

# 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.lu.hio.no/lins/educaid>

### 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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### LINS perspective

#### Development, NGOs and Partnership

This edition of Educaid focuses again on the role and work of NGOs, both Norwegian and international. In LINS' work this year with NGOs we have come to appreciate the particular advantages which many such organisations bring to development, especially at the local level. However, we have also noticed that the jargon so often associated with NGOs includes a number of terms which are rarely examined and analysed.

Too often the NGO environment is cliché-country where ownership, transparency, empowerment and participation abound. Prominent among these unexamined terms is the word 'partnership'. Partnership can be defined as a mutually beneficial means of co-operation in which each partner agrees to furnish a part of the resources or labour to achieve an agreed purpose. But this definition still leaves many issues unexplored. LINS has come to believe that partnership is best described in a cyclic relationship which begins with **shared values and belief systems**. These shared values lead to the determination of **common goals** through a process of negotiation and consensus building. From agreed goals the development of **common procedures** can begin, especially in terms of participatory approaches to policy formulation, planning and management procedures, including financial reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Shared procedures should lead to **shared structures** for capacity building, communication, accountability and transparency. The final link in the cycle relates to **shared learning and reflection** based on the outcomes from monitoring and evaluation and the experience of partners working together.

This last characteristic of real partnership brings us close to the idea of a learning organisation which takes deliberate steps to reflect upon its practice, its successes and its failures. Perhaps an idealised model has been described when the truth more often is that partnerships are skewed. Too frequently, partners in the South do not have the capacity to be partners in the real sense of the word due to lack of resources and also lack of educated and competent personnel whereas the partner from the North may have the money, the skills and the spare capacity to focus more heavily on the agreed programme of cooperation. But in presenting the cyclic model above it is hoped that debate will be stimulated among NGOs which make partnership an important part of their rhetoric. If the model enables organisations to develop checklists or indicators against which to measure the authenticity of their partnerships and to overcome skewed relationships then we believe this can only make NGO partnerships more and more effective.

*Bob Smith, LINS*

### Norwegian official cooperation in education – focus on NGOs.

Statistical databases in NORAD and MOFA indicate that the government's cooperation in the education sector with the countries in the South amounted to about NOK 793 mill in 2002, and this is a considerable increase compared to the previous year (about NOK 700 mill.) It should be remembered that in addition to these amounts, educational assistance can be channelled by other ministries and directorates, to other parts of the world, and that the private and NGO sector can provide funds which are not included here. There is also a question of how statistics are recorded, as a lot of education in terms of TVET and project/program related training are taking place without being registered as "education". The main point here, however, is briefly to describe the role of NGOs in what has been registered as governmental Norwegian education cooperation.

Over four years the assistance channelled via NGOs (including Nordic research institutions and fellowships/research) has increased from 25.7% (1999) to 29.6% (2000), 36.7% (2001) and 32.7% (in 2002). Although not increasing every year, one can safely conclude that a **considerable and growing portion of the Norwegian government education cooperation is channelled through NGOs**. Sometimes the channelling of funds can be described as relatively complex. For instance a Norwegian NGO can transfer funds to its international mother organisation, which again channels resources down to local organisations or even government institutions in the countries. Frequently funds pass through 3-5 different organisational levels (or accounts), and although this is not the main issue here, the cost-efficiency of this process should be examined in evaluations.

The NOK 260 million for NGOs in 2002 is divided as follows: 93.5% or NOK 242.4 million is channelled through "Norwegian NGOs", 4.7% through local NGOs in the beneficiary country, 1.2% via regional NGOs, and 0.1% through international NGOs, while 0.5% is for financing the work of Nordic research institutions. One major correction is needed, however, as the Norwegian Council for Higher Education's Programme for Development Research and Education (which certainly does not fall within the normal definition of an NGO) has been included, most probably because there is no other appropriate category identified in the statistic system. This Institution alone consumed NOK 60.4 mill in 2002, for university and higher education, including the International Summer School in Oslo, courses in cooperating countries, and NORAD's fellowship programs. Also the LINS' framework agreement with the University College of Oslo is included in the category of Norwegian NGOs.

For the "real" NGOs there are almost NOK 180 mill to divide for education purposes. A striking phenomenon is that there are four large institutions receiving more than NOK

10 million each in 2002, and these are consuming about two-thirds of the total. These are the Norwegian Save the Children organisation (SCN) (NOK 42.9 mill, or 5.4 percent of Norwegian assistance to education), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) (NOK 38.2 mill), Norwegian Interdenominational Office for Development Cooperation – (representing several missionary organisations) (NOK 21.8 mill) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NOK 16.7 mill).

Taking the SCN as an example, this organisation has more than quadrupled its NORAD/MOFA budget over a period of 5 years, while the NCA's budget has increased five times compared to its level in 1996<sup>1</sup>. There are no indications, known to Educaid that this growth will not continue in the coming years. These NGOs have established themselves as large-scale actors in the field of international cooperation in education. It is important to remember that in addition to the funds from the government, they have their own sources of income, as has been demonstrated this year by SCN's fund-raising of more than NOK 150 million during one day this autumn. All these points underline the importance of studying and assessing the capacity, performance as well as the policies and aims of these NGOs as well as of the organisations in the partner countries which are doing the job on the ground; in the schools and elsewhere in the education sector. No doubt these NGOs have the potential to play important roles. They are known to work directly with the grassroots, some of them have proved competence in reaching marginalised groups of people, they might be important if they test out new education methods, and they can influence governments. But, are they learning institutions, and are they learning from each others? Are they properly resourced? It is tempting to repeat Lexow's statement from a MOFA financed review of Norwegian cooperation in education in 2000: "For several reasons it was very difficult to assess the performance and impact of these organisations. The term evaluation seems to cover everything from external reviews to internal self-assessments. In many cases evaluation methodologies and approaches appear vague."<sup>2</sup>

*Anders Wirak, LINS*

### **BRAC's new Institute for Educational Development in Bangladesh.**

At the beginning of November 2003, international advisers from Canada, USA, UK, India and Norway (LINS) were invited to work with BRAC University staff in Dhaka, Bangladesh as the initial steps in determining the vision and mission for a new Institute for Educational Development were taken. Headed by the distinguished Bangladeshi educator Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, the new Institute will focus on strengthening professional capacity for educational development in Bangladesh and the region. The Concept Paper which formed the basis for discussion by the visiting experts and their local counterparts, makes it clear that quality, access and participation remain formidable challenges, despite much progress in Bangladesh over the last decade. More than 40% of current primary pupils fail to complete the full five-year cycle. Such problems increase at the secondary level. Within Bangladesh there are few facilities for

addressing the needs for professional development and institutional capacity building, hence the establishment of the Institute within BRAC University.

Priority areas for the Institute include primary education options and strategies, the 'learning society' initiative and contributing to post-primary educational development through improved curriculum and management. Outcomes from the workshop included a refined model of the mission of the Institute with heavy emphasis on its role in human resource development, policy, planning, leadership and management and finally in monitoring, evaluation, research and development. The Institute for Educational Development of BRAC University represents an innovative approach by Bangladesh's largest NGO to the professional development challenges within education in the country. Its impact remains to be seen but if BRAC's record of success elsewhere in the Bangladesh educational system is reflected in the Institute's growth and development then many of the capacity problems which have beset the system for so long may begin to be addressed.

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### **NGO forum**

LINS invited numerous groups to a NGO forum Nov 5th 2003 to discuss partnership in education and development, based on the experiences of various Norwegian NGOs. Eldrid Midttun, Norwegian Refugee Council, reflected on the importance of partnerships with the government and with local organisations at the national level, and shared experiences from the establishment of the global network INEE (Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies). The following discussion touched upon unequal power structures in partnerships, motivations for and content of partnerships, examination and reintegration, the important role of teachers and the issue of ownership. The role of partnerships at all levels; locally, regionally, nationally and globally, was highlighted, as well as the importance of sharing knowledge and competence, improving communication and strengthening capacity building among key actors.

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### **More than NOK 150 Mill collected by the public for Norwegian Save the Children.**

Since the early 1970s the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) has organised annual country wide fund-raising campaigns. In 2003 the benefiting organisation was the Save the Children Norway (SCN), and the thematic area was identified as education development with a main focus on Cambodia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Angola, and Norway.

More than NOK 150 million (more than US\$ 20 mill) was collected as the result of house-to-house collection, bazaars organised by children and a large number of similar initiatives. This was one of the most successful fund raising campaigns in the history of NRK. It should be mentioned that also the main private television channel TV2 has started with similar campaigns,

collecting large funds, seemingly without reducing the potential of the NRK campaigns.

In addition to the significance of the financial contribution to the organisations, these campaigns play an important role in providing information to the public about the organisations, their work, as well as the on the thematic area and the countries in the South benefiting. During the days before the last campaign and not least on the campaign day, the TV channels were strongly influenced

by programs describing the challenges of education development in the concerned countries. According to SCN almost 600 000 children in many countries had the opportunity to go to school thanks to the work of the organisation, and this was before the 2003 fund-raising took place.

### **Quality in Education Conference in Oslo**

A large scale and important conference was organised in Oslo by the Norwegian Save the Children (SCN) 11-13th of June. Reports and papers from the conference are available on the net (<http://www.rb2.no/qep/>). Almost 100 participants from 19 countries participated in the conference, and the majority of these came from the Save the Children organisation, in Norway and in the countries. There were also a considerable number of participants from ministries of education, and institutions of education and training.

Basic education is one of the major thematic areas of concentration of SCN and more than 50% of total project resources and 32% of total programming expenses are committed to this. The Conference Report explains that local evaluations of the SCN education programme were undertaken in eight countries during the period 1998-2001. Based on the results of these evaluations, SCN decided to give quality education a high priority in the present strategic period. The conference wanted, however, to address the education quality issues in a global perspective and not only focus on the situation in the South: SCN hoped that the conference was "a first step in a continued international discussion of what quality education is and how we can go about to improve it".

*More information: SCN homepages or  
<http://www.rb2.no/qep/>*

### **ADEA , 2003 Biennale: The Quest for Quality.**

The ADEA Biennale, was conducted in Mauritius, December 3-6 2003. It was very well organised by the host country, Mauritius, and more than 350 participants were present, among them Ministers of Education and selected staff from the member countries, donor representatives, representatives from international NGOs and professionals. The theme of the Biennale focused on examining policies and practices that had proven to be effective or promising in improving the quality of basic education in sub-Saharan Africa. A large number of case studies and background papers were used to produce a synthesis of African experience. These made it possible to provide international perspectives to accommodate lessons from other regions of the world, in particular developing countries. They considered a range of critical subjects such as: quality concepts and designs, equity and gender policies, frameworks and structures for supporting decision-making and implementation, the financing of quality and essential

inputs, the issues of the relevance of education in relation to curricula adaptation and the use of African languages strategies for skilled teachers and effective schools, decentralisation and diversification of the supply of education with an eye on the participation of civil society and local communities, quality management, monitoring and evaluation, new prospects and ways to improve quality.

There were plenary sessions on specific topics, round-tables and work-shops. The studies presented were quite numerous, as well as the case studies, therefore more time could have been set aside for discussions, but still major issues were raised by the participants.

Among the areas that created a lot of engagements and comments was the role of the donor community versus the role of the recipient country regarding the design, the priorities and the final decision-making when it comes to sector-wide approaches, such as SWAPs, PRSPs and the HIPC. It was argued that there had been a funding gap related to the prioritising of adult/non-formal education activities and secondary education for the last decade, which now seemed to be critical in many sub-Saharan African countries.

The discussions related to language of instruction raised political issues about which languages to use and global comparative advantages in using English or French. A case study presented from Zambia clearly showed the importance of using local languages to improve the achievement level, and as a basis for learning English as a second language.

*The discussion papers and studies are available on the web-page: <http://www.ADEAnet.org>.  
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### **Oslo Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Partnership Meeting**

The FTI Partnership meeting was held Nov 20th and 21st in Oslo, Norway. For the first time Ministers or senior officials from 8 of the first 10 FTI countries, civil society organisations and representatives from 18 donor countries and from several multilateral agencies held a joint meeting, and the total number of participants exceeded 90 people. The meeting provided a constructive forum to evolve a renewed consensus of the definition, the modalities, the instruments, and the governance of the Fast Track initiative partnership.

At the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey in 2001, the international community defined a global compact for development, for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In this spirit, the Fast Track Initiative was launched in 2002 as a major effort to mobilize resources to support Education for All, with a specific focus on the goal of Universal Primary Completion. This spirit of partnership and dedication to the goals of the Fast Track Initiative was in clear evidence in Oslo.

The Oslo FTI partnership meeting marked the formal launch of the Catalytic Fund, with initial commitments of US\$235 million for the period 2004-2007 from four donors – the Netherlands, Norway, Italy and Belgium. For FTI-endorsed countries without a strong donor presence and which have difficulty mobilising additional external funding at the local level, the FTI Catalytic Fund will provide transitional assistance to enable the countries to start scaling up implementation of their education programs and establish a track record of performance that will attract longer-term support from new donors.

A second key outcome of the Oslo meeting was agreement that the Fast Track Initiative will be opened up to all low-income countries. Ministers from partner countries shared their experiences, and were unanimous about the FTI's positive impact on coordination and harmonization among donors at the country level. However, the Ministers urged the donor community to act quickly to translate the new funding commitments into disbursements on the ground and to ensure that all countries get adequate support. It was agreed that the Fast Track Initiative Donor group will meet at least once a year, associating partner countries and civil society. It was also agreed that these meetings would be held back-to-back with the annual UNESCO High level group meeting on Education for All.

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### **Update on Norwegian Cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education.**

The Palestinian Minister of Education, Dr. Naim Abu Hommos, and NORAD's Director General Tove Strand opened a new annex to the Ministry of Education in Ramallah in February 2003. The infrastructure was financed by NORAD as part of the framework agreement with the Palestinian Authority; Cooperation in Education Development (CED). Dr. Hommos emphasised in his speech that Norway had proven to be a true friend of the Palestinian people, in addition to the roles played in the peace process and financial support for the building of the Palestinian state. The new annex will meet a long felt need for more office space and hence will assist in creating a good working context within the Ministry and strengthen the further development of the education sector.

Tove Strand emphasised that for Norwegian international cooperation education is considered as "job number one". Assistance to education also strengthens the aim of the Norwegian presence in the Palestinian area; to contribute to poverty reduction, social and economic development and resumption of the peace negotiations, and support to establishment of a sustained and democratic Palestinian state. Since 1995 Norway has assisted with NOK145 million to the education sector in the Palestinian area. The event opened for a high level exchange of opinions about the cooperation so far and also for the plans for the coming years.

The Palestinian MOE has achieved much since it took over the responsibility for education in 1994. School infrastructure has increased by 45%, increase in enrolment is 64% and the number of teachers has doubled. In the present 5 years' education development plan one of the main aims has been to establish a unified and national Palestinian curriculum. Despite all the problems and challenges faced in particular during the two last years, the intake of first grade students was 100% for the school year 2002/2003. Dr. Hommos underlined the importance of maintaining the education system as education is the best guarantee for peace.

NORAD's Director General expressed great admiration for the MOE achievements under particularly difficult conditions, and stated that Norway is very satisfied with the cooperation and looks forward to further collaboration during the coming years.

Since the inauguration two new agreements have been signed. One is phase II of the CED programme, with the same components, to a value of NOK 65.0 mill over a three

year period. The other is "Emergency Assistance to the Education Sector to NOK 11,0 mill, to be implemented over a 6 months period. The latter will be utilised for rehabilitation and extension of schools and teacher training. In addition one can mention that the building of the National Education Training Centre in El-Bireh/Ramallah has been finalised. Tendering procedures for furniture and equipment have been initiated.

This is based on inputs from Signe Marie Breivik at the Norwegian Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority.

### **Ethiopia ESDP: Joint Review Mission 2003**

Two LINS consultants were hired by the Swedish and Irish authorities to take part in a Joint Review Mission (JRM) under the Ethiopia Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP). One consultant wrote a paper "Gender Issues in Education in Ethiopia" as an input to the Review Mission, the other consultant took part in the Review with a responsibility to focus on the quality of education. The JRM split in three groups and undertook fieldwork in Amhara, Oromia and SNNPRS Regions.

Observers have noted that there seems to be an increasing focus on the role of NGOs in the ESDP. During the first phases of the sector programme, NGO's were not much emphasized as active partners in education development, nor as providers of inputs and ideas. Today, however, collaboration between the government and the NGOs seems to take place at several levels, and not least, Regions and Woredas (districts) have to some extent started to utilize promising NGO strategies and practices. For instance, in Oromia, the Regional Education Bureau has started to recruit and train local instructors to function in small scale rural school settings.

The JRM found that alternative provision of primary education (often named "non-formal education") is taking place in the three Regions, and that this is a growing phenomenon. In one Woreda there were as many children in the non-formal system as in the formal first cycle of primary school. The non-formal centres typically are found in rural areas where there is considerable distance to government schools. They cover the three first years of education, and have been made flexible enough to accommodate the needs of pastoral communities, working children, and those who are out of school. Hours of teaching are often adapted to the children and parents needs. The teachers, or rather instructors, are recruited locally, often selected by the parents, and given a short training. Class size tends to be small compared to the government schools, and there is normally a high degree of local participation in school affairs. Most of these centres have been supported by NGOs, but there are cases where the community has taken responsibility for non-formal education.

In most cases there seems to be a smooth transition from the non-formal to the formal education system. Students from Non-Formal Education Centres having passed the three first grades will normally be able to continue in grade 5 in the formal education system. JRM was informed that students passing alternative education were above average compared to student having gone through 4 years formal schooling.

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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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<sup>1</sup>Based on figures from Lexow, Norwegian Support to the Education Sector, Overview of policies and trends 1988-1998. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, 2000

<sup>2</sup>Op cit. 0

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