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Evaluation of Norwegian Multilateral Support to Basic Education: **Malawi Case Study**

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Development Portfolio Management Group

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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.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DfID	Department for International Development
DPs	Development Partners
ECD	Early Child Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQR	External Quality Review
ESP	Education Sector Plan
GoM	Government of Malawi
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDA	International Development Association
LEG	Local Education Group
MK	Malawian Kwacha
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFM	Public Financial Management
PIEQM	Project to Improve Education Quality in Malawi
PqTR	Pupil-qualified Teacher Ratio
PSIP	Primary School Improvement Plan
PTR	Pupil to Teacher Ratio
SE	Supervising Entity
SWAp	Sector-wide approaches
SWG	Sector Working Group
TLM	Teaching and Learning Materials
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Aid Development
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

Purpose and Background

1. The Malawi case study is one of four case 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 other three being Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Nepal. The two main questions for the 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. Two causal pathways are used to assess these questions: the research team's theory of change (ToC) that can be expected to improve three goals of interest to Norway (learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity) and the processes and quality assurance mechanisms that increase the probabilities of good aid management of the project/program cycle.

2. Strengthening basic education in Malawi during 2008 to 2013 proceeded through three main channels. These included the Project to Improve Education Quality in Malawi (PIEQM), a multi-donor program supervised by the World Bank and pooling funds from IDA, GPE, DfID, German Development Cooperation and others, begun in September 2010 with a closing date set at June 2015; the UNICEF Country Programme for Basic Education and Youth Development, implemented from June 2008 to December 2011; and programs of the government of Malawi, including the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) and Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP).

3. These three channels focused, in differing degrees, on: 1) teacher training; 2) construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of classrooms, school sanitary and other disability-friendly facilities, and, in rural areas, teachers' housing; 3) provision of curricular materials and textbooks, 4) promotion of school feeding programs; 5) improved access to Early Child Development programs, 6) Grants for disadvantaged children, to facilitate their attendance in school, and 7) improvements in school and teacher management.

Methods

4. Each case study is based on two main sources of evidence: desk reviews of multiple documents prior to the field work; and extensive case study fieldwork, involving interviews of parties connected with 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, plus, in the case of Malawi, visits to and interviews at school sites. Teams of two researchers carried out the field work in each country, in the case of Malawi, consisting of one senior researcher/education specialist and one senior academic.

5. The case study uses process tracing, a method of checking whether the intervening steps in the theory of change were realized, to strengthen assertions about the contribution of programs to outcomes and/or the attribution of change to program interventions. The study uses this method to assess not only the main outcome and output (intervention) variables in the theory of change, but the contextual variables (enabling conditions) in the theory that which can mediate (enhance or suppress) the effects of interventions on outcomes, such general government commitment to basic education access and equity, the percent of national budget allocated to education, and institutional capacity (national and sub-national) for planning and implementation. The case study pays special attention to the lessons learned and unintended consequences of sponsored programs, both negative and positive. Donor funding, for example, will not have the desired effect if a government simply reduces its basic education in order to spend their own revenues elsewhere.

Limitations of the Evaluation

6. Educational outcomes cannot be directly or solely attributed to Government or donor-sponsored programs--economic trends and natural disasters also affect outcomes. Also, even if process tracing turns

up strong evidence that allows a strong inference on whether aid programs or other factors affected outcomes, unlike experimental or statistical methods it does not give a precise estimate on how much each factor affected outcomes. It is not possible to test the counterfactual of what outcomes would have been in the absence of aid. In addition, even if a case study properly identifies the causal explanation for observed outcomes, care must be taken in generalizing these findings to cases that may be different in important respects from the case studied. The results of the Malawi case, for example, are more likely to apply to a state that is poor and that experiences a disruption of aid than to a case that lacks these features.

Findings

Outcomes

7. Improved Learning Outcomes. The GPE/PIEQM included among its objectives to “Enhance the quality of the Learning and Teaching Environment,” but included nothing explicitly about student learning outcomes. Malawi does participate in the Southern African Consortium of Monitoring Education Quality, but chose not to use results from that as a performance indicator, and has yet to develop its own standardized assessment system at the basic education level. Malawi did track a proxy variable for student learning, primary school completion, and findings on this were worrisome: for basic education they declined from a baseline value of 52 percent in 2010 to 31 percent in 2014 (moving it in the opposite direction of Education for All goals). UNICEF’s country programme aimed “to strengthen the Government’s capacity to fulfil the right of every child to a quality education through comprehensive measures to enhance access, completion, gender equity and performance.” Implicit in this goal was improving educational outcomes, but the Programme included no “expected result” in this area.

8. Gender Equality. The GPE/PIEQM Project included among its three components “improving access to and equity of education.” The two standard performance indicators that it employed, Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) and Primary Completion Rate, could have been used to track improved gender equity but they were not broken down by gender. However, net enrollment data obtained by DPMG from the Ministry did reveal gender parity for primary education (NER in total increasing from 79 to 86 percent from 2008 to 2012, with girls’ NER increasing from 80 to 87 percent. The same data reveal less than gender parity (0.85) at grade 8.) Thus gender parity at the primary level has been basically established at the primary education level in Malawi (except in the upper grades), but not as a result of the project, since this was the case before the project began.

9. The UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan for 2008-2011 sets out indicators that imply improved female access (95% eligible girls enroll in schools, and 50% complete primary education cycle) and mounted significant programs for that purpose, especially in low-performing areas, but the annual plans do not report on enrolment and completion in percentage terms, so it is not possible to determine if this goal was reached.

10. Equity (for marginalized groups). Equity for marginalized groups is implicit in the GPE/PIEQM goal of improving equity of education, and for this there was one outcome indicator, namely, an urban-rural comparison of Primary Completion Rates (the target was for rural to increase by 14 percent and urban by 3 percent). Unfortunately, the latest Project Implementation Status and Results Report (Dec 2014) had no urban/rural endline breakdowns on this indicator (nor on a similar one “Primary Survival Rate”). UNICEF was active in supporting the full school participation of marginalized children (for example out-of-school children and those touched by HIV/AIDs) but it articulated no expected results or outcome indicators for this work. Even outputs in this area (e.g., improvement in percent of children acquiring relevant HIV/AIDs knowledge and skills) could not be tracked because there were no recorded baseline data.

11. Other Outcomes. (For UNICEF) Under the Basic Education and Youth Development programme component on Policy Development and Sector Reform, UNICEF made significant contributions to the formulation of the education sector plan (NESP) and the development of the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) for education which incorporated the funding from GPE among other partners. .

12. Unintended consequences. The team explored a range of potential unintended consequences of aid programs and found two that are relevant in the Malawi case. First, in the “cash-gate” scandal, funds were diverted through corruption, though it remains unclear how much money was diverted from which sources. Second, funds designated for education were at times diverted to other governmental purposes, or were offset by governments redirecting spending away from education. At the district level, Primary School Improvement Plan funds intended for schools were diverted to other purposes, since education has the largest allocation in the district budget. The National Local Government Finance Committee have not been able to adequately monitor and rectify this problem. Funds were also diverted at the school level from the quality allocation, which constitutes 50 percent of the Primary School Improvement Plan, to infrastructure to address the critical shortage of classrooms.

Program Interventions (outputs).

13. The following list from the GPE/PIEQM project includes all of the interventions from the theory of change that were addressed by the project (those which were not included: *curriculum; student/teacher time on task; language of instruction; learning environment; and community and parents*). The UNICEF program also had interventions in many of these areas but the indicators were not tracked so as to show progress.

14. Teacher training. The Open and Distance Learning programme for training teachers had a baseline of zero and a cumulative target of 12,000. At the close of the project 14,724 teachers had graduated from the programme. As a result, the Pupil-Teacher Ratio decreased from 81 in 2009 to 70 in 2014, although it remained lower for urban schools (66), than for rural ones (71). At the same time, the government’s inability to place and retain all these trained teachers prevented full success in getting teachers into the schools.

15. Schools, classrooms. The target set for new classrooms was 3,000, of which 2,332 had been built by the close of the project period. The target for the boarding facilities was 11, of which 8 were built. As a result, the pupil to classroom ratio decreased from 116 in 2009 to a low of 101 in 2010. Yet, as school enrolments continued to grow, the Pupil to Classroom Ratio increased again after 2010, to 111 in 2014. The National Education Sector Plan (NESP) target, a pupil to classroom ratio of 57, is not likely to be met by the target year of 2017. The pupil to classroom ratio also varied greatly at the district level, with some districts having Pupil to Classroom Ratios as low as 55 (Likoma) while others have pupil to classroom ratios as high as 171 (Lilongwe).

16. Learning materials. Despite programs designed to improve pupil to textbook ratios, delays caused in part by the inefficient centralized textbook procurement system slowed improvement, and in some cases fewer textbooks were available for each student in 2014 than in 2008. The target ratios for students per textbook for Standard 3 for Mathematics and English, for example, were both 1.5 to 1, but the ratio for Math textbooks improved only slightly from a baseline of 2.6:1 to a 2014 outcome of 2.14:1, while the ratio for English textbooks grew slightly worse, from 2:1 to 2.15:1.

17. Teacher/school/system supervision. The supervision indicator tracked was the percentage of schools with strategic and annual work plans and budgets in place. The baseline was 0 and the target was 100 percent. Data at the end of the project was not available, but at the mid-term review 70 percent of schools had these plans. Also at the mid-term review 50 managers had received training against a target of 100 by the close of the project.

18. Children’s resources. The NESP sets a target 80 percent of all children having access to Early Childhood Development (ECD) by the end of the NESP plan period of 2017, including access for those with special needs. Enrolments in Early Childhood Education increased from 771,666 in 2010 to 1,057,705 in 2012. Yet, budgetary support from Development Partners to education is currently frozen, and the budget allocated to ECD in the ESIP II may be reduced by 20 percent of its 2013/14 amount. It is therefore difficult to see how the target for ECD access can be met. Development of ECD has thus been left mainly to communities, which themselves are cash strapped. As a result, in spite of the increase in the ECD centers during the ESIP period, the net enrolment ratio for ECD dropped from 35 percent in 2010/2011 to 33.2 percent in 2013/2014. Also, some caregivers have very low education and training levels. Another problem

is a lack of permanent buildings to be used as ECD centers, so some ECD activities are carried out under trees or thatch structures.

19. Grants to facilitate attendance in school had a baseline of zero and a target of 315,000 by the end of the project. Results remained far short of the target, as the cumulative number for two years was 21,515 beneficiaries (with close to 50 percent being female, against a target of 47 percent). The number of beneficiaries and the percentage of female recipients decreased over the period 2012 - 2014. Data for 2014/15 is not yet available.

Aid Management, Financial Management and Enabling Conditions.

20. **Aid management by GPE:** The GPE Secretariat commissioned an External Quality Review in 2009 that found a gap between the ambitious goals of education programs and the limited capacity of Malawi. The Local Education Group did not adequately address this gap, and together with unexpected growth in the school-age population and in repetition rates, this created sharp shortfalls in meeting outcome targets. The World Bank, as the Supervising Entity, and other partner agencies, flagged these capacity issues, but programs were not sufficiently restructured to address them.

21. **Aid Management by UNICEF:** UNICEF's Country Program Action Plan for 2008-2011 had an inadequate design, lacking a sufficient results framework or a theory of change indicating how Child Friendly School inputs could be expected to produce the desired outcomes. In addition, targets, especially for improved completion rates, were unrealistic, and reporting on progress in meeting expected results was inadequate.

22. **Financial Management.** The most recent Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability assessment for Malawi, conducted in 2011, indicates that the significant progress made in strengthening the public financial management system have been affected by a major corruption scandal that led to serious challenges in financing public services, as donors withdrew budget support from the country. Partially as a result of "cashgate" the development partners moved much of their remaining financial support to projects outside of government channels, giving priority to the payment of salaries to health workers to sustain minimum service levels.

23. Malawi's commitment to education appears to be strong as the education sector accounts for the largest share of Government of Malawi expenditures – 19 percent in 2013 and it is well above the average level of expenditures for developing countries of 17.3 percent (in 2012). Further, the education sector's expenditures have been increasing faster than the overall national budget both in nominal and real terms during the period of 2009 – 2013. Basic (primary) education accounts for the largest share of the education sector's recurring expenditures and the support has increased from about 48 percent of the total education spending in 2009 to more than 51 percent in 2012.

24. **Enabling conditions.** According to our case study team, Malawi was only strong on one of the ten Theory of Change enabling conditions, *National/political commitment to improved quality and equity in Basic Education, including Early Childhood Education*. It was weak in *conflict and disaster sensitive mechanisms*, as witnessed by the failure to control devastating floods in recent years; a *Functioning Local Education Group*, whose membership and functioning have not been well established; and *institutional capacity at national and local level for planning and implementation* (a recognized constraint to the implementing the complex GPE/PIEQM project), compounded the financial management scandal ("cashgate") that caused many donor agencies to cut back or withdraw their programs.

Conclusions

25. **Evaluation Question One:** Intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of basic education initiatives that Norway funds through GPE and UNICEF.

- Both GPE/PIEQM and UNICEF/ Basic Education & Youth Development have tried to address the challenges facing the education sector in Malawi, but the resources available in the evaluation period were not adequate to meet the great needs of a rapidly growing school population. Despite large investments in the sector by both Government and DPs, the impact has been very limited in terms of improved learning outcomes. Pupil-teacher ratios, pupil-classroom ratios, and pupil-textbook ratios have not reached program targets. Much has been achieved in gender equity at the basic education level, but the enrolment of girls lags in the higher grades. Improvements have been made in equity across the system through grants and school feeding programs for poor families, but not all those eligible have benefitted and these programs need to be expanded and put on a sustainable basis.
- Qualitative outcomes like student learning are difficult to assess, particularly for UNICEF programs, as programs often lacked adequate baseline measures and results frameworks. Moving forward, ongoing and new aid programs need tighter monitoring and evaluation provisions so that progress, or the lack thereof, can be reliably measured.
- Malawi has not adequately addressed all the conditions that are needed to produce positive results in Norway's three priority areas. The largest problem has been resource constraints, which are likely to be worsened if the support of Development Partners is not restored. The management of the system also needs to improve in order to improve service delivery beyond current levels. Inadequate promotion criteria, poor administration of rural allowances, few opportunities for professional development, and inadequate teacher houses particularly in rural areas, has demotivated some teachers and created problems in incorporating the 10,000 teachers trained.
- **Classroom construction and acquisition of Teacher Learning Materials (TLM) have lagged behind set targets** due to poor management, even with improvements brought by use of the Local Development Fund. As a result, Pupil to Teacher ratios, Pupil Classroom ratios and Pupil to Textbook ratios have remained high in spite of efforts to improve these. The currently available resources are not adequate to meet the classroom gap estimated at 3,400 per year up to 2017.
- **Girl dropout is a factor** in the last two years of the primary cycle and the higher grades, despite improvement in the lower grades. The **enrolment of those with special needs continues to be low** compared their size in the population, and too few teachers are trained in special needs education.
- **There is no focus on learning outcomes in the three NESP thematic areas.** There are in-built school push-out factors: the system encourages children to enroll but is unable to retain them; many are still learning under trees. An overemphasis on access reflects global attention on access rather than on learning. There is need for repositioning the focus so that interest shifts to what a child learns.
- **The continuous assessment required by the PCAR is difficult to implement** because of large class sizes and inadequate preparation of teachers in the prescribed assessment methods. This negatively impacts on the quality of the education.
- **Not much progress has been made in reaching the ESIP target of 80 percent** given the declining NER over the last few years. Lack of pay for caregivers, lack of instructional ECD materials, lack of supervision, a dearth of dedicated ECD classrooms, and low educational levels and lack of training of ECD caregivers impeded the quality of ECD programs. Development partners have shunned allocating resources to ECD in spite of this being a Government priority in the NESP and ESIP. Most of the support to ECD has been from UNICEF whose funding often comes through NGOs.
- **School meal programmes have enhanced attendance and child nutrition but resources are not adequate to include all the eligible students.** Currently, support for school feeding is

provided by Mary's meals, WFP, UNICEF, a number of NGOs and some church organizations. In order to reduce the overall cost of school feeding programmes the government is looking at home grown solutions, which would see the schools and the communities and farming clubs, growing and providing the food to the schools.

- **Although primary education is described as free, parents are paying hidden costs** related to school uniforms and other charges averaging between MK 2,500 and 3,000 per year for each student. For poor families this can be a constraint to sending children to school, and government grants do not meet the needs of all those eligible.
- **Most students graduating from Primary are not very articulate in spoken English.** Reconciling tensions between instruction in native languages and instruction in English will require considerable planning and resources, including increased access to learning and teaching materials in the chosen languages, and in-service language training to teachers.

26. Evaluation Question Two: The value-added to Norway of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments.

- **The SWAp is an effective way of funding the education sector** as it provides funding that is regular and predictable, in addition to reducing the transaction costs for Government.
- **There is need for clear prioritization so that resources are focused on a few things that can be done more effectively for impact.** Spending on school infrastructure like classrooms should not be at the expense of systems development. Teacher motivation is also essential in improving learning and some attention needs to be paid the necessary incentives through support from partners.
- **A well-functioning LEG is needed to improve coordination in the sector.** Partners should promote more accountability for the resources allocated to education for the benefit of the children of Malawi.
- **Consistent and predictable funding is important.** Aid suspensions like that brought about by the Cashgate scandal can be disruptive. The arrangement of reimbursement to GPE after the government had spent the money is not a good funding mechanism especially for a poor country that already depends on DP support

Recommendations

27. Recommendations based on the 2009-2013 evaluation period are not immediately pertinent to post 2013. In September 2013, the end of the evaluation period, "Cashgate" occurred. This event led to the suspension of donor budget support across all sectors. The development partners that had been pooling their funds through the education SWAp in a coordinated and harmonized fashion pulled out of the SWAp. The suspension of aid led to severe macro-fiscal problems. A new government was elected in May 2014, but January 2015 brought further problems in the form of catastrophic floods affecting half the country.

28. Lessons learned for fragile states need to be considered as the basis for going forward:

- 1) **Keep it simple.** The events of the last two years have put acute pressure on all sectors, including the education system. The design of aid needs to become simpler and omit complex issues that are demanding of implementation capacities that are apt to be in disarray or unavailable.
- 2) **Keep it realistic.** Be wary of outcomes and activities less likely to succeed under fragile conditions. Success requires the political support of Government. Shortfalls in Government capacity pose limits on what aid can achieve. Since fragile states often have high turnover at national and sub-national levels, pursue capacity development activities only if the intended beneficiaries have the

incentives to change and only if better capacities will not be quickly lost to further turnover. Recognize that some objectives, especially those involving quality, require longer time frames to succeed and thus relatively stable conditions that only infrequently exist in fragile states.

- 3) **Determine if an approach of maintenance or damage limitation is more appropriate than the development perspective appropriate to stable situations.**
- 4) **Always think through the causal pathways and have a robust M&E system in place.** Even if aid is simplified and organized around damage limitation, aid programs still need carefully thought through causal chains from activities to the outcomes sought. They still need indicators, and arrangements to measure progress toward outcomes. Especially in the Malawi case M&E needs to verify that goods and services in fact reach their intended beneficiaries. *The fundamental issue here is clarity of thought and the design of a measurement regime fit for management and accountability purposes.*
- 5) **Stay flexible.** Flexibility in means and sometimes in ends is necessary to operate effectively in fragile conditions. However, especially when ends must change, the theory that links activities to outputs to outcomes must be revised, as well as its associated indicators and measurement arrangements. All changes need to be clearly documented.
- 6) **Minimize the use of parallel systems.** Parallel systems disempower and discredit the Government and reduce the accountability of the systems and the personnel in place. If the donors are reluctant to work through Government, delivering the aid as directly to beneficiaries as possible minimizes the creation of centralized systems with powerful interests in sustaining their new role. Interests will be created even when delivering the aid as directly to beneficiaries as possible, but if direct delivery is working well, it is more efficient and should become a permanent delivery system.
- 7) **Carpe Diem--seize the day.** Crises can force the use of innovative ways to keep the system running that can reveal previously unrecognized capacities, build new capacities, and reveal significantly more efficient ways to get things done than had been previously used. When successful, these innovations can become institutionalized post-crisis. For example, in Madagascar UNICEF transferred the GPE share of school grants directly to the public primary schools, shortening the implementation chain and increasing the timeliness of fund transfers.

29. A few recommendations are germane if and when the aid situation stabilizes in Malawi:

- 1) **Reduce** the size of the Sector Working Group, reduce the number of annual Sector Working Group meetings, and lengthen each meeting. The Sector Working Group membership is too large, with some members not contributing at all. Reducing the number and extending the length of each meeting can reduce travel costs for members outside of Lilongwe and deal with the problem of the currently overloaded agendas for each meeting.
- 2) **Create a more unified aid management process** that focuses on policy, strategy, and accountability as well as implementation. This can be fostered by using a Terms of Reference for the Sector Working Group comparable to those for a Local Education Group that focuses the Sector Working Group on the sector as a whole and that includes the functions of policy dialogue and consensus building.
- 3) **UNICEF should consider funding more of their activities through the pool fund** in order to leverage more resources from the Pool instead of the current situation where most of the activities are outside the pool and in selected districts and schools.
- 4) The **school feeding program** should be revised to create more buy-in from local communities and greater breadth and sustainability. The possibility should be explored of including communal

gardens that participate in the school feeding program in other programs that improve access to seed and fertilizer.

I: Introduction: Objectives, Methods, and Limitations

1.1. Objectives. The Malawi case study is one of four case studies conducted by the Development Portfolio Management Group (DPMG) for the Evaluation of Norway's Support to Basic Education through UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education, the other three being Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Nepal. The time period for the evaluation is 2009-2013. The two main questions for the Evaluation are these: 1) what are the intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of the basic education initiatives that Norway's MFA 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. Annex 1 displays the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

1.2. Methods. Two causal pathways are used to assess these questions: a) the research team's Theory of Change (ToC) or causal path in annex 2 for improving three goals of interest to Norway (learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity), and b) the processes and quality assurance mechanisms that increase the probabilities of good aid management of the project/program cycle, diagrammed in annex 3.

1.3. Each case study is based on multiple sources of evidence, including interviews with outside observers and the main parties connected to the GPE and UNICEF programs, such as members of the Local Education Group (including bilateral organizations and CSO members), supervising or managing entities for GPE programs, UNICEF staff, and Ministry of Education leaders and technical staff; and, where possible, school visits and school-based interviews. The fieldwork complemented and deepened the desk reviews of documents for each case. The case study teams consisted of two researchers, one senior and the other more junior, except in Nepal where they were both senior. Prior to the field work they were given the desk study results and invited to contribute to the field study design. The resulting field-study instrument, containing both standard items and customized ones, was jointly reviewed by the teams and the overall evaluation Team Leader during his one week visit to each country (except for Nepal) just prior to the field work, to assure full understanding or further adaptation of the items and inter-rater reliability. The Team Leader participated in many of the early interviews in these locations to assure that data collection was conducted according to the agreed upon design and standards

1.4. The case studies assessed not only the outcome and contributing variables (interventions) in our Theory of Change, but also the contextual variables (enabling conditions) in the theory that can affect the outcomes and interventions, 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 meals and scholarships). They also took into consideration various national strategic conditions such as the *coup d'état* in Madagascar, Ethiopia's booming economy, Nepal's political turmoil, and, in Malawi, a major scandal at the Ministry of Finance that led to the suspension of aid by a number of donors. Each case study used process tracing, a method of checking whether the intervening steps in the theory of change were realized, to confirm the strength of the hypothesized pathways. This help establish whether inputs and outputs were related to outcomes through the processes outlined in the theory of change.

1.5. A two person team of local consultants whom the Development Portfolio Management Group (DPMG) had recruited conducted the fieldwork. The overall evaluation Team Leader worked with the local teams in the three African countries at the start of data collection to resolve any questions about the case study instruments, including the specification of those to be interviewed. Annex 4 lists those interviewed in the field.

1.6. Limitations. Data collection was conducted during the month of February 2015 at a time when the Ministry of Education was engrossed in preparing and finalizing the 2015/2016 budget. This affected all the Ministry Departments, making it difficult to interview critical stakeholders. The budget workshops were convened outside Lilongwe so it was difficult to arrange appointments with the suggested officers. The interviewees were forthcoming but in most cases did not have the information that was sought and promised

to provide the information later. Following up on these promises of data turned out to be a challenge, as much of the information was not provided.

1.7. The World Bank (WB) Task Team Leader had been evacuated to India because of illness. When contacted by e-mail she indicated that she was in hospital and could arrange for a Skype interview when she felt better but this never materialized and compromised the data collection since the WB was responsible for the implementation of the PIEQM and use of the GPE funding. Eventually it was possible to arrange a Skype interview with the previous Task Team Leader of the PIEQM who provided some useful information but not all the information that was specified in the Instrument. Also, two key development partner (DP) contacts were away on vacation. While it was possible to arrange a Skype interview with one of them it was not possible to do the same with the other. The DPs who were available were very forthcoming with information.

1.8. This report is presented in six additional chapters. Chapter II summarizes Malawi's country and sector context; Chapter III describes the country's education sector plan and the related support programs supported by GPE and UNICEF over the past decade. Chapter IV presents findings on the outcomes and outputs of those programs; Chapter V discusses the results of the aid management and financial assessments and examines salient enabling conditions (based on the Theory of Change). Finally, Chapters VI and VII cover case study Conclusions and Recommendations respectively.

II: Country and Sector Context

2.1. Population: The population of Malawi grew steadily from 14.1 million in 2008 to 16.4 million in 2013, an overall increase of 16 percent. Of this population 16 percent was urban in 2013, versus 15 percent in 2008. Malawi has a young population, with 44 percent aged under 15 years. There are 99 males per every 100 females.

2.2. Economy: Half the population (51 percent) is living below the national poverty line. The economic growth rate declined from 8 percent in 2008 to 5 percent in 2013, while the GDP per capita increased from 236 to 264 USD. This remains one of the lowest in region. Malawi's economy improved after the 2011/2012 economic and governance crisis, which had resulted in a slowdown in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth from an average of 7.0 percent from 2006 through 2011 to 1.9 percent in 2012. The projected real GDP growth for 2014 is 5.7 percent, from a 5.2 percent growth rate in 2013. Prudent fiscal policies taken by the Government over the last two years have reduced the fiscal deficit but fiscal conditions have continued to deteriorate with huge overruns in expenditures following the Cashgate scandal.

2.3. With the suspension of budget support by development partners in the wake of the Cashgate scandal and cuts in dedicated grants, overall fiscal conditions will continue to be tight in the current and next financial years. It is however expected that measures taken by the government will reduce expenditures and produce fiscal surpluses during the period 2014-2017.

2.4. Agriculture, the backbone of the Malawian economy, is highly susceptible to drought. Fiscal policy and better use of fertilizer created conditions for a bumper corn crop in 2009, but by 2013 Malawi faced a host of food related challenges, including poor harvests and high food prices. Also, Malawi is a highly indebted and aid-dependent nation, with about 40 percent of its direct budget coming from donors prior to 2013. But this stopped in 2012/13 after donors lost confidence in the country after substantial development funds were unaccounted for.

2.5. Currently, Malawi is looking at diversifying its sources of foreign exchange both in the agricultural sector and in other sectors identified in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (2011), such as mining, tourism and hospitality, and manufacturing.

2.6. Political Context: Malawi has had two changes in Government over the last 5 years. The transitions from one government to another have been peaceful and currently Malawi enjoys peace and political stability. However changes in government are often accompanied by changes in Ministry personnel, which have tended to affect service delivery, including in the education sector.

2.7. In particular, the Malawian government, and its relations with aid donors, were disrupted by the so-called "Cashgate" scandal that broke out in September 2013. The scandal involved allegations that government officials manipulated the government's computer accounting system to make fraudulent payments that a British accounting firm later estimated to be £35m (about \$50 million).¹ The scandal led to criminal trials of dozens of civil servants, businessmen, and politicians, and led to the forced resignation of the entire cabinet in October 2013.

2.8. As a result of the scandal, in October 2013 Norway froze all budget support to Malawi, Britain did the same in November 2013, and the IMF delayed a loan worth \$20 million. Development Partners who were in the Education Pool withdrew their support, effectively killing the pool. In total, these suspensions amounted to the withholding of about \$150 million. The US did not suspend aid, however, as most American aid went directly to NGOs, rather than to the government.

¹ David Smith, "Money from Malawi 'Cashgate' scandal allegedly funded electoral campaigns," *The Guardian* Friday February 13, 2015.

2.9. Social Context: Malawi is a low-income country ranked 170 out of 186 countries in the 2013 Human Development Index, with a GNI per capita of US\$ 320 in 2012. Despite high rates of economic performance during 2005 – 2010, poverty in Malawi remains widespread, and it is concentrated in the rural areas where 84 percent of the population lives. While it is estimated that over half of the population remains poor, one quarter live in extreme poverty, with total expenditure below the poverty level of USD 146 per year or below per person.² It is reported that poverty marginally declined from 52.4 percent in 2004/05 to 50.7 percent in 2010/11.

2.10. Health: In the evaluation time period the infant mortality rate decreased from 96 to 68 deaths per 1000 births as a result of improved health care. People living with HIV-AIDs were estimated by UNAIDS in 2013 to be 10.3 percent of the adults aged 15 to 49. About 53 percent of children 6-59 months old have experienced stunting. Under-five mortality was estimated at 85 deaths per thousand births and infant mortality at 53 deaths per thousand births in 2014. Almost half (47 percent) of the children under age 5 in Malawi are short for their age (stunted) due to long-term effects of malnutrition, and 20 percent are severely stunted (ESIP II 2013/14 – 2017/18).

2.11. Environment: Malawi suffers from annual floods and these tend to affect districts in low-lying areas. However, in 2014 Malawi suffered a very serious flood that displaced in excess of 300,000 people with over 100 estimated dead and led to the destruction and closure of many schools. Resettlement of displaced people and rehabilitation of the infrastructure that was affected by the floods, including roads, bridges, buildings, and schools, will require tremendous resources which may be beyond the capacity of the Government to provide. Therefore external assistance will be needed for this.

2.12. Education system: Malawi's Education system follows an 8-4-4 pattern of education comprising three levels. The primary level is an eight-year cycle from Standard 1 (grade 1) through to Standard 8 with the junior schools being Standards 1 – 5, and senior primary schools Standards 6- 8. At the end of this cycle learners take the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination, which determines their entry into secondary school. The secondary level is comprised of two cycles- junior grade years (referred to as Forms 1 and 2) and senior grade years (Forms 3 and 4), with national examinations after each cycle. - The Junior Certificate of Education and Malawi School Certificate Examination. The last level is tertiary education, which includes universities, technical and vocational schools, and teacher education programs. These levels are offered in both private and public institutions.

² Integrated Household Survey 3, 2010/11).

III: Education Sector Plan and Related Support Programs.

A. The Education Sector Plan and Sector Implementation Plan

3.1. Within the context of Malawi's overall development strategy (Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II, 2006-2011), Malawi's education sector plans included the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) 2008-2017, and under this, the Education Sector Implementation Plan for 2009-2013 (ESIP I) and 2014 – 2018.

3.2. The NESP seeks to address three priority areas of Access and Equity; Quality and Relevance and Governance and Management. Implementation of the NESP is achieved through the Education Sector Plan (ESIP), which outlines the strategies for addressing these three priorities.

3.3. Under quality, the main objective of the NESP is to promote effective learning and increase learning achievement by improving the teaching and learning environment, taking into account special needs learners. This includes curriculum reforms, strengthening supervision through increased inspection, and introducing incentives to enhance teacher motivation.

3.4. The ESIP focuses on:

- a. Production of more trained teachers through Initial Primary Teacher Education and the Open Distance programmes in order to reduce the Pupil to Teacher Ratio (PTR) across the system.
- b. Construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of classrooms, school facilities, teacher training colleges, and teachers' housing, especially in rural areas. This includes a focus on facilities friendly to girls and the disabled.
- c. Curriculum reform and provision of learning and teaching materials in order to reduce the pupil textbook ratio in all subjects.
- d. Provision of teachers' incentives in rural areas to facilitate the deployment of more teachers to rural areas and to promote teacher motivation.
- e. Broadening access to primary education targeting those disadvantaged by gender, poverty, special needs and geographical location through increasing infrastructure in difficult areas and promoting participation of private sector in education provision.
- f. Participation of communities in the management of schools through School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations.
- g. Promotion of school feeding programmes to enable those from poor families to attend school.

B. The GPE Program

3.5. This evaluation is expected to focus on the time period 2009 to 2013, and the GPE project approved during that time was the one implemented between 2010 to 2014 (with an extension to 2015). The project through which GPE funds were channeled is the *Project to Improve Education Quality in Malawi (PIEQM)*, which was prepared by the Government of Malawi with the assistance of the World Bank and other Development Partners. The project was initiated in 2009. The implementation period of the project was June 2010 to December 2014 with the closing date set at June 2015. The project became effective in September 2010. Since the GPE support is bundled within PIEQM we will generally refer to it as GPE/PIEQM project development objective is to "Increase access and equity and enhance the quality of the teaching and learning environment in basic education." The project development objective is consistent with the thrust of the NESP and the ESIP I, and in that respect, supported government efforts at improving Access and Equity, Quality and Relevance and Governance and Management. The PIEQM has three main components: (i) improving access to and equity of education; (ii) enhancing the teaching and learning

environment by providing learning materials and increasing the corps of teachers through open distance learning; and (iii) improving institutional and management capacity.

3.6. The project was financed under the Education SWAp Financing agreement that was signed between the Ministry and the pooling partners on 2010. The total funding of the project was USD 256 million comprised of the following contributions:

Table 1: Project Funding by Donor

Donor	Contribution Amount in USD
International Development Association (IDA)	50 million
GPE Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund	90 million
Department for International Development (DfID)	90 million
German Development Corporation	25 million
UNICEF	1 million

3.7. The IDA contribution was a loan with the standard IDA terms with a maturity of 40-years. The project is being implemented by the Ministry, with regular supervision by the World Bank, which monitors procurement and financial management of the project including progress on the achievement of the targets agreed upon the PAD. Procurement under the project follows the National Procurement Act. The World Bank provides No-Objections to procurements above the relevant threshold. The WB works closely with the SWAp secretariat based in the Ministry. The WB is also the supervising entity for the GPE funds in the pool.

C. UNICEF Country Programme (2008-2011)

3.8. The UNICEF Country Programme with dates closest to the time frame for this evaluation was the one covering 2008-2011. The objectives and components described in the Country Programme for 2008 – 2011 were agreed jointly by the Government and UNICEF. Basic Education and Youth Development is one of five programmes in the Country Programme and is sector specific to education.

3.9. Within the 2008-2011 Country Program was UNICEF’s development program called “Basic Education and Youth Development” which is the focus of this case study in Malawi. The objective of that sub-programme is “to strengthen the Government’s capacity to fulfill the right of every child to a quality education through comprehensive measures to enhance access, completion, gender equity, and performance.”

3.10. The programme has three components. The first is quality primary education, with a focus on girls’ education. This component addresses: (i) equitable access; (ii) completion and achievement; (iii) relevance and quality; and (iv) governance and management, with support to Early Childhood Development. These were to be achieved through technical support and capacity building for Early Childhood Development programs and the development and institutionalization of the child-friendly school (CFS) framework. Specific efforts included school construction and rehabilitation; provision of separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls; provision of clean water and promoting good hygiene practices; supply of teaching and learning materials to selected schools; support to the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR); and in-service teacher training 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.

3.11. **The second component focused on** adolescent development and participation and HIV & AIDS, in alignment with Malawi’s National Youth Policy, UNDAF, Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, and the Millennium Development Goals. Elements of this programme included: support to EDZI Toto Clubs offering a mix of sports, recreation, and AIDS talks and campaigns; use of music and dance to disseminate HIV and AIDS prevention; outreach activities to communities around schools; and the introduction of

voluntary counselling and testing and youth-friendly health services. The programme also focused on provision of a second chance to adolescents, particularly girls who dropped out of school, to acquire literacy and numeracy skills through complimentary basic education.

3.12. The **third component** focused on policy development and sector reform, with SWAp development as a major priority under the leadership of the Ministry. This component included support for the Education Management Information System (EMIS), and development of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system in the Ministry including capacity building for its institutionalization. The program also assisted the Ministry in streamlining its structures at different levels in order to ensure more effective management and utilization of human resources, and it focused as well on the development of a system for improving learning achievement and providing support for children with special learning needs by transcribing new materials into Braille for blind children. The goals of this component included finalization of NESP; agreement on a code of conduct and memorandum of understanding; joint financing agreements; and full-fledged SWAp in Education.

3.13. The project was implemented from June 2008 to December 2011. The total budget for the Country Programme was USD 124,176,000, while that for the Basic Education and Youth Development was USD 27,723,600, including USD 3,491,600 from regular resources and USD 24,232,000 from other resources that UNICEF mobilized.

IV: Support Program Outcomes and Outputs

A. GPE/PIEQM: Priority Outcomes and outputs

4.1. This section of the case study addresses Norway's three priority outcomes of **improved student learning, improved gender equality and improved equity (for marginalized groups)**. These were also articulated as the main outcomes variables in DPMG's Theory of Change. The team's approach to them was to determine what outcomes (and outcome indicators) GPE/GEQIP and UNICEF included in their programmes that related to these three priority areas, and then to assess whether and how effectively the outcomes were reached.

4.2. *Improved student learning outcomes.* The GPE/PIEQM included among its objectives to "Enhance the quality of the Learning and Teaching Environment," a reasonable version of the *Intermediate Outcome* in our Theory of Change. Its indicators, however, Pupil to Classroom Ratio, and Pupil to Qualified Teacher Ratio, are more like *outputs*, so we will cover them in the **Intervention Section**. In fact, the Project had no objective related to improved learning or learning outcomes, and included no indicators about this. Malawi does participate in the Southern African Consortium of Monitoring Education Quality, but chose not to use results from that as a performance indicator, and has yet to develop its own standardized assessment system at the basic education level.

4.3. *Gender equality:* The Project included among its three components "improving access to and equity of education." The two standard performance indicators that it employed, Net Enrollment Ratio and Primary Completion Rate, could have been used to track improved gender equity but they were not broken down by gender. Another indicator, added by GPE after the Project mid-term, "Female Beneficiaries," was estimated by the Project for primary education – at 50 percent, showing no gender gap, and this is consistent with the gender parity index at Project start up, which was 1.02 (grades 1-4: 1.04; grades 5-8: 0.96). Thus, gender equality in primary education is well established, on average, in Malawi (regional and class variations were not examined), but this was not a consequence of the project, since it was already a fact before the Project began.

4.4. *Equity (for marginalized groups).* Equity for marginalized groups is implicit in the goal of improving equity of education, and for this there was one outcome indicator, namely, an urban-rural comparison of Primary Completion Rates (the target was for rural to increase by 14 percent and urban by 3 percent). Unfortunately, the latest Project Implementation Status and Results Report (Dec 2014) had no endline breakdowns on this indicator (nor on a similar one "Primary Survival Rate").

4.5. *Other outcomes and unintended consequences.* Access: The GPE/PIEQM also aimed to improving access to basic education. The indicators used to measure achievement of the indicators were: Gross enrolment rate; and Net enrolment rate. The Gross Enrollment Ratio increased from 122 in 2009 to 127 in 2012, For girls this increased from 121 to 126 during this period while that for boys increased from 124 to 128. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) increased from 79 in 2008 to 86 in 2012, while the NER for girls increased from 80 in 2008 to 87 in 2011.

4.6. *Intervention Results.* Table 2 the intervention (output) variables from our theory of change and shows how (via "performance indicators") and how well (via "outputs") the GPE/PIEQM Project addressed each of them.

Table 2: GPE/PIEQM Results on Interventions (outputs)

ToC Interventions	Performance Indicator(s)	Outputs
Schools, Classrooms	(a) the number of classrooms built; constructed; (b) the boarding facilities constructed and rehabilitated; and (c) decline in the shortfall of classrooms at the primary level.	(a) Target 3, 000 classrooms, Endline 2,332; (b) Target 11, Endline 8; and (c) there is no evidence that this indicator was tracked.
Teachers	(a) additional teachers that graduate from the Open Distance Learning who received support from the GPE/PIEQM	Results: Baseline 0; Target 12,000 (cumulative); endline 14,724
Learning Materials	Performance Indicators: (a) number of textbooks disaggregated by subject, (b) textbook ratio for Standard 3 mathematics and English; (c) textbooks ratio for standard 7 mathematics and English.	Results: (a) Baseline 0, Target 9,800,000, Endline NA, (b) Std 3 Maths Baseline 2:1, Target 1.5:1, Endline 2.14:1; Std 3 English, Baseline 2.6:1, Target 1.5:1, Endline 2.15:1; (C) Std Maths Baseline, 1.5:1, Target 1:1, Endline 2.53:1, En; Std 7 English Target 1.5:1, Endline 2.53:1.
Teacher Supervision	(a) Assessment of the teacher management system completed (yes/no). (b) number of managers trained in strategic planning, budgeting, and reporting.	Results (a) Baseline NA. (b) At the mid-term review 50 managers had received training against a target of 100 by the close of the project.
Learning Environment	(a) percentage of Primary schools receiving school grants, (b) the number of schools with strategic and annual work plans and budgets in place.	(a) Baseline 0, Target 100%, Endline 100% ³ and (b) Baseline 0, Target 100%, Endline NA but at mid-term the percentage of schools with SIP were 70% of the total number of primary schools.
Children's Resources	(a) the number of beneficiaries and (b) the percentage of females who received the grant.	(a) Baseline 0, Target 315, 000, Endline 21,515 (at mid-term data for endline not yet available) (b) Baseline 0, Target 47%, Endline 50% (at mid-term endline data not yet available).

*The GPE/PIEQM lacked specific program interventions in other areas of DPMG's theory of change, including the curriculum (where GPE/PIEQM merely supported the implementation of the PCAR), communities and parents, and the language of instruction.

B. UNICEF Programme Outcomes and Outputs

4.7. Improved student learning outcomes. UNICEF's country programme aimed to "to strengthen the Government's capacity to fulfil the right of every child to a quality education through comprehensive measures to enhance access, completion, gender equity and performance." Implicit in this goal was improving educational outcomes, but the Programme included no "expected result" in this area.

³ Although the indicator was supposed to be measured by the number of schools, it was tracked as a percentage of the schools with the Plans.

4.8. Gender equality. The UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan for 2008-2011 sets out indicators that imply improved female access (95% eligible girls enroll in schools, and 50% complete primary education cycle), but the annual plans do not report on enrolment and completion in percentage terms, so it is not possible to determine if this goal was reached. (The UNESCO Institute for Statistics showed female enrolment in primary schooling for 2011 being 97% and GPE/PIEQM showed the Primary Completion Rate (measured as Primary Survival Rate) to be 49 percent in GPE/PEIQM in 2010 (this was for males and females, but there was gender parity by then). These statistics show fulfilment of UNICEF's goals, but since they are not found in UNICEF's progress report it is not clear whether the agency would consider itself to have contributed to them.

4.9. Equity (for marginalized groups). UNICEF was active in supporting the full school participation of marginalized children (for example out-of-school children and those touched by HIV/AIDs) but it articulated no expected results or outcome indicators for this work. Even outputs in this area (e.g., improvement in percent of children acquiring relevant HIV/AIDs knowledge and skills) could not be tracked because there were no recorded baseline data.

4.10. Other outcomes and unintended consequences. Under the Basic Education and Youth Development programme component on Policy Development and Sector Reform UNICEF made significant contributions to the formulation of the education sector plan (NESP) and the development of the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) for education which incorporated the funding from GPE among other partners.

4.11. Of the potential unintended consequences mentioned to respondents, the one they identified most frequently was the diverting of government spending away from education to other budget areas. This was particularly so at the district level where the PSIP intended for schools was diverted to other expenditure items since education has the largest allocation in the district budget. This often leads to delays in disbursing the funding to the schools. In some cases these funds are hardly ever recovered back to education. This has resulted in some school failing to receive their grants altogether. The National Local Government Finance Committee have not been able to adequately monitor and rectify this problem.

4.12. Funds were also diverted at the school level from the quality allocation, which constitutes 50 percent of the PSIP to infrastructure, which should be funded from the 40 percent allocation of the PSIP. The main reason given for this was the critical shortage of classrooms.

4.13. Intervention Results. Table 3 summarizes the specific performance indicators and outputs for UNICEF program. Notably, UNICEF did not establish baseline or endline measures as consistently as GPE/PIEQM, so for several categories these are not available.

Table 3: UNICEF Country Programme (2008-2011) Performance Indicators and Outputs*

	Performance Indicator(s)	Outputs
Schools and Classrooms	Simple count of infrastructure.	Baseline 1,350,000. Target: 984,000 additional improved sanitation facilities, Endline NA.
Teachers	Percent who received in-service training.	Baseline NA, Target 100%, Endline NA
Curriculum	Percentage of children (in target schools) applying at least three key improved hygiene practices.	Baseline NA, Target 70%, Endline NA
Learning Materials	Percentage of schools which had received the materials.	Baseline NA, Target 100 percent of schools with these materials including teacher manuals, Endline NA. There is no information that has been provided on the monitoring of the indicator.
Learning Environment	(a) Percent of schools implementing Child Friendly School package, (b) percent of schools children reached through CFS, and	(a) 20%, Target 80%, Endline NA (b) Baseline NA, Target 90%, Endline NA,

	Performance Indicator(s)	Outputs
	(c) percentage of target primary schools with improved sanitary facilities.	and (c) . Information on the tracking of this indicator was not available

*UNICEF lacked specific program interventions in other areas of DPMG's theory of change, including language of instruction, school and teacher supervision, child's background and resources, and community and parent involvement.

V. Aid Management, Financial Management and Enabling Conditions

A. Aid Management

GPE Aid Management

5.1. Several parties are accountable for the quality of GPE's management of donor aid funneled through GPE. These include the GPE Board and its committees; its executive arm, the Secretariat; the Malawi LEG; and the World Bank, the supervising entity (SE) for GPE's Project to Improve Education Quality in Malawi (PIEQM) (2010-2015).

5.2. In addition to Norway's MFA, those financing the GPE Project to Improve Educational Quality in Malawi include the World Bank, the Fast Track initiative Catalytic Fund, the UK's Department for International Development, the German Development Corporation, and UNICEF.

5.3. The party (parties) primarily accountable for aspects of aid management can be determined. For example, the supervising entity is primarily accountable for the quality of supervision. However, GPE has several unresolved governance problems that muddy accountabilities. Thus, the financing partners on the LEG often conduct joint reviews, making them also accountable for supervision. The LEG is accountable for the decision to endorse the Government's Education Sector Plan, a pre-requisite for GPE to consider an application for GPE grant funding. However, the Secretariat has no clear quality assurance authority over education sector plans.

5.4. Obviously, the performance of Government also defines the parties' opportunities for effectiveness, at least in part. However, the issue here is not Government's implementation performance, but how well the GPE players adjusted to the obstacles and possibilities presented by Government.

5.5. GPE Secretariat. The GPE Secretariat commissioned an External Quality Review (EQR)⁴ of the Malawi project. The EQR was thorough and professional. It assessed multiple aspects of the proposed project, flagging appropriate concerns about issues such as 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; and, given that the design anticipated the use of country systems for financial management and procurement, the speed with which the Government of Malawi (GoM) could improve its procurement and FM arrangements.

5.6. The SE was responsive to several comments of the external quality reviewers, but not to concerns about the implementation and coordination challenges posed by the complexity of the proposed project. The Secretariat had no real authority to pressure the LEG to reduce the scope of the operation.

5.7. Local Education Group. Those interviewed questioned whether a Local Education Group had been established in Malawi. De facto, there seem to have been two groups, not one that acted as a whole to discharge the functions of a LEG. One group (**Group A**) consisted primarily of Government and those development partners who were collaborating in a pooled funding arrangement for the implementation of a Sector Wide Approach Program, or SWAp. The second group (**Group B**), called the Sector Working Group (SWG), included Group A but also development partners not part of the funding pool, NGOs, and the private sector. The Secretary of Education Science and Technology (SEST) chairs the SWG, with the lead donor of the Development Partners acting as the vice-chair.

5.8. Group A came closest to performing the functions of a standard LEG, such as sector planning and inter-agency coordination; donor harmonization and use of common procedures; supervision of the

⁴ In 2009 the GPE Secretariat proposed and the Board agreed to pilot independent reviews of the quality of the design of projects prior to their being submitted to GPE for funding. These were called External Quality Reviews, conducted by education experts experienced in development.

education sector plan and projects designed to reach its goals; and policy dialogue and consensus building.⁵ Essentially the remit for Group B, the SWG⁶, is to work closely with nine Technical Working Groups (TWGs) created by the Ministry. Each TWG is co-chaired by a Ministry official and a development partner. The TWGs were the sole coordinating bodies for activities related to the implementation of those sub-sectors' education strategies as outlined in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP). Each TWG is accountable for the timely delivery of these quarterly reports: a) Annual Program of Activities and Quarterly Reports on the AWP; and b) Annual Budget and Quarterly Reports on Budget Performance. The SWG is expected to meet once every calendar quarter, and the TWG quarterly reports constitute the main agenda of the SWG when it is convened. In addition, the SEST, the lead donor, and the deputy try to meet weekly to discuss issues of joint concern. Depending on the individuals involved and whether they routinely report back to the development partners, this consultation forum has worked well, especially in the areas of policy and program implementation.

5.9. The donors in Group A appraised and endorsed the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) for 2008-17 and the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) for 2009-2013,⁷ evaluating the two documents in a 40 page appraisal document. A concluding table entitled Summary of Technical Appraisal summarized the donors' analysis of several dimensions of the NESP/ESIP. The appraisal is serious. The donors include baseline data for several ESIP indicators from the just completed Malawi Education Country Status Report (CSR 2008/09), such as indicators for disadvantaged groups.

5.10. At the same time, the Group A donors did not thoroughly evaluate the Education Sector Plan (ESP)/ESIP's patchwork results framework or the realism of its targets. The NESP has no results framework, although it lists key indicators by sub-sector with targets. 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. Although most key indicators lack baselines, it does provide baselines for the primary education indicators. The targets for some sub-sectors seem heroic, but those for basic education seem plausible, partly, perhaps, because trend data are more available for this sub-sector. The NESP and ESIP do not discuss risks explicitly.

5.11. Although the donors' appraisal report has no one section dedicated to an appraisal of risks, a risk perspective permeates the donors' appraisal, with particular attention to pervasive capacity problems with the sector and GoM. Table 4C in the appraisal analyzes capacity constraints and identifies initiatives within the ESIP to ameliorate them. The donors judge these initiatives as a start, but do not seem sanguine that these will close the capacity gaps. Given the scope of this SWAp relative to the donors' own appraisal of the sector's capacities, the Group A donors should have sought ways to re-balance the implementation load relative to capacities.

5.12. The Group A donors endorsed Government of Malawi's application to the Catalytic Fund with a succinct summary of their appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the NESP/ESIP on which the CF application is based. This summary is based on the appraisal document. Although it lists several capacity problems as "weaknesses", again it does not confront their implications in their final judgment: "The Development Partners to Education in Malawi conclude that the plans are realistic and feasible." At the time and in the event, this judgment was not realistic.

5.13. Annex 6 summarizes how those interviewed evaluated the performance of the SWG against the functions that a standard LEG performs. Against these criteria, their judgment was that the SWG was moderately ineffective. For example, Group A work together on implementation of the sector plan through

⁵ Recent SWG/LEG meetings have attempted to play the role prescribed for the LEG under the GPE, especially with regard to the work surrounding the formulation of ESIP II and GPE II.

⁶ The SWG: a) provides overall strategic guidance for the Technical Working Groups (TWGs); b) oversees the equitable distribution of the budget to districts and communities; c) ensures that agreed performance targets and timelines for activities under the different components are met; d) ensures effective project implementation; and e) proactively addresses critical issues that could hinder implementation.

⁷ 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 GPE project, the PIEQM, but partners not in the pool tend to focus on their bilateral projects. The interview data flagged several opportunities to improve the functioning of the SWG.

1. Use a TOR for the SWG comparable to those for a LEG that focuses the SWG on the sector as a whole and that includes the functions of policy dialogue and consensus building. De facto, those interviewed recommend merging Groups A and B and refocusing the whole less on implementation and more on policy, strategy, and accountability.
2. Establish an accountability framework that holds stakeholders accountable for the attainment of results for the NESP/ESIP rather than those (or just those) of projects.⁸
3. Reduce the size of the SWG, reduce the number of annual SWG meetings, and lengthen each meeting. The SWG membership is too large, with some members not contributing at all. Reducing the number and extending the length of each meeting can reduce travel costs for members outside of Lilongwe and deal with the problem of the currently overloaded agendas for each meeting.

5.14. Supervising entity. Those interviewed judged the performance of the World Bank, the supervising entity (SE) for the GPE project, as moderately satisfactory in terms of project preparation and project supervision. Changes that they wanted made in how this SE operates were to: a) share information better with other development partners on the Project; b) reduce the turnover in task team leaders; and c) improve participation of the development partners and other stakeholders in negotiations with the Government on priorities.

5.15. The document reviews also indicate that project preparation and supervision are moderately satisfactory, primarily because of the unmitigated complexity of the operation relative to Government's capacities.

5.16. Project preparation. The PAD's results framework has a clearly stated development objective (DO) that is well-linked to the analysis of the sector problems documented by the Country Status Report (CSR) that the project is designed to mitigate. 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 project development objective are traceable and plausible, and the indicators used to measure the DO are relevant and measurable. The DO indicator targets selected for what is only a 4.5 year project are refreshingly conservative. These are not "stretch" targets and may well be exceeded, but they seem quite realistic. With some exceptions, the intermediate results indicators are generally sound in terms of relevance, scope, and measurability. All DO indicators and intermediate results indicators had baseline values prior to implementation. The baselines appear current and quite trustworthy, partly reflecting the data-rich and recently completed CSR. The planned timing of M&E data collection is realistic. The data resources required for M&E are already in use, the EMIS being the main instrument for monitoring outcomes and outputs.

5.17. However, the PIEQM is 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.⁹ The donor appraisal, the SE's Project Appraisal Document (PAD), and the External Quality Review commissioned by the GPE Secretariat all pinpoint capacity risks as central to this operation. The PAD realistically rates the different risks and, also realistically, rates most mitigating measures as being expected to have little or only partial effect on the different risks. The unanswered question is why the Government, donors, and the SE did not reduce the scope of the operation, phase in

⁸ GPE's new funding model will create incentives for this focus. The model makes the release of a percent of a grant contingent on progress toward targets set for the education sector plan.

⁹ Aligning donors' investments around the sector's strategic plan is an excellent principle, but the alignment process tends to increase the scope and complexity of investment operations, often beyond the capacities of Government. Relying on country systems is also a good principle. However, in lower capacity countries such as Malawi, slowly phasing in the use of country systems is the wiser course of action.

certain high risk activities (e.g., relying on country FM and procurement systems), or take other actions to better balance the implementation demands of the operation with the implementing agent's capacities.

5.18. Supervision. In the event, several risks identified by the EQR panel and SE in the PAD materialized, placing a substantial burden on the SE, Government, and the donors. Both the procurement and financial management functions were immediately in trouble. Procurement slowly improved, but only with substantial support from the donors and SE—for example, intensive bi-weekly meetings with the Ministry's Procurement unit to review the details of all on-going and planned procurements. FM remained a significant risk. By December, 2014, six months before the project closes, the project had met some targets, but missed others. In terms of DO outcome indicators, the project had exceeded the NER, gender, and pupil/teacher targets (although not the pupil/qualified teacher targets). It had significantly missed the pupil/classroom targets, the target for the primary completion rate, and the gross enrollment rate target. The parties do not seem to have considered restructuring the project during its implementation to better align the project's design with Government capacities. In terms of intermediate results, the project had thus far missed targets for student/textbook ratios and construction/rehabilitation of additional classrooms. It had met intermediate results targets for boarding facilities, getting a learning assessment system in place, and several capacity building targets.

5.19. Problems with targets related to enrolment numbers, such as pupil/classroom or pupil/textbook ratios, stemmed partly from the fact that project beneficiaries increased during project implementation more than had been anticipated for two reasons: (i) the repetition rates remained high (in its appraisal of the ESP Group A had flagged insufficient attention to repetition as a concern); and (ii) the increase in new entrants into the system increased more than anticipated because of apparently unanticipated increases in the school age population. Misestimates here had a knock-on effect in terms of reaching targets such as pupil/classroom targets and pupil/textbook targets.

5.20. To its credit, the SE's supervision team tracked the implementation status of the project in biannual Implementation Status Reports (ISRs). The ISRs flagged implementation problems, what actions the SE was taking to resolve these, and the project's progress, as measured by multiple sources, on outputs and outcomes. Their management of implementation problems with the school construction components was exemplary, and they showed similar proactivity with regard to financial audits and textbook procurements. However, given the multiple problems with this project, there was not and should have been at least a debate about restructuring to deal with the complexity of the design that stemmed from the ESP.

UNICEF Aid Management

5.21. UNICEF's project cycle, the quality of which partly defines the quality of UNICEF's aid management for Malawi, starts with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Malawi. The UNDAF structures planned aid activities by UN agencies active in Malawi (UNICEF, UNDP, UNAIDS, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNFPA, and UNHCR). UNICEF's Country Program Document (CPD) for 2008-2011 includes support to basic education that is aligned with theme 3 on social development of the 2008-2011 UNDAF. UNICEF's Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) for 2008-2011 elaborates on themes in the CPD. UNICEF reports on progress against the CPAP annually.

5.22. Project design. Project design is unsatisfactory. The CPAP identifies 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. However, these components are described. They are not really designed. The CPAP lists a number of activities associated with each, but leaves unanswered questions such as how they will be sequenced and delivered.

5.23. For example, UNICEF states that for the Quality primary education component it will provide technical support: a) to ensure that 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, rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For the Convention on the Rights of the Child, operationally UNICEF will 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. Support to the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) 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."

5.24. The CPAP has no results framework, but the CPD includes a table called "Summary results matrix: Government of Malawi — UNICEF 2008-2011 country programme". The columns most relevant to a results framework are displayed in Table 4. 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.

Table 4: Results Matrix for Basic Education and Gender Equality for 2008-2011

Key results expected	Key progress indicators	Means of verification
Over 95% of eligible girls enroll in school and 50% complete the primary education cycle (eight years)	Net enrolment rate (NER). 2005 Baseline = 82%	EMIS
	Net attendance rate by age and sex. (No baseline)	DHS
	Primary completion rate by age and sex. 2005 baseline: 16%	MICS
80% of primary schools (grades 1-8) use Child Friendly School (CFS) approach ¹ , including life skills for HIV prevention.	% of primary schools implementing CFS package (No baseline)	Surveys, district education manager reports, review and monitoring reports, school reports
	% of school children reached through CFS (No baseline)	

¹ CFS is defined as: child health and nutrition; teachers trained in child-centered and gender sensitive teaching approaches; safe, inclusive, protective learning environments with water and sanitation facilities; strong community partnerships; and relevant and gender sensitive curricula and life skills.

5.25. UNICEF certainly issued annual reports on the 2008-2011 country with attractive photographs and interesting anecdotes. However, these reports were not analytic. They did not track outputs and outcomes, leaving all parties unable to assess the implementation status of the basic education components of the CPD.

B. Financial Management

Public Financial Management

5.26. The most recent Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment for Malawi was conducted in 2011 for the fiscal year ended in 2010. The assessment indicates that the significant progress made in strengthening the public financial management (PFM) system in the mid-2000s has not been sustained. Between 2006 and 2008 the PEFA scores improved for thirteen indicators and deteriorated for only two. However, the subsequent 2011 PEFA assessment gave a more mixed picture with scores improving for six indicators and deteriorating for eight. Malawi scores relatively well in the areas of budget credibility, comprehensiveness and transparency, and policy-based budgeting (6 out of 10 indicators

assessed in the 2011 PEFA were rated B¹⁰ or better), but significantly worse for budget execution and control, accounting and reporting, and external scrutiny and audit (only 4 out of 15 indicators were rated B or better).

5.27. A major corruption scandal led to serious challenges in financing public services, as donors withdrew budget support from the country. This “cashgate scandal” led to a forensic audit being conducted, in 2013, under the auspices of the National Audit in Malawi. The main focus of the audit was the misappropriation of funds from the national treasury by various perpetrators both in the public and private sectors. The audit identified weaknesses and failures in internal controls and provided recommendations for strengthening the system. The main findings of the audit were that funds had been stolen from GoM through a variety of means. It also found that some of the money was lost as a result of wider corruption scandals outside of the “cashgate scandal”. The “cashgate scandal” eroded public confidence in the PFM framework’s ability to safeguard public finances.

5.28. Partially as a result of “cashgate” the development partners moved much of their remaining financial support to projects outside of government channels, giving priority to the payment of salaries to health workers to sustain minimum service levels.

Credibility of the Budget

5.29. The 2008 PEFA assessment found that the budget was an effective predictor of actual expenditure, but the 2011 assessment found that the situation had changed. The 2011 assessment determined that the aggregate variance in expenditures was less than 5 percent in only one year (2010) and that it was particularly high in 2009 when the variance with actual expenditures exceeded the originally-approved budget by over 20 percent. The period from 2008 - 2011 as a whole was characterized by persistent over-spending in comparison to the original budget in contrast with the previous three years each of which reported under-spending. However, it should be noted that the GoM does go through a thorough mid-year review process involving parliamentary approval of revised estimates.

5.30. During these three years (2008-2010) there were also significant budgetary reallocations. The expenditure composition variance was less than 10 percent in only one of the three years and over 20 percent in one year (2008/09). This indicates that the budget has been ineffective as a tool for allocating scarce resources in line with policy priorities as set out in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. On the revenue side, the actual revenue was consistently above budget. Again, the credibility of the budget is called into question this time in terms of its ability to provide a reliable indication of the GoM resource envelope. The rating for the credibility of the budget declined from a C+ in 2008 to a D+ in 2011 according to the PEFA rating system.

Predictability and Control in Budget Execution

5.31. Reforms are on-going in the Malawi Revenue Authority and when properly implemented will undoubtedly improve and increase revenue collection to the benefit of budget execution as more financial resources will be made available for expenditure. The Ministry of Finance has improved the cash management process to the point where sectors express confidence in the predictability of the cash disbursement limits agreed with the Ministry of Finance, at least for the first 3 quarters of the fiscal year. However, more can be done in terms of improving the cash management process.

5.32. A payroll audit has been carried out providing some evidence of a well working payroll system with only 708 identified ghost workers. The current initiative to switch to salary payments through the banking system is laudable. The procurement system continues to be unable to provide statistics with regard to the implementation of competition in public procurement. The rollout of the integrated financial management information system (IFMIS) has been limited to the central government and to about half of the local

¹⁰ The ratings are based on the scoring system used by PEFA and it is based on best international practices and corresponds to a scale of four (4) points: A (best performance) to D, with the possibility of intermediate scoring (+)

authorities. More modules are under implementation and the further rollout and more functionality will improve overall PFM in the Government. The rating for this category was unchanged at C+.

Fungibility and/or Additionality

5.33. Disbursements of the funds to the District Councils were not predictable particularly at the school level because of both limited resources and the diversion of funds. There is a tendency by some District Councils to divert allocations intended for education, which are among the highest allocations in most Councils, to other Council expenditure items. As a result PSIP¹¹ releases to schools do not follow the cash flows agreed with Treasury making conditions difficult especially at the school level. Often allocations to schools are reduced/and/or delayed. One urban district had received MK 18 million out of an approved budget of MK79 million. One school visited during data collection reported that it had not received its PSIP allocation for the year well into the third quarter of the financial year. Delays in disbursements also result from system failure requiring the use of manual systems, which are generally slow.

Ratio and Trend Analysis

5.34. Malawi's commitment to education appears to be strong as the education sector accounts for the largest share of GoM expenditures – 19 percent in 2013 and it is well above the average level of expenditures for developing countries of 17.3 percent (in 2012). The education sector's expenditures have been increasing faster than the overall national budget both in nominal and real terms during the period of 2009 – 2013. Over this period, expenditures for the education sector have grown at an annual rate of about 35 percent as compared to the average growth rate in the overall GoM expenditures of 21.4 percent. As a result of this rapid rate of growth, the share of education expenditures to the national budget has increased from about 12 percent in 2009 to more than 19 percent in 2013.

5.35. There has also been rapid growth in on-budget funding, especially from development partners since the introduction of a pooled fund to support the Education SWAp in an attempt to provide a proportionate response to the scale of issues faced in Malawi's education sector. While GoM's resources to the sector have grown by an average of 25 percent per annum between 2008/09 and 2012/13, the pooled development partner resources increased by about 220 percent and 48 percent in 2010 and 2011 respectively. (Malawi PER November 2013).

5.36. Malawi's expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has increased steadily from 4 percent in 2008 to 6 percent in 2010 and to over 8 percent in 2013 which is well above the average for developing countries of 4.9 percent in 2012.

5.37. Basic (primary) education accounts for the largest share of the education sector's recurring expenditures and the support has increased from about 48 percent of the total education spending in 2009 to more than 51 percent in 2012 after declining as a percentage in 2010 and 2011. Higher education accounts for the second largest proportion of recurrent expenditures at 18 percent in 2012, followed by secondary education at 15 percent, but the proportions for both have been declining over this period

5.38. The growth in education sector's recurrent and development expenditures averaged about 32 percent and 74 percent respectively during the period (2008-2013), compared with growth of about 20 percent and 28 percent respectively in the corresponding components of overall GoM expenditures. During this period, total expenditures have grown from almost MK 20,000 million in 2008 to more than MK 92,000 million in 2013. During this period, the recurrent expenditures have grown from 73 percent of the total expenditures to more than 85 percent in 2013.

C. Enabling Conditions

¹¹ PSIP allocation is used at the school level to implement the three focus areas of the NESP – access and equity (40%), quality and relevance (50%) and governance and Management (10%)

5.39 DPMG’s Theory of Change includes system-level and basic education enabling conditions that can either enhance or thwart policy interventions. Table 5 lists these enabling conditions, with those that were strong in Malawi in green, those that were moderate in blue, and those that were weak in red. The case study also calls attention to an enabling condition that was not highlighted in the theory of change: the aid policies of other donors. In Malawi, when other donors suspended their programs in the wake of the cashgate scandal, this made it more difficult for GPE/PIEQM and UNICEF to succeed in those programs that they did not suspend.

Table 5: System-level and Basic Education Enabling Conditions

System-Level Enabling Conditions	Basic Education Enabling Conditions
<p>National/political commitment to improved quality and equity in BE, including ECE High share of national budget for education Conflict/disaster sensitive mechanisms in place Functioning Local Education Group Appropriate multi-lingual policy in place & funded Disaggregated EMIS & learning assessments in Place</p>	<p>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</p>

System Level Enabling Conditions

5.40 National/political commitment to improved quality and equity in BE, including ECE (strong)
 The NESP seeks to address three priority areas of Access and Equity; Quality and Relevance and Governance and Management. Implementation of the NESP is achieved through Education Sector Plan (ESIP), which outlines the strategies for addressing these three priorities. The NESP and the ESIP shows great Commitment to Basic Education.

5.41 High share of national budget for education (Strong). Government of Malawi has been allocating an average of 18 percent of its budget towards the education sector. This falls short of the 21 percent agreed under the FTI.

5.4.2 Conflict/disaster sensitive mechanisms in place (Weak). There is evidence of fulfilling the aspiration that education will enhance – group solidarity, national consciousness, tolerance of diversity and the development of a culture of peace. The government has a Department of Disaster Management to deal with all forms of disasters that Malawi may experience. At the local level there are Disaster Task Forces on which staff from the education ministry sit. The department of Disaster Management is under-resourced, however. At the Ministry there are no provisions for disaster management. The government therefore had to rely on development partners like UNICEF, DfID and the European Union; church organizations, companies and other well-wishers.

5.42 Functioning Local Education Group (Weak). There was no LEG as it should be constituted in Malawi. Some of the functions of the LEG were being carried out through the Sector Working Group (SWG) whose membership was much broader than that prescribed for the LEG. Meetings of the SWG are held once very quarter but do not deal with most of the issues that the LEG should be established for. It was more focused on monitoring implementation of projects and programmes.

5.43 Appropriate multi-lingual policy in place & funded (Moderate). Before the Education Act of 2012, Malawi did not have a pronounced language policy – there was however a directive that learning and teaching be conducted in the mother tongue up to Standard 4, and that instruction in English would start in Standard 5. The Education Act of 2013 states that, “The medium of instruction in schools and colleges shall be English. Section 78 (2) further states that “Without prejudice to the generality of sub-section (1), the Minister may, by notice published in the Gazette prescribe the language of instruction on schools.” This allows the Minister of Education some flexibility in proscribing other languages of instruction. Some Malawians criticize the emphasis on English as undermining indigenous languages, while others argue it

will make more instructional materials accessible and prepare students for a globalized economy. In any event, the limited English skills of children in the lower grades, and of many teachers as well, has constrained the transition to English as the language of instruction.

5.44 Disaggregated EMIS & learning assessments in Place (Moderate). An EMIS is in place and produces Annual Bulletins of Education Statistics. The data however lags a year because of the time it takes for the enrolments in the schools to settle down. This is being addressed by the introduction and strengthening of the District Education Management Information Systems (DEMIS)

Basic Education Enabling Conditions

5.45 Community/ parental involvement and supports especially for girls/ disadvantaged (Moderate). Malawi has a National Strategy for Community Participation, which requires each school to have a School Management Committee, which comprise the Head and members of the community. It also provides for the creation of mother groups whose role is to promote the attendance and retention of learners in school with a particular focus on girls. Almost all now have a School Management Committee and a mother groups that is operational.

5.46 Fee free policy & school feeding (moderate); scholarships for Disadvantaged (weak). Malawi adopted the policy of Free Primary Education in 1994. In spite of this policy primary education is not completely free. Parents pay incidental fees or their children to access education. Some of these costs are related to school uniforms; although these are not compulsory parents are often pressured to procure uniforms for their children. There are also other charges that are levied by the School Management Committees at the school level. For poor families these costs can be a constraint to sending children to school. The NESP (2009-2017) provides for school feeding programmes which benefited up to 635,000 children from 2008/09 onwards, out of an approximate enrolment of 3.6 million learners. This represents about 18 percent coverage. Thus the coverage is low but is considered useful for improving access, equity and learning. In 2011/12, almost 1,026 out of 5,400 schools in the poorest districts were benefiting from the school feeding program. In 2014 the ministry scaled up the school meals programme to 1,600 schools. School feeding also gets an allocation from the Primary School Improvement Plan funds. There are no government scholarships for pupils in primary schools presumably because on paper it is supposed to be free. But there is a bursary scheme at the secondary level in the form of cash transfer intended to encourage parents to keep their children in school, particularly girls. The parents receive the cash as long as the learner continues to attend school. Save the Children is in the process of planning one such cash transfer programme for learners in primary school with funding from DfID. The coverage of these programmes is very low and is not likely to make a big impact.

5.47 Institutional capacity at national and local level (for planning and implementation) (Weak). Malawi has the structures at both the national and local level. They are also implementing a decentralization policy designed to devolve decision making to the district level. Currently initiatives include decentralization of teacher salaries to the district level and textbook purchase to the school level. However, capacity remains weak at all level because lack of the human resources and expertise to carry out the needed functions. As a result capacity development in on-going.

5.48 Strong budgetary support for BE (moderate), including ECE (weak). Malawi allocates over 50 percent of its education budget to basic education. Primary Education also gets the largest share of the resources that are decentralized to the district level. The allocation to ECE is very low and this has hampered to development of this sub-sector. Both the NESP and the ESIP recognize Early Childhood Development (ECD) as an important pillar in Education for All. The new education policy advocates for promoting equitable distribution of ECD services for children aged 0-5, including those with special needs and other vulnerabilities. In spite of this commitment to ECD the government has not invested much in the development of ECD and has left this mainly to communities, which themselves are cash strapped, and the various NGOs and church groups that assist the communities. For instance in 2013 there were 90,089 special needs learners enrolled in primary schools constituting 2.0 percent of total enrolment. The census showed the persons living with disability constituted around 3.10 percent of the population, suggesting under representation of learners in the school system. The percentage of the Primary School

Improvement Plan (PSIP) funding allocated to items to assist attendance of Orphans, Vulnerable and Special Needs Children decreased from 14.8 percent in 2010/11 to 6.8 percent in 2012/13.

VI: Conclusions

6.1. Evaluation Question One: Intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of basic education initiatives that Norway funds through GPE and UNICEF.

- Both GPE/PIEQM and UNICEF/ Basic Education & Youth Development have tried to address the challenges facing the education sector in Malawi, but the resources available in the evaluation period were not adequate to meet the great needs of a rapidly growing school population. Despite large investments in the sector by both Government and DPs, the impact has been very limited in terms of improved learning outcomes. Pupil-teacher ratios, pupil-classroom ratios, and pupil-textbook ratios have not reached program targets. Much has been achieved in gender equity at the basic education level, but the enrolment of girls lags in the higher grades. Improvements have been made in equity across the system through grants and school feeding programs for poor families, but not all those eligible have benefitted and these programs need to be expanded and put on a sustainable basis.
- Qualitative outcomes like student learning are difficult to assess, particularly for UNICEF programs, as programs often lacked adequate baseline measures and results frameworks. Moving forward, ongoing and new aid programs need tighter monitoring and evaluation provisions so that progress, or the lack thereof, can be reliably measured.
- Malawi has not adequately addressed all the conditions that are needed to produce positive results in Norway's three priority areas. The largest problem has been resource constraints, which are likely to be worsened if DP support is not restored. The management of the system also needs to improve in order to improve service delivery beyond current levels. Inadequate promotion criteria, poor administration of rural allowances, few opportunities for professional development, and inadequate teacher houses particularly in rural areas, has demotivated some teachers and created problems in incorporating the 10,000 teachers trained.
- **Classroom construction and acquisition of Teacher Learning Materials (TLM) have lagged behind set targets** due to poor management, even with improvements brought by use of the Local Development Fund. As a result Pupil to Teacher ratios, Pupil Classroom ratios and Pupil to Textbook ratios have remained high in spite of efforts to improve these. The currently available resources are not adequate to meet the classroom gap estimated at 3,400 per year up to 2017.
- **Girl dropout is a factor** in the last two years of the primary cycle and the higher grades, despite improvement in the lower grades. The **enrolment of those with special needs continues to be low** compared their size in the population, and too few teachers are trained in special needs education.
- **There is no focus on learning outcomes in the three NESP thematic areas.** There are in-built school push-out factors: the system encourages children to enroll but is unable to retain them; many are still learning under trees. An overemphasis on access reflects global attention on access rather than on learning. There is need for repositioning the focus so that interest shifts to what a child learns.
- **The continuous assessment required by the PCAR is difficult to implement** because of large class sizes and inadequate preparation of teachers in the prescribed assessment methods. This negatively impacts on the quality of the education.

- **Not much progress has been made in reaching the ESIP target of 80 percent** given the declining NER over the last few years. Lack of pay for caregivers, lack of instructional ECD materials, lack of supervision, a dearth of dedicated ECD classrooms, and low educational levels and lack of training of ECD caregivers impeded the quality of ECD programs. Development partners have shunned allocating resources to ECD in spite of this being a Government priority in the NESP and ESIP. Most of the support to ECD has been from UNICEF whose funding often comes through NGOs.
- **School meal programmes have enhanced attendance and child nutrition but resources are not adequate to include all the eligible students.** Currently, support for school feeding is provided by Mary's meals, WFP, UNICEF, a number of NGOs and some church organizations. In order to reduce the overall cost of school feeding programmes the government is looking at home grown solutions, which would see the schools and the communities and farming clubs, growing and providing the food to the schools.
- **Although primary education is described as free, parents are paying hidden costs** related to school uniforms and other charges averaging between MK 2,500 and 3,000 per year for each student. For poor families this can be a constraint to sending children to school, and government grants do not meet the needs of all those eligible.
- **Most students graduating from Primary are not very articulate in spoken English.** Reconciling tensions between instruction in native languages and instruction in English will require considerable planning and resources, including increased access to learning and teaching materials in the chosen languages, and in-service language training to teachers.

6.2. Evaluation Question Two: The value-added to Norway of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments.

- **The SWAp is an effective way of funding the education sector** as it provides funding that is regular and predictable, in addition to reducing the transaction costs for Government.
- **There is need for clear prioritization so that resources are focused on a few things that can be done more effectively for impact.** Spending on school infrastructure like classrooms should not be at the expense of systems development. Teacher motivation is also essential in improving learning and some attention needs to be paid the necessary incentives through support from partners.
- **A well-functioning LEG is needed to improve coordination in the sector.** Partners should promote more accountability for the resources allocated to education for the benefit of the children of Malawi.
- **Consistent and predictable funding is important.** Aid suspensions like that brought about by the Cashgate scandal can be disruptive. The arrangement of reimbursement to GPE after the government had spent the money is not a good funding mechanism especially for a poor country that already depends on DP support

VII: Recommendations

7.1. Recommendations based on the 2009-2013 evaluation period are not immediately pertinent to post 2013. In September 2013, the end of the evaluation period, "Cashgate" occurred. This event led to the suspension of donor budget support across all sectors. The development partners that had been pooling their funds through the education SWAp in a coordinated and harmonized fashion pulled out of the SWAp. The suspension of aid led to severe macro-fiscal problems. A new government was elected in May 2014, but January 2015 brought further problems in the form of catastrophic floods affecting half the country.

7.2. Lessons learned for fragile states need to be considered as the basis for going forward:

- 1) **Keep it simple.** The events of the last two years have put acute pressure on all sectors, including the education system. The design of aid needs to become simpler and omit complex issues that are demanding of implementation capacities that are apt to be in disarray or unavailable.
- 2) **Keep it realistic.** Be wary of outcomes and activities less likely to succeed under fragile conditions. Success requires the political support of Government. Shortfalls in Government capacity pose limits on what aid can achieve. Since fragile states often have high turnover at national and sub-national levels, pursue capacity development activities only if the intended beneficiaries have the incentives to change and only if better capacities will not be quickly lost to further turnover. Recognize that some objectives, especially those involving quality, require longer time frames to succeed and thus relatively stable conditions that only infrequently exist in fragile states.
- 3) **Determine if an approach of maintenance or damage limitation is more appropriate than the development perspective appropriate to stable situations.**
- 4) **Always think through the causal pathways and have a robust M&E system in place.** Even if aid is simplified and organized around damage limitation, aid programs still need carefully thought through causal chains from activities to the outcomes sought. They still need indicators, and arrangements to measure progress toward outcomes. Especially in the Malawi case M&E needs to verify that goods and services in fact reach their intended beneficiaries. *The fundamental issue here is clarity of thought and the design of a measurement regime fit for management and accountability purposes.*
- 5) **Stay flexible.** Flexibility in means and sometimes in ends is necessary to operate effectively in fragile conditions. However, especially when ends must change, the theory that links activities to outputs to outcomes must be revised, as well as its associated indicators and measurement arrangements. All changes need to be clearly documented.
- 6) **Minimize the use of parallel systems.** Parallel systems disempower and discredit the Government and reduce the accountability of the systems and the personnel in place. If the donors are reluctant to work through Government, delivering the aid as directly to beneficiaries as possible minimizes the creation of centralized systems with powerful interests in sustaining their new role. Interests will be created even when delivering the aid as directly to beneficiaries as possible, but if direct delivery is working well, it is more efficient and should become a permanent delivery system.
- 7) **Carpe Diem--seize the day.** Crises can force the use of innovative ways to keep the system running that can reveal previously unrecognized capacities, build new capacities, and reveal significantly more efficient ways to get things done than had been previously used. When successful, these innovations can become institutionalized post-crisis. For example, in Madagascar UNICEF transferred the GPE share of school grants directly to the public primary schools, shortening the implementation chain and increasing the timeliness of fund transfers.

7.3. A few recommendations are germane if and when the aid situation stabilizes in Malawi:

- 8) **Reduce** the size of the Sector Working Group, reduce the number of annual Sector Working Group meetings, and lengthen each meeting. The Sector Working Group membership is too large, with some members not contributing at all. Reducing the number and extending the length of each meeting can reduce travel costs for members outside of Lilongwe and deal with the problem of the currently overloaded agendas for each meeting.
- 9) **Create a more unified aid management process** that focuses on policy, strategy, and accountability as well as implementation. This can be fostered by using a Terms of Reference for the Sector Working Group comparable to those for a Local Education Group that focuses the Sector Working Group on the sector as a whole and that includes the functions of policy dialogue and consensus building.
- 10) **UNICEF should consider funding more of their activities through the pool fund** in order to leverage more resources from the Pool instead of the current situation where most of the activities are outside the pool and in selected districts and schools.
- 11) The **school feeding program** should be revised to create more buy-in from local communities and greater breadth and sustainability. The possibility should be explored of including communal gardens that participate in the school feeding program in other programs that improve access to seed and fertilizer.

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Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Norwegian Multilateral Support to Basic Education Terms of Reference

- Background

1.1 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 enrolled¹². 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 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 year¹³. The cost of such underfunding to the individual and to society includes lost well-being, productivity and health.

Domestic spending on education globally has on average increased from 4.6% to 5.1% of GNP from 1999 to 2011¹⁴. A suggested goal post-2015 is that countries should spend between 4 and 6% of their GNP on education¹⁵. 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 countries will need external funding in addition¹⁶.

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 education¹⁷ were the World Bank, the United Kingdom, The United States, EU Institutions and Germany¹⁸. UNICEF is one of the five most important multilateral channels in terms of total financing to education¹⁹, 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 OECD, but would be the fifth largest multilateral donor based on its own

¹² Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 "Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all".

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 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)

¹⁶ 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".

¹⁷ Percentage share of donor's aid to basic education as a share of all donor's aid to basic education, source OECD/DAC.

¹⁸ Rose, P. and L. Stee, op.cit.

¹⁹ 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.

financial data²⁰. Even so, the share that these agencies contribute to basic education has declined over the last decade relative to that of bilateral donors.

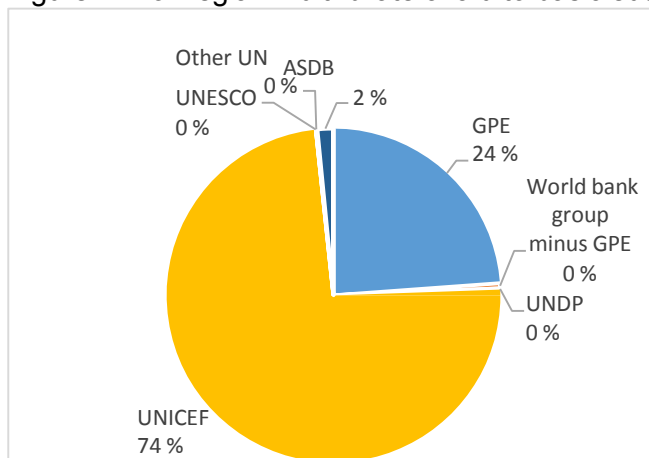
1.2 Trends in Norwegian aid to education over the past decade

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 provided²¹. 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.

Norwegian bilateral and multi-bilateral²² 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 2013²³. During the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the channeling of Norwegian aid to education from the bilateral to the multilateral channel. Of Norwegian bilateral and multi-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.

Figure 1: Norwegian Multi-bilateral aid to basic education by partner, 2009-2013²⁴



Source: Norad's Database

Allocations to UNICEF for basic education increased steadily in the beginning of the decade,

²⁰ Rose, P. and L.Stee, op.cit. (footnote 3)

²¹ Key document: http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/35167823/PDFS/PRP201120120001_UDDDDPDFS.pdf

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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).

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).

4.1 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) 2006-2013²⁵. 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.

UNICEF identifies five focus areas²⁶ that all receive "thematic funding"²⁷. 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 BEGE²⁸. The contributions from Norway to UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality for 2006–2013 have varied between USD 72 and 91 million per year²⁹.

4.2 The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)³⁰ 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

²⁵ A new Strategic Plan (2014-2017) has just been instituted.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ The other two focus areas are "early learning" and "education in emergencies".

²⁹ UNICEF Thematic Report 2013, table page 48. Note that figures before and after 2012 cannot be compared.

³⁰ 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.

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 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 LEG³¹. The SE or ME will play a key role in the LEG, and in supporting implementation.

Following an evaluation published in 2010³², 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 285 mill)³³. 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.

4.3 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 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 Education³⁴. Much of the funding for basic education is channelled through multilateral actors – notably through UNICEF and GPE. More knowledge on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency³⁵ of these institutions will be important

³¹ 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.

³² 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>.

³³ 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>.

³⁴ <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2013-2014/Meld-St-25--20132014.html?id=762554>.

³⁵ As defined by the OECD-DAC, see <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

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 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 learning³⁶, gender equality and equity³⁷, and through increasing the knowledge base of basic education.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 aid³⁸.
- Identify good practices and lessons learned.
- 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.

³⁶ 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. The aspect of learner achievement should carry particular weight.

³⁷ 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. This goes beyond equitable access to include equity in the quality of learning.

³⁸ 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.

- Scope and Evaluation Questions

3.1 Scope

The evaluation covers all of GPE's and UNICEF's support to basic education during the period 2009-2013³⁹. It will assess contributions of GPE and UNICEF to achieving results at national level, focusing on outputs and outcomes rather than impact⁴⁰, and emphasising the quality of learning, equity and gender equality dimensions of the basic education sector (pre-primary, primary, lower level secondary and including teachers' education and non-formal education⁴¹). 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). 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.

3.2 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.

- a) What results⁴² (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

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ "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.

⁴¹ Non-formal education should only be included to the extent that it is included in national education budgets.

⁴² 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

unintended effects?

- b) Given the different roles and mandates of UNICEF and GPE; how and to what extent do they complement each other?
- c) 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 of the technical inputs⁴³ and the extent to which the inputs are in accordance with the principles of aid effectiveness⁴⁴ 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.
- d) 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.
- e) 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?
- f) 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

o Specific methodological considerations

The evaluation will consist of three parts:

- A Results Assessment.
- A Financial Assessment.
- A Scoping Exercise: Preparation for a potential future Impact Evaluation⁴⁵. All three parts are expected to inform and build upon each other.

⁴³ "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.

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵ The Impact Evaluation itself will be commissioned in a separate tender.

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

Results Assessment

The evaluation shall document and assess results of the national basic education⁴⁶ 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.

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 goals⁴⁷, 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, 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:

⁴⁶ As defined above.

⁴⁷ Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 "Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all".

1. Characteristics of, and trends in Norwegian ODA funding to education, compared to ODA funding as a whole.
2. 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.
3. For UNICEF and GPE:
 - a. 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 areas⁴⁸ including BEGE and any further specification of BEGE funds.
 - b. Provide an overview of criteria for allocations of funds within UNICEF and to UNICEF's partners and to GPE-endorsed countries.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.

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 Evaluation⁴⁹

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 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

⁴⁸ Key focus areas are specified by the Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2006-2013.

⁴⁹ "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.

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 BEGE⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ http://www.unicef.org/parmo/files/FA2_Basic_Education_and_Gender_Equality.pdf, page 17.

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):

- 9.1. Document search and reviews.
- 9.2. Analysis of relevant databases and statistics for UNICEF, GPE and case countries.
- 9.3. Interviews with key staff at Headquarters (Oslo, New York and Washington D.C).
- 9.4. Interviews with key representatives of LEGs (or similar sector group if a LEG does not exist) in the selected countries, including government staff.
- 9.5. Field visits to relevant intervention sites in the selected countries, including interviews with key officials, head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils.
- 9.6. Document reviews including research.
- 9.7. Surveys.
- 9.8. 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:

- 1) Inception report not exceeding 20 pages to be approved by the Evaluation department
- 2) Country reports for each pre-selected case country, including financial assessment and

results assessment.

- 3) Brief report presenting results of the scoping exercise for impact evaluation.
- 4) Draft report.
- 5) Final report not exceeding 60 pages excluding summary and annexes.
- 6) Two policy briefs not exceeding 2 pages each, one targeting a wider audience and one targeting relevant personnel involved in development cooperation.
- 7) 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 made available to Norad. Norad retains all rights with respect to distribution, dissemination and publication of the deliverables.

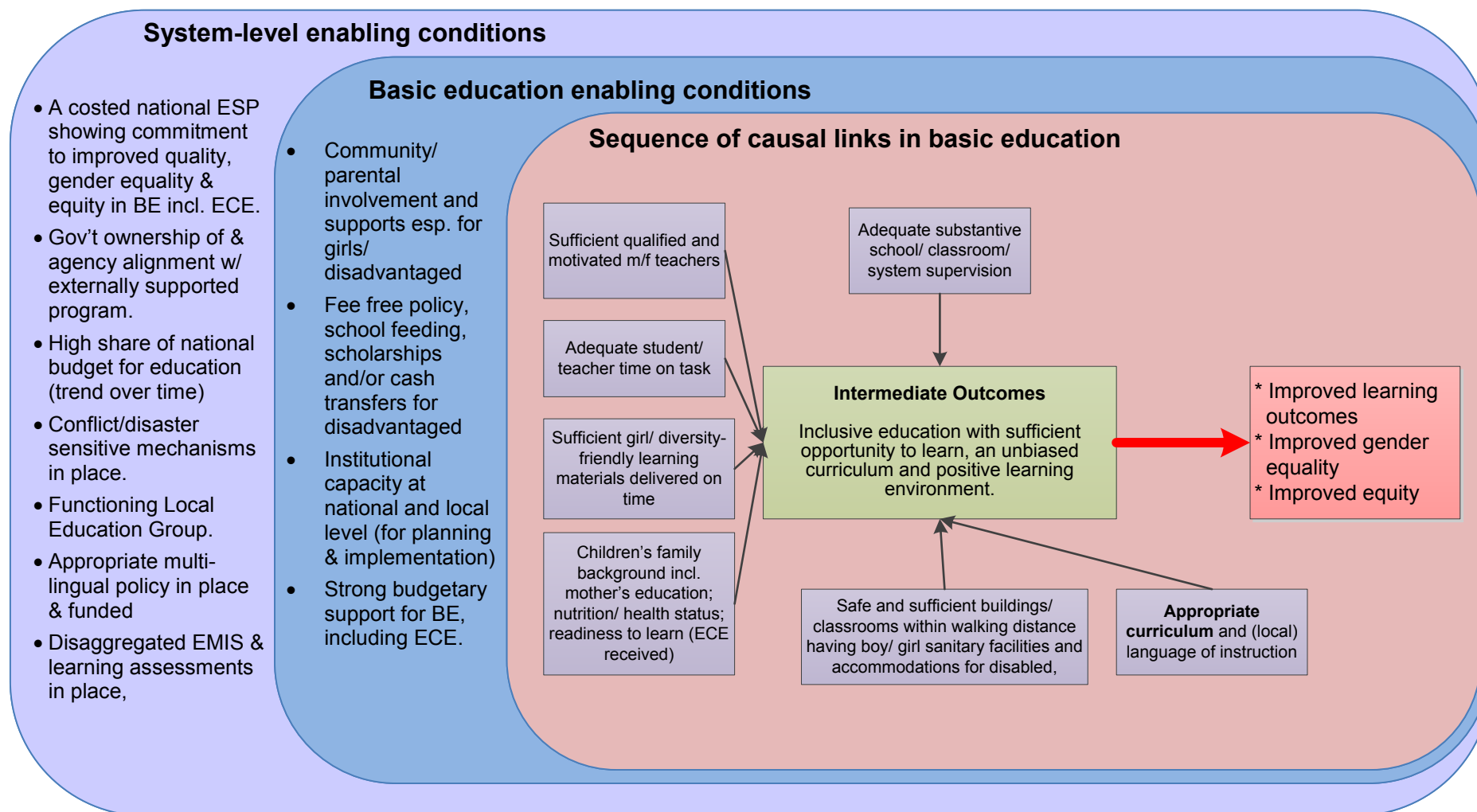
- **Organisation**

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.

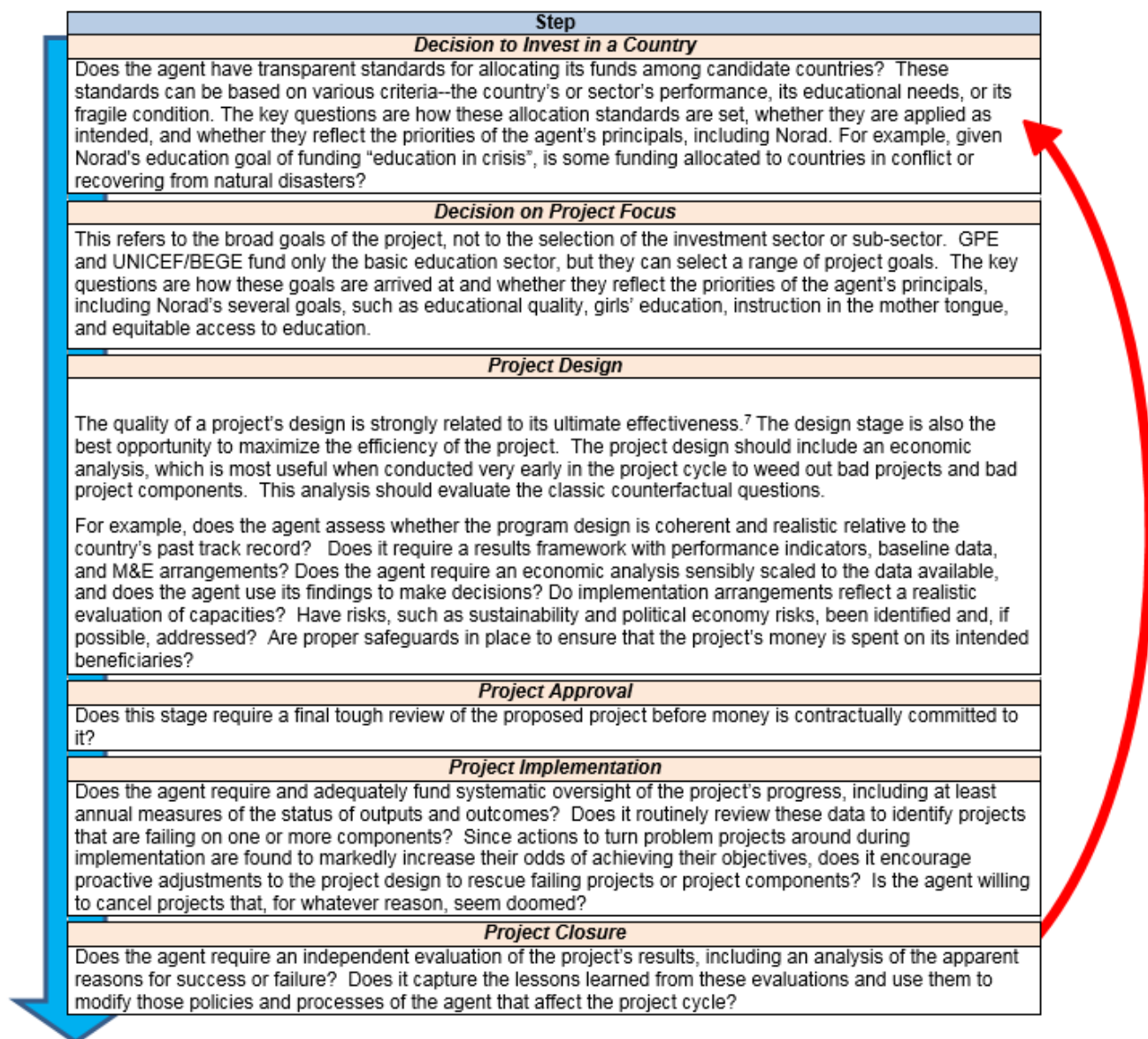
A Reference Group will be constituted with separate Terms of Reference. It will include relevant staff from Norad, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, GPE as well as other relevant stakeholders. Reference Group members will be invited to comment on all evaluation outputs before finalisation.

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: Theory of Change



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



Annex 4: List of those interviewed in the field

	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANISATION
1	Dr. Joseph Cimombo	Director of Basic Education	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
2	McKnight Kalanda	Director of Early Childhood Development	Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare
3	R Charles Nabongo	Head of Education	UNICEF
4	Ken Nsandu	Director of Finance	MoEST
5	Chris Naunje	SWAP Secretariat	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
6	R Martha Sineta	District Education Manager	Lilongwe Urban Education District
7	MS Grace Milner	UNICEF Desk Officer	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
8	Hendrina Givah	Director	FAWEMA
9	Kisa Kumwenda	Officer	Civil Society Education Coalition
10	Lusungu Sichali	Finance Officer	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
11	Albert Saka	Cross cutting Issues	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
12	Alexander Manyengo	District Education Manager – Lilongwe Rural East	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
13	Dr. Seneta	District Education Manager for Zomba Rural	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
14	Mrs Massi	Head Teacher Chipala Primary School	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
15	Ms Esnart Chaponda	CBE Coordinator	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
16	Ben Mbewe Kenneth Kalele Brain Ntulisha Nrewton Mopiha	Headteacher/Teachers	Chalomwe School, Zomba; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
17	Ms Lestina Mpulula MsElinala Kazembe	School Feeding Committee	Chalomwe School Zomba; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
18	Mrs Ngosi	Cluster Manager)	(World Vision Malawi-Zomba
19	(Mr Kalelo)	Zomba District Social Welfare Officer	Zomba District Council Office
20	Mrs Chiwayula	Lilongwe Demonstration School	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
21	Ms Brenda Banda	Program Officer	Ministry of Youth Development
22	Ms Christine Njondo	Head of Education	USAID
23	Mr Eric Kenam	District Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	District Council Office (Zomba)
23	Benedicto Kondowe	Executive Director for	Civil Society Education Coalition
25	Ms Emma Gremley	Head of Educaion	DfID
26	Ms Muna Meky	For Task Team Leader PIEQM	World Bank
27	Lamula Nsanje	Head of Education	KfW
28	Norihide Furukawa	Head of Eucation	JICA
29	Maxwell NKhokwe	Aid Coordinator e Education Specialist	JICA
30	Martin Masanche	EMIS	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
31	Lexon Ndalama	Director	Save the Children Malawi

Annex 5: Responses by Stakeholders to Interview Questions

Question	GPE/PIEQM	UNICEF
1. What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE have had the biggest positive effect on basic education in Malawi?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GPE had a huge impact in financing, being the biggest donor. It helped meet most of the needs in basic education including PSIP Grants. 2. Pool funding gave the government flexibility on the use of money 3. GPE classroom construction through the hiring of Local Development Fund, although not efficient enough 4. Because of the GPE many donors were forced to talk to each other. This reduced transaction costs for Ministry. 5. This was their great need and GPE did not pull out at a time when others were pulling out. 6. The GPE Appraisal process was good for the system. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction of toilets and sanitary facilities in schools. 2. Supports to ECD through policy formulation and training caregivers. 3. Through institutionalization of Child Friendly Schools, Health and Nutrition, 4. Capacity building of teachers, managers etc., and provision of TLM 5. Response to the flood affected schools.
2. What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE could be more effective in promoting basic education in Malawi?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GPE should have more consistency in implementation 2. Should address the high deficit in basic education needs. 3. GPE should have more in-country presence and reduce turnover of individuals in the Supervising Entity 4. The arrangement of reimbursement of GPE after the government had spent the money was a mistake and needs to be reviewed in future. 5. Funding should be consistent at normal intervals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNICEF should more funds for the construction of more classroom blocks. 2. UNICEF should support school feeding. 3. UNICEF should engage at the districts level using local structures as this is where the implementation takes place. 4. They should focus more institutionalization of child friendly schools. 5. Should work closely with Ministry and build capacity. 6. UNICEF could leverage more funding by working within the pool.
3. If you could re-allocate UNICEF and GPE funds spent on basic education in Malawi but had to stay in the same budget limit, where would you add funding and where would you reduce it?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce funding for classrooms and increase funding for teachers' houses 2. It would have been better to select 4 or 5 things and not too many things 3. Help MoEST to have a vibrant monitoring system of the TLM 4. Spend more School Improvement Grants but base them on performance. 5. Spend more on teacher motivation – and reduced on classroom construction to teacher houses. 6. Separate GPE from the WB – being the supervising entity to the impression that GPE is WB money. This reduces creating innovation in the use of GPE. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scale up child protection initiatives to all districts and reduce funding in construction of schools structures. 2. Reduce spending on consultancies, workshops and meetings and increase spending at the district level. 3. Promote nutrition education and sports, preventing school going children from contracting HIV, promoting girl child education 4. Promoting taking good care of the environment and promoting productive school environment as a way of mitigating climate change. 5. Reduce funding on infrastructure and spend more on curriculum review (teachers and that of primary).
4. Are there ways in which UNICEF and GPE need to adapt better to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They need to ask what Malawians want rather than imposing programs. 2. They need to promote the reading culture among Malawians through 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GPE and UNICEF also need to hold people accountable in the case of adverse audit reports. 2. They need to take into of the many barriers to participation of girls due to

Question	GPE/PIEQM	UNICEF
Malawi's history and culture regarding education?	<p>provision of print and electronic materials.</p> <p>3. Malawi's system is elitist (exclusive) in nature and favors those in the higher income quintiles...hence adaptation requires UNICEF/GPE to support analyses to minimize this influence.</p> <p>4. Its Malawi that needs to adjust – culture has been downstream in order to meet the needs of education for the 21st century other countries in the regions which are performing better.</p>	<p>social norms which need to be taken into consideration.</p> <p>3. UNICEF needs to address the fragility in governance (including poor commitment, low ownership and donor dependence) which seems historic.</p>

Upstream contributions (UNICEF).

The table lists responses on questions about UNICEF by the indicated stakeholders

Government	DPs	UNICEF	Ministry Officials
Upstream Contributions by UNICEF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF was very active when they were DP chair for some time It was instrumental in the finalization of the ESIP II It proposed the big policy shift of the decentralization of the TLMS to the district. Girls programmes in education as in education part of three UN agencies which are contributing to keeping girls in school 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> As a Coordinating Agency oversaw activities such as the application for GPE funds including allocation of initial \$90 million It put the integration of equity agenda and priorities on the table in sector policy dialogue-as a result disadvantaged groups and girls education featured significantly in eligible expenditures under the SWAP/GPE pool fund. It promoted Child friendly schools and initiatives such as Mother groups which introduce quality standards and support for vulnerable groups are an integral feature of sector policy and strategy. Modelling of the above activities at school level has influenced policy and standards. Curriculum improvement with specific focus on introduction/integration of life skills in the curriculum. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> It assisted in producing an ECD policy which is being revised and in the formulation of the ECD strategic plan in 2009 It collected data for the mapping of Community Based Child Care Centres in order to improve access to ECD. It played a big role in GPE II application It has championed the implementation of the child-friendly school concept.
What evidence is there that UNICEF was a moving force?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The GPE application is automatically attributed to the leadership of the CA On gender equity...UNICEF has been and is the main mover of girl's education 	UNICEF were the only ones involved in the ECD policy and mapping of the Community Based Child Care Centres Most DP have not supported ECD.

Government	DPs	UNICEF	Ministry Officials
		<p>interventions such as mother groups and CFS..</p> <p>3. Life skills materials clearly indicate UNICEF support</p>	
Without UNICEF would the policy/program/upstream breakthrough have come to fruition?	Although they led the initiatives other DP provided their support	No idea...UNICEF happened to be in the right place at the right time though.	Yes through the efforts of the Ministry but the involvement of UNICEF was crucial
Were there other agencies involved in the same upstream cause?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All DPs were involved in the formulation and finalization of the ESIP II. USAID and GIZ were also DP chair and contributed to some the upstream work. 	To a lesser extent yes.	
To what extent was UNICEF considered the lead agency for the upstream program breakthrough?	They initiated the discussion on the decentralization of TLM as a pilot to selected districts in the Ministry	In areas of comparative advantage mentioned above, UNICEF is considered lead agency by other agencies as well as government. Other agencies routinely refer and consult with UNICEF	As already stated above it was the only DP involved in ECD.
What are the most important UNICEF upstream contributions or planned contributions in the current Country Programme (2012-2016).		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF supported the development of the ESIP II for 2014-2018 which is basis for the new GPE grant application of USD\$45 million Implementation of the School Improvement programme using the CFS framework and technical support at national level to manage programme is ongoing. Innovation will include performance based financing and real-time monitoring; Teacher Education improvements are ongoing....modelling of methodology innovation in all 5 teacher training colleges and involvement in curriculum review are intended to improve learning outcomes; 	

Annex 6: Summary of respondent reviews of how SWG performed relative to LEG functions

Sector planning and inter-agency coordination. The SWG did not engage in sector planning or inter-agency coordination. They focused on the reports emanating from the TWGs, and the terms of reference for the TWGs did not include sector planning or inter-agency coordination. The SWG monitors whether set targets were met during the quarter, discusses causes of failed targets, and tries to find solutions. Given its focus on TWG reports, the SWG only rarely reflects on challenges to the sector as whole. Inter-agency coordination tends to be achieved through the SWAp for those Development Partners who are in the funding pool and through regularly convened Development Partner meetings that are arranged outside of the SWG and that are not attended by other members of the SWG.

Donor harmonization and use of common procedures. The SWG provides a partially successful platform for donors to: a) harmonize their support around Government's sector plan; and b) agree on common processes and procedures to reduce the burden on Government. Those not in the funding pool still engage with Ministry officials on their specific projects.

Supervision of the sector plan and projects. The SWG does not monitor the sector plan and engages only marginally in the supervision of projects. It relies on reports from the TWGs about the performance of each sub-sector. Although these reports are improving, their quality is low. They lack statistics that display progress on output and outcome targets. The TWGs should be asked to focus on a few indicators that are tracked and reported on. The reports are often circulated late, and stakeholders do not have enough time to read the reports before the meetings. The TWGs undertake school visits and visits to program sites once a year as part of the Joint Sector Review preparations. However, the schools to be visited are often alerted about the impending visits and therefore prepare for them. There is a need for surprise visits. Because of time constraints, schools not too far from Lilongwe are selected for the visits. The Ministry handpicks the schools to be visit, often selecting the better performing schools in order to enhance the image of the Ministry.

Policy dialogue and consensus building. The interview data indicate moderate dissatisfaction with the quality of the SWG's policy dialogue and consensus building. As noted, it focuses on the reports of TWGs. Given how it functions, it fails to focus on the big policy issues. It fails to monitor whether the sum totality of investments in the sector--by Government and donors--is moving the sector closer to the targets in the sector plan.

- i. GPE/PIEQM and UNICEF programs contributed to a substantial number of classrooms constructed and renovated, teachers trained, and textbooks produced, as well as a modest number of managers and administrators trained. Overall, however, these outputs did not substantially outpace the growth in the number of children in school, due to both high population growth and an increase in repetition rates.
- ii. The population of enrolled students in primary grades grew 30 percent, from 3.6 million in 2008 to 4.5 million in 2013. The educational system is struggling to cope with this sharp increase, which greatly increased the need for more school level educational infrastructure like classrooms, teachers' houses and sanitation facilities, more teachers, more teaching and learning resources and improved management systems. These increased needs hurt the quality of education, despite the investments made by both the government and development partners.

Pupil Teacher Ratio

- iii. The Ministry embarked on a number of programmes to increase the supply of trained teachers. It introduced among other things the Open Distance Learning/ Initial Primary Teacher Education model in order to speed up teacher production. The output from the teacher training college increased from 3,083 in 2010 to 10,214 in 2014. The biggest increase was in 2012 and 2013 as a result of the output from the Open Distance Learning programme.

- iv. The increased output from the teacher training colleges contributed to the decrease of both the PTR and the pupil: qualified teacher ratio (PqTR) particularly between 2012 and 2013 when the PTR and PqTR decreased from 74 to 69 and 96 to 76 respectively. The PTR target for 2017 is 1:60, which may prove ambitious. The impact of teacher production has sometimes been affected by delays in recruiting graduates and the inability of the government to place the 10,000 who have graduated in 2014. Progress has been made in reducing the PTR and the PqTR as a result of the strategies and investment in teacher education. Both PTR and PqTR are lower in urban areas than in rural areas. The challenge that remains is the ability of the system to employ and retain the teachers that are so much needed in the system.

Lack of progress on Pupil: Classroom ratio

- v. One indicator that both the PIEQM and the UNICEF CP were expected to impact is the pupil to classroom ratio, which has remained high despite the construction of additional classrooms. The PIEQM was expected to reduce the pupil: classroom ratio from a baseline of 1:100 to 1:97 in 2014 through the construction and rehabilitation of over 6,000 classrooms over the project life. The current pupil: classroom ratio currently stands at 111 against a NESP target of 79 in 2012 and 57 in 2017, and it ranged substantially across regions, from 77 in the Northern Education Division to 131 in the Shire highlands Divisions. There have been delays related to procurement and actual construction. Construction speeded up when some of it was delegated to the Local Development Fund, although the quality of structures they construct is deemed to be poor.

Primary Survival Rate

- vi. Primary school survival rates, the percentages of children who entered the first year of primary school who start a later grade of primary school, have decreased steadily for Standards 5 and 8 from 2008 to 2014. For Standard 5 this rate decreased from 76.2 percent to 64.5 percent. For girls the decrease has been from 73.6 percent to 64.0 percent. For Standard 8 survival rates have decreased from 52.1 percent to 31.5 percent - a drop of 20.6 points. The drop for girls was 21.6 points over this period.

Primary Completion Rate

- vii. Since more and more children enter school, against a constrained system, more are also not able to complete because of the push-out factors, both in the school and at home, that have yet to be addressed in the system. The state of the economy during the period of implementation of the two projects could have reduced the ability of parents to meet financial contribution needed at the schools. Although primary education is free in Malawi parents still have to make some contribution to fees set at the school level, and school uniforms, though uniforms are not compulsory.
- viii. Other push out factors include pregnancy, early marriages, family responsibility, long distances to schools, poor school facilities, and shortages of teachers. These push-out factors have affected both the survival rate and the completion rates at the primary level, thereby reducing the impact that the PIEQM was expected to achieve on these two indicators.

Pupil-Textbook Ratio

- ix. There continues to be a shortage of textbooks, particularly in the language subjects, mathematics and sciences. In some subjects like mathematics in some standards the pupil: textbook ratio is as high as 6:1. The PIEQM had a component for increasing LTM including textbooks. It was expected that the project would procure as many as 9,800,000 textbooks and that this would reduce the pupil: textbook ratio. But this was not the case as the pupil: textbook ratio mostly went up during the project instead of down.
- x. The main cause was the central procurement system for textbooks, which was cumbersome and led to delays in the procurement and delivery of textbooks to the schools. On average, it took two years to complete the procurement cycle. There were also delays in the distribution of the books to the schools and the teacher training colleges after procurement. It was therefore not possible for the project to have a

noticeable impact on the supply of textbooks. Increased enrolments also created more pressure for textbooks at all levels in the system. This created a knowledge gap on the exact textbook requirements of the system.

- xii. Even though schools are expected to use 50 percent of their Primary School Improvement Plan funds on quality improvement, this is not adequate to meet the gap in textbook requirements. A pilot program being championed by UNICEF to decentralize textbooks procurement to the school level is seen a solution to ensuring timely availability of textbooks in the schools. Under ESIP II the Ministry intends to devolve procurement of textbooks to the schools in an effort to improve the supply to the schools.

Gender Parity

- xiii. Gender parity in enrolment was achieved in primary grades, but was not met in higher grades. The Gross Enrollment Ratio was 135, with that for girls at 133. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) was 86 in 2012, while the NER for girls was 87 in 2011. The gender parity index was above 1 with that for the urban Gender Parity Index, at 1.035 is higher than the rural Gender Parity Index at 0.995, but it drops to .85 girls on average for every boy in Standard 8.

Equity

- xiv. The introduction of school feeding programmes enhanced attendance and improved equity in the sense that those from poor families who would not have attended because of hunger are able to attend. Schools that provided meals had relatively higher enrolment than those without school feeding but there is little conclusive evidence that school feeding programmes have improved learning outcomes in those schools that are practicing school feeding.
- xv. Other interventions included a return policy that allowed girls who get pregnant to return to school after giving birth; and the creation of mother groups who try to ensure that all children of school going age, particularly girls, enroll and stay in school.
- xvi. Despite these policy interventions, the NER is estimated at 89 in 2013, indicates that 11 percent of children of primary going age are still not attending school.