

Educaid

Norwegian co-operation in basic education

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LINS is a resource centre for international education and development established in June 1997.

You can also read Educaid at <http://www.lins.no/>

The purpose of Educaid

The objective of Educaid is to function as an information channel between persons and institutions in the field of basic education and development. A special focus will be Norwegian development assistance.

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The LINS Perspective: The Hour Glass Problem continued

In the last edition of Educaid the issue was raised of the hourglass problem in development. Borrowing from Eric Hoyle's metaphor it was suggested that good ideas and innovations might be found in the top half of the hourglass among Ministry policy-makers and donors but that they rarely filtered down to the schools and classrooms. LINS had considerable feedback on this discussion which seems to have struck a chord with many. Some who e-mailed were not so convinced that the ideas and innovations referred to in the top half of the hourglass were always so plausible and worth-while. This could be a reason why they never filter down.

Perhaps of more interest was the idea put forward by Kees van den Bosch, writing from New Delhi. Kees reminded us that the hourglass is designed to be inverted. If we did this we might find that many good ideas and practices are going on at the micro-level which never get picked up at the policy level. A few years ago ADEA sponsored a study under the broad heading of 'What Works?' The outcome was a set of ideas, innovations and sheer good practices which could be shared, adapted and applied more generally. These were genuinely ideas from the grassroots. This approach contrasts with those educational organisations which claim to be 'knowledge banks' or 'knowledge organisations'.

Per Dalin at a recent meeting in Bergen, pointed out that knowledge has to become understanding before it amounts to anything. Understanding does not come from amassing data on 'promising avenues' and 'blind alleys'. Too often these become soundbite slogans such as, 'Spending more per pupil does not raise quality'. Parents buying private education for their children would disagree with that. The lived experience of ordinary professionals trying to make the most of poor facilities and resources to deliver some kind of quality education to their pupils may offer the best opportunities for turning our knowledge into understanding. Looking for ways to turn the hourglass upside down and to make the most of real experience should be on the agenda of all those concerned with raising quality in education.

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The Fast Track Initiative is 'on track' as Norway leaves the steering committee

Norway will finish its term in the steering committee of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) in December 2004. From the middle of 2003 and for one year, Norway was also the co-chair, first together with France and subsequently USA, for

this initiative. The aim of FTI is to contribute towards the Millennium Development Goal on Education – that is universal primary completion rate by 2015 – by focusing on resources and harmonising the support to education. The recent partnership meeting on FTI in Brasilia confirmed that the initiative now seems to be 'on track'. Positive developments relating to the initiative includes: moving from a group of invited countries to all IDA countries with a PRSP and an education sector plan now being eligible to join the initiative. A fund has been established to support countries in the preparation of an education sector plan where this is not in place. The Education Programme Development Funds builds on the model of the Norwegian Education Trust Fund. Perhaps most importantly, total education disbursements to the FTI countries have increased according to the latest status report on the initiative. This is the case through regular donor funding channels as well as through the FTI catalytic fund; a source of fund for countries with few donors present.

However, partner countries lament that we are still not on a 'fast track'. This is because, they argue, the endorsement process for becoming a member of the FTI is cumbersome and slow. In their view, the same can be said for the disbursement of additional funds for education. However, the FTI secretariat, placed in the World Bank, with assistance from Norway, is now working to simplify the endorsement process. Moreover, the time frame for disbursement from the catalytic fund, supported by Norway with US\$ 8 million for 2005, has been considerably reduced in the last year. For more information on FTI see <http://www1.worldbank.org/education/efaiti/>. For information in Norwegian see http://www.norad.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=2765

Camilla Helgø, Norad

UNGEI - reaching consensus but still missing in action

Norway holds a position in the UNICEF led United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) Global Advisory Committee (GAC). UNGEI, which is a flagship on girls' education, was launched at the Dakar forum in April 2000 by UN secretary general Kofi Annan. The initiative embraces all partners at the national and global level working on girls' education. The aim of the initiative is to contribute to closing the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and ensure that by 2015 all children, boys and girls, will be able to complete primary schooling. Norway has voiced concern about the lack of action at the country level. Fortunately, the recent UNGEI

meeting in Brazil indicated agreement about UNGEIs role at this level. UNGEI should aim to influence national education plans and investments to ensure gender equity and equality, it was argued. UNGEI partners at the country level should also seek to cooperate and co-ordinate activities relating to girls' education. Operational guidelines and an UNGEI strategy are being preparation. Norway sits on a committee to revise the current drafts of these two important documents.

An additional problem for the initiative has been the weak staffing of the UNGEI secretariat placed in UNICEF. Norway has tentatively indicated willingness to contribute financially to the secretariat through its UNICEF support. Until the secretariat has been strengthened it is difficult to envision how UNGEI could become a significant force within the international education arena.

For more information on UNGEI see <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/docs/UNGEDI.pdf> and http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/working_group/266,8,UNG EI at Country Level.

Camilla Helgø, Norad

UNESCO International Meeting on the "University Community and EFA"

In November The UNESCO Division of Higher Education hosted an international meeting designed to focus on the role of higher education in achieving EFA and Millennium Development Goals. A number of Ministers, Vice Chancellors, academics and international partner organizations attended the meeting in Paris. It was a timely one, viewing the fact that institutions of higher learning often ignore the special role they can play in contributing to the training of professionals who in turn can contribute to achieving MDGs. Several points of interaction between the university community and EFA and MDG initiatives were identified. They include:

- outreach activities focusing on EFA,
- strengthening ministry links to improve pre-service and in-service teacher education,
- creating bridges between researchers and policy makers
- instilling a sense of social responsibility for EFA among university students

Particular attention was given to the role of improved teacher education in developing countries. One of the 5 working groups produced a document which brought forth common issues involving teacher education. Strategies were identified to deal with challenges, and examples of good practice were discussed and incorporated in the document. There was general agreement that higher education institutions should guide the teaching profession toward higher quality education grounded in research. Action research was identified as the most effective way of investigating and solving problems within education. Universities have a role to play here. The working group on teacher education identified several other common challenges amongst which:

- low status and poor remuneration of teachers
- lack of resources for professional teacher development
- the need for quality assurance and clarity of institutional objectives in face of the flux of change.
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The group concluded that institutional accountability, certification and evidence-based improvements in teaching might help persuade policy makers that investments in research-informed educational development can be cost-effective. They contribute to the public good.

Several examples of distance and electronic-based education programs for teachers were presented, amongst which the Open University in the UK and the Euro Mediterranean Information society. For more information see:<http://avicenna.unesco>, or write to fels-deep@open.ac.uk.

*Betsy Heen,
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Joint Assessment Mission in Sudan

The Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) for Sudan will provide an assessment of rehabilitation and transitional recovery needs focused on the next two years, and outline a framework for reconstruction and recovery through 2010, oriented toward the Millennium Development Goals. The JAM is managed by a Core Coordinating Group (CCG) comprising representatives from the GoS and the SPLM, as well as representatives of the UN system, the World Bank, the IPF and IGAD.

The work is organized around eight main clusters, and basic social services (including education, health, HIV/AIDS) is one of the clusters.

One LINS consultant was appointed by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry as a team member of this cluster, which basically worked on education sector plans for the North and the South. Due to basic difference in educational approach it is at present difficult to work out one unified educational sector plan which comprises both the South and the North.

The focus of the assessment is the recovery and rehabilitation of a basic education system in Southern Sudan based on a review of the available reports, studies and research on education. In the North the objective of the education sector plan has been to identify the main accomplishments and the key barriers to educating all children in North Sudan according to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

These sector plans will provide the basis for one section/chapter (on basic social services) in the Joint Assessment Mission Report (comprising all sectors). This report will be presented at an international financing conference to be held in Oslo, Norway shortly after the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

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The Annual NETF Seminar

The annual seminar mounted to discuss the Norwegian Educational Trust Fund administered by the World Bank was held this year in Bergen. Only one day was available

for the seminar as a Fast Track Initiative meeting was scheduled for the same week and a major conference on Education and Development was also being held in Bergen. The theme of the NETF seminar was 'Quality in Education' and as a change of approach no formal presentations were made by World Bank staff except for purely introductory matters. The main contributions were from recipients of the Trust Fund and non-governmental actors in education.

The Minister of Education from Burkina Faso and the Deputy Minister from Kenya gave presentations on the challenges of seeking quality in the systems for which they are responsible. Penina Mlamba of the Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE) also made a presentation as did Tove Nagel of Norwegian Save the Children. A major part of the programme was devoted to a discussion of ADEA's recently published report on Quality in Education. Adrian Verspoor, who had been part of the team preparing the report, gave a summary of its findings and responded to questions on the report. Once again the seminar was well supported but the Norway-based NETF Reference Group will want to look next year at a more participatory type of programme which will allow for more exchange and interaction.

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Teacher Education in Sierra Leone

LINS staff have recently been engaged in consultancy work in Sierra Leone. Anders Wirak reported in the last issue of Educaid on his long-term work for the World Bank in this post-conflict country which is now struggling to re-establish its infrastructure, especially its schools. One of the most critical areas for recovery is teacher development and supply. There may be as many as 12000 untrained and unqualified teachers in the primary schools of Sierra Leone and Government and its NGO partners are working together to address this situation. Bob Smith visited Sierra Leone in July on behalf of the World Bank to assess progress with a UNICEF-managed emergency teacher training programme. Using locally prepared modular learning materials and a decentralized training approach SABABU is reaching many untrained and unqualified serving teachers. At the same time Freetown Teachers' College is running a teacher's certificate programme through distance learning, again aimed at the untrained and unqualified teacher. The review of these programmes revealed the value of partnership between Government and NGOs and what can be done in the most difficult of circumstances by committed and professional people. Problems with the quality of materials and of student supervision certainly exist but the basis has been set up for innovative and effective ways of providing professional orientation for teachers who might never get the opportunity to attend college for a conventional training course.

A second opportunity to appraise emergency teacher education in Sierra Leone arose through Operation Day's Work and Plan Norway. Plan is a well-known international NGO but perhaps Operation Day's Work is less familiar. In a nutshell, the organization encourages Norwegian youth

to donate the proceeds from at least one day's work to development in the South. In this particular instance the funding raised by Operation Day's Work finances a Teacher Development Initiative in Sierra Leone in partnership with Plan Norway and Plan Sierra Leone. As with the UNICEF programme outlined above the target groups identified for assistance are untrained and unqualified teachers who are reached either through distance learning or through a series of upgrading and refresher courses run locally to their schools. The programme is currently running in five regions of Sierra Leone and a team of local researchers has been engaged in field work to determine the effectiveness of the training approaches taken. A full report is expected before Christmas.

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Decentralisation in Ethiopia

Some two years ago the Government of Ethiopia launched an ambitious programme of decentralization. The country was divided into regions, largely on an ethnic basis. Each region was given autonomy in its internal affairs and much control of services such as health and education was handed over to the region and even to the district (or woreda) level. Tor Halvorsen of the University of Bergen and Bob Smith of LINS undertook a study on behalf of the World Bank to assess the extent to which decentralization has supported or hindered service delivery in education and health. Working closely with local consultants we were able to gather data from the woreda level and even down to the kebele or community level. Our report has yet to be submitted to the Bank but an over-riding concern has been the issue of the level of resources available to pay health staff and teachers, to supply medicines and textbooks and to build the physical facilities the two sectors need. There is no doubt that people at the kebele and woreda levels feel that they are now part of the decision-making process. They are well aware of the needs in health and education in their communities. However, if they continue to produce annual plans which are never fully financed, however realistic and modest they are, their enthusiasm for the process is bound to wane. Ethiopia's great shift towards decentralization deserves to succeed but the gap between resources needed and those available is a threat to that success.

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Education in Angola: Off track, but improving

After 27 years of civil war, Angola finally got peace in April 2002. During the war, a third of the population was displaced, and health and education infrastructures and services collapsed in many places. School buildings were bombed, and teachers fled because of the insecurity. At the end of the war, the illiteracy was high in both adult and child population: Among the poor, only 27% of women could read and write, compared to 85% of the rich women.

In 2001, only 56% of children aged 6-9 were attending grades 1 to 4 and of those only 76% will reach grade 5.

Angola has been classified by the World Bank in the group of countries "seriously off-track" for Education for All. The projection, based on actual trends, is that less than 50% of children will complete primary education by 2015.

The education problems were defined in 2003 as related to access (lack of schools and classroom space), quality (lack of trained teachers - significant percentage of teachers with low or without teaching qualifications), school management, institutional development, and financing.

UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education to meet the challenge of access: They developed "Education for Life and Peace" (ELP) program, with the aim to prepare 150.000 children to start school in February 2003. The Back to School campaign supported the Government's recruitment of 20.000 new teachers at the end of 2002, and these were trained in a massive effort to get children back to school, and give new teachers basic training, including training in participatory methods. The ongoing Teachers Emergency Package, supported by NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council), was also supported by UNICEF. Support was also given to communities to re-build or rehabilitate their schools.

Norway has been the only partner in the social sector in Angola which gives long term support to UNICEF. The support is based on good collaboration and experiences since 1997. Children are a main target group for Norwegian development support to Angola, and the rights-based agenda of UNICEF is strongly supported by Norad.

Norway supports UNICEF Angola's education programme with NOK 11,5 millions over three years, in addition to giving support to 'Expanding Learning Opportunities through Portuguese as a second language in Angola' (4 mill.), and to the multi-country programme "African Girls' Education Initiative" (360 mill. 1996-2004). Support has also been given to UNICEF's programmes on Water and Sanitation, and on HIV/AIDS.

A review was conducted of the programme in November 2004 to assess results and impact of the programmes, and provide recommendations for future support through UNICEF. The review is not yet published, and we will give the results in the next issue.

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Review of Basic Education Improvement Project in North Western Frontier Province, Pakistan

Norway is funding a Basic Education Improvement Project (BEIP) in North Western Frontier Province (NWFP), Pakistan. BEIP is a 5 years project (2004-2008) established as a 'gap-filling' project to address the financial shortfall in the Institutional Reforms Programme (IRP) for the education sector in the province. IRP is part of the overall Provincial Reform Programme, financed through the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Credit in the province. The overall aim of BEIP is to contribute to Quality Education for All.

A review commissioned by NORAD in October 2004, revealed that BEIP is working hard to fulfil its gap-filling functions. Three central features of BEIP should be mentioned. Firstly, it is actually a project at a time when the project model for donor contributions more and more is being replaced by SWAPs or direct budget support to governments. BEIP is among the 15 projects, each with separate Project Implementation Units under the provincial Government; three of which including BEIP are in education sector. Secondly, it has gap-filling functions and therefore consists of different and not necessarily closely related activities. Among others, project's activities ranges from training programmes for teachers and staff at district education departments, construction of Teachers Resources Centres, reactivation of Parent Teacher Association to mainstreaming of Madrassa education. Importantly, the project has a flexibility to facilitate change in the project. Thirdly, most of its activities, in particular, its Technical Assistance (TA) programmes, which are now mainly provided by GTZ due to non-availability of TA from DFID, adhere to the cascade model of approach.

Although BEIP has, so far, achieved its objective with considerable success, the main challenges faced by the project are related to, on one hand, the general progress in the implementation of devolution process in Pakistan and on the other hand, identification of suitable mechanism appropriate for the project to link up to in future. The review of devolution process reveals the prevalence of vertical contradictory parallel structures and unclear distribution of roles and responsibilities between the electorates and technocrats, at both the provincial and district government levels. This reality threatens the successful implementation of BEIP.

On the other hand, donor support to educational activities in NWFP has for many donors come to a temporary stop while they are contemplating new approaches to financial contribution through SWAPs or budget support. This is why BEIP as a gap-filling project is useful in that it keeps rolling the already started or planned innovations while looking for broader structures for common financial input to link up to. DFID has carried out a full assessment of their Country Strategy for Pakistan, and it is almost certain that their future funding for NWFP might be channelled both as budget support and through the World Bank. On its part, WB is now particularly concerned about the weak policy focus on NWFP and thus, it is set to launch a major and comprehensive process of policy review of all sectors of society in NWFP most likely jointly with DFID. This policy review process in NWFP is expected to culminate in June 2005 with the forthcoming **NWFP Economic Report** which will stipulated major policy reforms of all sectors, from tax/revenue reforms, private sector reforms to the social sectors reforms programmes in NWFP. The report, therefore, will provide the future development trajectory for the NWFP, which would have a direct bearing on all donors' initiatives, including BEIP project in the province. Hence, the BEIP review has recommended the Embassy in Islamabad to closely monitor the process of policy review in NWFP in looking for suitable mechanisms appropriate for Norway's development strategies.

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Input and feedback to Educaid are appreciated

In order to be updated with news about ongoing education projects and international conferences, we dependent on information from our readers. Please contact:

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