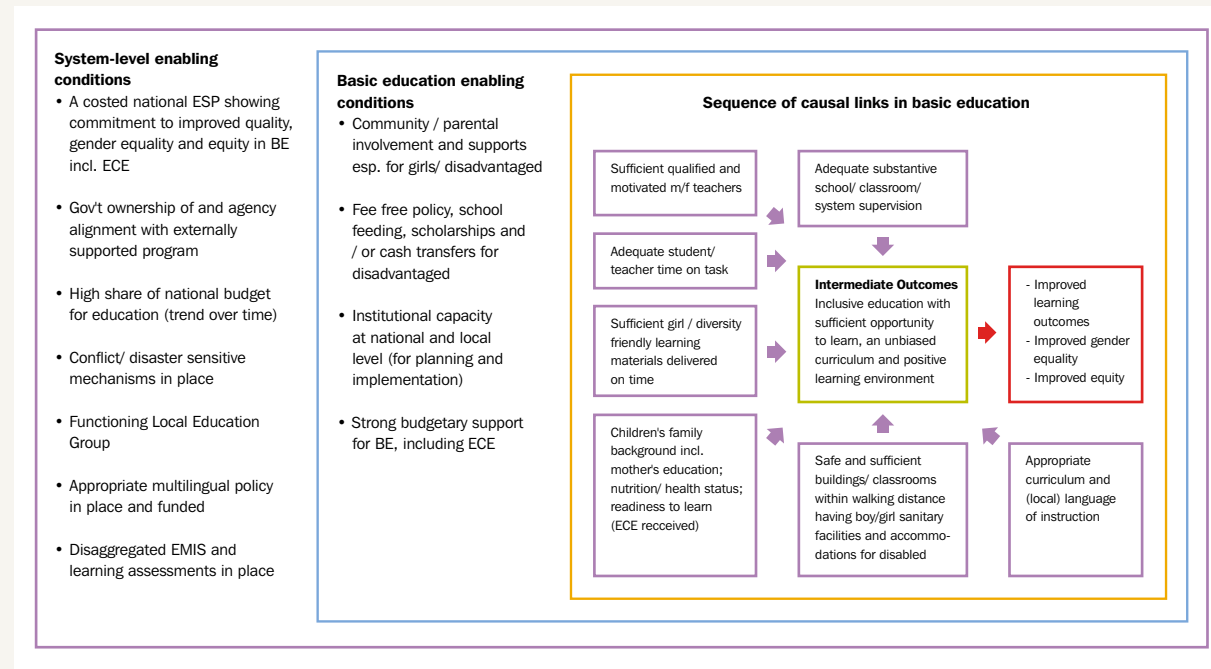
<sup>6</sup> For example, UNICEF archives at least its current country program documents. However, they are buried in the webpage for its Executive Board in a link obscurely labeled "CPD Archive".

### 3. Program causal path

In its project proposal, the Development Portfolio Management Group (DPMG) set out a general evaluation framework (Annex 4), having two main causal paths, a *Program Causal Path*, addressing evaluation questions about outputs and outcomes of projects/programs supported by GPE and UNICEF, and an *Aid Management Causal Path*. The analysis of both causal paths was informed by the desk reviews and country case studies.

The *Program Causal Path* is elaborated in our “Theory of Change” (ToC), as called for in the Terms of Reference. The ToC (see Figure 1) shows a causal ordering of elements leading to three main outcomes that Norway’s MFA prioritized: *improved learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity* (for “marginalized groups,” DPMG’s slightly modified language), defined operationally as follows: *improved learning outcomes*: positive changes in performance on assessments of basic skills; *gender equality*: closing the gap between boys and girls in educational access and achievement; and *equity*: relative improvement in educational access and achievement for those from

FIGURE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE



marginalized groups. These outcomes are preceded in the causal model by a set of intermediate outcomes, including *inclusive education, opportunity to learn, unbiased curriculum and positive learning environment,*

and feeding into those is a set of determinants which we refer to as *interventions*. These include: 1) *qualified, gender diverse, and motivated teachers*; 2) *adequate student/ teacher time on task*; 3) *sufficient*

*diversity-friendly learning materials; 4) adequate class and school supervision; 5) safe, sufficient, and accessible school buildings; 6) an appropriate curriculum and language of instruction; and 7) children who are ready to learn (i.e., healthy, with adequate nutrition, and having received early childhood education).*

Our ToC surrounded these causal chain elements with a set of contextual variables that constitute “enabling conditions.” These are features of the environment that would allow the interventions to be fully implemented and to have their expected effects. The ToC model puts forward two kinds of enabling conditions, those that were systemic or strategic (*System Level Enabling Conditions*) and those that were more tactical (*Basic Education Enabling Conditions*) – all of these elements will be more fully described later in this section). The conditions are themselves subject to change and improvement, but the current analysis takes them as given at their current states.

The sections that follow assess the program causal path and the following chapter assess the aid management causal path.

In evaluating the *program causal path*, as directed by the Norad Terms of Reference, we examined the effectiveness of the two multilateral programs “with a particular focus on quality of learning, equity and gender equality.” The analysis of the *program causal path* that follows draws upon both desk study and case study findings to summarize – in a cross-country manner – the effectiveness of GPE and UNICEF programs and projects, along the “implied” causal lines of our ToC model. We used measured outcomes as a way of determining whether and how well projects/programs covered the three priority objectives, not the project/programs’ own objectives. This is because we often found a discrepancy between project/program objectives and what was actually implemented and measured. For example, with GPE Ethiopia and Nepal only covered one of the three Norwegian priorities in their project objectives, but actually tracked outcomes for two; whereas Malawi covered all three in its objectives, but tracked none of them as outcomes (focusing instead on outputs). For UNICEF the consistency was better, except again, in the case of Malawi, but we still found it more useful to track real outcomes.

The main sections of this chapter will be the following: 3.1. and 3.2 *Improved Educational Outcomes (separately for GPE and UNICEF)*; 3.3 *Assessing Interventions (both GPE and UNICEF)*; 3.4 *Accounting for Enabling Conditions*; and 3.5 *Causal Connections and the Theory of Change (revisited)*. The last section presents the summary of findings.

**3.1 IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES: GPE**  
*Improved learning outcomes.* Table 1 summarizes the extent to which the GPE projects in the 10 countries addressed the priority outcome of *improved student learning* in some way or another. Outcomes in the table are taken from our desk studies of project/programme progress reports (supplemented in the case study countries by field work). Documents were examined for how and how well outcomes were addressed in each country. Those outcome indicators that reached their targets are shaded green; those partially doing so, yellow; and those failing, red. Those showing little or no change were coded blue, and those with unclear results violet. Grey with hash marks were used where a country’s program did not address the outcome

**TABLE 1: OUTCOMES FROM GPE PROGRAMS IN 10 COUNTRIES**

	Improved Learning outcomes	Gender Equality	Equity (for marginalized groups)
Ethiopia (2009-2013)	➤ Percent gr 4 & 8 students scoring at least 50% on National Learning Assessment (NLA): (2007 vs 2012/13)	➤ Percent gr 4 & 8 students scoring at least 50% on NLA: (2007 vs 2012/13); male /female ➤ Percent gr 4 & 8 students completing primary school: (2007 vs 2012/13); male/female	➤ See Note 1
Madagascar (2009 – 2011)	➤	➤	➤ Schools in disadvantaged areas survive the crisis (interim) period
Malawi (2009 – 2014)	➤	➤	➤
Nepal (2009/10 -2013/14)	➤ Student Leaving Cert. pass rate: 2009/10 and 2013/14	➤ Gender Parity Index: 2008 & 2014	➤ National Assessment (NASA) 2011 by eco-belt and gender
	➤ National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) gr 8: 2012 and 2014	➤ Primary survival rate to gr 5 2008 and 2011	➤ Gr 1 Net Intake Ratio 08/09 & 11/12 by eco-belt & gender ➤ Develop an equality strategy for OOSC
Afghanistan (2012 – 2016)	➤	➤ Increased access and retention especially for girls in targeted schools (too early to assess)	➤ Increased access and retention especially for girls in targeted schools* (too early to assess) *includes those in insecure, rural, remote, underserved and low income districts
Burkina Faso (2008 – 2012)	➤ National Assessment of Learning achievement (gr 5) 2006 & 2010 French and Math	➤ Primary completion rate 2010/11 to 2011/12 Percent increase girls vs boys	➤ Net Intake Rate for primary education by region 2010/11 to 2011/12
	➤ Success rate – Primary Ed Certificate: 2012 compared to 10 year average	➤ National Assessment gr 3 Girls vs Boys in language and math	
Haiti (2010 – 15, extended to 2017)	➤ Percentage of children enrolled in participating schools for more than one year reading at grade level in gr.3	➤	➤ Number of children in disadvantaged areas enrolled through the provision of tuition waivers
Mali (2006 – 2010)	➤ Percentage of students reaching adequate score in reading; science & math in grade 2, 4, 6. (results: reading bad, math OK)	➤ Gap btw boys/girls enrolment from 15.2% to 10% (achieved result 8 %)	➤
		➤ Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary	
		➤ Gross Intake Rate (GIR) 2006 to 2010 (boys and girls)	
Mozambique (2009 – 2014)	➤ Number of people who complete alphabetization cycle	➤ GPI upon 1st gr entry in ECD participating districts	➤ Difference between best & least performing provinces in % age of teachers without qualifications
			➤ GPI in net intake of 6 yr olds between best & least performing provinces.
Zambia (2009 – 2011)	➤ Learning outcomes on National assessment (gr 5)	➤ GPI gr 1-7 (2007 to 2011)	➤ Number of needy student receiving bursaries (target vs actual) ➤ Number of children w/ special needs enrolled (2007 and 2011)
		➤ GPI gr 8-9 (2007 to 2011)	
		➤ Basic Education Completion Rate (change 2010 – 2011) boys and girls	

➤ positive outcome; met target    ➤ partly positive/fulfilled    ➤ no or little change    ➤ negative outcome/target not met    ➤ unclear whether target reached or not    ➤ not addressed in the GPE Project

Note 1: The evaluation team did find a robust indicator on equity in the 2008/09 and 2012/13 *Education Statistics Annual Abstracts*, namely, Breakdowns of Net Enrolment Ration (NER) by district, which show relatively strong expansion of access in the “emerging districts” and by females within them, but this is not listed here because it was not among Ethiopia’s GPE/GEQIP’s performance indicators.

at all. Of the 10 countries, one, Madagascar, could be classified as “not applicable” since in the first restructuring in the Project brought on by the 2009 coup led donors to drop outcome assessment in favor of less ambitious goals. Of the remaining 9 countries, 7 of them addressed learning outcomes in some way, but two others, Malawi and Afghanistan, did not include this in their project design, focusing instead on access and/or outputs. Encouraging (and a sign of progress from a decade ago) is the fact that, in 6 of the 7 countries that addressed learning outcomes, the results came from some kind of national learning assessment (NLA) or test of early reading skills (similar to USAID’s “early grade reading assessment”).

Not so encouraging were the results obtained from the assessments conducted during this review period. Ethiopia was the only country which fully reached its learning outcome goal of improvement in the percent scoring at least 50 percent on the standardized test (even though the national average went down). Nepal, which targeted improved national averages on standardized tests, saw its

results go down (especially in reading), likely, at least in part a consequence of the recent surge in the enrolment of relatively unprepared children. In Burkina Faso and Haiti there was no substantial change, which may actually have been a good result given enrolment expansions in those countries, too. In Mali the results were equivocal – positive for math, not for reading, and in Zambia change scores were not obtainable. Finally, the results for Mozambique were equivocal, not only because they were mixed (only partly successful) but because the indicator was not very strong (percent of people *completing* an alphabetization cycle, but no data on their mastery levels). *The main message: good news about the measurement of learning outcomes – almost all of the sampled countries are doing it now; not so good is the fact that few are meeting their learning outcome goals.*

**Gender Equality.** This priority outcome (reflected in our Theory of Change) was assessed in a somewhat subtle manner. It was not so important to us whether equal access and achievement levels for girls was among GPE project objectives (in many cases they were), but

whether there were any indicators in the Projects’ results frameworks that could show progress towards equality. This allowed us to count any outcome where there was a *male/female breakdown* in the reporting as an indicator. Table 1 reveals that, depending on how one reads the ambiguous evidence on the outcomes in Afghanistan, 6 or 7 of the countries reported data indicative of girls’ progress towards equity, many with more than one indicator (ave. = 2 each). Of the 14 indicators, 12 were about access and 2 about learning gains (unless primary school completion is counted as a learning outcome indicator in which case the mix would be 9 access and 5 learning gains). Of the 9 unequivocally showing access, 5 were gender parity indices (GPIs).

Concerning success rate, of the 14 indicators, 10 moved towards increased gender equality; 3 shifted in a negative direction; and 1 had both positive and negative. Further broken down, 7 of 9 results on access were positive; while 3 of 5 about learning were. The best news was that in 4 of 5 cases where GPIs were used in measuring access, the results were positive, in fact, all 4

showed a GPI at or almost at 1.0 (*equality of access accomplished!*), at least at the primary level.<sup>7</sup> There is no index for learning outcomes, but it is the case that most programs show diminishing gender gaps on learning, too, and in a few cases, girls outperforming boys. *The main message from our review: gender parity in primary education access has been reached in 4 of our 10 sample countries, and that good progress has been made in the others. Of course, these are national averages, meaning that even with a national GPI of 1.0, some regions/groups are well below that and some (i.e., urban areas) are above, indicative of a possible new gender gap in favor of girls, a new problem to worry about. So, there still must be vigilance about gender equality in access, even for primary education in some regions/groups, and at the post-primary level. In addition, although gender gaps in learning outcomes seem to be closing in these countries, girls still lag far behind boys in many locations and in the higher age groups.*

<sup>7</sup> Zambia reveals a typical finding: its data show a move to gender parity during 2007-2011 at the primary level (gr 1-7), but at the lower secondary level (gr 8-9) for the same period there was no such move.

**Equity for Marginalized Groups.** The third priority outcome was examined much like the second. We did not focus on whether the project had an objective to bring access to marginalized groups (few of them did, but all prioritized equitable access). What we did was to identify indicators that would show outreach to the marginalized. And what we found were mainly breakdowns of access indicators by districts/regions (a proxy for “marginalized” since in many countries certain locations are largely populated by marginalized groups). Other classifications found were “disabled,” “special needs,” “disadvantaged areas,” the “needy,” “targeted areas,” “eco-belt,” “least performing provinces,” and “Out of School Children (OOSC)” – almost as many categories as there are case/desk study countries. As can be seen in Table 1, only three of the countries did NOT define a target “marginalized” population (one of those, Ethiopia did not do so in its program documents but its Education Management Information System (EMIS) does have breakdowns by district which we used in the country case study). The two countries for which there were no indicators for this priority outcome, Mali and Malawi,

are among those where disparities across geographic areas are some of the world’s highest (suggesting a serious flaw in the GPE design).

The categories of marginality used in the 10 countries roughly fit into two clusters: *locational characteristic* (7 in number, such as low income area, poor performing district or province, eco-belt), and *client characteristic* (3): needy, special needs/disabled, and out of school children). The performance indicators (those to be broken down by locational or client characteristic) were many: net intake, enrolment, exam results, financial support, surviving crisis,<sup>8</sup> and GPI: thus we looking at breakdowns of *net intake by region*, etc. Of the seven using locational breakdowns, three were found to be positive/successful and four were of mixed success. The mixed result is not surprising

<sup>8</sup> In the case of Madagascar one of the most important outcomes of the post-coup (redesigned) GPE project was “surviving the crisis” educationally, an outcome interpreted by the DPMG team as conveying an otherwise undocumented program contribution. This can be broken down by region, under the assumption was that it was the seriously disadvantaged children who needed the most assurances and help concerning the survival of their schools. In fact, the basic education programs of the most disadvantaged areas did survive due to massive inputs from GPE, and this is counted as a positive “equity outcome.”



given the severe challenges in reaching all eco-demographic niches (e.g., girls in the plain or tarai region of Nepal compared to those in the Western Mountains). However, some positive examples do stand out, such as better than average changes in Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in Ethiopia's four emerging regions. For client characteristics which are easier to design for, two of three cases showed positive results (e.g., plans for reaching out of school children); the one which was not was enrolling special needs children.

The main take away here is that countries can make progress in improving equity for the marginalized if they plan for it. They can plan for it if there are breakdowns in Management Information System (MIS) databases showing performance by marginalized groups, which is rarely the case for countries like those we reviewed. These country studies have shown that reaching the marginalized as defined by student characteristics has been somewhat more successful than doing so by geographic/ecological niche, which presents numerous logistical challenges.

### **3.2 IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES: UNICEF**

**Improved learning outcomes.** In the UNICEF Country Programmes *learning outcomes* were even less dealt with. As can be seen in Table 2, four of our 10 case/desk study countries (Malawi, Burkina Faso, Haiti and Mali) did not have learning outcomes on their UNICEF agendas. In another five countries (Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nepal, Zambia, and Afghanistan) improved learning outcomes were among the expected results, but the programmes were unsuccessful in tracking any changes. (e.g., Ethiopia used the same indicator as GPE, but presented results for only one year; for Zambia no results on the grade 5 mean pupil learning achievements were reported; in Afghanistan a sharp improvement in rates among females was targeted, but not tracked, at least in annual reports. It is possible that in some cases the country teams in collaboration with the governments decided to drop certain indicators, but the DGMG found no documentation of any such changes.) *There was considerable UNICEF programme support in improving school quality*

(for example, through Child Friendly Schools (CFS) or School Improvement Plans (SIP)– see the “Learning Environments” in the forthcoming Assessing Interventions section), but these programmes were either not designed to or unable to show evidence that learning outcomes had improved.<sup>9</sup>

**Gender Equality.** For gender equality our case/desk study information (Table 2: column 3) shows more UNICEF action and success. Only two of the Country Programmes examined failed to put forward any “expected results” and/or indicators about this priority outcome (those for Malawi and Haiti), and in two cases (Mozambique and Madagascar) our teams could not find any clear findings about it. In the remaining six countries, evidence showed reaching targets in 4 (green cells) and partially reaching them in a 5<sup>th</sup> (yellow). In only one country was there a negative finding: in Zambia the country failed to reach *gender parity* in the upper grades (8-9).

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF's response to the draft Synthesis Report indicated that in Burkina Faso in 2012/13 primary students in Child Friendly Schools scored significantly higher than those in regular schools, but this information was not in documents that UNICEF sent to DPMG for review (namely, Annual Reports and MTR).

**TABLE 2: OUTCOMES FROM UNICEF PROGRAMS IN 10 COUNTRIES**

	Improved Learning outcomes	Gender Equality	Equity (for marginalized groups)
Ethiopia	➤ A high proportion (85% in target areas) attaining 50% or better pass rate on National Learning Assessment (NLA)	➤ Gender parity index reaching 1.	➤
Madagascar	➤ 85% primary school completion rate	➤ 100% increase in the number of girls in post-primary education	➤ 95% of schools in priority regions Schools in have access to child protection networks and or health services
Malawi	➤	➤	➤
Nepal	➤ Dropout rate	➤ Increase in National Enrolment Ration (NER) for Girls baseline to 2011/12	➤ An increased 40% of the OOSC (6-14) in target district have access to B Ed
			➤ Urban OOSC programs in at least 3 areas supported in accommodating 50% of working OOSC (age 10-14).
Burkina Faso (2011-2015)	➤	➤ Number of boys and girls enjoying a quality basic education in the different structures of early childhood, primary education and alternative education for young (Baseline and MTR)	➤ Number of girls and boys with disabilities receiving quality education in special or conventional structures early childhood and primary education (Baseline to MTR)
		➤ Primary school retention, comparing 2010 to 2011 for girls	
Haiti (2009-2011)	➤	➤	➤ Improved access to quality early learning and basic education for low income and rural area children (with gender equity)
Mali (2008-2012)	➤	➤ Net Enrolment Ratio for primary education disaggregated by gender.	➤ Disparities between regions, rural and urban, rich and poor households
Mozambique (2012-2015)	➤ Annual report writers did not address Board-approved Programme Components		
Zambia (2011-2015)	➤ Mean pupil learning achievements grade 5	➤ Gender Parity Index: Primary	➤ Increased enrolment in Early Learning Centers 16 low performing target districts (enrolment increased substantially, but not clear what proportion this is of unserved population.)
		➤ Primary Completion Rate, M/F (Baseline vs Endline)	
Afghanistan	➤ A 50% increase in literacy rates among females between the ages of 15 and 24 (not tracked in annual reports)	➤ A 50% increase in literacy rates among females between the ages of 15 and 24 (not tracked)	➤ Children in hard to reach rural areas enrolled and continued with schooling through establishment of Community Based Schools (CBS) and support to existing ones (enrolment was substantial, but it is not clear what proportion it was of the underserved population).
		➤ Increase in number of children in primary school – 2009 to 2011 (boy/girl)	

➤ positive outcome; met target    ➤ partly positive/fulfilled    ➤ negative outcome/target not met    ➤ unclear whether target reached or not    ➤ not addressed in the UNICEF Project

It is notable that all of the indicators for the successful UNICEF programmes were about *equal access*; there were none about closing male-female gaps in learning outcomes; whereas for the GPE projects there were two that had that focus. (If we count primary school *retention or completion* as an indicator of learning outcomes, as some do, then GPE would have five countries showing improved gender equity on learning outcomes, and UNICEF 1). *UNICEF, by charter, puts heavy emphasis on educational equality for girls, and the country programme we examined were no exception – 8 countries covered it; 6 reported clear outcomes; and five showed positive or partially positive results (all about equal access). Alternatively, it could be observed that the glass is half empty: one might expect that all UNICEF supported countries would show clear improvement in gender equality in achievement as well as access. This could move closer to reality if/when outcome reporting for UNICEF programs is improved (see our Aid Management Causal Path chapter).*

**Equity for Marginalized Groups.** As in the case of GPE projects, marginalized groups were defined in UNICEF Country Programmes in many ways. UNICEF often targets certain regions for the delivery of services based their being disadvantaged in certain ways (low income; remote region; ethnic minorities; migratory or displace populations, etc.), and in this study four of the seven countries where improved intergroup equity was a target, this was the case. Other ways UNICEF Programmes used were to look at rural-urban breakdowns or to focus on disadvantaged groups such as children who are out-of-school, disabled or from low income families. As seen in Table 2 (column four), 2 country programs did not address *equity for the marginalized*, and 3 which addressed it did not provided clear information on improvement.<sup>10</sup> Of the five countries where there were programs and measured indicators of change, 4 of them were found to be successful (those in Burkina Faso, Haiti, Zambia, and Afghanistan)

<sup>10</sup> One of these countries was Madagascar, where reporting on outcomes became problematic during the post-coup period; another was Mozambique, where reporting did not cover any of the agreed upon indicators, the third was Nepal, where the indicators about out-of-school children were not (could not be?) used.

and one not (Mali). *These results shows that UNICEF programmes did make a different on equity for marginalized children in many countries (at least four in our sample) and that would have probably have been greater if the monitoring of it had been more effective.*

### 3.3 ASSESSING INTERVENTIONS

Figure 2 shows the kinds of interventions that were covered by the GPE and UNICEF programmes in the various countries, and gives a brief indication of their size and effectiveness. The size and color of the *checkmarks* convey intervention size (the larger the checkmark the bigger the effort)<sup>11</sup> and effectiveness: with a green checkmark conveying “fully meeting the target value,” a yellow one partially so, and purple one an intervention that is on track, but the meeting its target is undetermined, given the project is still in progress. The orange circles convey that nothing was implemented in this category. The black circle with a checkmark means that the intervention was implemented

<sup>11</sup> The larger arrows are for major interventions like those with a nation-wide scope, whereas the smaller ones are for more localized interventions.

**FIGURE 2: BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS BY GPE AND UNICEF IN 10 COUNTRIES**

INTERVENTION	Afghanistan **	Burkina Faso		Ethiopia		Haiti		Madagascar	Malawi		Mali		Mozambique		Nepal		Zambia	
	GPE/UNICEF	GPE	UNICEF	GPE	UNICEF	GPE	UNICEF	GPE + UNICEF	GPE	UNICEF	GPE	UNICEF	GPE	UNICEF*	GPE	UNICEF	GPE	UNICEF
<i>Schools and classrooms</i>																		
<i>Teachers</i>																		
<i>Curriculum</i>																		
<i>Learning materials</i>																		
<i>Student/teacher time on task</i>																		
<i>Language of instruction</i>																		
<i>tchr/school/system supervision</i>																		
<i>Learning environment</i>																		
<i>child background /resources</i>																		
<i>Community and Parents</i>																		

**KEY**



met target, magnitude indicate by size of  
meeting target not clear



partially met target  
partially met target so far, not completed



did not meet target, little or no progress  
did not address intervention theme

unsuccessfully or not at all. One prominent feature of this figure is the *question marks* that are above most of the checkmarks for UNICEF – this is to indicate that there were results, sometimes rather large ones, but we had difficulty discerning their significance (see footnote for further explanation).<sup>12</sup>

The most popular intervention category in the chart is *teachers*, deployed in all ten countries, either in big national programs (mainly covered by GPE interventions, including those packaged in sector-wide programs as in Ethiopia and Nepal), or smaller gap filling programs, like those supported by UNICEF to answer needs in targeted areas. In fact, this turns out to be one of the many complementarities between UNICEF and GPE. The second most prevalent intervention is *schools and classrooms*, supported in all countries by one of the organizations or the other, but in some cases, like those in Burkina

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<sup>12</sup> This is either because the reported results are absolute numbers for which we have no reference (it is not clear to what extent the numbers meet a need or fill a gap); or it is an expected result with an original target in percentage terms that is subsequently reported on in absolute numbers making it difficult to track changes; or an expected result that is reported on only once, also making it impossible to determine whether there is positive change or not; or an indicator with no baseline values given.

and Haiti (under GPE), not able to get off the ground (most likely for procurement reasons). The third most frequent intervention is not surprisingly *learning materials*, present again in all countries, but sometimes not successfully.

It might be surprising that few countries are showing positive learning gains, given that all of them have rather generous support for the basic ingredients of successful learning. However, there is a growing consensus that just getting the basic “inputs” into place, while necessary, is not a sufficient condition for improving learning outcomes. One recent commentator writes cogently that “the weight of evidence – from literally thousands of studies – suggests that achieving learning goals through input expansion alone, without increases in the efficacy with which they are used, is impossible.” (L. Pritchett, 2013, p. 100). Still one might have expected better outcomes, since the countries have also bought into other interventions, such as strengthening their *learning environments* through “School Improvement Plans” (mainly coming through GPE) and Child Friendly Schools (though UNICEF).

Yet, some pieces of our ToC model are conspicuous by their absence, for example, *student/teacher time on task*. This has been employed successfully as an intervention in only one country, although the evidence of its importance for learning outcomes has been known for over a decade (for example, through USAID’s EQUIP2), and countries desperately need to address it. In one of the countries it was found that the teacher absentee rate was 42 percent in 2010, with one of the reasons being that the teachers had to *tend to their other jobs during school hours*. Yet the country in question did not take up this issue during the last round of interventions (pushing it forward to the next one, according to the Minister). Also, one of the reasons given for high teacher absenteeism was weak *teacher supervision*, which was present in fewer than half of the cases in our sample. Strong supervision in Egypt and Kenya was instrumental in helping them double and triple their national reading scores in recent years (Nielsen (2013); Piper and Zuilkowski (2015)). Related to those gains was also the use of the vernacular in teaching reading; but, unfortunately, programs in support of instruction in the

mother tongue (despite being endorsed by a raft of recent research) were only implemented in 3 of the 10 countries.

One kind of intervention not captured by progress reports but by our in country interviews were those occurring upstream – in the policy development; research and piloting; advocacy for human rights, especially for girls and marginalized children; sector plan development and support for increased funding levels; and improved gathering and use of data, such as through UNICEF’s “Monitoring of Results for Equity System” (MoRES). Both GPE and UNICEF have been engaged in such work, but UNICEF is acknowledged to be influential in a wide range of fields (in Ethiopia there were 3-4 important policy developments that would likely not have moved ahead without UNICEF’s leadership; moreover it was said to have contributed to every chapter of the country’s new National Education Sector Plan). Upstream work is also evident in UNICEF cooperation with other agencies, as a member of the Local Education Group in every sample country (frequently its coordinator), and a contributor to sector-wide

approaches. This upstream work clearly had a healthy, but difficult to measure, influence on educational outcomes.

This situation and others captured in some of the case studies (Madagascar and Ethiopia) reveals something about the complementarity between the GPE and UNICEF. One example is precisely the relatively strong support by UNICEF on the upstream (human rights) issues. Another, noted particularly in Ethiopia’s causal analysis, is a more subtle division of labor, in which GPE supports some of the big ticket “Education for All” issues (the national teaching corps and nation-wide textbook distribution) whereas UNICEF is more focused on disadvantages groups (girls and marginalized children) and regions, often through its presence on the ground, and on support to those in emergency situations. Another good example of this is the intervention profile for Burkina Faso: of the 10 interventions, 7 are implemented by one of the organizations and not the other (5 only by UNICEF and not GPE; and two by GPE and not UNICEF). Precise lines of causality cannot be drawn, but it is likely that improvements in

gender equity and equity for the marginalized benefited from both sides of this complementarity.

Summarizing this section, the team found that the 10 countries in this evaluation have, with the help of GPE and UNICEF, adopted crucial interventions in recent years, especially those core inputs of buildings, teachers and learning materials, and also turned some attention to improved learning environments through SIPs and CFSs. Yet they have also overlooked some crucial parts of the Theory of Change for producing improved learning outcomes, such as improved student/teacher time on task, improved teacher supervision, and use of local languages in reading instruction. This is a familiar story: physical inputs are much easier to adopt since they present win-win situations generating investments and jobs that are appreciated by decision-makers and workers alike. In contrast, interventions aimed at improving quality are almost always harder to gain support for, since they often require changes in behavior, more work, and some clear losses (of status and status quo). This gets into *advocacy* and other upstream work of the kind

we just describe plus *political will*, which is often hard to come by and is one of the “enabling conditions” that will be discussed in the next section.

### 3.4 ACCOUNTING FOR ENABLING CONDITIONS

According to our ToC certain contextual conditions make it more or less likely that interventions can play an active role in improving educational outcomes. Our model groups those outcomes into education *System-Level Enabling Conditions* (those having a more long-term or strategic influence on events) and *Basic Education Enabling Conditions* (more focused on immediate conditions at play in the Basic Education sub-sector). Figure 3 lists the two kinds of conditions and shows our team’s estimate of their strengths across the four case study countries. (We could not do this for the desk study countries since we did not have the primary data needed for some of the items that were obtained from the field for the case study countries).

Cross-country comparisons are revealing and may help to explain some variations in both the

**FIGURE 3:** STRENGTH OF THE ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN 4 CASE STUDY COUNTRIES

	Ethiopia	Madagascar**	Malawi	Nepal	Key
<b>System-Level Enabling Conditions</b>					
National/political commitment to improved quality & equity in BE, including ECE	✓	✗	✓	✓	Strong ✓
High share of national budget for education	✓	✓	✓	✓	Moderate ✓
Conflict/disaster sensitive mechanisms in place	✓	✗	✗	✗	Weak ✗
Functioning Local Education Group	✓	✓	✗	✓	
Appropriate multi-lingual policy in place & funded	✓	✗	✓	✗	
Disaggregated EMIS & learning assessments in place	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Basic Education Enabling Conditions</b>					
Community/ parental involvement and supports especially for girls/ disadvantaged	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fee free policy, school feeding, scholarships for disadvantaged	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Institutional capacity at national and local level (for planning and implementation)	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Strong budgetary support for BE, including ECE	✗	✗	✓	✓	

\*\*For the post-coup period through 2013.

quality of interventions and in success with outcomes. For example, with its booming economy and stable government, Ethiopia has mostly green checks for the strategic, system-level conditions, the only country that is strong on both *national commitment to improved BE*

*quality and equity* and a *high share of the national budget for education*. Malawi and Nepal share that strong commitment in theory, but did not back this up with high funding support. In Madagascar’s case, the first interim government following the 2009 coup rejected the deposed

government's strong "Education for All" stance, and only reluctantly came back to supporting basic education when such support became the condition for a new GPE tranche.

Returning to Ethiopia, the high level of commitment to basic education and the large share of government budget provided to education, made possible by the booming economy, are huge, but they are not the only important enabling conditions, although in many ways they are key. For example, they can act to enable other enabling conditions: e.g., high commitment set the stage for a strong government-led "local Education Group" and strong budget support for "a fee free policy, school feeding and scholarships for disadvantaged." The strong commitment and the strong LEG are also likely to influence the government's receptivity to technical assistance, which our case study indicates was well used, and, of course, strong financing makes it more likely that there will be follow-up to assistance, as was the case in the changes made in mother-tongue language instruction and book production. In all the enabling conditions for successful implementa-

tion were quite broad: Ethiopia was the only country among the ten in our sample where eight of the ten ToC enabling conditions were rated moderate to strong.

Nepal also shows many strong enablers both at the systemic and basic education level, but there are also weaknesses at both levels as well have put constraints on improved outcomes. One particularly constraining situation in the area of *institutional capacity* is the way that teachers have come to be beholden to their unions (see our Case Study), which have strong political and patronage goals in addition to their avowed support for improving teaching effectiveness.

In the middle are Madagascar and Malawi. Madagascar has had a relatively high share of its budget going to the education sector, although in real terms funding has gone down, due to the shrinking economy. Madagascar has, with the support of UNICEF, created active community mechanisms for using grant money and distributing materials. However, given constant personnel changes at the top of the Government and Ministry, and management

reorientation towards a more political agenda, there has been little incentive for system upkeep and competent performance, and little attention to educational quality, settling instead for output and system maintenance goals. Likewise, for Malawi, all but one of the enabling conditions are rated as weak or moderate, with an unfortunate combination of low *commitment to quality and equity* at the top and low *institutional capacity* and weak *funding for basic education* at the field level. Again, this has resulted in a situation where inputs and outputs have become the main focus of the national strategic plan and development assistance.

The section has reviewed the relevance of enabling conditions to the causal chain linking interventions to outcomes. It has demonstrated the advantages that Ethiopia has with its booming economy, stable government, high funding levels for education, a strong Local Education Group, and an appropriate bilingual education policy. While these have not led to perfection, there is evidence of improved learning at some levels. However, the majority of the children across the case studies are not



showing improved learning – a sign that improved pedagogy is not reaching most classrooms or that those improvements made are not yet showing up as better test results. It also reflects our finding that that resources and institutional/individual capacity are still constrained at the local levels. More and higher barriers are observable in the countries studied, which inevitably leads to questions about whether support programs (like those mounted by GPE and UNICEF) are adding as much value as they could (a question which will be dealt with in the next section on Aid Management). What is clear is that development assistance in a sector like education cannot bring systemic healing to unhealthy broad social, political, and economic institutions, a growing issue for Norway as it moves to a position where a higher proportion of its development cooperation will be in fragile states. Under these circumstances what seems to be most needed is better insight on how to operate effectively and make meaningful contributions in such contexts despite the influence of “disabling” conditions.

### **3.5 CAUSAL CONNECTIONS AND THE THEORY OF CHANGE (REVISITED)**

This Program Causal Path section has reviewed the results from our teams’ desk and field studies of the various elements in the pathway proposed in our Theory of Change, including *education outcomes, interventions, and enabling conditions*. We have examined the connections between the elements and have described many that could be considered “implied causal connections” – logically related, but not empirically tested, given our methodological limitations. More detailed descriptions of implied connections for the four case study countries are available in their reports: for example, that for Ethiopia presented a visual mapping of the interconnections for GPE and UNICEF. It is beyond the scope of this synthesis to consolidate all of those, but a few noteworthy patterns can be discerned.

First, as has been pointed out, there have been few cases of documented improved learning over the course of the GPE/UNICEF programs during the past five years in the 10 countries – with only one country fully reaching its target and

two others partly doing so. For possible explanations we drew from our Theory of Change. A special study within GEQIP Ethiopia showed that two variables in the ToC, *trained teachers*, and widely-available, *revised textbooks* were statistically and significantly related to improved learning. In the other countries it was easier to see what was missing. In at least two countries, commitment to basic education equity and quality and educational share of the national budget were weak, and were accompanied by not targeting improved learning as sector plan or development assistance project outcomes. Instead the focus in those countries was mainly on inputs and outputs, the ingredients that by themselves Pritchett (2014) suggests will never lead to improved learning. In addition, also noted missing in a majority of countries was attention to three types of crucial interventions: *student/teacher time on task; teacher professional supervision, and the use of the vernacular (mother tongue) language for early grade learning*.

Next, *attributing* changes in outcomes (or lack thereof) to program interventions does pose

questions and challenges (especially in non-experimental research). Even though our team has followed the steps of Contribution Analysis (Mayne, 1999; Pawson, 2006) – as per our proposal, testing each step in a theorized causal chain, we are also aware of the need to examine alternative explanations. One we found was the fact that some of the programs we examined (specify) were not under implementation for as long as initially expected. Running 2 or 3 years, instead of 4-5 years envisioned in our overall design, may not have given the program enough time to influence national assessment results, which means we need to treat outcomes for those countries with caution.

Another explanation for weak learning outcomes was the dramatic expansion of enrollments in many countries that brought in children less ready for school than previous cohorts, leading to falling national test scores, a point we have already made. More robust testing of program effects can be made in a few years when enrollments have stabilized.

Finally, was the realization that using standardized national assessments was not always the best way to gauge program effects on learning outcomes. Having regular standardized assessments is an extremely important asset for strategic planning and policy making, but for program evaluation it can be problematic. For example, programs/projects are sometimes focused on particular regions or groups or content areas, to which national assessments are insensitive. Also, national assessments generally occur every 2-3 years, which may be out of synch with program timelines (occurring too soon before the program culmination or after it). For these reason some countries/programs are (wisely, we think) creating and reporting on simpler, more focused assessments (while keeping alive the national standardized testing). For example, the GPE learning-outcome indicator in Haiti, a desk study country, covered the “percent of children, enrolled for more than one year [in the GPE program], reading at grade level 3.” The results showed change scores to be flat, but at least they did not go down, despite rapid enrollment growth and general dysfunctionality in the education system. Such customized

assessments could be part of the program/project design itself, but administered by an independent assessment agency so as to assure objectivity.

Concerning our Theory of Change model, it did hold up reasonably well in this Program Causal Path analysis, guiding us to some of the most important areas of project/program performance, and flagging some legitimate areas that are being overlooked. One weakness is that we failed to compare the details of our model elements to what is actually implemented in the field. For example, the ToC item for teachers calls for “qualified and motivated male/female teachers,” but we didn’t check to see how motivated the teachers were and what their male/female mix was, details that probably made a difference on the impact teachers had on learning and equity outcomes. Similarly, our ToC variable on school/classroom specified buildings “within walking distance of students” and having “accommodations for the disable,” details that we did not pursue in our cases. Finally, there were some sins of omission in our model. We mainly included fairly standard inputs

and output features as interventions, but critics like Pritchett are focusing more on less tangible inputs such as “professionally networked teachers,” “performance pressed schools.” In addition, we missed some issue of political economy like the degree to which political patronage is present in the system (a problem discovered in Nepal), and underemphasized upstream contributions (e.g., towards advocacy and policy adjustments) by the development agencies. Finally, our model took a relatively static view of the enabling conditions, screening out the fact that these conditions were themselves changing during our evaluation period—although measuring that would have been a serious challenge. Our next Theory of Change will need some updating.

### 3.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**Improved learning.** Of the ten desk study countries, under GPE projects, one country, Ethiopia, fully met its learning outcome goals, whereas two, Mali and Mozambique, partially met them, and two others results held steady (showed no declines). Under UNICEF, six of

the ten countries focused on learning goals, but none reported learning gains (although in one, Zambia, the relevant UNICEF programme has not yet reached completion).

**Gender Equality.** Two-thirds of the case and desk study countries reported data indicative of girls’ progress toward equality in primary school enrolment rates – in fact, in more than one-third gender parity was reached. Many countries also showed improved gender equality in primary school completion and learning outcomes. However, girls still lag far behind boys in many locations and in the higher age groups.

**Equity for Marginalized Groups.** Our findings show that GPE and UNICEF programs did include improved equity for marginalized groups in their basic education agendas in most of the 10 countries and were often successful in reaching marginalized children in one way or another. For UNICEF, of the eight countries that did address such equity issues, three did not provide clear information on improvement, but of the five that did, 4 did so successfully. In addition, UNICEF has also been active in upstream work in this

field, advocating more action in support of out of school/marginalized children; producing profiles and other resource materials about them; improving systems for data collection about them, and producing methodological guidelines for use in reaching them. But the fervor put into parity of girls’ primary school enrollments has not yet been applied to this kind of equity. In fact, there is little sense of how close these countries are to closing the “equity gap” since government data on this is so poor (the appropriate breakdowns – by region, urban/rural, socio-linguistic or household income group, are generally not reported by governments, even in Education Management Information Systems). A breakthrough would be the use of an “education equity index,” of the kind that Nepal is working on with the help of UNICEF.

**Interventions.** The most common interventions were *teacher training*, *classroom construction*, and provision of *learning materials*. Aid programs contributed substantially to increasing the quantities of these basic educational inputs. At the same time, population growth and increased enrolment rates in many of the

countries studied were so large that often even sharp increases in such inputs did not translate into better ratios of teachers, classes, or materials per student (although they prevented these ratios from getting much worse). An important intermediate outcome in many countries was improved education environment, which mainly came through UNICEF “student friendly school” initiative or the “school improvement plan” approach often used in GPE’s projects.

It was also observed that a focus on these main inputs/output was not generally sufficient to drive changes in learning outcomes. Other crucial parts of the mix are *student/teacher time on task*, *professional supervision of teachers*, and *use of local languages for early grade learning*, which were emphasized by few countries (time on task by only one).

**Enabling Conditions.** With its booming economy and stable government Ethiopia was the only country that was strong on both *national commitment to improved Basic Education quality and equity* and a *high share of the*

*national budget for education*. In comparison, Malawi and Nepal did not devote a high share of their national budgets to education. Madagascar, which did, suffered from weakness in other key contextual variables, including *national commitment to Basic Education quality/equity*, and *institutional capacity*, both likely connected to the 2009 coup and the dysfunctional interim government that followed it.

**Unintended Consequences.** An unintended consequence observed in many of the countries was the diversion of funds away from education, or within education, away from basic education. This happened both at the national level and at the local level. A related consequence is a relative reduction of donor support for education, just at the time when Education for All goals (2015) are coming to culmination. The data show that Official Development Assistance has been increasing in general, but funds for education are on the decline.

## 4. Aid management causal path

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The two basic questions for this Evaluation are these: 1) what are the intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of the basic education initiatives that Norway funds indirectly through two agents, GPE and UNICEF; and, 2) what is the value-added to Norway of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments. Chapter 3 addressed the first question. This chapter addresses the second.

#### **Boundaries and assumptions of the aid management assessment**

Certain assumptions and boundary conditions defined the assessment of the quality of GPE's and UNICEF's aid management.

#### ***Relationships between the results of development aid and the quality of aid management.***

Aid can be very well managed and, for any number of reasons, still fail to achieve the development objectives sought. Thus, the point here is not to judge whether GPE or UNICEF achieve the outcomes sought in the programs for which they were responsible – Chapter III addresses this question. The point in

this chapter is to judge whether these two agencies managed aid delivery in ways known to enhance the chances of achieving the objectives sought in their operations, whatever the actual outcomes.

#### ***Comparisons between GPE and UNICEF.***

For methodological reasons, the same theory of good aid management had to be used to evaluate both agents. Given that each is evaluated on the same dimensions, it is easy for readers to misinterpret these findings as “comparisons”. However, neither Norad's Evaluation Department nor DPMG intends to make comparisons between UNICEF and GPE. DPMG is careful never to use language such as UNICEF or GPE is better or worse than the other.

The two agencies are completely different, and the basis for judging each on a given dimension will differ because judgment occurs within the context of how each agency operates. Judgments for each agency on a given dimension are relative to whether, given how that agency is organized, it meets standards for the adequate discharge of its functions, not relative

to the other agency. For example, both UNICEF and GPE are evaluated on the skills of their staffs relative to their mandated functions. However, the two agencies are organized very differently. UNICEF's country office staffs are responsible for designing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on UNICEF's country programs and the BEGE activities within those programs. For GPE these functions are performed by GPE's supervising/managing entities, such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and other aid agencies. GPE's Secretariat needs the skills to ensure that these entities are performing their functions well, but does not need the technical skills required to design, implement, and monitor a program.

Related to the comparison issue, the terms of reference for the value added evaluation focuses on two multilateral conduits for Norwegian aid, not on all funding channels that Norway now uses or could use. These include both bilateral aid and other multilateral conduits, such as UN agencies other than UNICEF, the World Bank, and other regional development banks. Thus, the evaluation is not structured to answer

questions about trade-offs for Norway of using one versus another funding conduit.

**Evaluation object.** In accord with the terms of reference and verbal instructions by Norad's Evaluation Department, the evaluation focuses on the quality of the aid management and outcomes of activities or programs delivered "on the ground". These instructions have several implications for what is evaluated and what is not. For GPE this means evaluating the management and outcomes of its program implementation grants and the education sector plans on which these grants are based. For UNICEF this means evaluating the management and outcomes of what it calls its "downstream" BE-GE-funded education services or projects within its country programs.<sup>13</sup>

Except for UNICEF's frequent role as Coordinating Agent between local education groups and the GPE Secretariat, the aid management evaluation does not assess what UNICEF calls its "upstream

13 See p.12 and figure 1 in the 2014 publication by UNICEF's Evaluation Department, Vol. 1, "Unicef's Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality, 2003-2012."

work".<sup>14</sup> These upstream activities may affect the context for UNICEF's delivery of downstream services or projects. However, evaluating the quality and the effects of these activities requires a specially designed evaluation that is outside the scope of the terms of reference for this evaluation. The DPMG team's experience with evaluating World Bank activities<sup>15</sup> that are comparable to UNICEF upstream activities and UNICEF's own evaluation of its upstream work show that assessing upstream work is methodologically challenging. UNICEF's typology of upstream activities at the country level<sup>16</sup> reveals them to be potentially important but also ephemeral and thus requiring a tailored assessment approach.

14 UNICEF's Evaluation Office defines "upstream work" to include: a) advocacy to influence policies, legislation, education sector guidance, official standards, and budgets among other elements; b) technical assistance to shape policies, legislation, guidance, standards and curricula, as well as to improve available data, build capacity and strengthen education management and technical systems, and establish sector training capacity; c) piloting approaches and models by financing and managing their implementation for demonstration effects; d) undertaking studies and analytical work to strengthen the evidence base and support its advocacy and policy influence; and e) undertaking sector coordination and leadership roles (UNICEF, 2014, Vol. I, p.9).

15 At the World Bank these were called Analytical and Advisory Activities (AAA). AAA consisted of Economic and Sector Work, Technical Assistance, Donor and Aid Coordination, Research Services, Impact Evaluation and the World Development Report.

16 Op. cit., 2014, table 3, p.60.

On instruction from the Norad Evaluation Department DPMG also excluded any evaluation of global goods such as the production of global data and research activities.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, these are important activities. However, Norad's Evaluation Department wanted the focus of this evaluation to be on the management of the delivery of specific aid at the country level. Thus, unless global goods directly and demonstrably affected the delivery of specific aid, they were to be excluded.

**Complementarities.** There are several complementarities between UNICEF and GPE. UNICEF has a seat on the GPE Board of Directors and currently sits on two of its Board Committees. UNICEF acts as the supervising and managing entity for GPE's implementation program grants. Of these grants, 15 percent are under UNICEF's responsibility, with 94 percent of those under UNICEF's responsibility being in fragile or

17 UNICEF's Education Programme Division and GPE's Strategy, Policy, and Performance unit are both working to include the coverage, timeliness, and validity of global measures of aspects of education systems. Both organizations engage in statistical research and policy development initiatives, such as GPE's annual Results for Learning and Global and Regional Activities (GRA) Program and thematic work and the Innocenti Research Centre that is affiliated with UNICEF

conflict-affected countries. UNICEF often acts as the coordinating agency for GPE. The coordinating agency is nominated by the local education group (LEG) and has a central role in facilitating the work of the LEG under the leadership of the government of the developing-country partner. The CA coordinates and facilitates partners' engagement with the GPE, thereby serving as the communication link between the LEG and the GPE Secretariat. UNICEF also conducts upstream work that enhances GPE's opportunities and the quality of its work. For example, it can create governments' commitment to and thus a window for GPE's priorities. Its focus on equity, such as on the Consolidated Equity Strategy and the Gender Parity Index for Nepal, can create a coherent donor approach to problems of concern to Norway. However, as stated in paragraph 4.7, other than UNICEF's role as coordinating agent for GPE, these activities are excluded from the evaluation because evaluating them requires a differently tailored methodology.

**Principal-agent theory.** Principal-agent theory framed our approach to the value added

question. In this approach the principal (Norway in this case) establishes its priorities. Its agents (GPE and UNICEF in this case) are expected to implement these priorities. The basic analytic question that stems from this approach is whether the agents in fact deliver Norwegian-funded development aid in ways consistent with the principal's priorities, organized under the concepts of relevance (consistency with Norway's aid values, such as child rights), efficiency, and effectiveness.

How the principal's policies and actions affect the ability of the agents to fulfil the principal's priorities is a very interesting question. However, answering it requires a considerably more complicated analysis of "value added" than was proposed.<sup>18</sup> This question is also more important for bilateral aid where the aid agency works directly with the agent, than for multilateral aid, where Norway's funding and priorities are channeled through multi-party Boards and Executive Committees on which Norway sits.

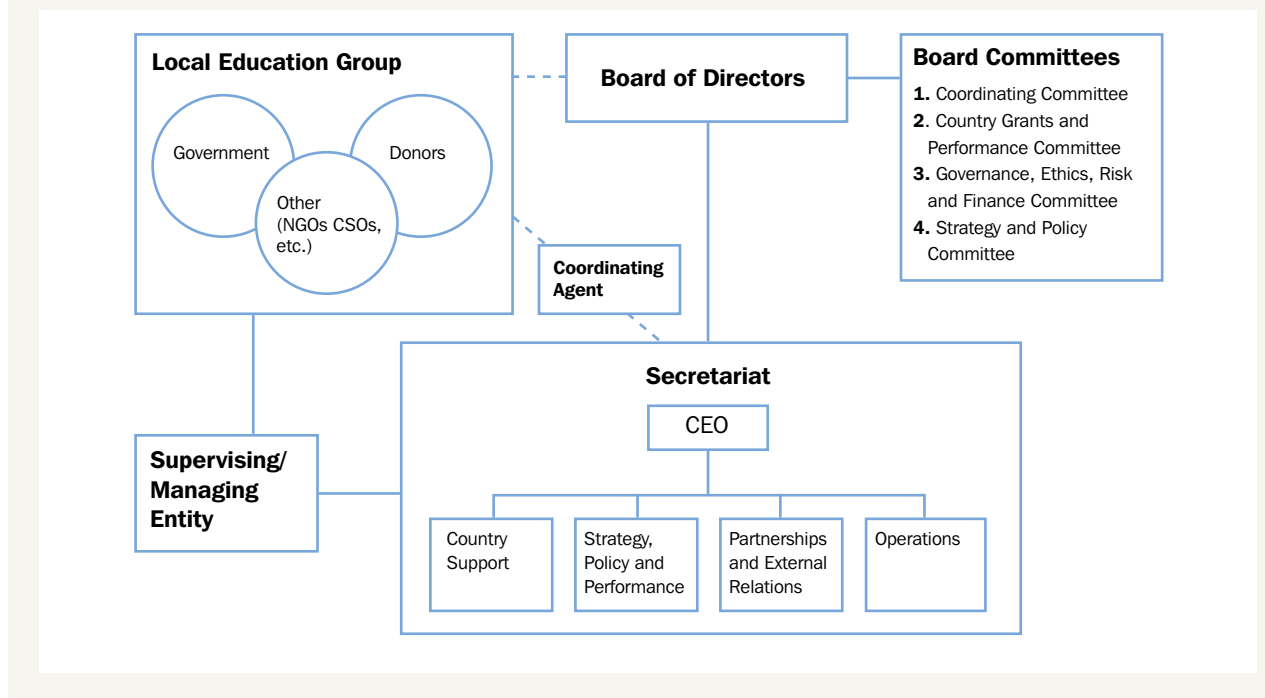
<sup>18</sup> An example of such an analysis is How DFID Works with Multilateral Agencies to Achieve Impact, conducted for the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, Report 44, 2015

**Time frame for the evaluation.** The time period for the evaluation was 2009-2013. This time period defined the programs that were evaluated in the 10 countries. However, in its Inception Report DPMG sought an expansion of the terms of reference for the aid management analysis to 2015 to reflect important changes at UNICEF and GPE since 2013 that might ultimately affect the quality of their aid management in future. If the aid management analysis had been cut off at 2013, the evaluation risked making recommendations that were no longer relevant. For example, in mid-2014 UNICEF established a new position of Deputy Executive Director that focuses primarily on management for field results. In the case of GPE, the donors, including Norway, have wanted better results from GPE's country partners on those Education Sector Plan (ESP) goals that fall outside of the GPE program. The GPE Board has approved a variable financing model that came into effect in January 2015 and that is expected to expedite progress on achieving the goals in the results frameworks of these partners' education sector plans.

However, ratings of the quality of each agency's aid management from 2009 to 2013 do not and cannot reflect any post-2013 reforms. Norad's Evaluation Department asked for an evaluation of the quality of these two agencies' aid management for 2009-2013. More important, by definition, any such reforms are very recent. Whether they will materially remedy weaknesses found in an agency's aid management during 2009-2013 cannot now possibly be known.

**Basis for ratings.** Subsequent sections of this chapter rate GPE and UNICEF on how well each meets each enabling condition, quality standards for each stage of the project cycle, and each criterion for good aid management (relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness). A three-point scale is used: 1) the agency meets the condition or standard adequately; 2) it meets it partially; or 3) it does not meet it. The basis for rating an agency on any given dimension is a judgment call based on multiple sources of evidence discussed in the text. These include analyses of documents, interview data, and research knowledge of the relative importance of

**FIGURE 4: ORGANIGRAM FOR THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION**



Source: GPE website, documents, and interviews with GPE Secretariat staff

different dimensions of aid management in increasing or reducing the chances that the aid will achieve the outcomes sought.

## 4.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR GPE AND UNICEF

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show GPE's and UNICEF's structures, respectively. GPE's core organization consists of its Board of Directors, its Executive



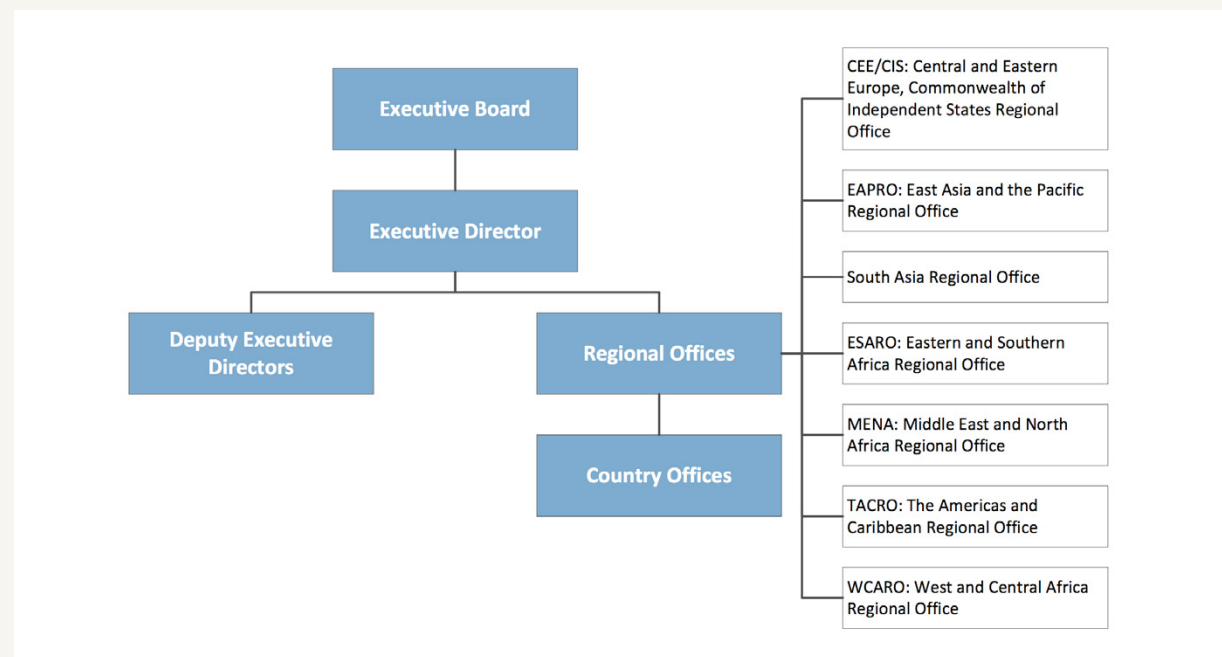
Committees, and its Secretariat. The national policy process is fundamental to the GPE model, and GPE's support is dedicated to ensuring the successful completion of the different stages of the process. Although it provides funding at various stages of the process, GPE relies on other organizations and players to develop the countries' education sector plans and to implement GPE programs – the local education group, coordinating agency, and the supervising/ managing entity<sup>19</sup> displayed in Figure 4.

UNICEF also has a fairly straight-forward structure, although the details at each level (headquarters, regional offices, and country offices) cannot be displayed.<sup>20</sup> UNICEF's

19 As discussed in more detail below, a managing entity is used when the government is not recognized by the international community, where other conditions prohibit or limit the transfer of GPE funds to the government, or where the government lacks the capacity to implement the proposed activities.

20 The UNICEF official website does not provide the fundamentals of UNICEF's structure or the mandates by level of the organization. DPMG requested an organigram or table of organization for UNICEF from multiple individuals interviewed at UNICEF headquarters, but no one could provide one. DPMG ultimately found a 2010 diagram of UNICEF's high level structure, but obviously it was out of date. As a result and because this unit was not included in DPMG's interviews, DPMG almost missed the fact that in 2014 UNICEF had established a new post of Deputy Executive Director with oversight of a Field Results Group (FRG) dedicated to strengthening management for results especially in the field.

FIGURE 5: ORGANIGRAM FOR UNICEF



Source: UNICEF websites; interview data

headquarters office focuses on global goods, including advocacy functions; overall management and administration; and support to regional and country offices.

The regional offices advocate at the regional level for investments in children and for children-centered social policies. They form regional partnerships and liaise with major international governmental bodies on region-wide children's issues.

They provide technical support, policy guidance and oversight, and intellectual leadership on children's issues to the UNICEF Country Offices in their respective regions. UNICEF's website indicates that these seven regions work in 157 countries.

### 4.3 THEORY OF AID MANAGEMENT

Figure 6 displays the causal path to good aid management outcomes. It consists of enabling conditions that result in project cycles that meet quality criteria and increase the chances of good aid management outcomes. Value-added aid is equated with achievement of these outcomes: aid that is better aligned with donor and country priorities (relevance), aid that minimizes the waste of resources (efficiency), and aid that is more likely to achieve intended outcomes (effectiveness).

Of the enabling conditions, the governance factor affects the aid relevance outcome sought both indirectly through the project cycle and directly. The other enabling conditions affect the outcomes sought indirectly through their effects on the quality of the project cycle – i.e., on how aid is delivered on the ground. Thus, the value added to Norway of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its

investments is judged by whether the agency adheres to well-executed project cycles to deliver aid and how the presence or absence of enabling conditions enhance or undermine the quality of aid relevance and the quality of the project cycle.

Section D evaluates how well UNICEF and GPE meet the enabling conditions. Section E evaluates whether the aid delivery by each organization meets the quality criteria for the project cycle. This section includes an assessment of the complementarities between GPE and UNICEF in the delivery of GPE programs. Section F evaluates how well each organization achieves the aid outcomes sought. Section G summarizes the findings for this chapter.

### 4.4 ENABLING CONDITIONS

The enabling conditions identified in Figure 6 emerged as especially salient to good aid management for UNICEF and GPE in the documents, interviews, and 10 countries examined.<sup>21</sup>

21. Obviously, UNICEF and GPE are complex agencies, with large numbers of moving parts that affect how well aid is delivered on the ground. The enabling conditions of Figure 6 are simply ones that emerged as particularly important for the quality of aid delivered in this time period for these 10 countries.

### Governance model

Three dimensions of the governance model for UNICEF and GPE matter particularly to good aid management: priority-setting, Board representation, and defined accountabilities.

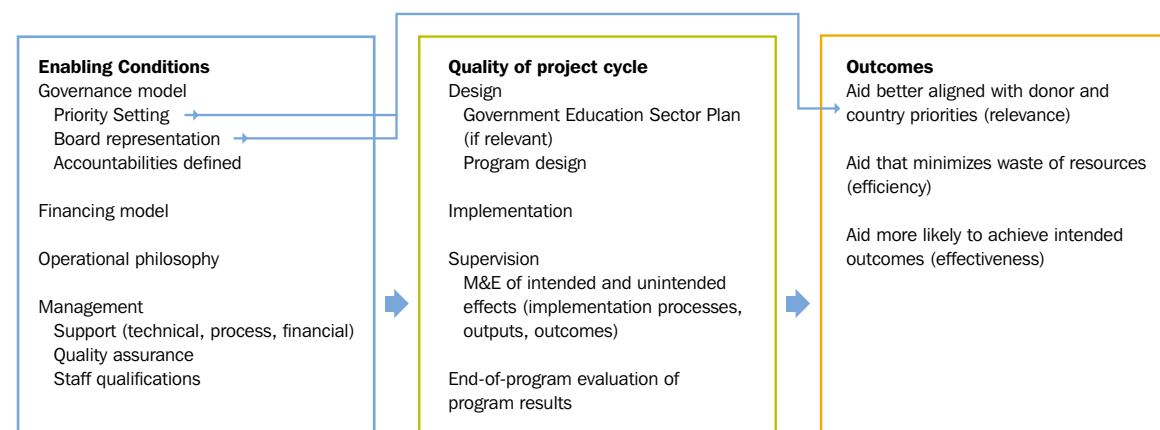
**Setting priorities.** The Boards of both agencies set each agency's priorities by voting on its strategies and making fund allocation decisions. *These actions determine the relevance of aid to donor and country priorities.* When aid is actually delivered, it can drift away from the Board's priorities, but it rarely does. Extraordinary events can disrupt the pursuit of the original objectives of UNICEF or GPE programs. Even the small sample for this evaluation had two such instances: Madagascar and Haiti, one involving a political coup and the second an earthquake. However, in these cases the responsible parties in each agency restructured the objectives of the aid, but still within the broad parameters of their Board's priorities. The Boards debate and ultimately adopt goals and strategies for their respective agencies. The recent strategies for both UNICEF and GPE reflect Norway's priorities for learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity. In terms

of education, UNICEF's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan continues its focus on access and learning in primary education. It plans to strengthen systems that can provide multiple and alternative pathways for disadvantaged and excluded children, including children with disabilities and girls. UNICEF will also increase attention to early childhood development and renew its involvement in secondary education.

GPE's 2012-2015 strategy identifies four strategic goals: access for all (all children have access to a safe, adequately equipped space to receive an education with a skilled teacher); learning for all (all children master basic literacy and numeracy skills by the early grades); reaching every child (resources are focused on the most marginalized children and those in fragile and conflict-affected states); and building for the future (national systems have the capacity and integrity to deliver, support and assess quality education for all).

Both Boards allocate funds by country and program. For UNICEF the Board decides whether and at what level to fund each country program.

**FIGURE 6: THEORY OF GOOD AID MANAGEMENT**



Source: DPMG

For GPE the Board decides whether and at what level to fund each development grant and each implementation grant.

**Board representation.** If aid is not relevant to donor and country priorities, the problem lies in most cases with the representation on the Board and/or with how well the Board's decision processes reflect the preferences of its

members. In terms of representation, both the UNICEF and GPE Boards have significant representations of donors and beneficiary countries. This is not to say that any given Board decision reflects the priorities of an individual donor or single beneficiary country – obviously, every decision will reflect compromises among Board members.

UNICEF's Executive Board has 36 Member States, elected to three-year terms by the Economic and Social Council, with the following regional allocation: Africa (8 seats), Asia (7 seats), Eastern Europe (4 seats), Latin America and Caribbean (5 seats) and Western Europe and Others (12 seats).<sup>22</sup> Although other countries in other regions may donate to UNICEF, the Western European and Others category most obviously represents the donors. Thus, two-thirds of the seats are reserved for beneficiary countries; about a third, for the donors. The donor share is about the same for both GPE and UNICEF.

The GPE Board of Directors Board has 19 members that represent GPE's main constituencies. A Board member and an Alternate Board member represent each constituency. Board members serve for 2 years. Almost a third of the seats are reserved for developing country

partners (6 seats)<sup>23</sup> and another third for donors (6 seats), a share of the seats that should assure that country and donor priorities are taken into account. The remaining 7 seats are allocated to civil society organizations (3 seats), the private sector and foundations (1 seat), and multilateral organizations (3 seats).

Norway is represented on both boards. Norway has had a seat on UNICEF's Board 45 of the last 70 years, or 64 percent of the time, between 1946 and 2015. For 7 of the last 8 years, or 88 percent of the time, it has sat on the Board. Usually the Director General of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs represents Norway on UNICEF's Board. Norway's place on the GPE Board rotates among the "Donor 4" countries of Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden. At present Norway has the position of alternate Board member, with Denmark holding the Board position. Of the three executive committees that have a representative from the Donor

4 countries, Norway is the representative on the powerful Country Grants and Performance Committee.

**Defined accountabilities.** In terms of accountability, UNICEF operates with a highly decentralized model. Its country offices shape and deliver UNICEF's country programs and their activities, and the accountability for the lion's share of UNICEF's aid delivery lies at this level. Given UNICEF's decentralized model, UNICEF's headquarters has had limited latitude for improving the highly variable quality of country programs, country program action plans, and annual reporting.

However, in December 2012, the General Assembly affirmed the importance of results-based management as an essential element of accountability that can contribute to improved development outcomes, including the Millennium Development Goals. The General Assembly requested that UNICEF and others accelerate work to develop a results culture

22 "Others" include countries such as Japan, Australia, Canada, and the United States.

23 The remaining seats are reserved for civil society organizations (one seat for international/ Northern organizations; one seat for developing country organizations, and one seat for the teaching profession), private sector/foundations (one seat), and multilateral agencies (three seats – UNESCO, UNICEF, and a representative from the multinational and regional banks).

at all levels.<sup>24</sup> In mid-2014 UNICEF established a new position of Deputy Executive Director that will lead a Field Results Group focused primarily on management for field results. This position oversees the performance of regional offices, and through regional directors, country office performance in achieving programmatic results and sound financial management. This new position emphasizes the importance of accountability at the country level. The programme divisions at Headquarters are starting to exercise systematic review of country program documents for quality. However, especially against a long history and commitment of UNICEF to decentralized accountability, the long chain from Headquarters to the regional offices to the field offices will at the least lengthen the time required to get real changes across the country offices.

GPE clearly defines some accountabilities and leaves others poorly defined. As Figure 4 shows,

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24 An example of UNICEF's response to this directive, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 outlined a set of results in seven outcome areas focusing on the most disadvantaged and excluded children. The plan includes a results chain with associated indicators and suggests several priority actions to strengthen management for results including increased support to the wider use of the Monitoring Results for Equity System by country offices.

the players are the Board of Directors and its Executive Committees, the Secretariat, the Local Education Group (LEG) in each member country, the Coordinating Agency for the LEG,<sup>25</sup> and, when GPE-funded programs are being designed and implemented, the supervising entity (SE) (or in rarer cases, the managing entity).<sup>26</sup>

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25 The coordinating agency (CA) is nominated by the local education group (LEG) and has a central role in facilitating the work of the LEG under the leadership of the Government. The Coordinating Agency has functions such as facilitating communication between the government and the development partner group, and between the LEG and the Secretariat; coordinating the appraisal and endorsement of the education plan; coordinating applications to the Global Partnership for Education Fund; facilitating monitoring and evaluation; and facilitating general reporting to the GPE about education sector progress.

26 Program activities financed by GPE are usually implemented by the developing-country partner with the support of a supervising entity (SE). The SE is any GPE multilateral agency partner or GPE donor country partner designated to receive transferred funds and supervise an activity, as approved by the GPE Board of Directors in consultation with the Trustee. The SE works with the developing-country partner to prepare a program. Once the GPE Board of Directors approves the program, the SE prepares and signs a grant agreement with the developing-country partner government and oversees and reports on the use of the funds, keeping other members of the local education group (LEG) informed of implementation progress. In exceptional cases a managing entity (ME) may manage the funds on behalf of the developing-country partner. In such cases, there is no supervising entity. A ME is any GPE multilateral agency partner or GPE donor country partner approved by the GPE Board of Directors, in consultation with the Trustee, to receive GPE funds. The ME takes the lead in preparing and implementing a program in close collaboration with other members of the LEG. A ME is used when the government is not recognized by the international community, where other conditions prohibit or limit the transfer of GPE funds to the government, or where the government lacks the capacity to implement the proposed activities.

GPE is committed to Government-owned national education development plans and country-led development cooperation. It is committed to the formation of LEGs, chaired by Government. A LEG assembles members of Government, technical and financing partners, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, and the private sector around the development of the Government's Education Sector Plan, its appraisal and endorsement, its financing, and its implementation and monitoring.

This commitment creates ambiguous accountability relationships. As Table 3 shows, the main source of ambiguity is the LEG as GPE's main instrument for the Government and country-led processes. The LEG acts almost as a proxy for the Partnership. It is authorized by the Board to sign-off on the quality of ESPs and to report on progress. However, this relationship is fraught with asymmetric information. Although the Board specifies its objectives, it has no real leverage over the LEG. The Board's agent, the Secretariat, has leverage over the LEG only through the coordinating agency, its ability to

influence stakeholders on the ground, and its use of the rules surrounding preparation of ESPs and grant applications. A weak LEG cannot be easily strengthened by the Secretariat, nor can the Secretariat supplant what the LEG does.

Formally, the supervising entity is accountable to the Board and should report to the Board’s agent, the Secretariat. However, it is also a member of the LEG and works closely with the technical and financing partners on the LEG. At the least accountabilities are blurred.

### Financing model

While Chapter 5 discusses a wide range of financing questions about basic education and the two aid agencies, aid management is concerned with only one dimension. Are the program and the activities within a program fully funded at their start? During the period of 2009-2013, GPE-funded programs were fully funded at their start. In 2015 GPE introduced a new financing model that makes full release of funds contingent on making progress on the targets for the ESP, whether or not these targets might be affected by GPE-funded programs.

**TABLE 3: ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE GPE PLAYERS**

Player	GPE Board	Secretariat	LEG
<b>GPE Board</b>			
<b>Secretariat</b>	Accountable		Ambiguous
<b>LEG</b>	Ambiguous	Ambiguous	
<b>Supervising/managing entity</b>	Formally accountable	Somewhat ambiguous	Collaborative

Sources: Interviews with GPE Secretariat staff and GPE documents

However, full funding is still available if and when Government meets the agreed-upon conditions.

UNICEF develops a three to five year country program that is partly funded through funds under UNICEF’s control – so-called “regular” funds (internal budget). The funding gap between regular funds and the cost of the full program can be substantial, the gap having to be filled by raising additional funds from the donors. Thus, it is normal to start a country program with only a portion of it funded. How much is funded depends on the program and the level of regular funds.

In terms of the activities *within* the country program, such as basic education and gender equality, UNICEF officials indicated that they start these when they have one or 1.5 years of funding in hand. Completing the activities depended on raising additional resources. UNICEF’s aid management shows changes in direction and apparent non-completion of activities that may or may not be attributable to UNICEF’s funding model. Since UNICEF often fails to adequately document the reasons for changes in program delivery, apparent non-completions may have nothing to do with funding. For example, an activity may be terminated because it is failing to provide results or, if successful, its continuation or completion is

transferred to Government. Whatever the effects of partial funding, those interviewed in the case study countries agreed that for downstream aid UNICEF needed a properly financed and stable core agenda.

### **Operational philosophy**

This concept refers to the often implicit shared view internal to the aid agency of “who we are” and “how we should behave”- the often unspoken assumptions that animate and distinguish the agency from other aid agencies.

For GPE it is the country-led model, with donors harmonizing their previously fragmented programs, technical support, and funding around the development and execution of the Government’s Education Sector Plan. This is a powerful model that, in general, significantly increases the coherence and synergy of donors’ technical support and funding. However, as pointed out, the model leaves unresolved the accountability relationships between the partners on the ground, the GPE Board, and the GPE Secretariat. There is a reluctance to infringe on the autonomy of the local partners, leaving those ultimately

responsible for the effectiveness and fiduciary integrity of GPE funds with limited information about and latitude to address problems at the point of aid delivery. The harmonization of donor support around the ESP can also have the unintended negative consequence of increasing the complexity of operations beyond the implementation capacities of government.

UNICEF’s operational philosophy is deeply field-based with flexibility and rapid response as core values. UNICEF was created in 1946 to provide humanitarian assistance (food, clothing and health care) to post World War II Europe. UNICEF has subsequently significantly expanded its reach, but it still responds to emergencies, such as natural disasters, man-made conflicts and war and internal displacement. Humanitarian action remains central to UNICEF, with a special commitment to protecting children and the most disadvantaged children-victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities. Its mandate reflects its original humanitarian mission and the special convention passed by the United Nations in 1989 recognizing the rights of the child.

This philosophy may explain some of the strengths of UNICEF, such as its upstream work. UNICEF works effectively “in the trenches”- households, communities, schools, clinics- and brings this intimate knowledge to pressure central authorities for policy changes that improve local conditions. Its operating philosophy also seems to position UNICEF well for managing GPE’s programs in fragile or conflict-affected countries. Delivering aid in countries of this type requires flexibility and ingenuity.

However, the value that it places on flexibility and rapid response may also help to explain management weaknesses in UNICEF’s delivery of downstream aid. Field interviews indicated that players on the ground valued UNICEF’s dynamism, its willingness to try new ideas, its agility, and its ability to touch attitudinal and deeper socio-cultural issues that affect education. However, they flagged problems related to the frequent shifts in UNICEF’s priorities and their failure to follow through on initiatives, for whatever reason.

## Management

Of the many dimensions of agency management, three are particularly important for this evaluation. One is the support (technical, process, and financial) that management provides units delivering the aid. The second is having quality assurance processes in place to raise and reduce the variance in the quality of all aspects of the project cycle. The third is staff qualifications.

**GPE management.** In terms of financial support, the GPE Board makes three types of financial grants available to member governments:

- Education Plan Development Grants (up to US\$250,000)<sup>27</sup> to develop their education sector plans;
- Program Development Plan Grants (up to US\$400,000) to develop an operation to implement the ESP; and

<sup>27</sup> The new ceiling for these grants is US\$500,000, with 50% programed for education sector analysis.

**TABLE 4:** RATIO OF GPE MEMBERS TO SECRETARIAT COUNTRY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Year	Cumulative number of member countries (calendar year)	Number of Secretariat support staff (fiscal year)	Ratio of member countries to support staff
2008	36	5	7
2009	40	5	8
2010	44	6	7
2011	46	6	8
2012	54	11	5
2013	59	11	5
2014	59	15	4
2015	60	14	4

Source: GPE

- Program Implementation Grants (up to US\$100 million) to implement the operation.

Between 2003 and June 30, 2014, the Board awarded 60 grants under a now-closed funding facility, the Education Program Development Fund;<sup>28</sup> 28 Education Plan Development Grants;

<sup>28</sup> This facility combined the Education Plan Development Grant and Program Development Grant facilities.

30 Program Development Grants, and 110 Program Implementation Grants.<sup>29</sup>

In terms of technical support, the Secretariat provides support to the LEG, the GPE Board, and government partners. The donors and the agency selected to function as the supervising

<sup>29</sup> Global Partnership for Education. 2014, Results for Learning Report, 2013-2014, table 4.3, p.80.



or managing entity for a GPE implementation grant provide technical support to government partners. The Secretariat processes all grant applications. It facilitates the plan development process, comments on the ESP, and comments on the appraisal of the ESP by the development partners (donors) within the LEG. At the stage of the application for an implementation grant, the Secretariat provides and manages thorough quality assurance reviews of the application. It subsequently participates in joint sector reviews of the grant with members of the LEG.

Those interviewed for the case studies for this evaluation often said that GPE was missing “on the ground.” This finding seems to reflect the low ratio of Secretariat country support staff to the number of member countries during much of the evaluation period of 2009-2013. As Table 4 shows, through 2011 each GPE country support officer in the Secretariat had to support an average of 8 countries. In 2012 this ratio dropped to 5 and then to 4 in 2014. Since 2011 the budget devoted to country support has more than doubled, staff time devoted to each country partner increased

by more than 50 percent, and country visits have dramatically increased.<sup>30</sup>

Given that new members joining the GPE are often fragile or conflict-affected countries with heavy support demands, even the ratio of 4 countries to one country officer is not generous. Of the 60 member countries, 23 are classified as fragile states by the World Bank as of 2013-14.<sup>31</sup> Grants to fragile states accounted for only 21 percent of the funds approved in 2008, but this share had more than doubled to 49 percent by mid-2014.<sup>32</sup>

The GPE Secretariat has developed a good portfolio of terms of reference, templates, and guidance notes to clarify roles and requirements for all of the players in the GPE processes – for example, for the Coordinating Agency or the Supervising Entity. It manages research and policy development initiatives to support country partners. As of fiscal year 2014-15, it had

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp.78-79 and table 4.2.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Annex table 1.1, p.96.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.86.

awarded grants for 15 Global and Regional Activities (GRA), such as monitoring out-of-school children and improving their inclusion in schools; monitoring and improved approaches to early grade teaching and learning; and approaches to better monitoring of national education sector spending.<sup>33</sup>

Quality assurance is a mixed picture, although it is one of the most important responsibilities of the Secretariat to the Board. The development partners in the LEG conduct the quality assurance process for Education Sector Plans – they appraise and endorse. The quality of appraisals is variable. Even if thorough and balanced and even if the partners solicit external technical help in conducting the appraisal, they are not independent. The partners are involved with Government in designing the ESP and are thus appraising their own work.

As noted, the Secretariat has no real authority for assuring the quality of the ESP, although all GPE-funded operations must be based on

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, table 4.1, p.74.

governments' ESPs. A first step in assuring the quality of a GPE-funded operation is to assure the quality of the Education Sector Plan on which it is based.

The Secretariat now comments on the ESP and on the development partners' appraisal of the ESP. In concert with the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), it issued *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal* in 2012. GPE has just started implementing a new financing model that has potential for creating incentives for higher quality and more realistic ESPs. This results-based model holds "hostage" 30 percent of its grant financing conditional on the sector's significant performance results in three primary categories that align with the Global Partnership's strategic goals (equity, efficiency, and learning outcomes). The performance standards will vary depending on the development situation in each country. This funding model may encourage setting more realistic targets in the ESP, greater attention to selecting activities known to be effective, and more focus on M&E of indicators to assess progress against targets.

The Secretariat's leadership commissioned an Organizational Review that was presented to the GPE Board in December, 2014. In response to this review, the Secretariat just established a three-person Quality Assurance Unit. One of its remits will be the quality of ESPs. To improve their quality, the Unit will have to navigate the complexities of a business model that assumes a national policy process which must be "owned" by the in-country players. Over the long term, this is a good model, and any heavy-handed intervention by GPE will undermine the process.

In contrast to the quality assurance processes for ESPs, those for GPE implementation grants are excellent. With Board authorization, the Secretariat manages a three-phase Quality Assurance Review process for applications

to receive GPE implementation grants.<sup>34</sup> These reviews are high quality and conducted in ways that give the supervising entity and LEG time to revise the application to reflect reviewers' concerns.

Once the different types of GPE grants enter the GPE portfolio, its terms of reference requires the Board's Country Grants and Performance Committee to provide annual reports on the grant portfolio. The portfolio is defined to include Program Implementation Grants, Education Plan and Program Development grants and Global and Regional Activities. The report reviews

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<sup>34</sup> The Quality Assurance Process, which superseded the pilot External Quality Review process, includes three phases. The GPE Secretariat is involved in all three phases and takes primary responsibility for Phases I and III. In Phase I, the Initial Program Consultation, GPE's Country Lead visits the country for discussions with the LEG about the potential future use of GPE Funds. The Lead assesses the links between the proposed program and the Education Plan, ensures that the GPE strategic priorities are addressed in the application, and develops a brief report summarizing discussions and agreements. Phase II, the Program Review, is a desk study conducted by GPE's Country Lead and two external experts hired for 5 to 7 days. The panel subjects the draft program developed by the Supervising Entity to a rigorous review. GPE uses a well-defined template and guidance note for this review. Its main intent is to provide a technical assessment of the program that will facilitate the preparation of a robust and relevant set of interventions that has the potential to achieve key results in the sector. The review is expected to provide directions for improving the design of the program. Phase III, the Final Readiness Review, is carried out by the GPE Secretariat. It constitutes a final assessment of the quality of the application for the Board's executive committee, the Country Grants and Performance Committee. It is the basis for this committee's recommendations to the GPE Board of Directors on country allocations

disbursements, budgets and implementation progress and makes recommendations on future funding priorities and strategies. The Secretariat prepares the report on behalf of the Committee and finalizes it according to the Committee's input. The Committee submits the annual report to the Board of Directors with any recommendations or comments incorporated in the Report.

An example of this annual portfolio reviews shows a thorough analysis of the state of the portfolio.<sup>35</sup> In terms of grant performance, it analyzes the disbursement and implementation status of each implementation grant. It flags those grants that evidence progress relative to the previous year and why, those that are still in trouble and why, and those that have become troubled and why. It reports grants that have been restructured and how. It tallies the initial results for those grants under implementation long enough to produce them.

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<sup>35</sup> Global Partnership for Education. October, 2014. Grant Portfolio Review 2014. BOD/2014/12 DOC 09

The 2014 Grant Portfolio Review talks about “clearing” agents for assuming the role of supervising or managing entity. However, interviews at the Secretariat found that the Secretariat has tried but thus far has failed to establish a certification process for agents for the supervising/managing role for a GPE implementation grant. Various players want to open up the competition to obtain the role of supervising or managing entity. However, the role carries real fiduciary risks and should require good processes for managing the project cycle, such as systematic reporting to the Secretariat on the grant's progress toward output and outcome targets. GPE allows each agent to use its own processes to supervise or manage the grant, which further complicates the Secretariat's and Board's ease of comparing and monitoring supervising/managing entities.

Government makes the final selection of the agency to serve this function after a discussion within the LEG about candidates for the supervising entity for a GPE-funded operation. Between January, 2003, and June, 2014, the World Bank supervised 77 percent of all

GPE grants; UNICEF, 15 percent (94% of these instances being fragile states); and other agencies, such as the UK Department of International Development (Dfid), the Netherlands, or Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA), 7 percent.<sup>36</sup>

In terms of staff qualifications for aid management on the ground, the Secretariat needs good management and coordination skills and, in its due diligence role, good country support skills to help governments, LEGs, and supervising/managing entities design and implement better quality ESPs and GPE-funded programs. The Secretariat's Monitoring and Evaluation team needs good measurement, statistical, and evaluation skills. However, GPE generally relies on others, especially the supervising/ managing entity, to provide the heavy duty technical skills required to design and implement GPE-funded programs.

In its early EFA days, GPE Secretariat had limited skills relative to its (evolving) functions. However, over the last half decade it has steadily built

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<sup>36</sup> Results for Learning Report, 2013-2014, op. cit. Table 4.4, p.88.

much stronger skills to deliver on the functions that it has. For example, in 2014, the staff dedicated to country support had professional experience with or had lived in 32 developing countries, compared with only 12 in 2011, and they now have more development experience – on average, around 18 years of experience each. This experience level is better geared to supporting partner countries' education planning and policy processes effectively.

**UNICEF Management.** The country offices that deliver UNICEF's aid on the ground receive financial support and technical support from UNICEF's Headquarters and technical support from its Regional Offices. Seven Regional offices have to support 157 field offices – an average of 22 field offices per Regional office. A document for the South Asia and East Asia and Pacific Regional Offices describes these offices' main functions.<sup>37</sup> Excluding their contributions to Headquarter functions, they represent and advance UNICEF's core mandate, develop

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37 UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) and East Asia & Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), 2009. "Office Management Plans & Integrated Budgets, 2010-2011".

external relations and partnerships, and provide technical support to the country offices. This technical support includes program guidance, management and oversight. In 2014 the South Asia Regional Office provided 400 responses to country office requests. In 2014 this same office conducted a survey of its country office management and staffs, asking them about their satisfaction with the relevance, timeliness, and quality of the Regional Office's support.<sup>38</sup> The survey had an 82 percent response rate and registered high levels of satisfaction across the three dimensions.

In terms of assuring the quality of the project cycle, UNICEF is very weak. During the evaluation period (2009-2013) it did not require systematic and formal quality reviews of any outputs of the project cycle. Regional offices were presumed to provide quality oversight for Country Program Documents, but these documents were sufficiently variable in quality to raise questions about how well the Regional offices

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38 UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA). December 2014. Country Support Survey 2014: Summary Results.

exercised this responsibility – or were positioned to do so. Country Program Action Plans are similarly variable, and annual reports on program achievements ranged from quite good to nothing more than attractive pictures and anecdotes.

UNICEF Headquarters acknowledges the quality issues. As one senior official noted, during the evaluation period of 2009-2013, there was no consistency between the country plan and implementation. Country offices had high staff turnover, and rarely did one person manage the set of activities from the inception of the Country Program through to completion. Sometimes UNICEF had two, but usually three, staff for a program, creating a substantial potential for discontinuities.<sup>39</sup>

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39 Staff turnover always carries the potential for implementation discontinuities. However, the UNICEF documents underlying their programs are so general that it would be difficult for new staff to pick up the thread in any consistent way. In contrast, the World Bank's Project Appraisal Document (PAD) that goes to the Bank's Board of Directors for approval constitutes a detailed design for all activities in the project. It is the "bible." The detailed design makes it easier for new staff to understand the intent and specifics of project activities. Any deviations from the original design require either high level managerial approval or Board approval. These practices minimize the effects of staff turnover – and opportunities for flexibility.

UNICEF is starting to address these problems. For example, as noted earlier, in mid-2014 UNICEF established a new position of Deputy Executive Director that will lead a Field Results Group focused primarily on management for field results. In 2012 UNICEF established a new budgeting system. This new system is linked to the performance management information system for planning and reporting. This linked system compels UNICEF to record indicators and to record performance against indicators. Headquarters is now systematically reviewing the Country Program Documents for quality.<sup>40</sup>

It has introduced a Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES). MoRES focuses on identifying inequities across the child's life cycle, identifying factors that create inequities, selecting approaches to reducing them, and using frequent monitoring data to inform timely course corrections in strategies and actions. It is working with the American Institutes for Research on an evaluation of UNICEF evaluations to foster an

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<sup>40</sup> UNICEF's Education Programme Division at UNICEF headquarters uses a simple template for a technical quality review of the education components of each country office's Country Program Document (CPD).

in-house evaluation culture. It is conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis that completes an expenditure review of education spending from 2006 and contrasts expenditures and results to shed light on what has been effective in different country contexts.

In terms of staff qualifications, UNICEF needs strong technical skills to design and monitor its own country programs and GPE programs when it acts as GPE's supervising or managing entity. Although UNICEF staffs often have good substantive knowledge for these functions, its skills for developing plausible theories of change or causal paths, designing activities to achieve goals, and credibly measuring the effects of its activities are much weaker.

Part of UNICEF's longer term strategy is aligning staff at all levels of the organization with the new focus on outcomes, indicators, data, and analysis. UNICEF's Education Programme Division recognizes that UNICEF lacks the right skills mix for measurement and analysis at every level of the organization – Headquarters, the Regional offices, and the country offices.

Headquarters is gradually working to redefine the role of the Regional Offices to assure quality and to provide technical assistance to country offices to help them meet quality standards. UNICEF has to strengthen the regional advisors' abilities to recognize quality and to be able to strengthen it at the country office level. Regional office staffs often have good substantive knowledge but usually lack the necessary measurement and analytic expertise.

To this end, the Education Programme Division is helping regional offices recruit staff to fill these needs by providing generic job vacancy announcements. These announcements define the competencies and technical standards for the people needed at different levels of the organization. It is creating a talent pool populated with candidates that have the needed skills, and testing candidates against the standards. This office expects that realigning the staff at all levels of the organization will be a gradual process that will probably take about 10 years. Country offices in fragile states pose the most challenging staffing problems.

UNICEF’s initiatives to improve quality assurance processes and the analytic and measurement skills of staff at all levels indicate a seriousness of purpose. Some initiatives seem focused on improving global goods, and it is not clear how they will (or are even expected to) impact the quality of aid management at the country level. Others clearly target the regional and country levels. However, these initiatives are just starting. Not only can their adequacy not yet be known, but improving the performance of large numbers of decentralized offices will take substantial time.

### Summary of the status of GPE and UNICEF on the enabling conditions

Table 5 summarizes the status of GPE and UNICEF on the enabling conditions. GPE meets the majority of the enabling conditions adequately, with fewer than half met only partially. UNICEF meets two conditions adequately, one (quality assurance) not adequately, and the majority of conditions partially,

**TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF STATUS OF ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR UNICEF AND GPE**

Enabling condition	UNICEF	GPE
Financing model	➤	➤
Governance model		
Priority-setting	➤	➤
Board representation	➤	➤
Accountabilities defined	➤	➤
Operational philosophy	➤	➤
Management		
Support (technical, process, finance)	➤	➤
Quality assurance	➤	➤
Staff qualifications	➤	➤

➤ Meets enabling condition    ➤ Meets condition partly    ➤ Fails to meet condition

Source: GPE

### 4.5 QUALITY OF THE PROJECT CYCLE

Any agent that delivers aid works within an implicit or explicit *project cycle*. Figure 6 showed generic stages of this cycle. Based on multiple internal analyses, the World Bank’s Quality Assurance Group (QAG) found that the quality of the project cycle significantly affects the chances that the program will attain its intended

outcomes or development objectives. The determinate question for this evaluation is whether each agent managed the project cycle in ways known to affect ultimate program results. Annex 3 details the quality questions that need to be asked about each stage of the project cycle.

## Important quality dimensions of the project cycle

**Design quality.** QAG's analyses found that the quality of a program's design was strongly related to program success, as measured years later by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group. Poor designs were also found to consume inordinate supervision resources downstream.

A good design meets several quality standards. Is the program design coherent and realistic relative to the country's past track record and capacities? Is its theory of change consistent with empirical research findings? Is the design of its activities casual, or does it reflect carefully analyzed cost-effectiveness considerations? For example, when more capacity cannot feasibly be wrung out of the existing plant, school construction becomes the option of choice. The economic analysis now must identify cost-effectiveness tradeoffs between major design alternatives: a) choice of where to locate new schools; b) choice of construction norms – i.e., materials,

engineering, and workmanship standards;<sup>41</sup> and c) choice of construction procurement and management arrangements.<sup>42</sup>

Does the design include a plausible and logical results framework that makes the project's theory of change explicit? Does this framework have performance indicators that meet basic measurement standards, reasonably recent and accurate baseline data, and M&E arrangements?

Do implementation arrangements reflect a realistic evaluation of capacities? Have risks, such as sustainability and political economy risks, been identified and, if possible, addressed? Are proper safeguards in place to ensure that the program's money is spent

41 The school construction technology employed influences the cost, durability, and ability to scale up construction to the level required. Two patterns emerge from 30 years of African countries' extensive experience with various school construction technologies. First, "innovative" technologies that were intended to lower the cost of school infrastructure and increase the volume have done neither. However, these technologies are continually resurrected at various times, mainly by donors, with the same results. Second, the use of the very same technology results in a wide range of costs, depending on the implementation arrangements.

42 Serge Theunynck. 2009. School Construction Strategies for Universal Primary Education in Africa : Should Communities Be Empowered to Build their Schools?. Washington D.C.: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2637>.

on its intended beneficiaries? Is the quality of the design subjected to a final tough review of the proposed program before money is contractually committed to it?

Several design factors were found to elevate the risk of program failures:

- Overly complex program designs relative to government's implementation capacities. The mismatch between complexity and capacity occurred most frequently in low-income and fragile states. This is a common design problem for GPE programs. Complexity can take many forms, such as multiple education sub-sectors, beneficiaries with diverse needs (e.g., disabled children, out-of-school children, girls in ethnic minority areas), and multiple reform objectives, such as access, quality, or equity.
- Poorly formulated causal links between inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The causal paths from activities to outputs to outcomes/development objectives cannot be convincingly traced. For example, the program may seek

better learning outcomes, but the package of interventions intended to affect learning will not be implemented at the level of the classroom until just before the program closes.

- Poorly selected indicators of success that leave all parties to the program flying blind. For example, one program gave four indicators of its objectives. Three of these were outputs (such as the number of books procured), not outcomes (such as the number of children using the books in the schools). In another program, the outcome measures were inappropriate: they applied to the entire country, not to the sub-regions targeted by the program.
- Premature approval. When programs enter the portfolio too soon, program teams may spend the first year or longer addressing issues that should have been handled before the program started. In these cases, the program is not likely to meet its objectives by the time that the program closes. Phase III of GPE’s Quality Assurance Review (QAR) process should help protect against this problem.

**TABLE 6: RATING SCALE USED TO RATE QUALITY OF GPE PROGRAMS**

Rating	Definition
1 = Satisfactory	Satisfactory or better on all key areas (e.g., sound quality assurance checks in place and implemented; design has solid results framework; sound and timely focus on implementation problems; sound assessment of project's results)
2 = Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory on all key aspects, but exhibiting some deficiencies and missed opportunities to improve prospects of successful outcomes or to learn from project experience
3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory	Significant deficiencies in one or two areas that could affect prospects for reaching stated objectives or learning from project experience
4 = Unsatisfactory	Significant deficiencies in several key aspects that could jeopardize outcomes
NYC	Program not yet closed
NA	Data not available

Source: DPMG

**Program implementation.** Program implementation is normally under the control of government, not the aid agency. However, all else equal, government’s implementation performance should increase as the quality of the agent’s program design and supervision increase.

**Program supervision.** Proactive supervision to turn problem programs around during implementation increases their odds of achieving their objectives. This was found to be true even

for programs that started with sub-optimal designs. Do those supervising the program demand systematic oversight of the program’s progress, such as annual measures of the status of outputs and outcomes? Are these data reviewed to determine if the program is failing on one or more components? Do those supervising the program proactively adjust the program design to rescue failing program components? Are they willing to cancel entire programs that, for whatever reason, seem doomed?



**TABLE 7: RATINGS OF GPE PROGRAMS ON DIMENSIONS OF PROJECT CYCLE BY COUNTRY**

Quality dimension	Country									
	Afghanistan	Burkina Faso	Ethiopia	Haiti	Madagascar	Malawi	Mali	Mozambique	Nepal	Zambia
Quality of ESP design	1/2	2/3	2	3 <sup>43</sup>	NA <sup>44</sup>	3	3	2	2	3/4
ESP appraisal)	1	3	NA <sup>45</sup>	NA	NA	2	3	1	3	2
Quality of GPE program design	3/4	3	2/3	2	3	2	3	2	2	NA <sup>46</sup>
Assurance of design quality (EQR/QAR)	1	4 <sup>47</sup>	1	1	4 <sup>48</sup>	1	NA <sup>49</sup>	2	1	NA
Quality of implementation	NA <sup>50</sup>	2	2	2	1	3	3	2	2	3
Quality of supervision	NA	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	2
Supervisor's proactivity	NA	2	1	2	1	2	4	2	1	2
Supervisor's M&E of outputs & outcomes	NA	2	1	3	Outputs: 1 Outcomes: 4	2	3	2	1	2
Completion	NYC	Yes	Yes	NYC	Yes	NYC	Yes	NYC	NYC	Yes
Quality of end-of-project evaluation	NYC	2	1	NYC	2	NYC	3	NYC	NYC	1

<sup>43</sup> Based on the 2007 ESP, GPE approved an implementation grant in September 2009. After the January 2010 earthquake, the grant was restructured, and a 2010 Operational Plan functioned as the ESP.

<sup>44</sup> The political coup of March 2009 initially rejected the ESP. The Action Plan on which GPE aid was based tried to pursue a few of the original reform objectives, but focused on trying to limit the damage to the sector.

<sup>45</sup> Prior to 2012, the development partners in the LEG had to appraise the education strategy only at the time that the country became a member of GPE, and Ethiopia had become a member in 20004. They did not have to appraise each new phase of a long-term education strategy.

<sup>46</sup> GPE responded that neither a project design document, EQR/QAR, a response to the EQR, nor a MTR were available. There is some documentation on implementation and supervision, but it is possible that some documents relevant to these issues are also missing.

<sup>47</sup> The EQR process was in place at the time of this project, although only recently established. No EQR was, but should have been, conducted for Burkina Faso.

<sup>48</sup> Although the EQR process was in place at the time of this project, none was and should have been conducted for Madagascar.

<sup>49</sup> This project predated the EQR process.

<sup>50</sup> There is only scant information on the project during implementation. Thus, the quality of implementation and supervision cannot be properly judged.

**End-of-program evaluation.** Assessments of closed programs are critical for learning if the aid agency is structured to incorporate revealed lessons into its operations. Does the aid agency require an independent evaluation of the program's results that also analyzes the apparent reasons for success or failure? Does it

capture the lessons learned from these evaluations and use them to modify those policies and processes of the agent that affect the project cycle? Ex-post assessments can also clarify the role of different players in the results observed.

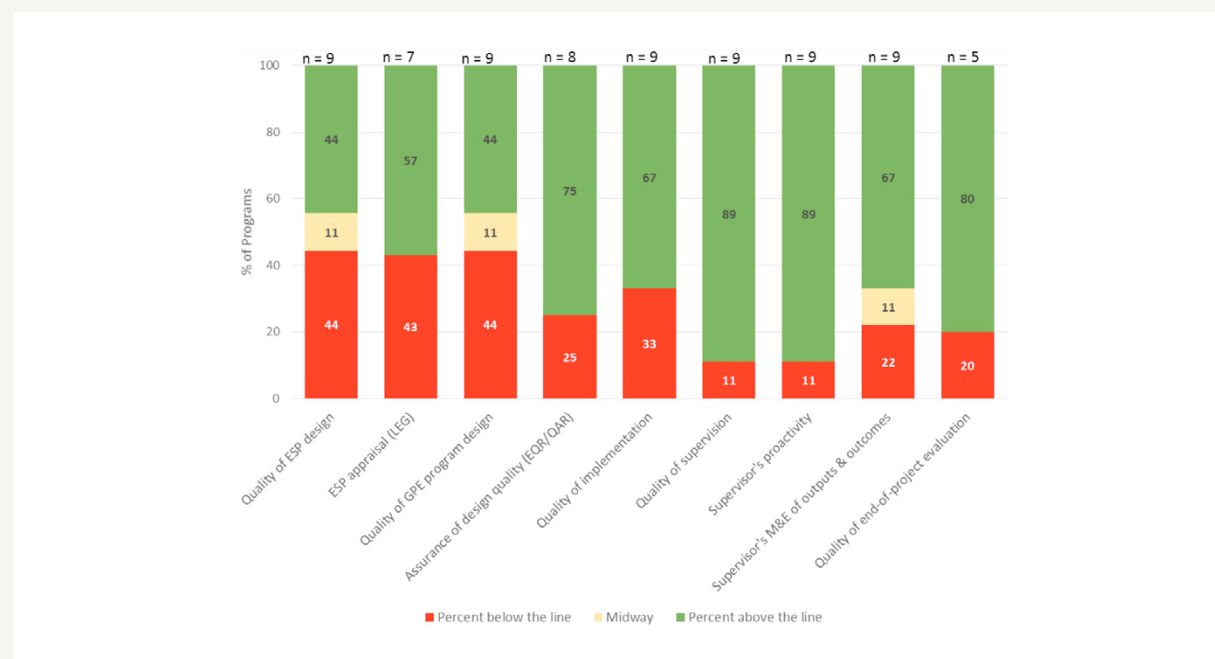
**Ratings of the quality of the project cycle for GPE projects in 10 countries**

The scale being used to rate the GPE projects is defined in Table 6. Table 7 shows the extent to which GPE programs in 10 countries met the standards for a quality project cycle. Annex 5 gives an example of the evidence behind the

Secretariat has an important role at this stage. Unless a managing entity is used, government is responsible for implementation. The supervising entity and the LEG are primarily responsible for the quality of supervision, with oversight by a member of the Secretariat's Country Support Team. The supervising entity is responsible for conducting an end-of-project evaluation. The GPE Secretariat is primarily responsible for reviewing end-of-project evaluations to determine if they have implications for GPE's policies and practices.

UNICEF was the managing entity for Madagascar and the supervising entity for Afghanistan. The Netherlands was the supervising entity for Zambia. The World Bank was the supervising entity for the other seven countries. Information is sketchy for evaluating aspects of the Afghanistan program, and GPE informed us that several documents important to the evaluation were missing for Zambia. For programs where information was available, Figure 7 shows the percent of GPE programs for each quality dimension that were "above the line", "midway", and "below the line." Above the line is defined as satisfactory or

**FIGURE 7: PERCENT OF GPE PROGRAMS RATED ABOVE, MIDWAY, AND BELOW THE LINE BY QUALITY DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT CYCLE**



Source: DPMG

moderately satisfactory (ratings of 1 or 2). Midway is defined as between moderately satisfactory and moderately unsatisfactory (2/3). Below the line is defined as moderately unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory (ratings of 3 or 4).

Figure 7 shows that GPE programs were weakest on the quality of the ESP design, the development partners' appraisal of the ESP, and the quality of the program design. Because GPE-funded operations are expected to be

closely aligned with the country ESP, problems with program designs stemmed partly from problems with the ESPs on which they were based. The External Quality Reviews were of high quality, the 25 percent rated below the line being two instances where the Secretariat did not, but should have, conducted an independent quality review. Given the scope and complexity of most GPE programs, the rating for implementation is higher than might have been expected, perhaps because the quality of supervision was high. Agents evidenced significant proactivity. Only half of the projects had closed, but the quality of the evaluations for those that had closed was good.

Ratings of GPE program designs were often downgraded because they were unrealistically complex relative to Government's capacities. Both the External Quality Reviews (when conducted) and this evaluation flagged a number of cases of unrealistically complex designs. Although harmonizing fragmented donor initiatives around Government education sector plans is a signal improvement over uncoordinated and multiple donor initiatives, sector-wide

plans and multiple donors seem naturally to tilt operations toward greater complexity. A sector-wide plan shows governments what needs to be done, and it is easy for them to confuse an understanding of what they need to do with being able to do it. When multiple donors are involved, all want to be part of the operation that is funded. Both tendencies risk expanding the scope of the program beyond the capabilities of governments, especially given that the presence of multiple donors usually signals low income countries and less capable governments.

The fact that GPE is increasingly working with fragile or conflict-affected countries is only likely to exacerbate the complexity-capacity imbalance. It is possible to reduce complexity by sequencing or taking other actions. However, if such actions were taken in the cases reviewed, they were insufficient. The ambiguous accountability relationships among governments, LEGs, SEs, the GPE Board, and the GPE Secretariat translates into a lack of leverage to ensure that operations have a scope appropriate to government capacities.

### **Complementarities between GPE and UNICEF**

UNICEF is playing increasingly important roles in supporting GPE's delivery of its programs, one (Coordinating Agent) being an upstream role and the other (supervising/managing entity) a downstream role. It made upstream contributions other than in the role of coordinating agent, but, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, evaluating UNICEF's upstream work for its role as coordinating agent is outside the scope.

Using UNICEF's statistics, in 2012 UNICEF was the Coordinating Agent for GPE in 48 percent of the cases;<sup>51</sup> by 2015, in 65 percent of the cases. In 2012 UNICEF was the supervising/managing entity for 8 percent of GPE's implementation grants;<sup>52</sup> in 2014, for 15 percent.<sup>53</sup> The growth in its supervisory role correlates with the growth in GPE's program

51 UNICEF. *Unicef's Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality 2003-2012*, p.93

52 Global Partnership for Education. *Results for Learning 2012*.

53 *Results for Learning 2014/15*, p.88.

grants to fragile or conflict-affected countries. As noted earlier, 94 percent of the implementation grants for which UNICEF was responsible in 2014 were in fragile or conflict-affected countries.

UNICEF's performance in the role of Coordinating Agent is difficult to measure. Not surprisingly, the documents used for the desk studies of GPE programs revealed little about the functioning of the LEGs, including the coordinating agents. Field interviews for the four case studies probed respondents' views of the LEG, including the Coordinating Agent. The results were mixed, but it was by no means clear that the Coordinating Agent (and thus UNICEF) was responsible for perceived instances of sub-optimal functioning.

Since the role of Coordinating Agent falls within UNICEF's definition of upstream work, we had hoped that the evaluation conducted by UNICEF's Evaluation Department, *Unicef's Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality 2003-2012*, would evaluate it. Unfortunately, although the evaluation documented a number of upstream activities supportive of GPE programs, it said little about

UNICEF's role as Coordinating Agency for the LEG, noting that it was primarily a "liaison role" (p.93).

The GPE Secretariat assesses UNICEF's role as coordinating agent positively. Given that those in the Secretariat are well positioned to observe and compare how different coordinating agents perform, their assessment has weight. They state that GPE has noticed significant improvements in UNICEF capacities at country level in sector policy dialogue. It flags UNICEF's unique role in introducing the important issue of equity and inclusion into country policy dialogues.

Of the 10 GPE programs evaluated, UNICEF was the supervising/managing entity for two: Afghanistan and Madagascar. With one exception UNICEF performed well as the managing entity for Madagascar under very difficult circumstances. The exception was that it did not analyze outcomes in ways that let GPE – or the independent evaluator contracted by UNICEF for this operation – judge the effects of GPE funding. All players – GPE's Board, the Secretariat, and UNICEF – were complicit in this failing. Given Madagascar's circumstances, the players

could have explicitly agreed that outputs only would be tracked. However, there is no explicit record of any such agreement, leaving outcomes to fall through the cracks.

In Afghanistan the quality of the program design fell between moderately unsatisfactory and unsatisfactory. GPE was unable to locate any subsequent documents on implementation or supervision, but where the responsibility for the lack of documentation should be placed is not known.

### **Evaluation of UNICEF's aid management of Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE) activities**

**Overview.** UNICEF's project cycle starts with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the country. The UNDAF structures the aid activities to be delivered by the usually large number of UN agencies active in the country and charts their complementarities. Basic education is sometimes clearly and sometimes obliquely flagged as an UNDAF priority. UNICEF's Country Program Document

(CPD) reflects the UNDAF and develops UNICEF's priorities in slightly more detail. UNICEF's Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) elaborates on themes in the CPD. These three documents are more or less aligned. UNICEF reports annually on progress against the CPAP.

During the evaluation period of 2009-2013 UNICEF's project designs and supervision reporting (although not necessarily supervision itself) were generally unsatisfactory. In most cases UNICEF had only sketchy or limited design of its basic education initiatives. Its activities, intended implementation processes, beneficiary targeting, and risks are either discussed at a very general level or not discussed. Sometimes the design consisted of just a list of activities.

UNICEF's results frameworks for basic education initiatives were often fragmented between two of the three or all three documents. It was usually not possible to piece together a credible causal path from activities to outputs to intended outcomes/development objectives. Sometimes baseline data were available; sometimes, not.

Targets were often specified, but frequently seemed unrealistic and implausible, especially given the absence of details about how UNICEF planned to implement its activities and against what timeline. UNICEF argues that in the spirit of aligning itself with Government's objectives, they adopted their targets. However, there should be a difference between what Government sets as its targets and those that UNICEF sets for its more limited operations. Similarly, even though GPE implementation grants should be based on the country's ESP, the targets for the GPE operation reflect the scope and timeframe of the GPE operation. The regional offices presumably reviewed the quality of the CPDs – and perhaps the CPAPs. However, there were no documented quality reviews of its designs. Although the program divisions at UNICEF Headquarters now systematically review the quality of CPDs, from 2009 to 2013 time period their quality reviews were sporadic.

Supervision reporting – although not necessarily supervision – was weak. UNICEF certainly issued annual reports against the CPAP, and some of these were better than others. For example, the

midterm review for Burkina Faso Midterm Review (MTR) reported on the indicators as they were presented in the CPAP.

However, even the better ones did not necessarily track outputs or outcomes or use the same indicators across time. Sometimes annual reports reported on more indicators than were specified in the CPAP. They sometimes changed the unit of measurement – e.g., from the percent of age-appropriate children in basic education to the number. Weaker annual reports seemed almost like marketing brochures: attractive photographs and interesting anecdotes, with virtually no analysis.

A number of those individuals interviewed in Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad's program sections, and Norad's Evaluation Department expressed frustration that bordered on irritation with UNICEF's spotty reporting and lack of attention to outcomes. The findings of this evaluation confirm those views. However, these specific problems reflect much deeper problems with UNICEF's management of downstream aid. These are problems with the

rigor of its design of activities, analytic grasp, valid measurement of outputs and outcomes across the life of the activity, and thorough documentation of restructuring or termination decisions.

### **Results for UNICEF: Four case studies.**

The state of UNICEF's documentation for its downstream aid means that the quality of UNICEF's management of its BEGE-funded activities cannot be systematically evaluated or rated. As a fallback, we use the documents and interview data for the four country case studies to convey a qualitative sense of UNICEF's aid management. Because DPMG's Nepal team obtained unusually rich interview data, we use those data for that country. For Malawi, Madagascar, and Ethiopia we focus on the specifics of UNICEF's documentation of its aid.

**Nepal.** As with all of the case studies, the categories of those interviewed in Nepal were UNICEF's management and staff in the country office; the World Bank's staff in the education sector; partner organizations in the Local Education Group (LEG), such as donors;

Government/Ministry officials, especially for the education sector and for those active in the LEG; and staff in the country-based technical support units.

Although rich in subjective content, the interview data have limits. In some cases respondents were de facto referencing UNICEF's upstream aid. They did not always clarify the context for their comments. They did not always understand the context for UNICEF's actions.

On the positive side of the ledger, the Ministry of Education greatly appreciated UNICEF's work on their ESP and the GPE-funded operation – the School Sector Reform Plan and School Sector Reform Program, respectively. They noted that UNICEF works well with government. UNICEF was seen as primarily involved in advocacy – both at the level of public policy and at the level of individual attitude and value change. In the latter area, UNICEF is considered especially effective. It is seen as “good at messaging, networking, mobilizing communities, and setting agendas.” UNICEF is seen as bringing in the child's perspective and standing for child rights,

child protection and gender equality. These issues were not necessarily the top priorities of the Ministry, but Ministry officials recognized them as important.

UNICEF's agility and willingness to try new ideas and to pilot initiatives such as Early Childhood Education and Development and the Welcome to School Campaign were all valued. Its work at the district level through NGOs and local government and at the policy level in dialogue with the central office of the education ministry was valued. One Ministry official gave UNICEF's advocacy work credit for Nepal's excellent progress on improving the Gender Parity Index in education.

The main concerns or critiques of UNICEF among Ministry staff were related to the frequent shifts in UNICEF's priorities. “What UNICEF does is good, but they always have a crowd of activities. And they don't focus long on any one subject.” Another observed that “UNICEF lacks continuity. They are spread over too many areas. People get confused and can't absorb it all.”

Like the government, the World Bank valued UNICEF for its comparative advantage in addressing the attitudinal and deeper socio-cultural issues that influence education. The Bank works mainly with the government, and the Bank's staff members realize that it is difficult for the state to affect factors important for education such as the child's home environment. However, UNICEF, NGOs and INGO's are well-positioned to target these factors. UNICEF was appreciated for "doing a good job with very few resources" and for their "on the ground" experience. The Bank's only critique of UNICEF was that they are "not strategic." For example, in their Child Friendly School program UNICEF initially insisted on having some 250 different criteria that needed to be met before a school could be judged as Child Friendly. This allowed UNICEF to communicate its vision of an ideal school, but was discouraging for the schools that have very few resources and little hope of meeting all these criteria. Later they reduced the long list to 25 "Minimum Enabling Conditions" and finally, after considerable dialogue within the LEG, UNICEF was finally convinced to develop a list of five "Prioritized Minimum

Enabling Conditions." These are now a part of the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP), and funds have been budgeted to help schools reach at least these five benchmarks.

As LEG and Joint Funding Agreement members for the SSRP, Norway, Finland, Australia and ADB staff members were interviewed. All valued UNICEF for its advocacy for children and other vulnerable groups, its strong field-based work and ability to work with NGOs and government at the district level. But concerns were also expressed about the inability of some UNICEF staff to see the education sector as a whole rather than just focus on UNICEF projects. Many expressed the wish for UNICEF to be more "strategic" about what it does and to carry through on its good work.

**Madagascar.** In Madagascar UNICEF did many things right in its own program in a very difficult environment. However, its basic education aid activities during the coup period were overshadowed by under-specified and activity-driven designs and monitoring focused on outputs, leaving all parties flying blind in

terms of outcomes. As the manager of these programs, UNICEF is directly accountable for the design and implementation flaws. However, the UNICEF Executive Board and Norway as a bilateral donor are complicit in not requiring of UNICEF more rigorous designs and systematic measurement of indicators during the design and implementation of these projects.

**Malawi.** For Malawi, project design is unsatisfactory. The CPAP identified 3 components for basic education and youth development, two being germane to basic education: Quality primary education with a focus on girls' education and Policy, systems development and sector reform. Although these components are identified, they are not designed in any standard sense of the word. The CPAP lists a number of activities associated with each, but leaves unanswered questions such as how they will be sequenced and delivered.

For example, UNICEF states that the quality primary education component will provide technical support: a) to ensure that Early Childhood Development (ECD) meets the

expected standards defined in the relevant national policy and international and regional guideline documents; and b) to develop and institutionalize the child-friendly school (CFS) framework. UNICEF planned to promote the CFS concept through programs such as: “school construction and rehabilitation; provision of separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls; provision of clean water and promoting good hygiene practices; and supply of teaching and learning materials to selected schools.” “In-service teacher training will continue to focus on: interactive and gender-sensitive teaching; the use of locally available materials to develop teaching aids; development of school-level partnerships and community mobilization; and strengthening the Girls Education Movement and UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI). Support to the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform and CFS will be major programs. The CFS concept will provide a basis for strengthening partnerships through the harmonization of related initiatives and setting of standards.”

The CPAP had no results framework, but the CPD includes a table called “Summary results matrix:

Government of Malawi — UNICEF 2008-2011 country programme.” Pieces of a results framework that relate the primary activity, implementing a CFS approach, to the educational outcomes sought can be patched together. However, there is no discussion of how the CFS will produce the outcomes – i.e., no theory of change. Baselines are sometimes, but not always, present. Targets, especially for improved completion rates, are unrealistic.

Supervision reporting, but again not necessarily supervision itself, was unsatisfactory. UNICEF certainly issued annual reports on the 2008-2011 country program, but these reports were not analytic and left all parties unable to assess the implementation status of the CPD’s basic education activities.

**Ethiopia.** In Ethiopia, project design falls between moderately unsatisfactory and unsatisfactory. From the upstream documents it is hard to discern the design of the activities that UNICEF planned to use to achieve their objectives. The CPAP should but did not translate the CPD’s approach into operational activities.

UNICEF’s results framework for the 2007-2011 program had to be patched together between upstream documents, and its causal pathway from activities to outputs to outcomes cannot be constructed. Some outcome targets seem heroic – for example, the net intake rate (NIR), to grade 1 will increase from 60 percent in 2005 to 96 percent in 2008. The grade 1 dropout rate is projected to drop from an (undated) baseline in the UNDAF of 22 percent to 2 percent by 2008. The primary school completion rate is expected to increase to 85 percent, against a baseline of 52 percent in the 2007 CPAP. These may be targets sought by the Government of Ethiopia in its ESDP III, but, even if they are, UNICEF should have examined their plausibility before adopting them as their accountabilities for UNICEF’s country plan from 2007 to 2011.

Supervision reporting (not necessarily supervision itself) falls between moderately satisfactory and moderately unsatisfactory, in good part because annual reports could not report against a clean and coherent results framework. Annual reports included helpful information, such as the resources used; the most recent Government



data on outcomes; the activities pursued and outputs achieved; factors or constraints affecting performance and lessons learned; and monitoring, studies, and evaluations. However, targets shifted between the CPAP and annual reports. For example, under “key milestones and expected results” the CPAP expected that the net intake rate would be 81 percent by the end of 2007 and 96 percent by the end of 2008. In the 2007 annual report, the target date for reaching 96% had shifted to 2015. The school completion target of 85 percent in the CPAP had changed to 80 percent by the 2010 Annual Report. Some of the inferences about the effects of outputs seemed unwarranted.

#### 4.6 AID MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Three outcomes are sought for good aid management: aid better aligned with donor and country priorities (relevance); aid that minimizes the waste of resources (efficiency); and aid more likely to achieve intended outcomes (effectiveness). As Table 8 shows, this evaluation concludes that UNICEF and GPE do some, but not all, things well.

**TABLE 8: RATINGS OF UNICEF AND GPE ON AID MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES**

Outcome	UNICEF	GPE
Aid better aligned with donor and country priorities (relevance)	➤	➤
Aid that minimizes waste of resources (efficiency)	➤	➤
Aid more likely to achieve intended outcomes (effectiveness)	➤	➤

➤ Meets enabling condition    ➤ Meets condition partly    ➤ Fails to meet condition

Source: DPMG

#### Relevance

Both agencies deliver aid that is well-aligned with donor and country priorities.

#### Efficiency

UNICEF and GPE both have mixed records on efficiency. There is a broad consensus that UNICEF does some things well with very few resources. However, perhaps, although not necessarily, because of resource constraints, it does not always complete activities. Weak designs, results frameworks, and M&E mean that often UNICEF does not know when activities are off track and cannot deal proactively with

failing components or activities. Factors such as these degrade the efficiency of its aid delivery.

GPE achieves powerful efficiencies with its model of donor harmonization of funding and technical support around a country education sector plan. However, in this sample of GPE countries, less than 50 percent of the ESPs are rated as being satisfactory or moderately satisfactory. Since a GPE-funded operation is expected to be aligned with the ESP, problems at the ESP stage radiate outward to the operation itself. And in fact less than half of the programs had satisfactory or moderately satisfactory designs. Flaws at the

design stage increase supervision costs downstream and degrade efficiency.

### **Effectiveness**

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the point here is not to judge whether GPE or UNICEF achieve the outcomes sought in the programs for which they were responsible. Chapter III addresses this question. The point here is to judge whether these two agencies managed aid delivery in ways known to enhance the chances of achieving the objectives sought in their operations. Aid can be well managed and, for any number of reasons, still fail to achieve the intended development objectives.

UNICEF does not manage its aid in ways that increase the chances of achieving the intended outcomes. Activities are not really designed and often just listed; outcomes are often not measured; and what is measured is often not consistently measured across the lifetime of the activity.

GPE's supervising agents manage the project cycle fairly well, but still with flaws. The quality

of supervision is strong, and the quality of implementation is respectable, given the complexity of GPE programs. However, the problems evidenced at the design stage increase the risks of failing to achieve the intended objectives.

### **4.7 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The **enabling conditions** for good aid management include three aspects of governance (priority-setting, Board representation, and definition of accountabilities), the agency's financing model, its operational philosophy, and three aspects of its management (support; quality assurance, and staff qualifications). UNICEF meets two governance enabling conditions: priority-setting and Board representation. It partially meets the conditions for financing, operational philosophy, a third aspect of governance (definition of accountabilities), and two aspects of management (support and staff qualifications). It does not meet the quality assurance condition.

GPE meets the financing model condition, two governance conditions (priority setting and Board

representation), and two management conditions (support and staff qualifications). It only partially meets three other conditions: a governance condition (definition of accountabilities), the operational philosophy condition, and a management condition (quality assurance).

Most enabling conditions affect the aid delivery outcomes via their effects on the **quality of the project cycle**. These dimensions of the cycle were rated for GPE: ESP appraisal (development partners within the LEG), quality of the GPE program design, assurance of design quality (External Quality Reviews), quality of implementation, two aspects of the quality of supervision (supervisor's proactivity and supervisor's M&E of outputs & outcomes), and the quality of the end-of-project evaluation.

GPE programs were weakest on the quality of the ESP design, the development partners' appraisal of the ESP, and the quality of the program design. Because GPE-funded operations are expected to be closely aligned with the country ESP, problems with program designs partly stemmed from problems with the ESPs on

which they were based. When conducted, the External Quality Reviews were of high quality. Given the scope and complexity of most GPE programs, the ratings for Government's implementation of the programs are higher than might have been expected. The quality of supervision was high, evidencing significant proactivity. Only half of the projects had closed, but the quality of the evaluations for those that had closed was good.

During the evaluation period of 2009-2013 UNICEF's project designs and supervision reporting (although not necessarily supervision itself) were generally unsatisfactory. In most cases UNICEF had only sketchy or limited design of its basic education initiatives. Its results frameworks for basic education initiatives were often fragmented between the upstream documents. It was usually not possible to piece together a credible causal path from activities to outputs to outcomes and development objectives. Sometimes baseline data would be available; sometimes, not. Targets were often specified, but often seemed unrealistic and implausible, especially given the absence

of details about how UNICEF planned to implement its activities and against what timeline. There were no documented quality reviews of its designs.

Supervision reporting – although not necessarily supervision – was weak. UNICEF issued annual reports against its Country Program Action Plan, and some of these were better than others. However, even the better ones did not necessarily track outputs and outcomes or use the same outcomes across time. Weaker annual reports had virtually no analysis.

The three **outcomes sought for good aid management are**: aid better aligned with donor and country priorities (relevance); aid that minimizes the waste of resources (efficiency), and aid more likely to achieve intended outcomes (effectiveness). UNICEF and GPE both achieve *relevant aid* that is aligned with donor and country priorities.

Both partially achieve efficient aid. There is a broad consensus that UNICEF does some things well with very few resources. However, perhaps

because of resource constraints, it does not always complete activities. Weak designs, results frameworks, and M&E mean that often UNICEF does not know when activities are off track and thus cannot deal proactively with failing components or activities. Factors such as these degrade the efficiency of its aid delivery.

GPE achieves powerful efficiencies with its model of donor harmonization of funding and technical support around a country education sector plan. However, in this sample of GPE countries, less than 50 percent of the ESPs are rated as being satisfactory or moderately satisfactory. Since a GPE-funded operation is expected to be aligned with the ESP, problems at the ESP stage radiate outward to the operation itself. And in fact less than half of the programs had satisfactory or moderately satisfactory designs. Flaws at the design stage increase supervision costs downstream and degrade efficiency.

In terms of aid effectiveness, the point is not whether GPE or UNICEF achieved the outcomes sought in the programs for which they were responsible. Aid can be well managed and,

for any number of reasons, still fail to achieve the intended development objectives. The question is whether these two agencies managed aid delivery in ways known to enhance the chances of achieving the objectives sought in their operations.

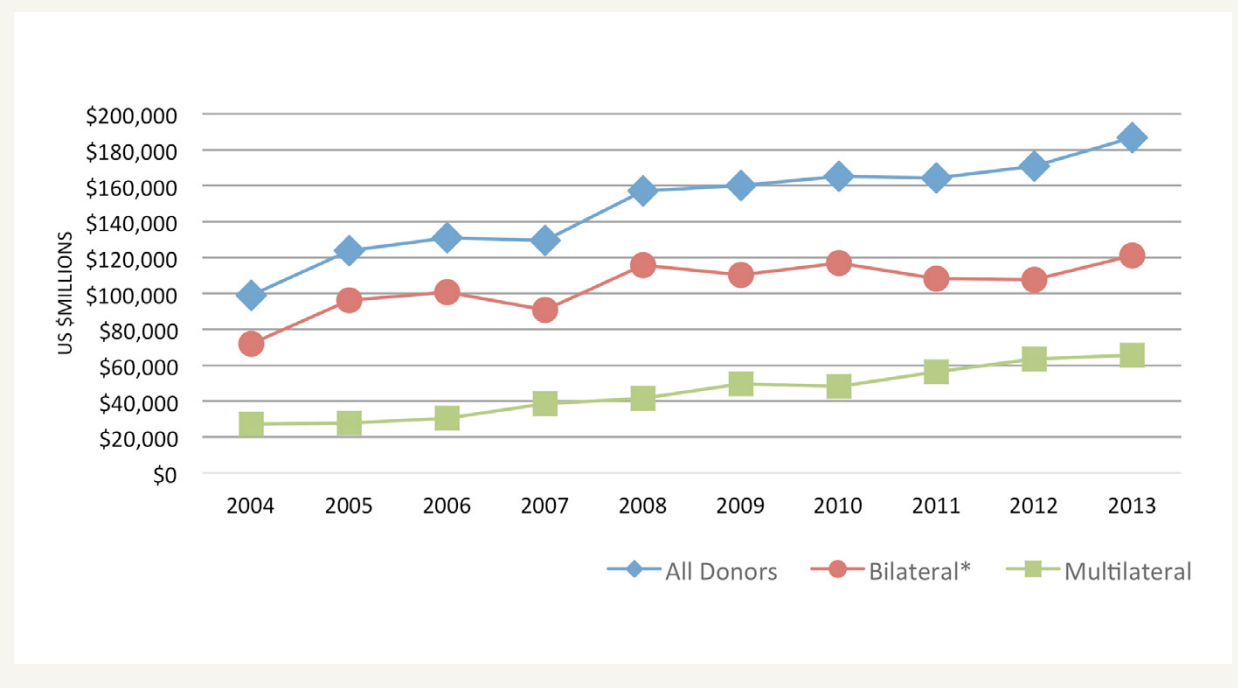
UNICEF does not manage its downstream aid in ways known to increase the chances of achieving the intended outcomes. Components are not thoroughly designed; outcomes are often not measured; and what is measured is often not consistently measured across the lifetime of the activity. GPE does a better, but still a flawed, job. The quality of supervision is strong, and the quality of implementation is respectable, given the complexity of GPE programs. However, the problems evidenced at the design stage increase the risks of failing to achieve the intended objectives.

## 5. Financial assessment

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The following financial assessment presents a review of the Characteristics and Trends in ODA Funding to Education, provides an overview of the Global Partnership for Education and UNICEF, and presents some Conclusions and Recommendations based on the data contained in the assessment. The initial section in the financial assessment presents and compares the characteristics of and trends in Norwegian funding to education with the overall funding provided by official development assistance (ODA) over the period of 2004-2013. The presentation/analysis of the ODA funding also includes the funding provided to education, and in particular to basic education, over this same period. The data for both the Government of Norway and for the ODA is presented in current (nominal) amounts. The decision to use nominal versus current amounts was made to be consistent with the data sources (OECD-DAC and Norwegian Aid Statistics). In addition, to be consistent with these sources of data, the ODA data is presented in US dollars and the Norwegian contributions are presented separately and in Norwegian Kroner.

**FIGURE 8:** OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR ALL SECTORS 2004-2013 (US \$ MILLIONS)



Source: OECD-DAC Database

The other sections in the chapter present an overview of the characteristics and trends in the contributions of funds to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and for the basic education and gender equality (BEGE) focus area for

UNICEF. This presentation also examines the trends in the allocation of funds made by these entities to the partner countries, and discusses the procedures used to make these allocations and any resulting bottlenecks in the disburse-

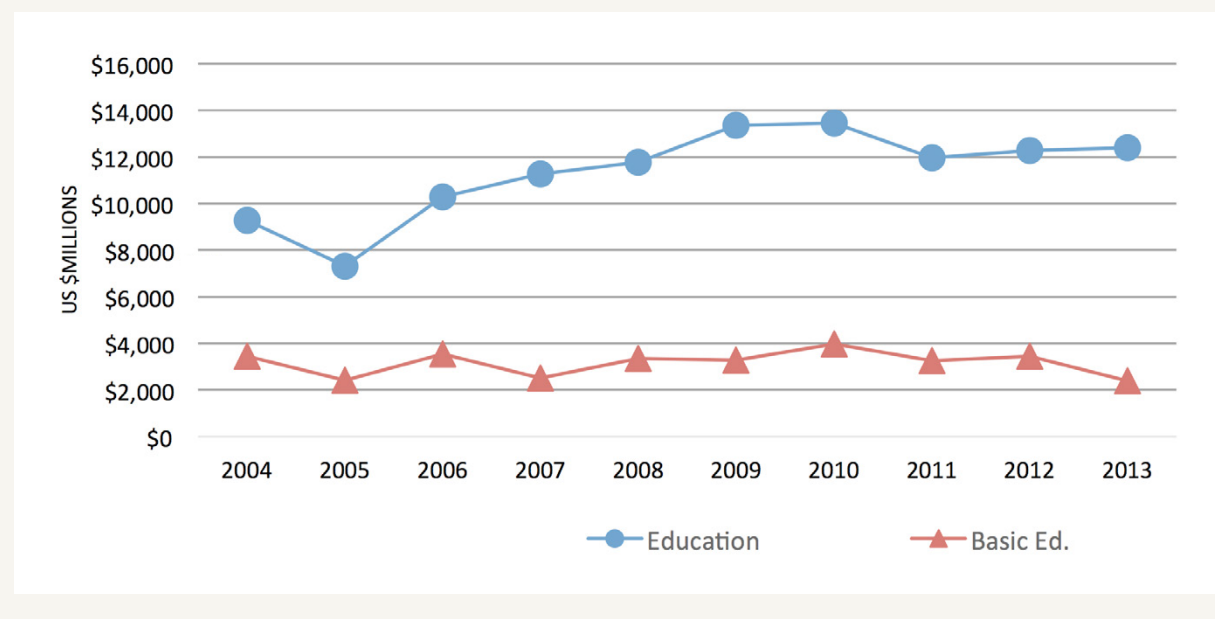
ment process. Finally, the chapter presents some conclusions and recommendations to include the importance of increasing the level of domestic resources for the education sector.

## 5.2 CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS IN ODA FUNDING TO EDUCATION

### Official Development Assistance

A review of the total ODA funding for all sectors for the period 2004-2013 shows an increasing level of support being provided by bilateral and multilateral donors. As Figure 8 indicates, over this period, the total level of ODA support increased by almost 90 percent to more than US\$186 billion. During this period, the support from the various bilateral donors increased by almost 70 percent from \$71 billion in 2004 to more than \$121 billion in 2013, but that support was somewhat variable as the funding declined in 4 of the 9 years. While support from bilateral and multilateral donors increased over this period, the more rapid increase of support from multilaterals (141%) resulted in the share of support being provided by multilaterals increasing from 27 percent in 2004 to more than 35 percent in 2013.

**FIGURE 9: AID TO EDUCATION, ALL DONORS 2004-2013 (US \$ MILLIONS)**



Source: OECD-DAC Database

### Financing of Education

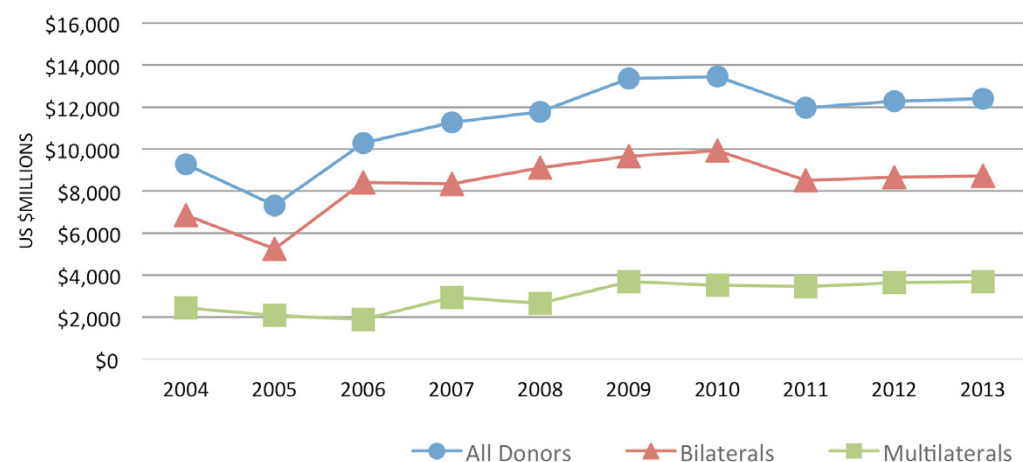
Despite the strong support provided by the donor community for all sectors as demonstrated in Figure 1, the financial support to education increased at a slower rate than the total ODA, and the financial support provided to basic education over this period actually declined.

As Figure 9 indicates, over the period of 2004-2013, the level of funding provided by all donors to the education sector increased by approximately 33 percent. While this increase is significant, it is below the increase in the total volume of ODA funding of almost 90 percent, and the level of support being provided to the

education sector in 2013 remains below the support provided in 2009.

While funding for education was increasing by about 33 percent, the support to basic education declined by 31 percent. As Figure 9 illustrates the support to basic education has tended to be virtually flat over this period with levels of support being provided from 2008 to 2012 being comparable to that provided in 2004, followed by years of low levels of support as in 2005, 2007 and 2013. So, while it may not be a fair to conclude that the support for this sub-sector has declined over this period, it is fair to conclude that the support from all donors has not increased from its 2004 level. While the level of financial support provided to education and basic education in particular decreased from 2009/2010 levels, the support to other social sectors such as health and water supply and sanitation increased during this period. It is beyond the scope of this consultancy to determine the reason for the declining level of support for the education sector, however, it is imperative for the donor community and the sector to develop a good understanding of the reasons behind this trend so that it can be reversed.

**FIGURE 10: AID TO EDUCATION BY TYPE, ALL DONORS 2004-2013 (US \$ MILLIONS)**



Source: OECD-DAC Database

A closer examination of the support being provided to the education sector indicates (Figure 10) that while the total levels increased by approximately 33 percent, support from the multilateral donors is growing more rapidly than that of bilateral donors. The large majority of support to the education sector continues to

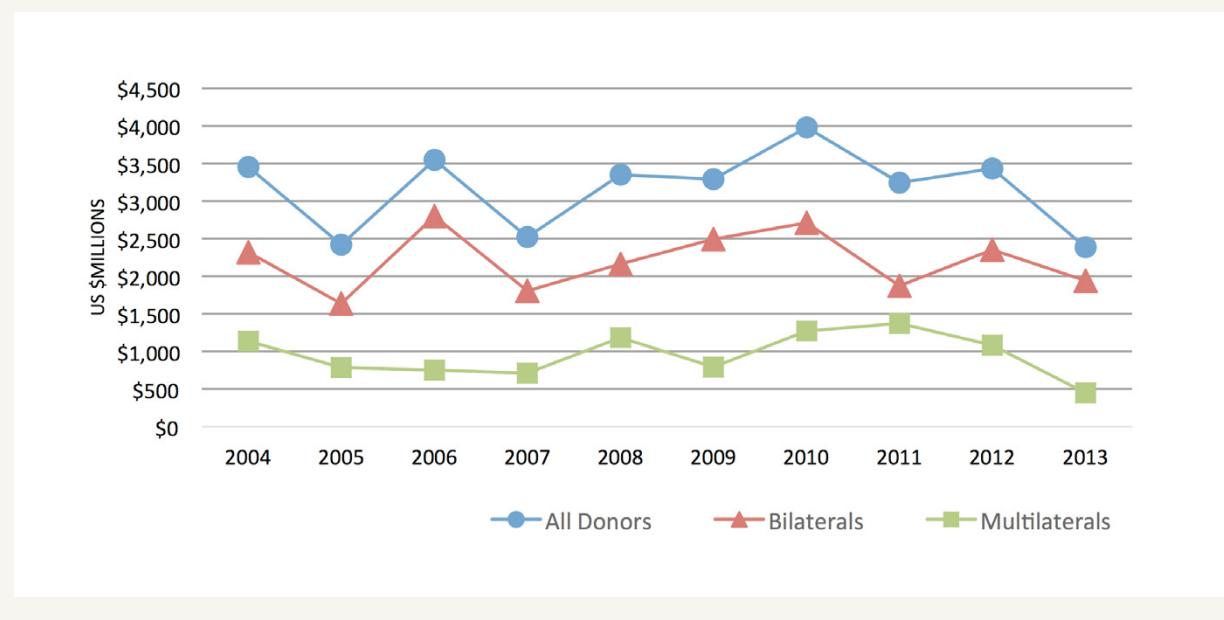
be provided by bilateral donors, and the support provided by this group increased by about 30 percent over the period under examination. However, the support being provided by the multilateral donors increased at a more rapid rate (50%) and they now provide about 30 percent of the financial support to the sector.

The support to basic education has not only lagged significantly behind the increases in the total levels of ODA funding of almost 90 percent and the increases in education of 33 percent, but it has at best remained generally constant over this period – if the sharp decreases in 2013 are ignored. As Figure 11 indicates, support from both bilateral and multilateral donors generally declined from 2004 levels through 2007 with the multilateral support decreasing most dramatically. From 2008, funding levels for the multilateral and bilateral donors increased through 2012 by about 60 percent and 18 percent respectively before declining sharply in 2013. There is no clear explanation for the decline in 2013.

The primary contributors to basic education over this period have generally consisted of the same donors. In 2013, as for many of the other years in this period, the five largest contributors to basic education (in USD) were:

- United States of America – 781 million
- International Development Association – 278 million
- Norway – 179 million

**FIGURE 11: AID TO BASIC EDUCATION, ALL DONORS 2004-2013 (US \$ MILLIONS)**



Source: OECD-DAC Database

- Germany – 153 million
- United Kingdom – 131 million

Sources: OECD-DAC database

### Norway's Contributions to Education

As indicated by Figure 12, the level of ODA funding provided by the Government of Norway

over the period of 2004 – 2013 increased by 31 percent, in line with the 30 percent increase presented in Figure 3 for all bilateral donors. However, the support provided by Norway for basic education grew by approximately 41 percent over this period while the trend presented in Figure 11 indicated that the overall level of



bilateral support to basic education declined by about 16 percent. Over this period, Norway's support to basic education as a share of the total education program increased from 60 percent in 2004 to 65 percent in 2013. Over this same period, Norway's support to secondary and post-secondary education and to an unspecified level of education totaling approximately 511 million kroner in 2004 increased only marginally to 589 million kroner in 2013.

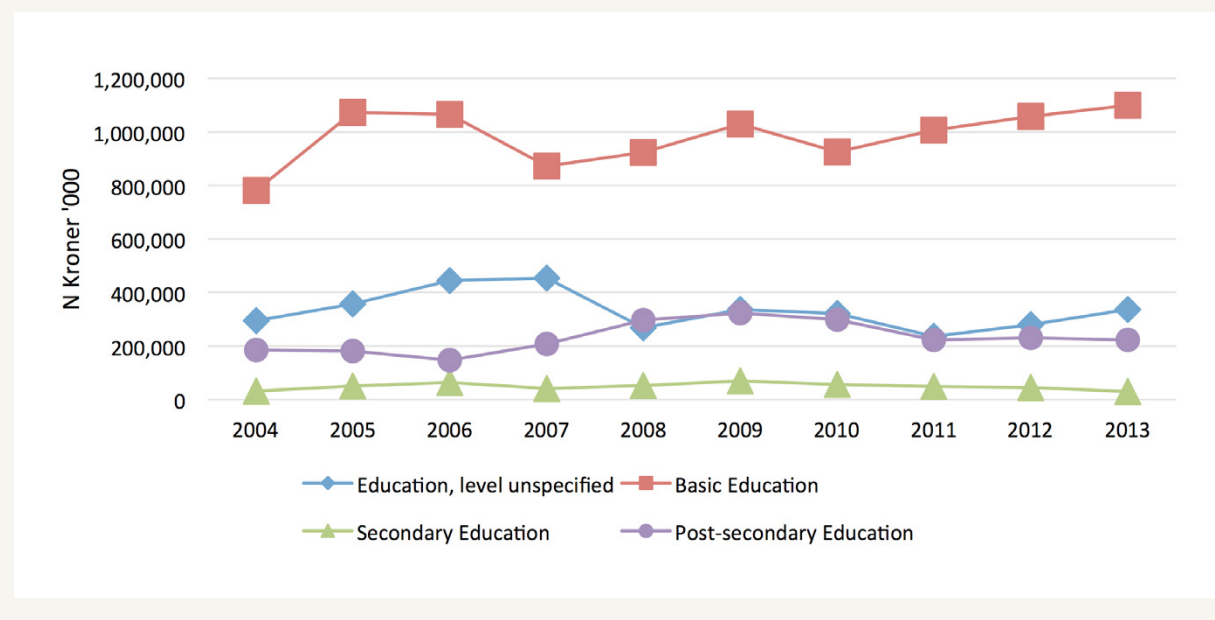
In addition to the bilateral support provided to basic education, Norway is the largest resource partner to UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality focus area and the fifth largest contributor to GPE since the inception of the GPE program in 2002. A more complete review of these programs and the support provided by Norway is presented in the Financial Assessments of UNICEF and GPE appearing in the following sections of this chapter.

### 5.3 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION

#### Introduction

The Global Partnership for Education was established in 2002 as the Education for All

**FIGURE 12:** DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FROM NORWAY TO EDUCATION (N KRONER '000)



Source: Norwegian Aid Statistics, MFA Grants Portal

Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI). In 2010, the Board commissioned an external mid-term evaluation of EFA-FTI. The evaluation exposed a number of major problems and recommended a major re-design of the partnership away from its focus on the “finance gap model” and to build on its strengths and leverage greater ambition.

Since the mid-term evaluation, the reform program of the GPE can be divided into three phases. In Phase I (2009 to 2011), the mid-term evaluation proved pivotal in catalyzing major reforms leading to a constituency based Board, re-branding of the partnership, establishment of a new Needs and Performance Frame-

work and country allocation formula, and culminating in a replenishment event in Copenhagen in 2011. Phase II (2012 to 2013) built on previous reforms with the creation of a CEO and CTO position, modest expansion of the Secretariat, creation of the monitoring and evaluation team, and development of a new Strategic Plan. In Phase III (2014 – ), further reforms of the Global Partnership are expected to support the implementation of the new results based GPE Funding Model.<sup>54</sup>

### Flow of Funds

**Introduction.** “By 2013, 28 fragile and conflict affected countries had joined the Global Partnership, representing almost half of the 59 GPE developing-country partners.”<sup>55</sup> Further, “since its launch in 2002, the Global Partnership has approved 203 grants, at a cumulative value of \$3.25 billion. As of the end of August 2013, cumulative GPE grant disbursements were

<sup>54</sup> Recommendations for the Evaluation of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative and Actions Taken in Response, GPE

<sup>55</sup> Results for Learning Report, p.xviii

**TABLE 9:** GPE GRANTS BY TYPE AND AMOUNT AS OF AUGUST 2013

Type	Number	Amount (US\$ millions)	Disbursed (US\$ millions)
Education Program Development Fund (closed)	60	112.2	105.4
Civil Society Education Fund I (closed)	1	17.6	17.6
Grant for global and regional activities	16	33.0	1.6
Civil Society Education Fund II	1	14.4	7.25
Education plan development grant	24	5.1	3.8
Program development grant	24	4.7	2.5
Program implementation grant (including the Catalytic Fund grant)	78	3,083.4	1,918.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>3,252.9</b>	<b>2,039.0</b>

Source: Results for Learning Report 2013

valued at \$2.04 billion.”<sup>56</sup> Table 9 above summarizes the grants approved as of August 2013 by type and amount.

<sup>56</sup> Results for Learning, p. 92

**Allocations to Partner Countries.** One of the recommendations from the mid-term evaluation of FTI (GPE) was “adopting key measures aimed at ensuring greater transparency with clearer eligibility and allocation criteria; allocation decisions being made by an independent panel rather than a donor committee; a defined

procedure of funding rounds as well as advance indications of funding amounts potentially available; partner countries not being excluded from the governance of the funds; transparent feedback on all country applications, including those that are rejected; and a transparent procedure to appeal decisions.”<sup>57</sup>

To address this recommendation, the Needs and Performance Framework (NPF) was established. The NPF assessed countries in terms of their need (education need, poverty, population) and performance (commitment of national government to supporting education through national budget, use of previous grants). The NPF represents an improvement over the previous system whereby the Catalytic Fund Committee decided which countries to support and the amount of funding to be provided.

The NPF represented a significant improvement in the level of transparency of the decision making process regarding the allocation of

grants to be made by the GPE. However, the Board continued to modify the NPF to make it even more effective. In 2011 the Board of Directors agreed that the NPF should be revised to also factor in increased funding for fragile states, countries with larger populations of out-of-school children and those with greater gender disparities in education. The NPF is formula driven and is typically used for recurrent costs rather than capital. The use of a formula creates predictability and increases transparency, reduces transaction costs, and encourages local-level decision making. The need and performance factors considered in the formula include:

Need Factors:

- High population of school-age children
- Low primary completion
- Fragility
- Low income population
- Low gender equality
- Low level of support from other donors

Performance factors:

- Making own effort to finance education (measured as a % of GDP)
- High performance on governance
- Fast progress on completion

The Board recently decided to replace the Needs and Performance Framework by a new funding model which will have a variable element in the allocation formula which will provide more emphasis on performance. This new funding model will be in place in 2015.

**Program Implementation Grants.** As of July 2013, GPE had approved 78 program implementation grants for 51 countries. These grants are used to finance three-year programs that directly advance the implementation of endorsed education sector plans. These implementation grants can reach a maximum of US\$100 million and they represent about 95 percent of all approved GPE funding.<sup>58</sup> The design of the

<sup>57</sup> Recommendations for the Evaluation of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative and Actions Taken in Response, GPE

<sup>58</sup> Results for Learning Report, p.93 and 96

implementation grant is the responsibility of the selected supervising and managing entities and that design can take one of four forms such as:

- General budget support – involves the distribution of the funds through the government’s national treasury;
- Sector budget support – involves the channeling of funds into the government’s treasury account dedicated to the education sector;
- Pooled fund support – may be provided through a range of options depending on the country-specific funding arrangements; and
- Project funding support – may be delivered partly or entirely through country-systems or channeled through a parallel structure.

As Table 10 indicates, project funding has been the default approach by the supervising and managing entities for the delivery of GPE implementation grants. GPE indicates that it would prefer to make more use of procedures which align their funds with country systems through the use of budget

**TABLE 10: SUMMARY STATISTICS ON PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS, AS OF AUGUST 2013**

Design of Grant	Number	%	Amount (US\$000)	%
General budget support	1	1	102.0	3
Sector budget support	2	3	140.2	5
Pooled funds	14	18	993.4	32
Project funds	61	78	1847.8	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,083.4</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Results for Learning Report 2013, p. 97

support procedures to promote country ownership, and capacity building. However, there is no indication that recent grant applications are moving toward more aligned modalities.

Figure 13 presents the disbursements made by GPE to its partner countries from its inception through 2013. The figure shows a rapid and steady increase in annual disbursements starting in 2004 of approximately \$15 million and peaking in 2011 with disbursements in excess of \$385 million and then declining slightly in 2012 and 2013. The decline in disbursements in 2012 and 2013 is partially due to a hiatus in 2011 in grant applications because of the replenishment of the

Global Partnership Fund. Over this period, GPE has approved grants in excess of \$3.9 billion with disbursements in excess of US\$2.3 billion.

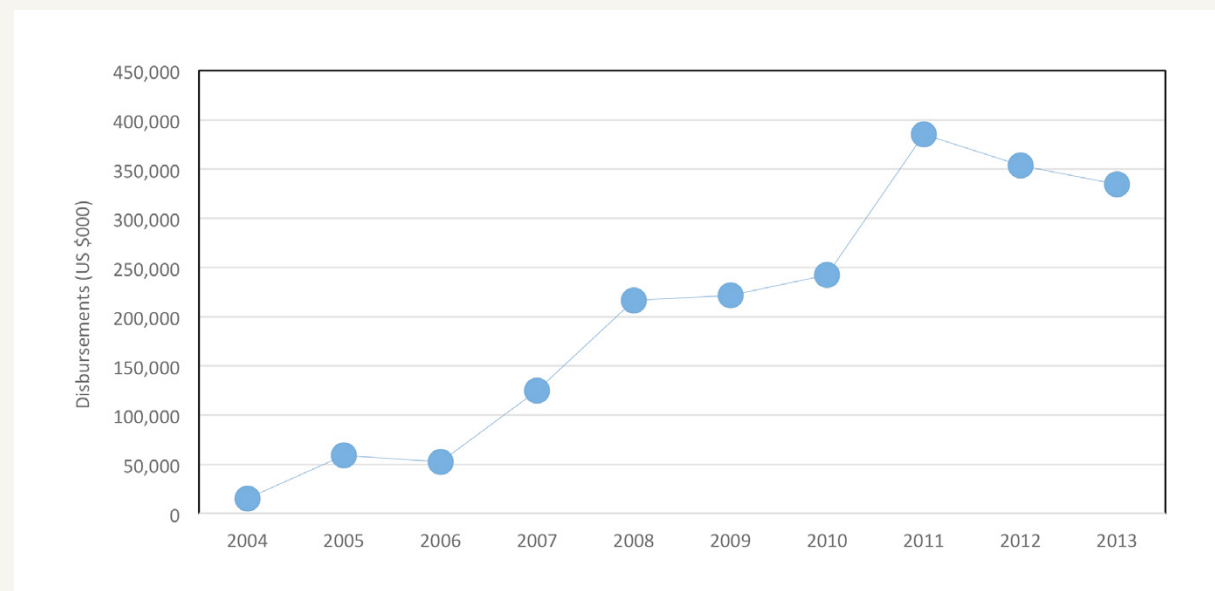
The disbursements to partner countries from 2002-2013, as indicated in Annex 6, Table A, have totaled more than \$2 billion against approved programs of more than \$3.9 billion. Further, about 65 percent of the approved grants are for Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

**Disbursement procedures.** The procedures used to transfer the funds from the Trustee, on behalf of the GPE are set forth in the Financial Procedures Agreement negotiated for each grant.

The procedures used are the standard procedures used by the World Bank for all of its loans and grants and it requires the submission of a specified World Bank cash transfer request form. A sample of this form is included in the Financial Procedures Agreement and explained to the country officials during negotiations. The procedures used are clear and relatively easy to use, and support in the use of this form and the disbursements procedures in general are available through the supervising or managing entity.

The general principle behind the disbursements procedures is to advance funds to the implementing entity to ensure that it has sufficient funds to proceed with the timely implementation of the project. The advance and the need for additional cash transfers are reconciled through the cash transfer request form. The cash transfer request form indicates the cumulative receipts and cumulative disbursements for the project and the resulting net cash position. The transfer request form then calculates the amount of the cash to be requested, for the next six months, by combining the estimated disbursements for the next six months with the project's net cash position.

**FIGURE 13:** TOTAL GPE DISBURSEMENTS TO PARTNER COUNTRIES BY PERIOD (US \$000)



Source: Results for Learning Report

**Bottlenecks and/or issues in the transfer of funds.** Once a project has been approved by the GPE Financial Advisory Committee and the Board of Directors during their semi-annual meetings, the funding is made available to the partner countries. The GPE Secretariat has been able to reduce the amount of time for GPE supported

programs to reach the approval stage to 7 months, but since the Financial Advisory Committee and the Board of Directors meet semi-annually, it will be difficult to reduce the time for approval much further. The area where improvements can be realized is in the area of the timing of the project launch and project implementation.

Once a project has been approved, the timing of the launch and the implementation of the activities supported by the grant depends on the supervising or managing entity and the partner country. For those projects supervised by the World Bank, it takes on average 12 months before the first disbursement occurs after GPE makes the funding available. While this represents a significant improvement over the 16 months required for disbursements to begin during the period of 2007-2009, the Secretariat has set a target of no more than 3 months between GPE approval and the launch of implementation.<sup>59</sup>

UNICEF is the supervising entity (SE) in only one country (Afghanistan) and managing entity (ME) in nine. UNICEF is, however, engaged as the coordinating agency in 39 of the 59 GPE countries, leading or coordinating the development partner mechanism at the country level (e.g. LEG), supporting GPE fund applications, as well as supporting implementation, monitoring and reporting.

<sup>59</sup> Results for Learning Report, pp. 97-102

In those cases where UNICEF takes on the ME role for the GPE, funding is managed by UNICEF as part of its regular engagement with country governments through its Country Programme of Cooperation. Under this modality, UNICEF follows the same processes and accountability as all other resources received for the country program, including program and financial oversight and support. Under the ME modality, UNICEF usually requests funds from the GPE trustee immediately after the GPE Board approves the grant. Cash transfer requests are often times requested in tranches to better coincide with implementation timing and funding needs at the country level, avoiding large cash balances. To avoid any delays, funds are made available to UNICEF country offices by the UNICEF's finance department immediately when cash transfer requests are issued, not requiring the actual receipt of funds in UNICEF's account from the trustee. UNICEF's country offices have specific implementation plans for the GPE funds, but the actual utilization depends on the country program implementation context. When UNICEF is the SE, it does not have a financial management role. That function becomes the

responsibility of the government using its normal procedures.

Program performance and fund utilization is reported back to the GPE Secretariat on a regular basis in line with reporting requirements of the individual grant (usually through annual implementation reports), as well as through annual certified financial statements for each grant, issued by UNICEF's Comptroller within six months after the end of UNICEF's fiscal year. In addition, UNICEF headquarters provides quarterly funds utilization updates for each of the GPE grants to the GPE Secretariat. Additionally, UNICEF has provided interim ad-hoc updates to the GPE Secretariat and Board on multiple occasions and whenever specifically requested. In addition, UNICEF country offices usually have good working relations with GPE country focal points, routinely exchanging information on grant implementation. In contrast to the World Bank, where the GPE has direct access to financial systems due to the GPE being hosted by the World Bank, such an arrangement is so far not possible with UNICEF.

Despite the improvements in the internal GPE grant approval processes and the improvements cited regarding reducing the amount of time between grant approval and the project launch, an average of 17 months elapses between the start of the development of a GPE program and the launch of its implementation. However, a closer examination of this 17 month period indicates that the GPE procedures only account for about 3 or 4 months of that time. The remaining time, about 13 months, is associated with the procedures of the supervising or managing entity and the partner country. Therefore, while there are still areas where GPE can become more efficient and further reduce the bottlenecks that exist in the development and approval of its implementation grants, the majority of the opportunities to reduce the amount of time to develop and launch a GPE grant lies with the partner countries and the supervising entities and the processes that they use.

**Contributions.** Since it was established in 2002, donors have pledged \$3.76 billion to GPE (Annex 6, Table B) including pledges of

about \$1.5 billion as part of the second replenishment in November 2011. In its second replenishment campaign launched in June 2014, GPE set a target of \$3.5 billion, and, as indicated in Annex 6, Table C pledges totaling \$2.2 billion have already been received. The pledges to the recent replenishment campaign are positive and would appear to offset a disappointing level of contributions in 2013 and 2014.

**Norwegian contributions.** Norway ranks as the fifth largest donor to GPE since its establishment with almost \$270 million in contributions, and Norway is also the fourth largest donor in regards to pledges received for the most recent replenishment.

**Financial management systems.** As with other trust funds under the control of the World Bank, the GPE funds are subject to the World Bank's financial accountability requirements and use its strong system of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention. The GPE funds are audited annually by an independent external auditor, and the GPE audited financial

statements are presented in the World Bank annual financial report.

Generally, donors transfer their contributions in three annual tranches to a central GPE account under the control of a Trustee in the World Bank. Once the funds are received, they are pooled with the funds from other donors for GPE. Allocations are then made from this pooled GPE account for GPE expenses, supervision costs, development program costs, and of course the allocations made to the partner countries to support their education programs.

#### **Additionality**

Given UNESCO's estimate of \$26 billion as the annual world-wide global financing gap for education,<sup>60</sup> GPE's yearly disbursements are only a fraction of the total need. Further, it is not clear that GPE's cumulative disbursements of approximately US\$3.5 billion have resulted in additional ODA resources being provided to the education sector. However, if the concept of

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60 Is the Global Partnership for Education Ready for Takeoff, Brookings. June 23, 2014, p. 2

additionality is defined more broadly to include support to countries in strengthening their education sector, it becomes more apparent that GPE has been a source of additionality to the sector. This broader definition of additionality would also include the increase in domestic resources provided to the sector in the GPE partner countries (see the following discussion on Domestic Resources)

GPE's importance to the education sector is increasing. Not only is it the only entity that focuses exclusively on education in developing countries, in 2011 it was the fifth largest donor to basic education in the world.<sup>61</sup> GPE is an inclusive global forum that plays an important role in keeping education on the international agenda. GPE uses its increasingly prominent role to promote donor coordination and harmonization. GPE's Board and committees bring together major education donors, partners and stakeholders including United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Bank and major

61 Financing for Global Education, p. 15

civil society organizations to engage in significant global education policy dialogue.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to its role in donor harmonization, GPE promotes the concept of cost effectiveness and the senior management and the Board are attempting to focus more on the concept of value for money. This is evidenced by the inclusion of two related key guiding principles in its Charter: (i) lower transaction costs and development results, and (ii) value for money. Further, GPE does not create parallel structures as it uses existing government systems and draws on donor partner resources at the country-level through the method of supervising entities of grants and coordinating agencies of programs.

The GPE is seeking to address one of the findings from the 2009 evaluation report that found that some of the procedures in the Catalytic Fund resulted in high transaction costs through the use of clearer procedures and strengthening the role

62 Australian Multilateral Assessment of the Global Partnership for Education, March 2012, p. 7

of its in-country local education groups to monitor progress at country-level. The efforts to increase the efficiency of GPE and increase its value for money can be seen in the significant increase in the level of disbursements after 2007 and the reduction in the amount of time to prepare between the decision to prepare a GPE funded implementation grant and the launch of the program.<sup>63</sup>

**Domestic Resources:** A final item to consider in reviewing the additionality provided by GPE is the emphasis that GPE places on increasing domestic resources for education. GPE challenges and supports partners to think about value for money and affordability over the long term as part of proposal development and approval processes, and the GPE Appraisal Guidelines include guidance on value for money and affordability. Data indicate that in developing countries the share of public spending on education increased from 16 percent in 2000 to 18 percent in 2011 and represented 4.8

63 Australian Multilateral Assessment of the Global Partnership for Education, March 2012, p. 13



percent of GDP in 2011 compared to 3.9 percent in 2000. In addition, data indicates that domestic spending on education, as a share of GDP, in partner countries increased on average by 10 percent after joining the partnership.<sup>64</sup> While the data is not sufficient to establish attribution to the GPE for the positive trends in the education sector in GPE partner countries, it is reasonable to assume that GPE's policies and procedures were instrumental in achieving some of these positive results.

Since domestic spending provides the most important contribution to education,<sup>65</sup> it is important to examine the funding provided from domestic sources as a means to determine a government's commitment to the sector. While no two countries are the same, it is possible to estimate a government's commitment to education and the likelihood that they would be able to further increase the funding to the sector by attracting donor financing by evaluating the share of public expenditures that are allocated and expended on education.

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64 Results for Learning, p. xiv

65 Results for Learning Report 2014/15, Global Partnership for Education, p.46.

In the developing countries with available data, education's share of public expenditures increased from 16.7 percent in 2008 to 17.3 percent in 2012. For fragile and conflict affected countries, spending on education as a share of public expenditures increased more slowly from 16.4 percent in 2008 to 16.7 percent in 2012. On average, public expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP in developing countries increased from 4.4 percent in 2008 to 4.9 percent in 2012. While there are large variations among countries, the share of education spending, with the percentage of GDP ranging from about 3 percent to 9.5 percent.<sup>66</sup>

## 5.4 UNICEF

### Introduction

UNICEF is a highly decentralized organization with offices in 155 countries. Country offices are largely autonomous and responsible for the preparation of the five-year country programs on a cycle that is unique to each country. The Country Program Document (CPD) is developed in response to the

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66 IBID, pp 47-49

country's needs and prepared in cooperation with the government and in coordination with other UN agencies. The CPD is developed with support from the regional offices and from HQ and approved by the Regional Directors before presentation to the Executive Board. The CPD indicates the support that will be provided by UNICEF to address each of the six focus areas – including Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE).

The funding for the activities included in the various CPDs comes entirely from voluntary contributions – public and private. This income is further divided between “regular” and “other resources.” Regular, or core resources, are unrestricted in their use and are used to fund country programs as well as program support, management and administrative expenses approved by the UNICEF Executive Board. Regular resources are the foundation upon which all country programs are developed as they are predictable and support both development and management activities. In addition, since regular resources are not earmarked for specific programs, they provide management with the flexibility to respond quickly to unplanned activities.

Other resources are restricted to specific board-approved purposes. This source of income is further sub-divided into “other resources regular” and “other resources emergency.” Other resources are also referred to as “thematic funding” because they are limited to specific programmatic themes. Thematic funds are pooled (one pool per focus area).

Thematic funding was created after the adoption of UNICEF’s first Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2001 – 2005 as an alternative opportunity for donors to support the goals and objectives of the MTSP and to allow for longer-term planning and sustainability of programs. Thematic contributions are soft – earmarked pooled funds to support the achievement of results in one of the Focus Area in UNICEF’s Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) listed below:

- Focus Area 1: Young Child Survival and Development
- Focus Area 2: Basic Education and Gender Equality

- Focus Area 3: HIV/AIDs and Children
- Focus Area 4: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse
- Focus Area 5: Policy Advocacy and Partnerships for Children’s Rights
- Humanitarian Response

While regular resources continue to be UNICEF’s preferred type of funding, global thematic contributions are the next best option, as they have fewer restrictions on their use than traditional other resources. In addition to the global level, thematic contributions can also be provided at the regional or country levels.

Thematic contributions for the MTSP Focus Areas are received against programs approved by the Executive Board. No specific proposals are required from the country and/or regional offices for allocations from the global thematic funds. These funds are allocated by UNICEF according to a set of criteria to support results related to the respective MTSP focus areas.

Global Thematic funds are also made available up to certain limits to regional offices and headquarters for cross-cutting work, advocacy and program development in support of country allocations.

### **Flow of Funds**

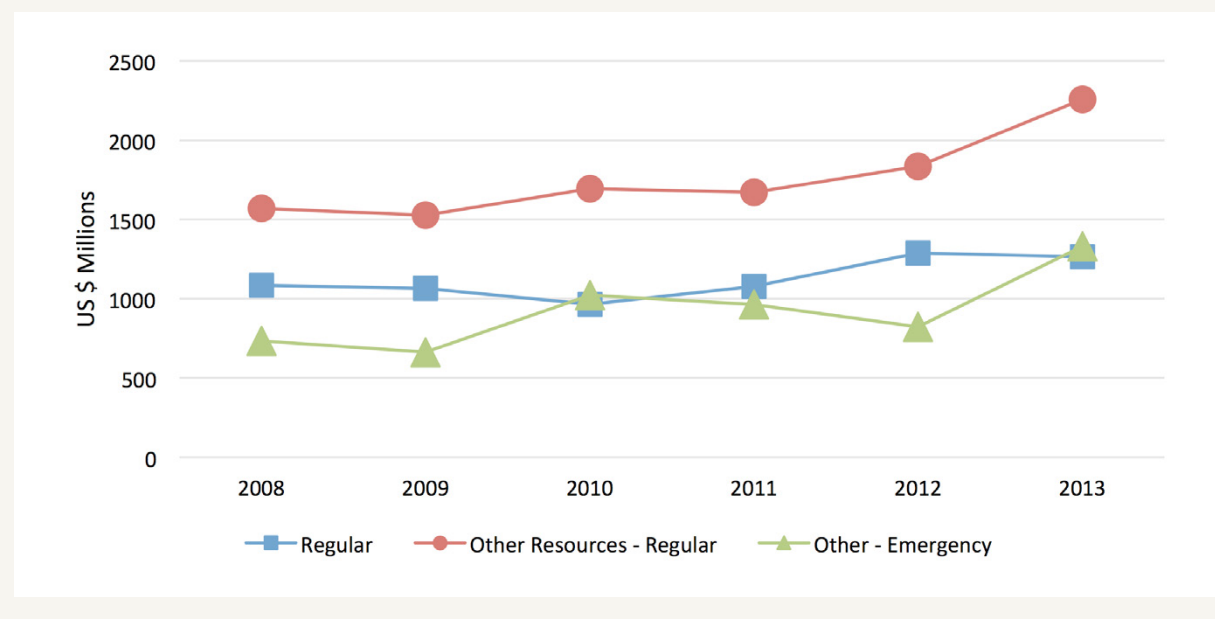
**Revenues.** As Figure 14 indicates, UNICEF’s total revenue in 2013 was about \$4.9 billion representing an increase of about 23 percent over 2012 levels and about a 43 percent increase from 2008 levels. Over this period, the level of regular resources has increased by about 17 percent, and while the 2013 level is slightly less than 2012 it has shown steady improvement after declines from 2008-2010.

During this same period, the level of other resources, regular and emergency, has increased from about \$2.3 billion or about 68 percent of total revenue in 2008 to about \$3.6 billion or about 74 percent in 2013. While the level of funding provided under other emergency has doubled from 2008-13 the level is variable and thus difficult to predict. The thematic funding

provided as regular other has increased steadily from \$1.6 billion in 2008 to \$2.3 billion or 46 percent in 2013. As indicated earlier, while regular resources are the preferred source of funding UNICEF's activities, the steady and increasing level of thematic funding provided as regular other plays an increasingly important role in allowing UNICEF to achieve its outputs/outcomes in its key focus areas such as Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE).

**Norwegian funding:** Recently, the majority of Norwegian support to UNICEF has been in the form of thematic contributions in Focus Area 2 – BEGE. In 2013, Norway contributed about \$241 million to UNICEF of which about 61 percent or \$147 million, including about \$85 million in thematic contributions, were for BEGE. As Table 11 indicates, the level of thematic contributions to the six focus areas has fluctuated over the period primarily as a result of the contributions to humanitarian assistance which increased sharply in 2010 and 2011 and declined in sharply in 2009 and 2012. For the other areas, and BEGE in particular, the level of contributions have not changed greatly. Over this

**FIGURE 14:** UNICEF REVENUE 2008 – 2013 (US \$ MILLIONS)



Source: UNICEF

period, the contributions for BEGE increased steadily from \$122 million in 2008 to \$132 million in 2010 before declining to \$112 million in 2013. Norway's contribution to the BEGE thematic program increased from \$64 million in 2008 where it represented about 52 percent of the total contributions to \$85 million and

76 percent of the total thematic contributions in 2013. During the period 2008-2013, as Table 12 indicates Norway was the largest contributor to the BEGE thematic area (focus area 2), and the total contributions over this period of \$490,946,000 exceeded the second largest contributor, Spain, by more than 5 times.

**Expenditures.** The level of expenditures for the six focus areas has increased by almost 30 percent from \$2.8 billion in 2008 to more than \$3.6 billion in 2013 (Figure 15). Over that same period, the expenditures for BEGE have increased by about 19 percent from about \$600 million in 2008 to \$713 million in 2013. As Table 13 indicates, while the level of regular funding has increased over this period, the level of funding from other resources has increased by almost 40 percent and now represents about 63 percent of the total level of funding for the BEGE focus area. Within the expenditures for BEGE, the programs in sub-Saharan Africa received about 51 percent of the funding in 2013 up from about 39 percent in 2008.

**Allocation.** Regular funds are allocated to the various country programs based on decisions made by the Allocation Advisory Committee. The allocation formula used to calculate the amount available to each region is not public but is shared informally with the donors. Once the regional allocations have been approved by the Executive Board, the Regional Directors allocate the funds to the various countries using the allocation guide-

**TABLE 11: THEMATIC CONTRIBUTIONS (\$MILLIONS)**

Funding Type	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Young child survival and development	64	41	28	33	22	19
Basic education and gender equality	112	122	128	132	129	122
HIV/AIDs and children	10	11	7	53	51	36
Child protection	17	18	19	10	15	10
Policy advocacy	8	6	4	13	13	16
Humanitarian assistance	148	89	187	332	65	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>343</b>
Norway	85	91	92	81	78	64

Source: UNICEF

lines approved by the Executive Board which apply to all regions. Other resources (thematic funds) are allocated using both the signed agreement and the allocation procedures used for regular funds.

**Disbursement procedures.** When the decisions regarding the allocations to the regions and the countries have been finalized, all transfers are made using the internal budgeting system. In the

case of regular funds, the annual allocation for the 5-year country program is made available prior to the start of the fiscal year. For thematic funding, when the agreement has been signed with the donor, the funds are transferred to the countries using the same internal budget system.

The transfers from headquarters will appear at the country level as a commitment (availability

of funding) with allocations made against the specific line items or activities in the CPD. With these commitments, the country can then proceed to make disbursements for the agreed upon activities in the CPD. Since the CPD is developed based on the expected or estimated level of funding that will be made available to the country from both regular and thematic funds over the 5 year period, each transfer is applied to the CPD until the program is fully funded and the ceiling reached. However, if the funds available are not sufficient to fund the entire CPD, the implementation period of the CPD will either be reduced or some of the agreed upon activities will not be implemented.

**Reporting.** An important aspect of thematic funding and one which helps to reduce the administrative cost of using thematic funds is that thematic contributions to UNICEF to the same focus area are combined into one funding pool with the same duration of implementation. This significantly simplifies financial management and reporting for UNICEF offices. Since funds are pooled, UNICEF cannot track individual donor contributions. When making a thematic

**TABLE 12:** MAJOR RESOURCE PARTNERS TO BASIC EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY (\$000)

Resource Partner	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Norway	85,470	91,926	91,695	80,645	77,870	64,370
Spain		(291)		25,413	29,586	32,384
Sweden	1,400	9,371	11,721	10,143	11,094	15,332
Korean Committee	1,585	2,008	11,412	915	765	584
Brazil	2,842	3,445	3,086	2,793	2,623	3,012
Luxembourg	1,018	996	1,056	1,050	1,969	2,118
USA Fund	1,005	1,463	1,106	643	1,165	406

Source: UNICEF

contribution, the donors agree to accept one annual consolidated narrative and financial report that is the same for all donors. Due to the reduced administrative costs, thematic contributions are subject to a lower cost recovery rate of 5 percent (compared to the standard 7%).<sup>67</sup>

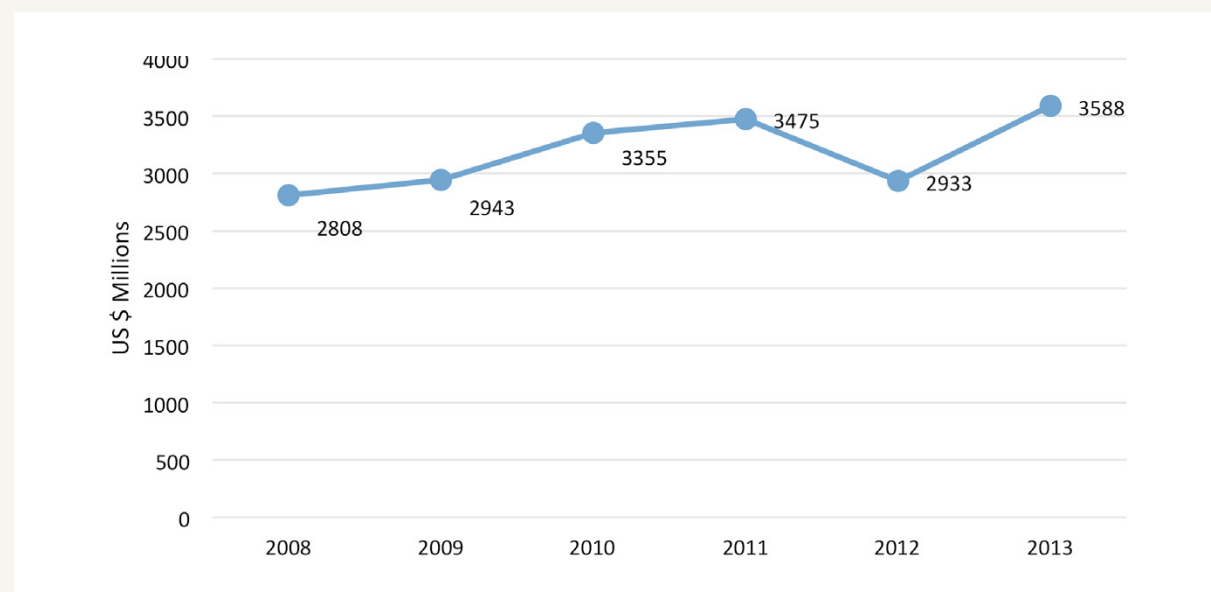
<sup>67</sup> Norwegian Funds through the Multilaterals to Education Development Trends 2001-2010, Stein Hansen, Nordic Consulting Group, May 2011, p.1-12

**Bottlenecks.** Since all transfers from Headquarters to the regions/countries are made using the internal budgetary system, there do not appear to be any bottlenecks which would delay the receipt of funds at the country level. The only issues which could be construed as a bottleneck and delay the implementation of the 5-year country program is if the actual level of funding is below the ceiling that was agreed to with the government, and/or the country office experiences country-specific implementation issues.

**Financial management controls.** A joint Nordic pilot study was made of the UNICEF financial management oversight system in November 2013. This pilot study emanated from an initiative of the Nordic network for internal audit and counter-fraud units and their concern that multilateral organizations frequently work in fragile situations and engage in high risk transactions such as cash transfers and procurement. It was decided to conduct an in-depth study of the oversight systems in relation to financial irregularities in a UN organization. UNICEF was selected because of the nature of its work, the amount of funding that it receives from the Nordic countries, and the assumption that most of the elements of a strong oversight system are already in place.

The study does not provide an overall assessment of UNICEF's financial management oversight system other than to say that the system is well developed but that improvements can be made. The study then proceeds to set forth eight recommendations addressing such issues as: (i) the development of a new policy prohibiting and fighting fraud and corruption, (ii) increasing the

**FIGURE 15: TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR ALL FOCUS AREAS (US \$ MILLIONS)**



Source: UNICEF

financial resources and staffing of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigation (OIAI), (iii) the use of a systemic competence-building program on how financial irregularities are prevented, detected and addressed, (iv) the use of a coherent risk management framework including financial irregularities, and (vi) member states

ensuring that oversight issues related to financial irregularities are adequately reflected in agreements with UNICEF and other multilateral organizations.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Report from the Nordic Pilot Study on UNICEF's Oversight System in Relation to Financial Irregularities, November 2013.

While the recommendations contained in the Nordic pilot study are relevant and prudent, there is nothing in the findings of the study to challenge the initial assessment that most of the elements of the UNICEF financial management oversight system are in place. In addition, since this study was conducted in December 2012, UNICEF has replaced its previous management information system with a more current system using an SAP platform designed to provide real-time reporting to enable management to monitor performance against agreed upon indicators.

### **Additionality**

As with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF's annual expenditures for basic education of approximately \$700 million are not sufficient to fill the gap of additional funding needed in the sector. Further, it is not clear that the annual expenditures for basic education by UNICEF have resulted in additional ODA resources being provided to the education sector. Again as with GPE a better way to evaluate the additionality provided by UNICEF is to look at the issue more broadly and give emphasis to the institutional and/or sector support provided by UNICEF.

**TABLE 13:** EXPENDITURES BY FUNDING TYPE FOR BEGE (\$MILLIONS)

Funding Type	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Regular	137	126	126	112	111	113
Other Resources – Regular	452	390	444		380	326
Other Resources – Emergency	124	89	142	584	138	159
<b>Total</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>598</b>

Source: UNICEF

The issue of additionality by UNICEF to the basic education sector stems largely from its presence on the ground in virtually every country in the world and its focus on activities defined by UNICEF as upstream. UNICEF contracted for a study to review the issue of its upstream activities in BEGE over the period of 2003-2012 and to draw lessons for its future activities. The study defined upstream activities as those intended to have a system-wide, sustainable effect on the national capacities of public sector in the basic education sector for fulfilling children's rights, directly or indirectly. The study also indicated that upstream work has always been a basic component of UNICEF's activities at global level. However, starting in 2006 these activities were articulated

for the first time as a key component of UNICEF's strategy where in addition to the four programmatic focus areas, a new cross-cutting theme of 'policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights' was introduced.

At the country level, upstream work includes activities such as:

- Advocacy to influence policies, legislation, and education sector guidelines;
- Technical assistance to shape policies, legislation, standards and curricula, as well as to build capacity and strengthen education management and technical systems;

- Piloting approaches and models for demonstration effects;
- Undertaking studies and analytical work to strengthen the evidence base and support its advocacy and policy influence; and
- Undertaking sector coordination and leadership roles, coupled with the facilitation of external financing to the sector.<sup>69</sup>

One of the findings and lessons learned from the referenced study captures the additionality provided by UNICEF. The study states that “UNICEF’s global engagement in education upstream work has had discernible results at the global and country level. Drawing on its mandate, priorities and experience at the country level, UNICEF is able to influence what these global partnerships and other partners at country level can do. It has also made key technical contributions, such as the standards for education in emergencies and to the learning

69 UNICEF’s Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality, 2003-2012, p. 8-10

standards metric processes and outputs. Results of global upstream efforts have similarly registered attitudinal change and discursive commitments at the country level, realized through progressive policy content and legislative reform. Working at these two levels has mutual benefits; UNICEF’s participation in global partnerships strengthens its position at country level for policy influence while its engagement at country level informs its global engagement.”<sup>70</sup>

## 5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In developing the financial assessment of the support being provided by donors and governments to basic education, the team reviewed the flows of Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by all donors from 2004 until 2013. The team also reviewed the funding provided to GPE and UNICEF as well as the domestic financing provided by the governments in the four case study countries (Nepal, Malawi, Ethiopia and Madagascar) as part of their annual budgets. The data shows that despite expressions of commitment and

70 IBID, p 10

support from donor agencies and governments, funding for the education sector is increasing at a lower rate (33%) than the total level of ODA funding which increased by approximately 90 percent over the same period. An exception to this trend is the Government of Norway where financing provided for basic education over the period of 2004 – 2013 increased by 41 percent while overall bilateral support to basic education over this same period declined by about 16 percent.

Over this same general period, the level of funding provided to GPE and UNICEF has been disappointing – again except for the Government of Norway. The GPE 2014 replenishment produced pledges of about \$2.2 billion against a target of \$3.5 billion. For UNICEF, the contributions of the focus area of Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE) have been declining since 2010. The exception in this is the Government of Norway which is the largest resource partner for UNICEF’s program for basic education and gender equality and the fifth largest contributor to GPE.



While it is difficult to explain the apparent lack of support by the donors and governments to basic education, the following information provides some insights into the larger flow of Official Development Assistance funds to the sector as well as discussions regarding GPE and UNICEF and some of the issues that they face. An analysis of the domestic resources provided to the sector by the four case study governments is presented as part of the case studies for each of those countries.

During the interviews and the research for the study, efforts were made to address the issue of additionality and/or fungibility of domestic and international funding to the sector especially with regard to funding being provided by GPE and UNICEF. As the case studies illustrate the issue of fungibility or the budget variance is a major concern in most developing countries, however, there is no indication that this was due to the involvement of these two agencies but is more indicative of weak financial management procedures and perhaps a lack of real commitment to the education sector. The Government of Ethiopia is an exception. Its budget proce-

dures are quite strong and the support provided to the sector is robust. With regards to UNICEF and GPE, the annual expenditures for basic education are small relative to the overall financing gap, however, there is no evidence that these entities resulted in additional ODA funds being provided to the sector. As discussed later in the Financial Assessment chapter of this report, the efforts by GPE and UNICEF to encourage partner countries to increase the level of domestic resources allocated to the education sector have been positive.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

### 6.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Program Causal Path.** Using our Program Causal Path, derived from our Theory of Change (ToC), to address the main evaluation question about program outputs and outcomes, we found that most countries made improvements in the outcome of gender equality – four of ten reaching “gender parity” in primary school enrollment; that many improved equity for marginalized groups (an exception being that for disabled children); but almost none met their goals for improved learning outcomes. For outputs (i.e., “interventions”), most countries covered the basics of classrooms, trained teachers, and learning materials, but many other essential ingredients of learning improvement went untreated, showing the basic ingredients to be necessary but not sufficient. The influence between the interventions and outcomes appeared to be moderated by the ToC enabling conditions, especially “national political/commitment to improved equity and quality of basic education,” and “high share of national budget going to education,” which together seemed quite powerful. The most prevalent

unexpected consequences were recipient countries diverting funds away from education (or at least basic education) and donor agencies reducing their support to basic education.

**Aid management causal Path.** The second basic question that this evaluation was expected to answer was the value-added to Norway’s MFA of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investment in basic education. The findings indicate that both add value, neither adds as much value as it could, particularly UNICEF.

**Financial Assessment.** The general conclusion of this financial assessment is that donor agencies and governments alike express strong commitment and support for education and basic education in particular. However, the data also shows that despite these expressions of support, funding for the sector is generally declining as funding is being diverted to other sectors. An exception to this trend is the Government of Norway where financing provided over the period of 2004 – 2013 increased by 41 percent while overall bilateral support to basic education over this same period declined by about 16 percent.

Both UNICEF and GPE lack transparent and easy access to their key documents. Neither UNICEF nor GPE routinely archive all key documents pertaining to upstream work and the program cycle on their websites by country and operation. When web-based searches failed, multiple emails had to be sent to the GPE Secretariat and different UNICEF country offices to obtain documents. The staffs in both agencies had to use their valuable time trying to locate documents, and not always successfully.

### 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations focus on outcomes. They are addressed to MFA as the client for this evaluation. The MFA may wish to encourage GPE and UNICEF to:

1. Place a higher priority on learning outcomes. The efforts of donors and partner governments to expand enrolment have helped many children, but resources now need to be invested in factors that increase the main payoff from being enrolled, namely, acquiring basic knowledge and skills.

2. Give more emphasis to proximate causes of learning outcomes: student/teacher time on task, teacher supervision, and use of local language in early learning.
3. Support countries in establishing or continuing regular national assessments of learning outcomes, but for evaluating short-term learning gains, related to educational interventions, to set up targeted assessments, showing changes among those experiencing the interventions; (where possible) compared to control groups.
4. Vigilantly promote gender equity in enrolment and learning outcomes in the higher grades of basic education.
5. Strengthen the emphasis in each country on the needs of marginalized groups, particularly the disabled, at least by establishing or strengthening EMIS tracking of disaggregated population and outcome data on marginalized groups, including linguistic minorities and students from poor families as well as students with disabilities.

These recommendations focus on aid management. The first one is addressed to MFA and refers to increasing the accountability of the agent for good aid management.

1. Agents (those creating the design and managing the implementation of aid) should be held accountable for the quality of aid design and implementation. Even if the principals (those financing the aid) delegate the responsibility to others to assure that projects that they finance meet standards, the principals have a responsibility to set standards for good practice and to enforce these standards, either through suasion or the judicious use of their financing.

Recommendations 2-7 refer differentially by aid agency. They are addressed to the MFA as the client. The MFA may wish to encourage:

2. Both UNICEF and GPE to routinely and transparently archive on their websites all key documents pertaining to upstream work and the program cycle by country and operation. The staff in both agencies now waste time

trying to find documents for various purposes and not always successfully.

3. UNICEF to dramatically improve the analytic rigor, clarity, and consistency of the documentary trail for its activities. Whatever its ultimate role relative to other aid agencies, the quality of UNICEF's upstream and downstream documents are now unacceptable. UNICEF's Headquarters understands that to fix this deeply seated problem, the skill mix has to change at all levels of the organization and the operational culture has to change at the level of the regional and country offices.
4. UNICEF to start country program activities only when the activity is fully funded. Some UNICEF officials deny that starting with partial funding affects the stability of objectives and activity completion rates. Those outside of UNICEF see partial funding as helping to explain why some UNICEF activities fail to complete and why some started activities change direction over time in response to new funders for the activity.

5. GPE's Board of Directors to resolve the ambiguous accountability relationships between the LEG, the Secretariat, and the Board
6. GPE Board and the Secretariat to find ways to raise the quality of and reduce the variance in quality between ESPs. The GPE Board and its agent, the Secretariat, have ultimate accountability to the donors and their taxpayers for good aid delivery. GPE's operations should be based on ESPs, and the strengths and flaws of ESPs radiate outwards to GPE-funded operations. At the same time, GPE builds on national policy processes that must be "owned" by the in-country players. Any heavy-handed intervention by GPE will undermine this process.
7. GPE's Board of Directors to adopt a certification process for those agencies eligible to serve as Managing Entities and Supervising Entities. The risks associated with entities that have not been vetted are high. The Board's relevant Executive Committees, such as the Country Grants and Performance Committee and Governance, Ethics, Risk, and Finance Committee, and its Secretariat could advise on criteria and process.

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# Annexes

<b>ANNEX 1</b> – Terms of Reference .....	98
<b>ANNEX 2</b> – List of those interviewed .....	110
<b>ANNEX 3</b> – Schematic of the project cycle and questions that reveal the quality with which it is implemented .....	112
<b>ANNEX 4</b> – Norad's Evaluation Questions in Relation to the Data Collection Efforts .....	113
<b>ANNEX 5</b> – What is behind the GPE ratings? An example from Malawi .....	114
<b>ANNEX 6</b> – Tables for Financial Management Analysis .....	117

# Annex 1 – Terms of reference

## EVALUATION OF NORWEGIAN MULTILATERAL SUPPORT TO BASIC EDUCATION

### BACKGROUND

#### Global trends in education aid over the past decade

The overarching goals for education aid globally are the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and 3. We are half a year from 2015, the year when the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved. A lot of progress has been made since the start of the millennium. The global pre-primary education gross enrolment ratio increased from 33% in 1999 to 50% in 2011, equivalent to almost 60 million more children enrolled.<sup>71</sup> The number of children out of school fell almost by half by 2011 but has since stagnated.

Yet we will not meet the global education goals. 58 million children are still out of school, and poor quality schooling is a major obstacle to

71 Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 "Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all".

ensuring that adequate learning is taking place. Inequality in access and learning impede the achievement of quality education for all. One major reason for this is inadequate funding. Basic education is underfunded by USD26 billion per year.<sup>72</sup> The cost of such underfunding to the individual and to society includes lost wellbeing, productivity and health.

Domestic spending on education globally has on average increased from 4.6% to 5.1% of GNP from 1999 to 2011.<sup>73</sup> A suggested goal post – 2015 is that countries should spend between 4 and 6% of their GNP on education.<sup>74</sup> Another international benchmark is that education should be allocated between 15 and 20% of the national budget, which for various reasons is the case in very few countries. Widening the tax base could help some countries meet the education goals, but especially the poorest

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 The OECD average was 6.3% of GDP (GNP and GDP are not directly comparable. Information taken from [http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20\(eng\)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20(eng)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf)

countries will need external funding in addition.<sup>75</sup>

Globally, the volume of financial aid for education has increased considerably since 2000, though it decreased by 10% from 2010 to 2012 (OECD). The education sector has a narrow donor base and is as such vulnerable to low aid predictability and delivery. In 2011, the top five funders of basic education<sup>76</sup> were the World Bank, the United Kingdom, The United States, EU Institutions and Germany.<sup>77</sup> UNICEF is one of the five most important multilateral channels in terms of total financing to education<sup>78</sup>, and together, the multilateral agencies contributed 25% of total ODA to education over the past decade. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) does not report to the

75 Rose, P. and L. Steer (2013): "Financing for Global Education. Opportunities for multilateral action. A report prepared for the UN Special Envoy for Global Education for the High-Level Roundtable on Learning for All: Coordinating the financing and delivery of education".

76 Percentage share of donor's aid to basic education as a share of all donor's aid to basic education, source OECD/DAC.

77 Rose, P. and L. Stee, op.cit.

78 The largest multilateral donors as reported by the OECD-DAC in terms of total financing to education are the Asian Development Bank, The African Development Bank, The European Union Institutions, the World Bank and UNICEF.

OECD, but would be the fifth largest multilateral donor based on its own financial data.<sup>79</sup> Even so, the share that these agencies contribute to basic education has declined over the last decade relative to that of bilateral donors.

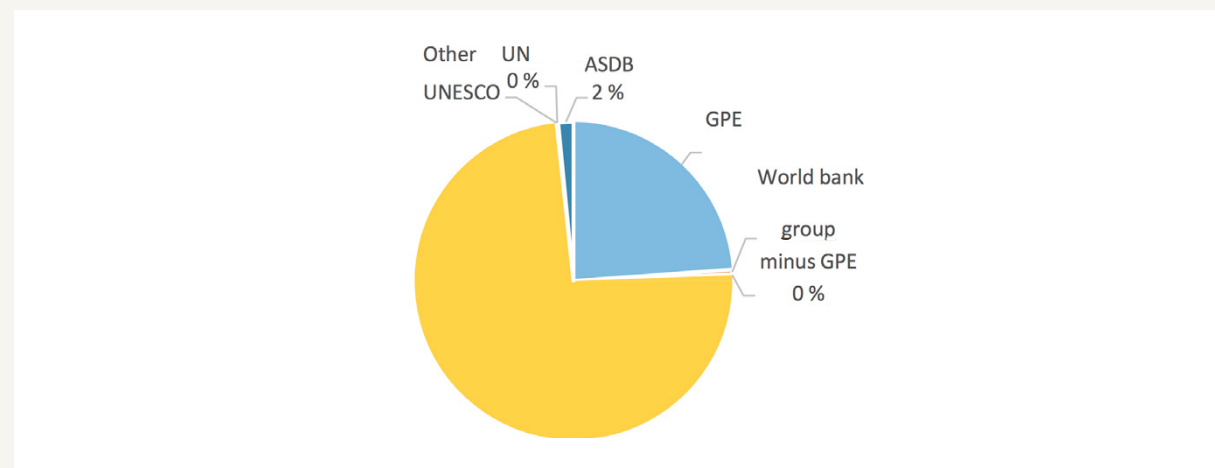
### Trends in Norwegian aid to education over the past decade

The EFA goals and the MDGs 2 and 3 also guide Norwegian aid to education. Basic education is a priority, and two of the main goals for Norway are enhanced access to education and improved quality of the education provided.<sup>80</sup> There is a particular focus on girls' education and on provision of education in a safe learning environment, both during peace, and during war and conflict. Norwegian development cooperation is guided by the principle of a human rights-based approach.

79 Rose, P. and L.Stee, op.cit.

80 Key document: [http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/35167823/PDFS/PRP201120120001\\_UDDDDPDFS.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/35167823/PDFS/PRP201120120001_UDDDDPDFS.pdf)

**FIGURE 1: NORWEGIAN MULTI-BILATERAL AID TO BASIC EDUCATION BY PARTNER, 2009-2013\***



\* The two largest recipients in the "other UN" category up to and including 2009 are ILO (NOK 87 million) and the International Institute for Education Planning (NOK 83 million).

Source: Norad's Database

Norwegian bilateral and multi-bilateral<sup>81</sup> aid to education increased from NOK 1293 million in 2004 to NOK 1690 million in 2013. Aid to education as a share of total aid peaked

at 13.5% in 2006 and has since gradually decreased to reach 7.2% in 2013.<sup>82</sup> During the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the channelling of Norwegian aid to education from the bilateral to the multilateral channel. Of Norwegian bilateral and multi-

81 Bilateral aid here includes both government-to-government funds as well as funds from the Norwegian aid administration to/through NGOs and CSOs. Multi-bilateral aid includes both earmarked funds from the Norwegian administration to multilateral organisations (MO) centrally and funds from Norwegian embassies to the MO's local country offices. Pure multilateral funds (i.e. core funding) is not included in this evaluation.

82 The share to education does not include core funding to multilateral organisations, of which some is used to support education, or expenses for administration in Norway.

bilateral aid to basic education, the latter increased from 30% in 2000, to 73% in 2013.

Most of the aid to education goes to the basic education sub-sector (86% in 2013). The total Norwegian multi-bilateral funds to basic education over the last five years amounts to NOK 3.79 billion. As illustrated in Figure 1, nearly three quarters (74%) of this has gone to UNICEF. Almost a quarter (24%) of the funds have gone to the GPE. For this reason, UNICEF/BEGE and GPE have been chosen as evaluation objects for this evaluation.

Allocations to UNICEF for basic education increased steadily in the beginning of the decade, and have stabilised around NOK 480-560 million per year during the latter half of the decade. Norwegian support to GPE started in 2003, and stabilised around NOK 100 million per year but doubled in 2011 to reach NOK 200 million.

Norway is actively engaged in GPE as member of the Board, and participating in the constituency group as well as in one of the four committees

advisory to the Board of Directors, namely the Country Grants and Performance Committee. Norway has bilateral annual meetings with UNICEF and participates in UNICEF's Executive Board and in working groups as relevant (e.g. the working group on Results Framework, 2014-2017).

#### **UNICEF's Thematic Focus Area Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE)**

In the period under review, UNICEF was guided by the second Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2006-2013<sup>83</sup>. According to the UNICEF Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic Report for 2013, UNICEF aims to play a significant global leadership and advocacy role across the education sector, as well as working with key partners at the country level. UNICEF is committed to working for an evidence-based equity focus in education systems analysis and policymaking, for expanding coverage of basic education for the marginalised and for improving the quality of education.

<sup>83</sup> A new Strategic Plan (2014-2017) has just been instituted.

UNICEF identifies five focus areas<sup>84</sup> that all receive "thematic funding"<sup>85</sup>. This evaluation concentrates on one of these; "Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE)".

The 2013 expenditure for BEGE was almost USD 713 million, with USD 112 coming from thematic contributions. Norway contributed almost 76% of the thematic funding for BEGE. Learning outcomes and equity including gender equality (the key focus areas in the current evaluation) accounted for the majority (72.2%) of expenditure for BEGE<sup>86</sup>. The contributions from Norway to UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality for 2006–2013 have varied between USD 72 and 91 million per year<sup>87</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> The thematic focus areas as outlined in UNICEF's Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for 2006-2013 are: Young Child Survival and Development; Basic Education and Gender Equality; HIV/AIDS and Children; Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse; Policy Advocacy and Partnership for Children's Rights; and Humanitarian Response.

<sup>85</sup> This is an alternative funding modality created to support the goals and objectives of the MTSP. It is more flexible than traditional earmarked funds (sometimes referred to as softly earmarked), and allows for longer term planning and sustainability of the programmes.

<sup>86</sup> The other two focus areas are "early learning" and "education in emergencies".

<sup>87</sup> UNICEF Thematic Report 2013, table page 48. Note that figures before and after 2012 cannot be compared.

## **The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)<sup>88</sup> is a global partnership of developing and donor countries, multilateral agencies, civil society organisations, the teaching profession, and private sector actors supporting the education sector in developing countries. It currently has 59 developing country partners. Focusing on coordinating action at country level, GPE does not operate as a traditional global fund. While it allocates funds to countries based on an agreed-on formula, it puts primary responsibility on national governments and in-country partners to mobilise and deliver support for education sector plans endorsed by the Local Education Group (LEG) and provides a global platform for mobilising additional resources nationally and internationally.

The LEG, intended to include all actors involved in the education sector, lies at the heart of the GPE as a collaborative forum for policy dialogue, alignment and harmonisation of donor support

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88 GPE started as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative in 2002, but was renamed the Global Partnership for Education in 2011 to reflect key changes in the governance structure.

to the national education plan. It seeks to keep all parties fully informed of progress and challenges, and collates and disseminates information, including on GPE partner and non-partner funding. The specific composition, title, and working arrangements of LEGs vary from country to country. When a program implementation grant is requested from the GPE, a supervising entity (SE) or a managing entity (ME) must be designated by the LEG<sup>89</sup>. The SE or ME will play a key role in the LEG, and in supporting implementation.

Following an evaluation published in 2010<sup>90</sup>, the partnership was restructured and its mandate broadened. The largest donors to the partnership in terms of cumulative contributions by May 2014 are the UK (USD 857 million), the Netherlands (649 mill), Spain (353 mill), Australia (307 mill), Denmark (288 mill) and Norway (USD

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89 The SE or ME are a bilateral or multilateral development agency. The SE will transfer grant funds to the developing country government, who will implement the programme, whereas the ME will manage programme activities directly.

90 See <http://www.government.nl/documents-and-publications/reports/2010/02/01/mid-term-evaluation-of-the-efa-fast-track-initiative-final-synthesis-report-volume-5-appendices-vi-viii.html>.

285 mill)<sup>91</sup>. This year, the GPE's independent evaluation committee is commissioning an interim evaluation of the partnership. This evaluation will to the extent possible be coordinated with the GPE evaluation so that the two evaluations can complement, inform and support each other.

## **The difference between UNICEF and GPE**

There are important differences between UNICEF and GPE, and how they engage in the education sector, which warrant some clarification. At the country level, UNICEF is involved from the national through to the school level contributing to both upstream policy and on-the-ground programme activities and outcomes. While UNICEF participates in the national policy dialogue, UNICEF's funding is often channelled outside the national education budget and targeted to specific groups and/or regions. UNICEF implements some projects directly, some through government and some through civil society. UNICEF has significant

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91 See <http://www.government.nl/documents-and-publications/reports/2010/02/01/mid-term-evaluation-of-the-efa-fast-track-initiative-final-synthesis-report-volume-5-appendices-vi-viii.html>.

presence nationally and sub-nationally, and actively collaborate with government offices at all levels. GPE on the other hand has no direct in-country presence and builds on its partners, including UNICEF in certain countries, for implementation. The GPE Secretariat engages remotely or through periodic in-country short-term visits by secretariat staff or consultants.

### **RATIONALE, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The current Norwegian government places education on top of the development agenda, and has recently launched a White Paper on Global Education<sup>92</sup>. Much of the funding for basic education is channelled through multilateral actors – notably through UNICEF and GPE. More knowledge on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency<sup>93</sup> of these institutions will be important for future allocations of aid. The White Paper explicitly states that better results reporting and delivery is expected, and both UNICEF and GPE are potential candidates for substantial

92 <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2013-2014/Meld-St-25-20132014.html?id=762554>.

93 As defined by the OECD-DAC, see <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

scaling up of Norwegian support to education. This is the rationale for assessing the degree to which Norwegian support to basic education through UNICEF and GPE provides quality results in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

*The purpose* of the evaluation is to facilitate more evidence based policy and programming decisions both in Norway and in UNICEF and GPE, with a dual focus on accountability and learning. This will be achieved through generating evaluation evidence on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of Norwegian aid to basic education through UNICEF and GPE, focusing particularly on the achievement of Norway's policy objectives quality of learning<sup>94</sup>, gender equality and equity<sup>95</sup>, and through increasing the knowledge base of basic education.

94 Quality is defined here in line with UNICEF who sets out the desirable characteristics of learners, processes, content and systems. See [http://www.unicef.org/education/index\\_quality.html](http://www.unicef.org/education/index_quality.html). The aspect of learner achievement should carry particular weight.

95 Equity is defined here as "all children hav[ing] an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination, bias or favouritism.", ref. UNICEF and consistent with the Convention of the Rights of the child. See [http://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/index\\_60239.html](http://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/index_60239.html). This goes beyond equitable access to include equity in the quality of learning.

*The objectives* of the evaluation are to:

- a) Assess the relevance and coherence of Norway's, UNICEF's, GPE's and selected national government's development objectives. Because a rights-based approach is a key principle for Norwegian development cooperation, the evaluation shall assess if and how this principle is followed by UNICEF, GPE and governments in the selected case countries.
- b) Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of financial and technical inputs provided by UNICEF and GPE in generating results at the country level, with a particular focus on quality of learning, equity and gender equality.
- c) Identify the added value, or comparative advantage, of GPE and UNICEF respectively. 'Added value' is defined as the degree to which UNICEF and GPE make a difference, positively or negatively, beyond the sheer volume of aid<sup>96</sup>.

96 This includes the way in which UNICEF and GPE interact with each other and with national governments, the quality of their technical inputs, additionality of funds, as well as other factors influencing whether results are achieved in an efficient and effective manner.

- d) Identify good practices and lessons learned.
- e) Provide evidence-based operational recommendations for consideration and action by decision makers and practitioners in Norway, in UNICEF and in GPE, and to the sector more generally.

## SCOPE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### Scope

The evaluation covers all of GPE's and UNICEF's support to basic education during the period 2009-2013<sup>97</sup>. It will assess contributions of GPE and UNICEF to achieving results at national level, focusing on outputs and outcomes rather than impact<sup>98</sup>, and emphasising the quality of learning, equity and gender equality dimensions of the basic education sector (pre-primary, primary, lower level secondary and including

97 To the extent that it is seen as relevant, activities spanning 2014 might also be included. Similarly, the evaluation team can argue for going further back in time.

98 "Impact evaluation" here refers to rigorous evaluation design to identify the causal effect of an intervention or a policy/reform, including the use of a counterfactual comparison group.

teachers' education and non-formal education<sup>99</sup>). Vocational-, adult- and informal education have been excluded as these areas do not constitute a substantial part of what is supported by either UNICEF or GPE.

GPE prioritises support to fragile states. Quality education for all is no less important in such contexts, and the evaluation will therefore assess how basic education sector plans cover allocation of resources to children who live in conflict- or disaster affected areas, and how they cover disaster risk reduction, conflict sensitivity and other measures relevant to such contexts. Beyond this, humanitarian aid is excluded from this evaluation.

As outlined below, the evaluation is planned with three separate but related parts: A Financial Assessment, a Results Assessment, and a Scoping Exercise for a potential Impact Evaluation. Each part is specified in detail under approach and methodology (Section 4).

99 Non-formal education should only be included to the extent that it is included in national education budgets.

The Impact Evaluation might be commissioned in a separate tender following the Scoping Exercise.

The evaluation will include in-depth study in four pre-selected countries, and a desk review of 10 countries based on available documentation. Selection of countries for the desk review will be made during the inception phase.

The countries selected for in-depth studies are Malawi, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Nepal. The selection criteria were: the main geographical focus should be Africa; GPE and UNICEF had been present in the countries for some time and preferably since 2009; quality, equity and gender are important areas in national education plans and interventions; potential candidates for future increase in Norwegian development aid to education; at least one country is a fragile state.

### Evaluation Questions

In response to the purpose and objectives of this evaluation, the team should design the evaluation to answer the questions outlined in this section. The questions are organised according

to the different parts of the evaluation outlined below, although some may overlap.

1. What results<sup>100</sup> (outputs and outcomes) of basic education interventions have been achieved at the country level? What are the contextual and other factors contributing to or impeding progress on each goal? Have the interventions resulted in any unintended effects?
2. Given the different roles and mandates of UNICEF and GPE; how and to what extent do they complement each other?
3. To what extent are UNICEF and GPE working in ways that support national efforts towards fulfilling the relevant EFA goals in terms of 1) Quality of learning, 2) Gender equality and 3) Equity? This includes assessment of the quality

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100 The focus should be on measures of quality (e.g. learner achievements, drop-out and repetition rates), equity (e.g. Benefit Incidence Analysis, Equity Gap) and gender, but general measures such as enrolment, completion and survival rates should also be included

of the technical inputs<sup>101</sup> and the extent to which the inputs are in accordance with the principles of aid effectiveness<sup>102</sup> and serve to strengthen the ability of governments to achieve their goals. The role of UNICEF and GPE vis-à-vis the education sector group in each country is key to answering these questions.

4. What have been the global patterns of financial allocations to basic education over the past five years? This is further specified in the methodology section.
5. To what degree is there stability and predictability of funding for education from national governments, UNICEF (and within UNICEF), GPE and other relevant actors, and in what ways does the degree of stability and predictability affect the ability to deliver results?

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101 "Impact evaluation" here refers to rigorous evaluation design to identify the causal effect of an intervention or a policy/reform, including the use of a counterfactual comparison group.

102 The focus should be on measures of quality (e.g. learner achievements, drop-out and repetition rates), equity (e.g. Benefit Incidence Analysis, Equity Gap) and gender, but general measures such as enrolment, completion and survival rates should also be included.

6. To what extent have resources been allocated and utilized in an efficient manner? This should include a minimum assessment of value-for-money, i.e. the extent to which the programme has obtained the maximum benefit from the outputs and outcomes it has produced within the resources available to it.

## APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### Specific methodological considerations

The evaluation will consist of three parts:

1. A Results Assessment.
2. A Financial Assessment.
3. A Scoping Exercise: Preparation for a potential future Impact Evaluation<sup>103</sup>.

All three parts are expected to inform and build upon each other.

For data collection purposes, visits to UNICEF and GPE headquarters are needed in addition to country visits to the four pre-selected countries.

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103 The Impact Evaluation itself will be commissioned in a separate tender.



## **Results Assessment**

The evaluation shall document and assess results of the national basic education<sup>104</sup> interventions directly or indirectly supported by UNICEF and GPE at the country level, in relation to prevailing national policies.

In addition to in-depth country studies, this part of the evaluation shall include a desk study of 10 countries. The selection criteria will be similar to the criteria for the four in-depth case countries (see 3.1), and the countries will be selected during the inception phase. The desk review shall include results reporting from the relevant agency offices and/or governments, as well as review and analysis of relevant strategies, expenditure data, programme documentation, any reviews or evaluations, and a rapid review of available census or survey results to provide a general socioeconomic setting and a sense of educational status. The desk reviews should also include phone interviews with key personnel to allow for a deeper understanding of country processes.

<sup>104</sup> As defined above.

The results assessment shall focus on three key areas in the basic education sector: Quality, Gender and Equity. These areas represent major obstacles to achieving the EFA goals<sup>105</sup>, and it is important to assess the extent to which the relevant actors deliver results that make a difference on the ground. At the same time it is important to be aware of possible trade-offs between equity on the one hand and quality of learning on the other. Improving equity by including marginalised and poor students could potentially reduce the average level of learning in the short-term, unless extra resources are spent to counteract this, even though increased equity will pay off in the longer term. This perspective should be included in the analysis.

The education sector group in each country, be it a local education group (LEG) or its equivalent, plays a key role both in UNICEF's and in GPE's work at the country level. The focus in this evaluation should be to assess the value added of UNICEF and GPE to the group,

<sup>105</sup> Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 "Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all".

or if relevant, in any other forum for dialogue with national government. This includes assessing how UNICEF and GPE contribute to the effectiveness of the education sector group and its role in achieving country results. Particular priority should be given to assessing the extent to which the national government takes leadership in the group including if and how it is supported to do so, and the role of any Joint Financing Agreement between donors. The role of GPE Supervising Entities and Managing Entities is also key.

GPE is currently formulating a new financing model, which could have implications for its work on statistics and results. The mentioned GPE evaluation will focus at the global level in addition to the country level, but it is important that the evaluation team is aware of these and other reform processes taking place at the global level.

## **Financial Assessment**

A Financial Assessment study shall collect and analyse available statistics to establish the patterns of financial allocations to basic education, i.e. allocations to and from UNICEF

and GPE and allocations to and within the selected countries. The Financial Assessment should be limited to the following:

- Characteristics of, and trends in Norwegian ODA funding to education, compared to ODA funding as a whole.
- For national education budgets: Provide an overview over the case countries' share of

GDP allocated to education, the share of the national budget allocated to education, and the education budget going to basic education, for the period 2009-2013. This analysis should be related to availability of external funding, including but not limited to funding from UNICEF and GPE.

For UNICEF and GPE:

- Provide a simple overview of characteristics of, and trends in total funds received by the agency from donors (in general and for education), and in the agencies' allocations to education in different geographical areas. For UNICEF this should also include a specification of key

focus areas<sup>106</sup> including BEGE and any further specification of BEGE funds.

- Provide an overview of criteria for allocations of funds within UNICEF and to UNICEF's partners and to GPE-endorsed countries.
- Provide an overview of flow of funds and identify any bottlenecks, e.g. caused by the timing of allocations to recipients (NGOs, national governments or others) or other factors.
- Assess the fungibility and/or additionality of domestic and international funds (e.g. for UNICEF how thematic funding influences thematic allocations of core funding and its relationship to non-thematic funding).

The Financial Assessment study shall base its findings on available statistics from each entity and country administrative data.

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<sup>106</sup> Key focus areas are specified by the Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2006-2013.

All data shall be cross-referenced in tables, graphs and text, analysing patterns within and between the categories over the past decade. Relevant categories for cross-referencing shall be identified by the evaluation team, and include as a minimum themes, sectors and countries. The findings from the financial mapping shall be used as background data for the evaluation's wider analysis, especially with regard to assessment of the programme theories of change.

**Scoping Exercise: Preparation for a potential future Impact Evaluation<sup>107</sup>**

Given the recent reforms in GPE, and with reference to scoping study undertaken by White (2010) as part of the mid-term evaluation of EFA-FTI, the Evaluation Department does not foresee an impact evaluation of GPE at this point. In any case, an impact evaluation of GPE is planned by GPE for the years 2017 and 2018.

The scoping exercise should rather aim to identify what possibilities exist in terms of an Impact

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<sup>107</sup> "Impact Evaluation" here refers to rigorous evaluation design to identify the causal effect of an intervention or a policy/reform, ideally including the use of a counterfactual comparison group.

Evaluation preferably of a) a UNICEF intervention or alternatively of b) a reform or policy change in the basic education sector in one or more of the four selected case countries. If option b) is chosen, the reform or policy change should be one where UNICEF and/or GPE have played a major role, so that the Impact Evaluation can be combined with a contribution analysis. The Evaluation Department plans to use the information from the scoping exercise in the Terms of Reference for the Impact Evaluation. The scoping exercise should include information about any impact evaluations undertaken of the UNICEF interventions under review.

For potential candidates for a future Impact Evaluation, the scoping exercise could address questions and tasks such as;

- Mapping UNICEF basic education interventions including their duration. For each intervention: Has there been any major changes during the intervention period; what was the baseline situation?

- Which basic education sector reforms and/or major policy changes have taken place in the selected countries since 2009? How and to what extent have these reforms or policy changes been supported by UNICEF and/or GPE?
- What is the data needs and availability for analysing these changes, and what is the quality of the data, and needs for collection of primary data? Note that the Evaluation Department foresees that the main source of data will be secondary, and that primary data collection will be limited.

#### **General methodological principles to be adhered to**

The tender shall follow the OCED Development Assistance Committee's quality standards for development evaluation.

Details on evaluation methodology will be developed by tenderers in their proposals. The methodology should take cognisance of the data routinely collected (by GPE and/or UNICEF and/or other relevant actors), any previous evaluations and studies from the basic education sub-sector

including literature on multilateral aid effectiveness, and relevant progress and other results reports at the global and country levels.

Proposals should include the appropriate treatment of gender and other equity considerations, both in terms of assessing the relevant DAC criteria, and in the data collection and analytical approaches of proposed methodologies.

The evaluation should be based on a theory / theories of change approach, explicitly linking inputs, activities and results, and identifying factors influencing successful outputs and outcomes within a range of contexts and factors that inhibit achievement of stated objectives. This will provide a framework for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness at the country level (and at the global level as relevant, for example when assessing technical inputs).

Within the overall analytical framework, mapping of financial flows will be conducted both at the global and country levels. The GPE is currently establishing their own theories of change at the

country level. UNICEF has developed a theory of change for BEGE<sup>108</sup>.

The informants shall include a broad range of key representatives in the Norwegian aid administration, UNICEF and GPE as well as National Government representatives, donor representatives and other participants in the Local Education Groups (especially those taking the role of Supervising Entity or Managing Entity for GPE, as defined in section 1.4), in addition to relevant education staff (district officers, head teachers, teachers, etc.), parent- teachers associations and students.

The evaluation team shall develop an appropriate methodology that can respond to these Terms of Reference. The evaluation should draw on mixed methods. The methods adopted shall be described in detail in the tender, such as the following suggestive list (not exhaustive):

- a) Document search and reviews.
- b) Analysis of relevant databases and statistics for UNICEF, GPE and case countries.
- c) Interviews with key staff at Headquarters (Oslo, New York and Washington D.C).
- d) Interviews with key representatives of LEGs (or similar sector group if a LEG does not exist) in the selected countries, including government staff.
- e) Field visits to relevant intervention sites in the selected countries, including interviews with key officials, head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils.
- f) Document reviews including research.
- g) Surveys.
- h) Sampling.

The tender should describe the planned approach for the field studies, including how relevant beneficiaries/stakeholders will be selected for participation in groups and how groups will be organised (e.g. women only? children only? without authority figures?)

The evaluation shall demonstrate how triangulation of methods and multiple information sources are used to substantiate findings and assessments.

### **DELIVERABLES**

The deliverables are:

- Inception report not exceeding 20 pages to be approved by the Evaluation department
- Country reports for each pre-selected case country, including financial assessment and results assessment.
- Brief report presenting results of the scoping exercise for impact evaluation.
- Draft report.
- Final report not exceeding 60 pages excluding summary and annexes.
- Two policy briefs not exceeding 2 pages each, one targeting a wider audience and one targeting relevant personnel involved in development cooperation.
- Dissemination in Oslo.

All reports shall follow the Evaluation department's guidelines. All written material will be submitted electronically, and all supporting data will be

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108 [http://www.unicef.org/parmo/files/FA2\\_Basic\\_Education\\_and\\_Gender\\_Equality.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/parmo/files/FA2_Basic_Education_and_Gender_Equality.pdf), page 17.

made available to Norad. Norad retains all rights with respect to distribution, dissemination and publication of the deliverables.

### **ORGANISATION**

The evaluation will be commissioned and managed by Norad's evaluation department. Norad will be responsible for the final decisions concerning the Terms of Reference and the evaluation outputs.

A Reference Group will be constituted with separate Terms of Reference. It will include relevant staff from Norad, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, GPE as well as other relevant stakeholders. Reference Group members will be invited to comment on all evaluation outputs before finalisation.

The evaluation will be carried out by an independent team of consultants contracted by Norad's Evaluation department. The evaluation team is entitled to consult stakeholders pertinent to the assignment but it is not permitted to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Norway, UNICEF or GPE. The evaluation team leader will report directly to Norad's Evaluation department.

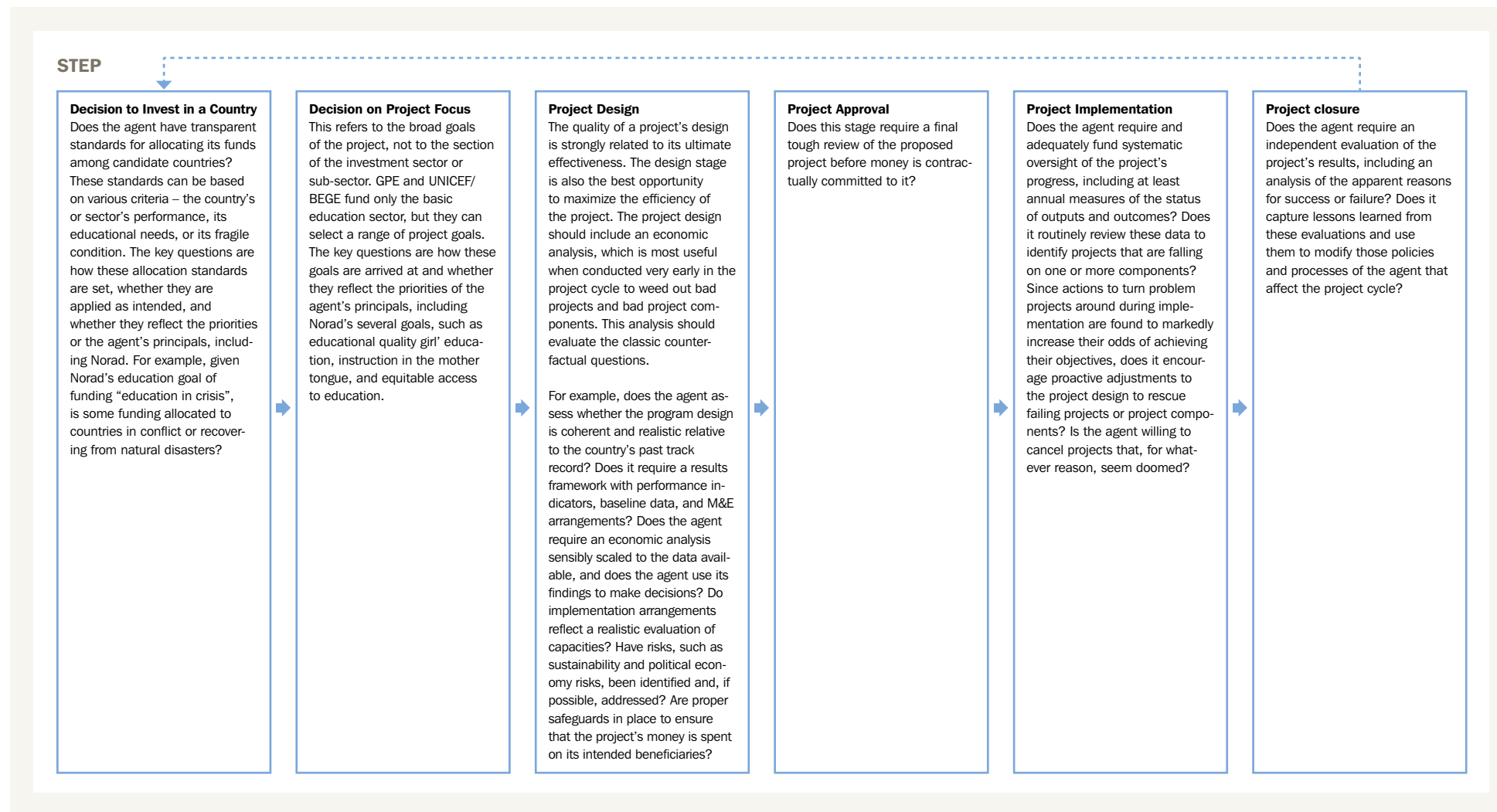
## Annex 2 – List of those interviewed

Name	Gender	Organisation
Tale Kvalvaag	Director, Evaluation Department	Norad
Per Øyvind Bastøe	Director, Evaluation Department	Norad
Paul Richard Fife	Director, Department for Global Health, Education and Research	Norad
Reidun Gjengedal	Assistant Director, Statistics Section, Department for Quality Assurance	Norad
Gerd-Hanne Fosen	Head of Section for Education, Department for Health, Education and Research	Norad
Kjersti Løken	Higher Executive Officer, Evaluation Department	Norad
Randi Gramshaug	Senior Advisor, Section for Education, Department for Global Health, Education and Research	Norad
Kjersti Franciszka Okkelmo	Senior Advisor, Section for Education, Department for Global Health, Education and Research	Norad
Bente Nilson	Senior Advisor, Section for Education, Department for Global Health, Education and Research	Norad
Vigdís Aaslund Cristofoli	Senior Advisor, Section for Education, Department for Global Health, Education and Research	Norad
Sidsel Bleken	Director, Section for Budget, Financial Monitoring and Management, Department for UN, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs	MFA
Olav Hæreid Seim	Policy Director Education, Section for Global Initiatives, Department for UN, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs	MFA
Jenny E. Linge Valberg	Consultant, Section for Global Initiatives, Department for UN, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs	MFA
Asbjørn Eidhammer	Senior Adviser, Section for Global Initiatives, Department for UN, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs	MFA
Elin Eikeland	Senior Adviser, Section for Grant Management, Human and Financial Resource Department	MFA
Kari Hauge Riisøen	Project Manager, Section for Global Initiatives, Department for UN and Humanitarian Affairs	MFA
Stephen Adkisson	Deputy Executive Director, Field Results Group	UNICEF
Colin Kirk	Director, Evaluation Office	UNICEF
Kathleen Letshabo	Evaluation Office	UNICEF
Josephine Bourne	Associate Director and Global Chief of Education	UNICEF

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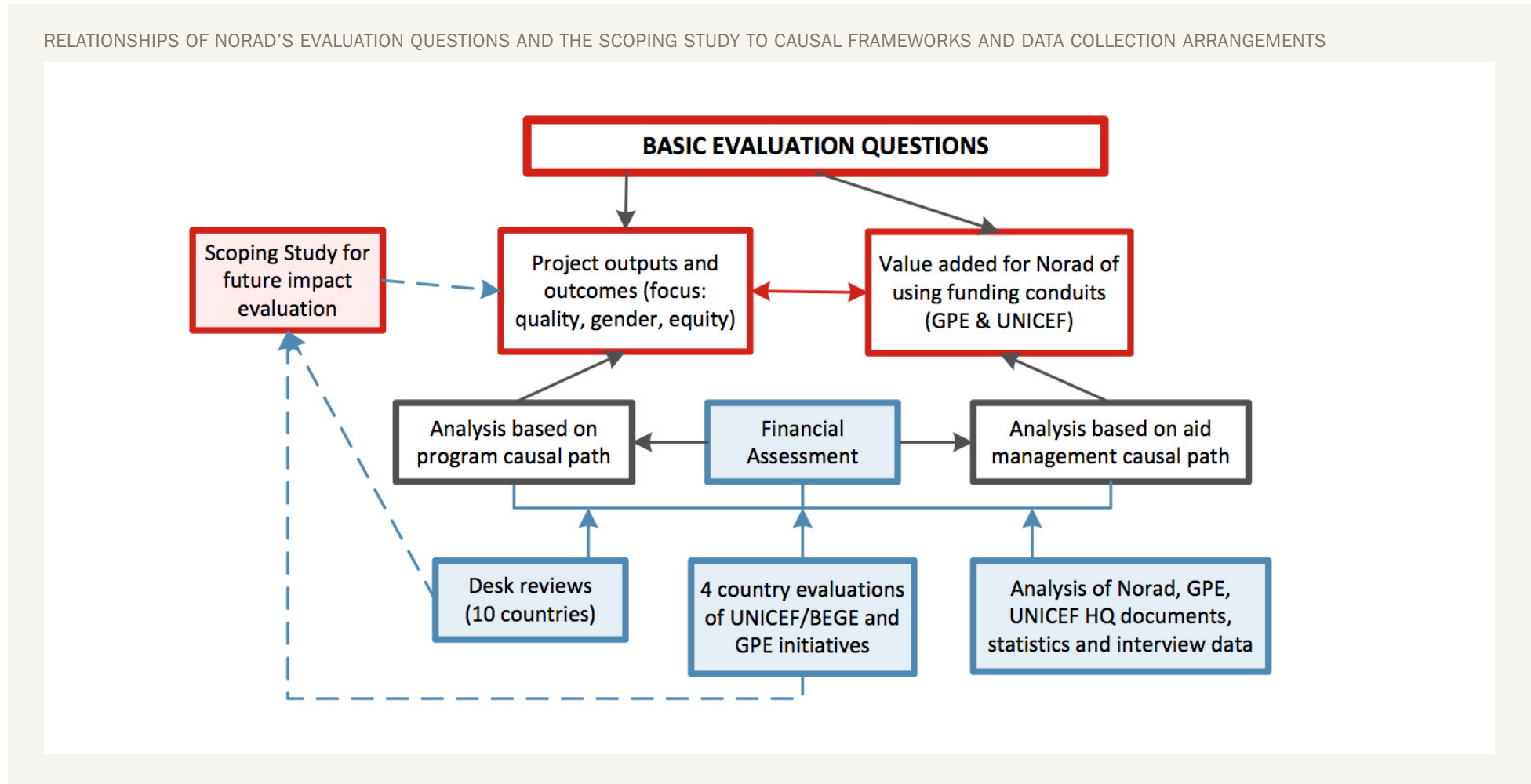
Name	Gender	Organisation
Mathieu Brossard	Senior Advisor, Education Programme Division	UNICEF
Nora Fyles	Head of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) Secretariat	UNICEF
Tom Olsen	Advisor, Public-Sector Alliances & Recourses Mobilization Office (PARMO)	UNICEF
Christian Salazar	Deputy Director, Program Division	UNICEF
George Laryea-Adjei	Deputy Director, Division of Data, Research & Policy	UNICEF
Jordan Naidoo	Senior Advisor, Education (Scaling up and System Reconstruction). On GPE Board Committee for Country Grants and Performance.	UNICEF
Jean-Marc Bernard	Monitoring and Evaluation Team Leader, Monitoring and Evaluation	GPE
Kouassi Somai	Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation	GPE
Julie Wagshal	Program Assistant, Monitoring and Evaluation	GPE
David Bridges	Donor Relations Officer, Europe, Donor Relations	GPE
Margarite Focas Licht	Interim Country Support Team Lead, Country Support	GPE
Sven Baeten	Senior Country Operations Officer. Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Country Support	GPE
Lisa Gomar	Chief Operating Officer, Operations	GPE
Padraig Power	Senior Financial Officer, Finance	GPE
David Glass	Financial Analyst, Finance	GPE
Christine Guetin	Board Operations Officer, Governance	GPE
Alison Evans	Incoming Chief Commissioner	ICAI

# Annex 3 – Schematic of the project cycle and questions that reveal the quality with which it is implemented





## Annex 4 – Norad’s evaluation questions in relation to the data collection efforts



Source: DPMG

## Annex 5 – What is behind the GPE ratings? An example from Malawi

Table 7 in Chapter 4 rates the GPE programs for 10 countries. This annex summarizes the evidence on which the ratings for the Malawi GPE program are based as an example.

### **ESP is rated as moderately unsatisfactory.**

The Government produced two documents: National Education Sector Plan (NESP) for 2008-17 and the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) for 2009-2013. The ESIP is a medium-term plan, designed to translate the vision of the NESP into operational terms and to meet the requirements for Malawi to be included in the FTI partnership.

The NESP has no results framework, although it lists key indicators by sub-sector with targets. Although most key indicators lack baselines, it does provide baselines for the primary education indicators. The ESIP does not have an integrated results framework, and thus it is difficult to construct a causal chain from activities to outputs to outcomes. A partial version can be pieced together from two tables: 1) a Primary Education Activity Matrix that shows output objectives, activities expected to achieve these,

and output targets by year; and 2) a table for key indicators, where it shows the goals for each sub-sector, indicators for each goal that are a mix of outcome and output indicators, and targets by year. This table has no baseline data. Although the targets for some sub-sectors seem heroic, those for basic education seem plausible, partly, perhaps, because trend data are more available for this sub-sector.

The NESP and ESIP discuss M&E arrangements. Reflecting years of prior work by the donors with the MoEST, the sector does have a functioning EMIS. However, the LEG noted that “Data for EMIS is used for updating the status quo, with little usage of the same in decision making and management of education functions at the district and national levels. The decentralized level is heavily characterized with weak or low monitoring capacity. Districts and school do not use the data for their own planning. There is no M&E plan at the sector level.” The NESP and ESIP do not discuss risks explicitly.

### **The LEG’s 40 page appraisal of the ESIP and NESP is rated moderately satisfactory.**

The appraisal is serious. A concluding table entitled *Summary of Technical Appraisal* summarized the LEG’s analysis of several dimensions of the NESP/ESIP. The LEG includes baseline data for several ESIP indicators from the just completed Malawi Education Country Status Report (CSR 2008/09), such as indicators for disadvantaged groups.

The LEG does not thoroughly evaluate the ESP/ESIP’s patchwork results framework or the realism of its targets. Although it has no one section dedicated to an appraisal of risks, a risk perspective permeates the appraisal, with particular attention to pervasive capacity problems with the sector and Government of Malawi. Table 4C analyzes capacity constraints and identifies initiatives within the ESIP to ameliorate them. The LEG judges these initiatives as a start, but does not seem sanguine that these will close the capacity gaps. Given the scope of this Sector-wide Approach relative to weak sector capacities, the LEG should have sought ways to re-balance the implementation load relative to capacities.

**The quality of design is rated moderately satisfactory.** The components are generally well designed. The results framework is solid. With a few exceptions the causal connections between each point in the chain (inputs to activities, activities to outputs, outputs to outcomes, outcomes to the development objectives) are traceable and plausible. All indicators for the development objectives and intermediate results indicators had baseline values at Board. The baselines appear current and quite trustworthy, partly reflecting the data-rich and recently completed Country Status Report. The planned timing of M&E data collection is realistic. The data resources required for M&E were already in use – the EMIS. However, given the LEG’s concerns about M&E at sub-national levels, the design should have included at least spot checks on the validity of the data that the EMIS was collecting.

The major flaw is the complexity of the operation relative to government capacities. The Project Paper and the External Quality Review both identify capacity risks as significant for this operation. Almost all country, sector,

and operation-specific risks identified in the Project Paper constitute weak implementation capacities. The Paper rates these risks realistically. Although the design identifies actions to reduce these risks, the Paper, again realistically, rates most mitigating measures as expected to have little or only partial effect on different risks. The question remains about why the Government, LEG, and SE did not reduce the scope of the operation, phase in certain high risk activities, such as, relying on country FM systems, or take other actions to match Government’s capacities to the implementation demands of the project.

The donor harmonization around the operation was good, resources from IDA, GPE, and four other development agencies being pooled to support the Government’s NESP. The funders relied on country systems, using Government staff, rather than the previous program implementation unit, and country systems for procurement and financial management to implement the program. Reliance on country systems is desirable in the long run, but in this case was premature. In lower capacity countries

such as Malawi, slowly phasing in the use of country systems would have been the wiser course of action.

**The External Quality Review was rated satisfactory.** It was thorough and professional. It assessed multiple aspects of the proposed project, flagging appropriate concerns about the realism of the project’s design relative to the country’s performance history and capacity constraints; the coordination challenges that the design posed; the results framework; the speed with which the GoM can improve its procurement and FM arrangements. It rated the PIEQM an unrealistically complex operation relative to the time frame, the new use of the Ministry (as opposed to a dedicated PIU) to implement the operation, and the new reliance on country systems for FM and procurement.

**The supervising entity’s response to the EQR was thorough.** The task team made some changes in the draft Project Paper to respond to the EQR panel’s comments – e.g., revisions in the results framework. It provided additional information and history to explain why certain

decisions had been made. These explanations were generally acceptable. It clarified linguistic ambiguities and amended the text in the Project Paper to convey the intent. However, its discussion of the implementation and coordination challenges posed by the proposed project's complexity was not convincing.

**Implementation was rated moderately unsatisfactory.** The supervising entity and the LEG had to do sustained “heavy lifting” to keep the project even approximately on track. Both the procurement and financial management functions were immediately in trouble. The project suffered from unrealistic procurement planning that was not fully institutionalized within the government implementation process, unexpected barriers in converting infrastructure personnel from consultants to civil servant positions, and weak financial management. Compounded by the 2011/12 financial and political crisis, the procurement problems led to delays in some key interventions, particularly in the construction of classrooms and purchasing of teaching and learning materials.

Procurement slowly improved, but only with substantial support from the donors and supervising entity – for example, intensive bi-weekly meetings with the Ministry's Procurement unit to review the details of all on-going and planned procurements. Although financial management remained a significant risk, starting in late 2012 Government significantly accelerated program implementation by (i) addressing capacity constraints in planning and procurement and (ii) using more effective implementation mechanisms for school infrastructure, decentralizing the procurement of learning materials, and increasing funding directly schools. However, as of December, 2014, just before the program closed, it seemed likely that several program targets would be missed.

**Supervision was rated moderately satisfactory.** The supervising entity proactively tracked the implementation progress of the activities, as measured by multiple sources, and of progress toward achieving the development objectives. Its management of implementation problems with school construction was exemplary, and it showed similar proactivity with

regard to financial audits and textbook procurements. The MTR was adequate, but not stellar. It identified multiple implementation problems, some of them stemming from the unanticipated bulge in enrolments. Given the bleak sub-text, one might have expected ideas about restructuring, but the MTR offered none. Given the multiple problems with this project, there should have been a vigorous debate about restructuring to deal with the complexity of the design that stemmed from the NESP.

## Annex 6 – Tables for financial management analysis

**TABLE A:** DISBURSEMENTS BY GPE TO PARTNER COUNTRIES DISBURSEMENTS BY PERIOD (US \$000)

Fund Country Name	Grant Amount	Pre-2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	Cumulative Disbursed	Undisbursed
Afghanistan	55,700	-	-	-	9,000	-	9,000	46,700
Benin	117,408	21,321	10,193	30,766	12,828	-	75,108	42,300
Burkina Faso	180,200	22,000	-	45,000	35,000	-	102,000	78,200
Burundi	52,900	-	-	-	-	8,000	8,000	44,900
Cambodia	95,861	4,617	13,440	23,390	15,913	-	57,361	38,500
Cameroon	100,364	22,500	-	15,464	9,100	-	47,064	53,300
Central African Republic	41,490	2,930	8,968	13,218	10,196	4,148	39,460	2,030
Chad	47,200	-	-	-	-	8,360	8,360	38,840
Comoros	4,600	-	-	-	-	1,829	1,829	2,771
Congo DR	100,000	-	-	-	-	5,683	5,683	94,317
Cote d'Ivoire	41,400	-	-	-	1,974	1,839	3,814	37,586
Djibouti	15,800	8,000	-	655	2,231	1,112	11,998	3,802
Eritrea	25,300	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,300
Ethiopia	267,364	36,500	26,672	83,631	13,313	5,195	165,310	102,054
Gambia, The	48,299	19,744	2,869	8,564	7,191	3,032	41,400	6,899
Ghana	94,500	27,600	-	(8,600)	-	22,685	41,685	52,815
Guinea	64,000	-	24,000	11,853	17,347	9,475	62,675	1,325
Guinea-Bissau	12,000	-	-	-	-	2,560	2,560	9,440

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Fund Country Name	Grant Amount	Pre-2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	Cumulative Disbursed	Undisbursed
Guyana	32,920	18,513	5,892	3,505	5,011	-	32,920	-
Haiti	46,100	-	11,779	1,763	6,198	800	20,539	25,561
Kenya	121,000	121,000	-	-	-	-	121,000	-
Kyrgyz Republic	27,599	8,762	228	2,238	2,651	1,020	14,899	12,700
Lao People's Democratic Republic	30,000	-	2,000	4,608	9,327	6,981	22,917	7,083
Lesotho	31,672	9,244	2,428	1,426	-	6,474	19,572	12,100
Liberia	40,000	-	-	6,000	1,496	3,908	11,404	28,596
Madagascar	209,400	60,000	37,018	-	26,982	-	124,000	85,400
Malawi	90,000	-	-	15,000	23,208	37,072	75,280	14,720
Mali	48,254	4,767	2,276	(489)	-	1,545	8,099	40,155
Mauritania	35,398	13,207	3,692	4,397	1,704	(2)	22,998	12,400
Moldova	13,168	7,750	1,018	-	350	932	10,051	3,118
Mongolia	39,400	25,100	4,300	-	2,000	233	31,633	7,767
Mozambique	169,000	58,000	21,000	-	19,995	26,745	125,740	43,260
Nepal	120,000	-	-	30,016	38,000	44,608	112,624	7,376
Nicaragua	40,700	24,000	-	-	-	800	24,800	15,900
Niger	104,716	13,000	3,792	1,506	2,344	(127)	20,516	84,200
Pakistan	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	100,000
Papua New Guinea	19,200	-	-	934	531	7,546	9,011	10,189
Rwanda	175,000	70,000	35,000	20,000	24,000	26,000	175,000	-

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Fund Country Name	Grant Amount	Pre-2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	Cumulative Disbursed	Undisbursed
Sao Tome and Principe	4,700	1,200	1,127	1,273	-	-	3,600	1,100
Senegal	128,400	9,326	11,860	9,465	32,748	6,990	70,388	58,012
Sierra Leone	29,591	3,000	-	5,940	2,457	294	11,691	17,900
Somalia	14,500	-	-	-	-	7,168	7,168	7,332
South Sudan	36,100	-	-	-	-	11,060	11,060	25,040
Sudan	76,500	-	-	-	-	2,686	2,686	73,815
Tajikistan	47,950	17,369	2,031	3,433	5,420	3,496	31,750	16,200
Tanzania	100,000	-	-	-	-	2,494	2,494	97,506
Timor-Leste	15,850	10,588	2,500	(39)	-	400	13,449	2,400
Togo	72,800	-	-	9,450	14,451	11,275	35,177	37,623
Uganda	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	100,000
Uzbekistan	49,900	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,900
Vietnam	84,600	-	-	-	-	33,864	33,864	50,736
Yemen, Republic of	122,367	19,778	8,433	10,621	946	10,000	49,778	72,589
Zambia	95,400	30,100	-	30,100	-	-	60,200	35,200
Zimbabwe	23,600	-	-	-	-	6,300	6,300	17,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,860,170</b>	<b>689,914</b>	<b>242,517</b>	<b>385,088</b>	<b>353,913</b>	<b>334,482</b>	<b>2,005,914</b>	<b>1,854,256</b>

Source: GPE Secretariat

**TABLE B: CONTRIBUTIONS TO GPE FROM 2002 – 2014)**

Donor	Pre 2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Australia	6,183,618	18,879,347	12,856,550	81,274,000	30,675,000	151,811,731	301,680,246
Belgium	9,534,644	6,923,673	8,145,700	11,934,000	11,579,400	-	48,117,417
Canada	31,266,324	24,002,953	203,037	45,620,743	-	-	101,093,058
Denmark	46,099,801	25,267,177	51,670,784	63,964,429	50,939,123	50,040,774	287,982,089
EC	21,428,705	102,768,184	3,931,852	20,414,010	3,121,983	31,417,372	183,082,106
Finland	-	-	-	-	-	4,399,315	4,399,315
France	29,310,987	1,759,320	22,518,166	20,977,332	23,031,835	-	97,597,640
Germany	13,968,408	6,681,500	7,179,975	7,687,350	9,309,860	-	44,827,093
Ireland	44,902,752	4,998,520	5,095,350	5,202,400	6,929,400	4,155,900	71,284,322
Italy	27,453,700	4,012,800	2,133,300	1,586,280	2,024,100	-	37,210,180
Japan	3,600,000	1,200,000	741,600	5,400,000	5,070,000	2,910,000	18,921,600
Luxembourg	4,535,062	943,180	1,006,040	-	-	410,160	6,894,442
Netherlands	439,502,569	48,413,167	39,204,000	39,600,000	41,232,000	-	607,951,736
Norway	138,172,724	18,410,238	38,631,047	34,053,231	39,533,186	-	268,800,426
Romania	512,174	-	199,833	-	-	-	712,007
Russia	7,200,000	6,000,000	2,000,000	-	-	-	15,200,000
Spain	247,118,740	79,374,000	-	-	26,826,000	110,328	353,429,068
Sweden	53,348,192	48,245,165	55,735,033	14,259,030	15,178,422	-	186,765,842
Switzerland	2,526,110	1,345,050	1,630,435	7,043,602	6,997,524	7,188,675	26,731,396
United Kingdom	290,352,630	84,994,000	156,571,796	144,522,320	96,587,000	907,767	773,935,513
United States	600,000	900,000	-	800,000	21,020,000	20,180,000	43,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,417,617,140</b>	<b>485,118,274</b>	<b>409,454,499</b>	<b>504,338,728</b>	<b>390,054,832</b>	<b>553,175,808</b>	<b>3,759,759,282</b>

Source: GPE Secretariat



**TABLE C: PLEDGE SUMMARY, GPE REPLENISHMENT, JUNE 26 2014, BRUSSELS\***

Donor	Pledged Amount	US Dollar Equivalent
Australia	AUD – 140,000,000	USD – 131,166,000
Belgium	EUR – 36,000,000 <i>Includes €9m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>	USD – 48,973,000 <i>Includes US\$12.2m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>
Denmark	DKK – 1,600,000,000	USD – 291,968,000
European Commission	EUR – 375,000,000	USD – 510,135,000
Germany	EUR – 35,000,000	USD – 47,613,000
Ireland	EUR – 16,000,000	USD – 21,766,000
Italy	EUR – 7,500,000	USD – 10,203,000
Japan	USD – 2,442,000	USD – 2,442,000
Norway	NOK – 1,660,000,000	USD – 270,116,000
Sweden	SEK – 1,300,000,000 <i>Includes SEK100m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>	USD – 192,830,000 <i>Includes US\$14.8m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>
Switzerland	CHF – 26,000,000 <i>Includes CHF6.5m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>	USD – 29,068,000 <i>Includes US\$7.3m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>
United Kingdom	GBP – 300,000,000	USD – 509,113,000
United States	USD – 90,000,000	USD – 90,000,000
Finland	EUR – 4,841,388 <i>Includes €0.841m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>	USD – 6,586,000 <i>Includes US\$1.145m existing pledge for payment in 2015</i>
<b>Public Sector Pledge – USD 2,161,979,000</b>		
Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)	USD – 22,000,000	USD – 22,000,000
Dubai Cares	USD – 1,000,000	USD – 1,000,000
<b>Private Sector/Foundations Pledge – USD 23,000,000</b>		
<b>TOTAL PLEDGE – USD 2,184,979,000</b>		

\*Source: GPE Secretariat

# List of tables/figures

## LIST OF TABLES

- TABLE 1:** Outcomes from GPE Programs in 10 Countries
- TABLE 2:** Outcomes from UNICEF Programs in 10 countries
- TABLE 3:** Accountability Relationships between the GPE Players
- TABLE 4:** Ratio of GPE Members to Secretariat Country Support Officers
- TABLE 5:** Summary of status of enabling conditions for UNICEF and GPE
- TABLE 6:** Rating Scale used to rate quality of GPE programs
- TABLE 7:** Ratings of GPE programs on dimensions of project cycle by country
- TABLE 8:** Ratings of UNICEF and GPE on aid management outcomes
- TABLE 9:** GPE Grants by Type and Amount as of August 2013
- TABLE 10:** Summary Statistics on Program Implementation Grants, as of August 2013
- TABLE 11:** Thematic Contributions
- TABLE 12:** Major resource partners to Basic Education and Gender Equality
- TABLE 13:** Expenditures by Funding Type for BEGE

## LIST OF FIGURES

- FIGURE 1:** Theory of Change
- FIGURE 2:** Basic Education Program Interventions by GPE and UNICEF in 10 Countries
- FIGURE 3:** Strength of the Enabling Conditions for Basic Education in 4 Case Study Countries
- FIGURE 4:** Organigram for the Global Partnership for Education
- FIGURE 5:** Organigram for UNICEF
- FIGURE 6:** Theory of Good Aid Management
- FIGURE 7:** Percent of GPE programs rated above, midway, and below the line
- FIGURE 8:** Official Development Assistance for all sectors 2004-2013
- FIGURE 9:** Aid to Education, All Donors 2004-2013
- FIGURE 10:** Aid to Education by Type, All Donors 2004-2013
- FIGURE 11:** Aid to Basic Education, All Donors 2004-2013
- FIGURE 12:** Development Assistance from Norway to Education
- FIGURE 13:** Total GPE Disbursements to Partner Countries By Period
- FIGURE 14:** UNICEF Revenue 2008 – 2013
- FIGURE 15:** Total Expenditures for all Focus Areas

# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>BE</b>	Basic Education	<b>MTR</b>	Midterm Review	<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>BEGE</b>	Basic Education and Gender Equality	<b>MTSP</b>	Medium Term Strategic Plan (UNICEF)	<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>CFS</b>	Child Friendly Schools	<b>NASA</b>	National Assessment of Student Achievement (Nepal)	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>CPAP</b>	Country Program Action Plan	<b>NER</b>	Net Enrolment Ratio	<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>CPD</b>	Country Program Document	<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization	<b>USD/ US\$</b>	United States Dollar
<b>DPMG</b>	Development Portfolio Management Group	<b>NIR</b>	Net Intake Rate		
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development	<b>Norad</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation		
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All	<b>NPF</b>	Needs and Performance Framework		
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information Systems	<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance		
<b>ESP</b>	Education Sector Plan	<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee		
<b>FTI</b>	Fast Track Initiative	<b>OOSC</b>	Out of School Children		
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product	<b>PEFA</b>	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability		
<b>GEQIP</b>	General Education Quality Improvement Program (Ethiopia)	<b>PFM</b>	Public Financial Management		
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education	<b>QAR</b>	Quality Assurance Review		
<b>GPI</b>	Gender Parity Index	<b>SE</b>	Supervising Entity		
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	<b>SIP</b>	School Improvement Plan		
<b>LEG</b>	Local Education Group	<b>SSRP</b>	School Sector Reform Program		
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation				
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs				
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education				

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- 17.10 Evaluation: Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative. Country Report: Tanzania

16.10 Evaluation: Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative. Country Report: Indonesia

15.10 Evaluation: Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative. Country Report: Guyana

14.10 Evaluation: Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative. Country Report: Democratic Republic of Congo

13.10 Evaluation: Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative. Country Report: Brasil

12.10 Evaluation: Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI)

11.10 Evaluation: Evaluation of the International Organization for Migration and its Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking

10.10 Evaluation: Democracy Support through the United Nations

9.10 Study: Evaluability Study of Partnership Initiatives

8.10 Evaluation: Evaluation of Transparency International

7.10 Evaluation: Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with the Western Balkans

6.10 Study: Evaluation of Norwegian Business-related Assistance Uganda Case Study

5.10 Study: Evaluation of Norwegian Business-related Assistance Bangladesh Case Study

4.10 Study: Evaluation of Norwegian Business-related Assistance South Africa Case Study

3.10 Synthesis Main Report: Evaluation of Norwegian Business-related Assistance

2.10 Synthesis Study: Support to Legislatures

1.10 Evaluation: Evaluation of the Norwegian Centre for Democracy Support 2002-2009

**2009**

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**2008**

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3A.02 Évaluation du programme ACOPAM Un programme du BIT sur l’« Appui associatif et coopératif aux Initiatives de Développement à la Base » en Afrique de l’Ouest de 1978 à 1999

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