

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.

Address: Pilestredet 52,
N-0157 Oslo, Norway
Tel: +47 22 45 21 00
Fax: +47 22 45 21 05
e-mail: lins@lu.hioslo.no

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

LINS' perspectives

Once again we return to the issue of poverty and the role that education can play in the alleviation or elimination of the condition in the poor countries of the South. It is interesting to observe that commentators like Ted van Hees of the European Network on Debt and Development note that nearly 30% of the debts of the most highly indebted countries are already (late 1999) in arrears and that cancelling such debts requires no new money from creditor countries. Writing off this US\$60 billion would simply be a tidying-up of the book-keeping. Opponents of this view usually take the line that cancelling debt would encourage further "irresponsibility" among borrowers. Perhaps an irresponsible debt is the result of an equally irresponsible loan, but the yin and yang of international finance is rarely gone into on an equitable basis. Mr. van Hees goes on to argue that the structural reforms required of HICs by the IMF are not well designed for debt relief. Which brings us to the salient point in van Hees' argument - that mechanisms for fighting poverty are best designed in the country concerned.

The counter argument is that misgovernment is frequently the norm in poorer countries. The capacity to come up with well-designed, sustainable and effective poverty alleviation strategies is therefore very limited. The second horn of the developmentalist's dilemma thus presents itself. The concept of 'good governance' is prominent in the rhetoric of many development agencies as a pre-requisite for aid. By good governance is usually meant some evidence of political processes which more or less resemble what happens in mature democracies not too far distant from Brussels. Yet the countries which seem to be doing something about getting their educational and economic houses in order often demonstrate 'strong' rather than participatory political systems. The Asian Tigers offer good cases in point. World Bank figures for 1988-97 show that these countries showed the greatest rates of economic growth (and greatest decline in poverty) of any region in the world. Uganda offers another example of rapid economic recovery under 'strong' government. Pakistan's new military regime has instituted special courts to root out the endemic corruption which led to the downfall of successive 'democratic' governments. Yet most donor agencies are cautious about being seen to cooperate too closely with the regime. It may make political sense to support allegedly democratic governments which do little about poverty, simply because the governance of the country fits Western liberal models. But if sound, home-grown approaches to the elimination of poverty are found across a variety of systems, should they not also be encouraged? General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was criticised for accepting 'tainted' money, collected from bars and pubs. His reply was, "Give me the money and I will see that it is sanctified".

This pragmatic attitude might well be reflected in how we select our development partners. At least let us avoid formula-driven approaches, selecting partners on the basis of what they can be seen to be doing rather than what they talk about.

Robert Smith, LINS

Nepal BPEP: Donor co-ordination lead by Norway in 2000

Danida, the European Union, Finland, IDA and NORAD have all agreed to support the Basic Primary Education Programme (BPEP) in Nepal in the form of basket funding. They have further agreed to co-ordinate their relationship with the Nepali Ministry of Education, and take turn leading the co-ordination. In doing this, the Nepali government only have to deal with those representing the donor group instead of all parties involved between annual review mission.

Danida was head of the donor group in 1999 during the last round of preparations and negotiations. The agreement between the donors and the Nepali Ministry of Education was signed and a basket account established in 1999. The programme started in July the same year.

In January 2000, Norway took on the leading role. Håkon Bjørnes from the Norwegian Ministry of Education has been engaged by NORAD to support the Norwegian Embassy in executing this responsibility.

The co-ordination role involves inter alia preparing of the first annual meeting since the programme started. The annual meeting, where the budget and the work plans for 2001/2002 are negotiated, will be held in the spring. Prior to the meeting the Norwegian Embassy jointly with the Government of Nepal have to prepare a Terms of Reference for all the donors in the group.

The agreement includes two meetings a year. In addition to the annual meeting, a meeting in the autumn is expected to look deeper into the results of the programme. The donors will participate in stock-taking teams that will pursue specific topics at national, district, local and classroom levels. The Norwegian Embassy will together with the Government of Nepal be co-ordinating all practicalities around the meetings, field studies etc.

This kind of donor co-ordination has not yet been fully explored from the Norwegian side. NORAD is therefore also expecting to learn from the process itself.

*For further information: Marit Vedeld, NORAD
marit.vedeld@norad.no*

MAYA child labour project

Eliminating child labour is a political priority issue in Norwegian development co-operation. In India, the Norwegian Embassy has followed up this complex and multifaceted issue by supporting various NGOs, including Movement for Alternatives and Youth Awareness (MAYA). MAYA operates in Bangalore City and Rural

The purpose of Educaid

The objective of Educaid is to function as an information channel between persons and institutions with interest, capacity, and competence in the field of basic education and development. A special focus and "target" will be Norwegian development assistance. Educaid is distributed to individual and institutional actors within the field of education, development and North/South relations.

districts and works at present in 50 villages and 20-30 slum areas. The organisation puts a strong emphasis on mobilising community support and facilitating poor groups of people to articulate their demands. According to MAYA understanding, aspects that cause and perpetuate child labour include community apathy, parental negligence, a hostile school environment, lack of options to determine life and livelihood and poor political action and participation. MAYA is addressing child labour from the perspective that all non school-going children are working children, and all interventions are designed to eradicate and prevent child labour.

The Norwegian Embassy in India has provided financial support to MAYA since 1996 and did recently carry out a review of the project. The review team was in general very positive to the approach MAYA has taken to combat child labour, and NORAD is likely to support the project for another three years.

*Further information: Janne Lexow, DECO/LINS
e-mail: jlexow@os.telia.no*

NORAD's strategy for 2000-2005

NORAD has recently published "*NORAD invests in the future – NORAD's strategy for 2000-2005*". The document gives an outline of the goals and key principles of Norwegian development co-operation, NORAD's role and some of the challenges the agency faces.

Among the key principles of Norwegian development assistance policy it is stated that transfers will be non-tied, funds do not have to be repaid, all investments must contribute towards combating poverty and must embody the concept of human rights. Investments must further be based on the recipient's "ownership" of, i.e. responsibility for and control of, development in its own country. The recipient countries' own priorities and choices must take precedence over Norwegian priorities. It is however NORAD's prerogative to decide whether Norwegian funds and experts should be used to support such choices.

The strategy acknowledges that political will and ability to implement development-promoting policies which benefit marginalised groups are among the most important prerequisites for combating poverty. Further the strategy calls for a holistic approach in viewing the relationship between a partner country's economy, the fabric of society and potential for growth. Corruption is a widespread problem in several of Norway's partner countries. An increased emphasis will be put on efforts to eliminate corruption. (See Anti-corruption article).

Norway will contribute with expertise in areas where Norwegians have special competence in relation to other actors in development co-operation.

Norwegian development co-operation will focus on six areas:

- Social development
- Economic development
- Peace, democracy and human rights
- Environment and natural resource management
- Humanitarian assistance in the event of conflicts and natural disasters
- Women and gender equity

Women, children, the disabled and indigenous peoples are among the specific target groups of Norwegian assistance.

*For further information: Information Centre, NORAD
Tel: +47 22 24 20 30 Fax: 22 24 20 31
e-mail: informasjonssenteret@norad.no*

NORAD anti-corruption action plan 2000-2001

Corruption is a wide spread phenomenon in several Norwegian partner countries. Several donors as well as partner governments have recognised the restrictions corruption lay on development and have taken on the need for action to combat corruption. The "NORAD Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2000-2001" has been developed following the Norwegian offensive against corruption launched by the Minister of Development and Human Rights, Hilde Frafjord Johson, in a presentation to the Parliament in May 1999.

Corruption is defined as any transaction between private and public sector actors through which collective goods are illegitimately converted into private-regarding payoffs. It materialises in different forms including bribery, embezzlement, fraud, favouritism and nepotism. It is however often difficult to delimit clearly what is corruption. What foreigners consider illegitimate or illegal governance practice, may be locally acceptable. To avoid ethnocentric condemnation, there is a need to develop internationally accepted concepts of corruption which delimit what behaviour should be criminalised as corrupt.

Corruption is critical for all development co-operation as well as a serious development challenge. It undermines democracy and good governance by subverting formal processes and it weakens economic development by generating considerable distortions and inefficiency.

The main goal of the NORAD anti-corruption action plan is to strengthen the ability to prevent and curb corruption in Norway's partner countries, and in the Norwegian aid administration in order to improve the effectiveness of aid and to reduce poverty.

The objectives of the action plan are to:

- Intensify Norwegian assistance to good governance and the fight against corruption in our partner countries.
- Increase the awareness and knowledge in the aid administration on how to prevent corruption in all of Norwegian funded development co-operation.
- Establish mechanisms for systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of experiences drawn from efforts at preventing and combating corruption.

For further elaboration of the strategies adapted by the action plan: <http://www.norad.no/> or informasjonssenteret@norad.no

Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes, UNESCO.

As a follow-up to the World Conference on Special Needs Education (Salamanca, Spain 1994), UNESCO launched the project *Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes* which aims for wider access to schools and quality education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs. The main focus is on promoting inclusion of children with special needs into regular education provision. The project is funded by Denmark, Finland and Norway, with the participation of Sweden and Portugal in the first phase.

Implementation of the second phase started in 1998 and covers eleven countries: Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, India, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Paraguay, South Africa and Yemen. Initiatives are supported in order to give countries experience in developing inclusive education and to assist countries in trying out new approaches in addressing diverse needs, in building human capacities and in demonstrating new practice for wider dissemination.

Most of the country projects involve working with pilot schools and concentrate on developing the human capacities of teachers and key educational personnel, as well as awareness raising amongst all partners. In some countries capacity building in the area of inclusive education is promoted through the training of coordination teams at the national level. All projects receive technical assistance from UNESCO headquarters and field units.

In Phase Two a strong emphasis has been put on facilitating networking and exchange between countries and across regions. A wide range of training materials has been developed to support the work towards inclusive education systems, not only in participating countries but in all regions. Phase Two is to be completed by the end of 2000, and the planning for a Phase Three has begun.

For more information:
 Hildegunn Olsen,, UNESCO
 e-mail: H.Olsen@unesco.org or
www.unesco.org/education/educprog/sne

Norwegian Institutions in Education and Development

Strømme Foundation (SF)

Poor people have lots of potential. The biggest waste that is going on in the world today is the lack of human investment in these people. For the SF education is a key to tap into these potential, and hence eradicate poverty. The SF has a practical approach to development. Learning is discovering and doing things differently.

The education projects fall into three categories

- 1) Literacy; the SF believes that it is crucial to improve literacy rates (particularly for women). To be literate increases your possibilities to participate actively in the society, it gives access to new opportunities, and it increases the likelihood for investing in your children's education and improving the quality of the local school.
- 2) Basic education, mostly primary education. Some of these activities target children at risk, i.e. street children and orphans, others target poor rural or urban areas.
- 3) Conscientisation or awareness with regard to activities ranging from health to participation in political processes and capacity building of local organisations. The literacy work will for the future more be linked to a reflection around a development theme. One partner (Eveil, Mali) is for instance doing literacy around concepts of women's rights and a political decentralisation process.

Some other examples of education projects are:

- Janasiksha Prochar Kendra in India facilitates pavement schools for street children in Calcutta.
- Social Action Volunteers in Nepal works among landless families. SAV is offering tutoring and counselling to reduce the drop-out rates from the schools.
- AIDSESEP in Peru has a bilingual and cultural education programme for teachers aimed at improving the education for indigenous peoples of the Amazon.
- Cooperacion y Desarrollo in Peru has several education projects aiming at construction and/or rehabilitation of schools, training of teachers and providing didactic material. The local communities always have an agreement with the local authorities about the future running of these schools.
- Credo in Burkina Faso has a literacy project aiming at increasing women's capabilities to manage their micro enterprises.
- Cornerstone in Mali has a literacy project which also sensitises and supports local communities in creating their own community schools.

The dimension of conscientisation and awareness building goes through most of the other projects. The Strømme Foundation regards it more as a way of working than as a separate activity.

For further information, please contact:
 Johannes Sannesmoen, Strømme Foundation,
johannes.sannesmoen@stromme.org

Delta Internasjonalt KFUK-KFUM (DI) (International Partnerships YWCA-YMCA)

For more than 30 years, educational programmes have been the major sector for the involvement of Delta Internasjonalt KFUK-KFUM (DI) with our partners in the South. During the last decade, DI has supported pre-schools, primary education, high-school programmes for girls, vocational training centres, and supplementary education programmes. In this period, some of our partners have also entered into non-formal education programmes. The main target group for these programmes has been children and youth, but in connection with community-development programmes some adult education activities have also been implemented. Our partners, being organisations focusing to a large extent on holistic approaches to address needs among children and youth, have also been involved in training of youth for peer-counselling on specific issues (like HIV/AIDS). To a large extent, the educational programmes are closely linked to broader community development approaches, and are used as entry points for addressing other target groups (like parents) and other concerns (like nutrition, children's rights, culture, human rights, political mobilisation) in the communities.

The strong emphasis on educational programmes is a result of the priorities made by DI's partner movements. DI's role in this is mainly to support financially the programmes and be part of evaluation and strategic development. Some of the main elements in DI's present

involvement with the partners in educational programmes are:

- discussions with partners on priority given to formal or non-formal education (Bangladesh)
- processes geared at increasing financial and institutional sustainability for educational programmes (Kenya, India, Bangladesh)
- connecting educational programmes to broader community development approaches (Palestine, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka)
- developing educational programmes for training of volunteers on issue oriented peer-counselling and people's mobilisation (reproductive health in South Africa and Zimbabwe, peace education in Sri Lanka, youth participation in Palestine, etc.)

Being the development wing of the Norwegian YWCA-YMCA, DI co-operates today only with YWCA and YMCA organisations in the South. These YWCAs and YMCAs are membership based voluntary organisations, with a number of associations in local communities. DI generally relates to their national entity. The YWCA and YMCA are big global organisations (approx. 130 countries) which also provide an opportunity for developing additional programmes like exchanges and advocacy. Such programmes are also developed in connection with partners involved in the educational sector.

*For further information: Eilert Rostrup or Anne Mathilde Klare,
Delta Internasjonalt KFUK-KFUM
Tel: +47 22 11 56 90 Fax: +47 22 20 47 59
e-mail: delta@kfuk-kfum.no*

Conferences and seminars

Report on ADEA 1999 Biennial, Johannesburg, South Africa 5-9 December 1999

The ADEA 1999 Biennial was held in Johannesburg from 5-9 December 1999. The most important aspect of the conference was probably the mere presence of top educational politicians from various African countries who had a unique opportunity to discuss common educational challenges in plenary sessions and more informally.

At the conference many reports of various educational programmes all over Africa were presented, and it is hoped that successful programmes can be used in other countries besides those where they were initiated. Still one wonders if the whole approach to the educational challenges of Africa is too technically oriented and that the lack of success in education in many African countries is due not to lack of knowledge of educational innovation, but due to lack of economic sustainability, political stability and thus lack of long-term educational planning. I agree with those at the conference who stressed the importance of political leadership and political commitment in the field of education.

The problem of HIV/AIDS in education came up forcefully during the second half of the conference, and both ministers and NGO representatives underlined that the challenge of HIV/AIDS has changed the educational situation in Africa dramatically, and that comprehensive measures must be taken to counter this tragedy and catastrophe. It is now important to proceed from the discussion phase to the implementation phase. Both South Africa and Uganda seem to have initiated important

AIDS/HIV-programmes in education, but it is quite clear that many countries are lagging behind.

The conference was very well planned and organised. It is hoped that the next Biennial will focus more on the importance of political and ideological commitment and long-term strategies for education.

*Further information: Anders Breidlid, LINS
Anders.Breidlid@lu.hioslo.no*

ADEA Working Groups

Prior to the ADEA Biennial in Johannesburg, the ADEA Working Groups had pre-biennial Symposiums. The undersigned participated in two; The Working Group on Non-Formal Education (WGNFE) and the Working Groups on Education Sector Analysis (WGESA).

The WGNFE Symposium focused on the dynamics of non-formal education and the importance of linking learning to earning and focusing on education as a meaningful activity through addressing the needs in society, - locally and nationally as well as globally. The need for learner centred approaches and follow-up activities were among the issues discussed.

The WGESA meeting focused on the need for changing the process of education sector analysis. Concepts like capacity building, participatory approaches and transparency were highlighted. The working group further addressed inter alia the need for dissemination of knowledge on for example how to utilise policy research, and how to develop impact assessment.

*For further information: Ellen Carm, LINS
ellen.carm@lu.hioslo.no*

Conference on Education for All in Europe and North America – 6 to 8 February 2000, Warsaw, Poland

The first World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 decided that a general assessment should be held in the year 2000. The conference in Warsaw is one of six regional conferences prior to the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal from 26 to 28 April 2000.

In rich countries, the public assume that education for all is a well-established reality. This is not the case. Europe and North America also have teachers who have not been paid for three years, refugee children attending school under the most precarious conditions, rural schools lacking even the most rudimentary equipment, inadequately trained teachers, immigrant children badly integrated into the school system. The failings of basic education are numerous even in rich countries. We know, for instance that some 25 per cent of the adult population in this part of the world have difficulties with reading and writing.

Over 300 participants from all over Europe and North America were gathered in Warsaw to examine the state of education in the forty-six countries in the region. National assessments were presented in reports, and based on the findings, the aim was to set new goals which are realistic, concrete and for which there are adequate means.

*For further information : Olve Hoolaas, UNESCO
O.Hoolaas@unesco.org*

Input and feedback to Educaid are appreciated

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

Educaid
DECO as
Kongens gate 14
0153 Oslo, NORWAY
Tel: + 47 22 42 60 54
Fax: + 47 22 33 66 21
e-mail: wirak@os.telia.no
Editor: Anders Wirak
Editorial staff:
Annelene Rør
annelene.ror@online.no