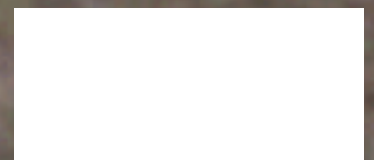


# **Increasing the effectiveness of donor co-ordination**

A case study of the education sector in  
Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Tanzania



**ActionAid Alliance is a network of non-governmental development organisations working together to promote structural changes to eradicate injustice and poverty in the world. ActionAid Alliance members are ActionAid (UK), ActionAid Hellas (Greece), ActionAid Ireland (Ireland), Aide et Action (France), Ayuda en Acción (Spain), and Azione Aiuto (Italy). It enjoys the regular and active support of more than 500,000 EU citizens. Its programmes reach over 7 million people in more than 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.**

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# Summary of recommendations

**On the basis of research into donor co-ordination in the education sector commissioned in Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Tanzania, as well as our own experience in the sector, ActionAid Alliance makes the following recommendations.**

Within the framework of a code of conduct, donors should commit to:

- n Working within the parameters of locally owned education sector development strategies that have been elaborated jointly with all stakeholders including civil society and that are integrated into national poverty reduction strategies;
- n Where sector wide support programmes are not in place, working through existing structures to ensure the maximum integration of projects into Ministry policy;
- n Working with civil society organisations and supporting consultation on a national basis to ensure accountability in the education sector;
- n Improving co-ordination at all levels of interaction with national governments;
- n Ending the practice of aid tying in the education sector in the provision of both goods and services;
- n Demonstrating that gender equality considerations have been incorporated into project design and implementation;
- n Freeing up additional resources for basic education;
- n Ensuring that other donor policies are coherent with development policy;
- n Working to increase co-ordination at an international level in line with commitments agreed in the framework of the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000. EU donors should publicise and implement the EU Code of Conduct agreed in 1996.

# Overview

**ActionAid Alliance works for equitable access to quality basic education for all those who are currently excluded. Education is a right enshrined in international treaties and conventions and in most national constitutions. It is the key to other development gains in health and economic and social progress. It is a prerequisite for ensuring people can hold their governments to account. In its absence other development goals will not be realised.**

ActionAid Alliance is focusing on the education sector since many countries are currently developing sectoral education plans that call for much greater donor co-ordination and for donor

*There is a yawning gap between policy and practice as far as co-ordination is concerned.*

willingness to be co-ordinated by national government.

Furthermore, the World Education Forum in April 2000 refocused the world's attention on education and the crisis into which many education systems in the South have been thrown in recent years.

The facts are well known:

- n 125 million children will never attend school;
- n Another 150 million children drop out before they learn to read and write;
- n Two thirds of all out of school children are girls;
- n In sixteen sub-Saharan African countries there has been a decline in enrolment rates over the past decade;
- n One in four adults in developing countries is illiterate – around 880 million people.

The World Education Forum galvanised both southern countries and donors into action – or at least, into a series of commitments. National governments agreed to conclude participatory education plans by 2002 although many countries are already well advanced along this route. The framework specifically commits governments to ensuring “the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring, of strategies for educational development<sup>17</sup>”. The international community undertook to ensure that no country with a viable plan would be prevented from implementing it by lack of resources. It also committed itself to “facilitating more effective donor co-ordination; strengthening sector-wide approaches.<sup>23</sup>” The challenge now is for donors to improve their co-ordination and to fund these plans.

Although typically, donors account for only a small percentage of the overall education budget in any country – around 3 per cent of the total education budget – their influence as gatekeepers

to global resources notably through aid budgets and debt relief, is often disproportionate to their financial contribution. Furthermore, donor funds are concentrated in non-recurrent expenditure (whereas most of national government education budgets are allocated to pay teachers' salaries). The result is that donors often wield a disproportionate amount of influence over key items such as curriculum and textbook content.

ActionAid Alliance has commissioned three reports on donor co-ordination in Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Tanzania. Each report examines the role that donors play in that country in the sector vis-à-vis other donors as well as in relation to the government and civil society. ActionAid Alliance selected countries where the sectoral approach to support in the education sector was already under discussion and where the European Community was a donor in the sector in addition to three or more member states. The research continues a theme established by ActionAid in 1999, whose research into donor activity in the education sector in Ghana revealed some startling instances of a lack of donor co-ordination<sup>3</sup>.

Each author was asked to examine donor practice and policy in the education sector in the country concerned. They were asked to assess each donor's attitude to sector wide approaches, whether the Framework agreed at the World Education Forum in Dakar would lead to changes in donor practice and whether donors were aware of and working to meet the terms of the EU Code of Conduct (see below). The authors were then asked to assess positive and negative elements of co-ordination in that country and propose suggestions for improvement. Full-length versions of the reports are also available from ActionAid Alliance which cover the role of the government and civil society in each country in more detail.

The reports reveal a depressing lack of practical co-ordination even though regular donor and donor/government meetings are the norm. Yet donors do see the need for greater co-ordination. A 1999 Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (DAC) report states “the DAC has made aid co-ordination a central concern from its inception in the early 1960s.<sup>49</sup>” The DAC has produced a ‘working checklist’ on ‘strengthening development partnerships<sup>55</sup>’. It contains a range of recommendations emphasising the need for transparency, adjustment to local procedures, promotion of local ownership and capacity building, notably by untying aid and changing existing modalities for providing technical co-

operation; providing aid increasingly in the form of programme and budget assistance to a country's strategic priorities.

The EU's own Code of Conduct agreed in 1996, which applies specifically to the education sector, contains clear guidelines for improving co-ordination. These include ensuring that information on relevant interventions is available to all other partners; adhering to maximum agreed consultancy rates; ensuring that donor-funded technical assistance is government driven and managed; actively encouraging national consensus building and supporting local co-ordination mechanisms, and working towards fitting into government schedules and procedures for financial procurement, reporting procedures, monitoring and evaluation.

However, these reports show that donor co-ordination *in practice* is still some way off. For example, in all three countries donors meet collectively with government to negotiate the funding and content of a national sectoral education plan of some sort. Information is exchanged and there are even examples of joint evaluations. Yet that still does not seem to discourage donors from continuing to provide funding on the basis of priorities set in their own national capitals without reference to other donors' projects and geographical spread. At least six common themes arise from the reports.

**First, in none of the cases examined have the donors agreed so far to support the plan tabled by the Government.** This despite the fact that, as the reports highlight, the project approach has proved to maximise inefficiency and exemplify why donor co-ordination is so vital. The Burkina Faso report catalogues a series of deficiencies of the project approach in relation to donor co-ordination. The Bolivia report emphasises the importance of working to solutions tailor made for and managed by Bolivia. In spite of the advantages of sector wide support, in Tanzania the Japanese national aid agency even claims to be prevented by its own law from funding sector wide support.

**Second, the EU Code of Conduct appears to be poorly disseminated and widely ignored.** In Tanzania where most EU Member States are present as bilateral donors in addition to the EC, three out of the fifteen Member State representatives had never even heard of it. In Burkina Faso the EU donors have clearly not internalised the Code and do not take account of it in the development and implementation of their projects. Although donors in Burkina Faso examined the Code and approved it in general in January 1999, further meetings on how to take it forward appear to have been indefinitely postponed. In Bolivia the EU donors speak with a 'bilateral logic'.

**Third, in each case, basic education is narrowly defined as formal primary education.** Yet as the Burkina Faso report points out, formal primary education is a luxury for most Burkinabè so the fact that donors focus on it means that they fail to target the poorest and most marginalised. This low level of targeting of the poor and marginalised is also a feature of development co-operation in Tanzania. Although nearly all donors claim to focus their aid where it will have the greatest impact on poor people, it appears that because they do not systematically involve and consult education system users nor co-ordinate their efforts with organisations working in basic education more broadly defined, the poor and marginalised lose out. Donors need to work with the full range of actors in the education sector, including civil society, to ensure that increased co-ordination is effective.

**Fourth, donor imposed conditionalities and in particular, irrelevant and counterproductive technical assistance, are identified in all the reports as hampering effective co-ordination.** Indeed, in Burkina Faso, some of the donors seem to be opposing funding the sectoral approach due to the concomitant loss of patronage over awarding technical assistance contracts that sector wide support implies.

**A fifth major common weakness is the persistence of differences in donor policy guidelines, operating procedures, accounting systems and monitoring and evaluation.** In all three cases officials appear to spend hours of their working day producing reports for donors and the rest of their time meeting other donor requirements on financing work programmes and the approval of expenses.

**Sixth, all the reports emphasise that the lack of donor contact with civil society and education users generally impedes effective support to the sector.** All the reports recommend that donors (and governments) address this lack of participation because it will improve the quality of aid and ensure better co-ordination.

The reports also highlight common weaknesses in government, which in turn hinder effective co-ordination. In Burkina Faso for example, no department is responsible for ensuring that aid is co-ordinated and the Ministry of Education has no centralised information on actual or potential aid to the sector. This lack of capacity and organisation is not unique to Burkina Faso. The Tanzania report identifies inadequate individual and institutional government capacity as well as frequent changes in leadership within the various ministries responsible for education as key weaknesses on the government side.

These reports illustrate a remarkable convergence of experience in very different contexts. Since this report is addressed to the donor community, the following recommendations are limited to areas over which donors have control.

## Recommendations

**ActionAid Alliance, on the basis of these reports and our own experience, calls on donor agencies to adhere to a code of conduct to ensure that support to government efforts to achieve education for all is not undermined by inefficient, uncoordinated donor practices.**

Within the framework of the code of conduct, donors should commit to:

- n Working within the parameters of locally owned education sector development strategies that have been developed jointly with all stakeholders including civil society and that are integrated into national poverty reduction strategies. Where these have not yet been developed, they should be drafted by national governments in consultation with all relevant stakeholders and funding partners. This will require donors to increase support to strengthen local capacity at all levels of government involved in designing and implementing education sector policy through stimulating and supporting government led co-ordination efforts. This is more likely to be achieved if donors devolve the necessary decision-making responsibility to field offices.
- n Where sector wide support programmes are not in place donors should work through existing structures to ensure the maximum integration of projects into Ministry policy.
- n Donors should work with governments and stakeholders to ensure that education sector development strategies contain clearly defined mechanisms for civil society monitoring of the implementation of reforms and provisions for holding implementing authorities to account. This will require donors to support stakeholders such as national civil society networks, in accordance with UNESCO guidelines for national plans, to ensure real participation.
- n Improving co-ordination at all levels of interaction with national governments. Specifically this implies:

- u Donors must ensure that all relevant information on activity in the sector is made available to government and other donors. This includes consultancies, new project initiatives, requests for assistance made by governments, project appraisals, implementation and progress reports, technical assistance reports and evaluations. Donors must also ensure effective communications between the local donor office and headquarters.
- u Strictly adhering to agreed terms and conditions for the employment of consultants. Donors should offer consultants terms and conditions comparable to those in the public sector for similar work. This will help to avoid an outflow of civil servants to the consultancy sector. Donors should conduct joint appraisal missions, joint monitoring and joint auditing and evaluation, in accordance with national government budget cycles and fiscal planning. Missions should be designed to fit the government's timetable and should be at a manageable level. Where a number of donors support a sector wide programme, they should encourage joint appraisal mechanisms, including government and other stakeholders, most importantly the grassroots. Donors could designate one lead agency which would be responsible for conducting appraisal missions, monitoring and evaluation on behalf of all the agencies.
- n Ending the practice of aid tying in the education sector. Tied aid, for example in the provision of text books, can lead to delays in supply, undermine the development of publishing industries in the South and as a result, impact negatively on the cultural development of a country (since text book publishing is often used to subsidise the publishing of other authors). Tied aid practices prevent local ownership, hinder capacity-building and can generate significant additional costs.

Where technical assistance is funded by donors, it must:

- u Be driven by government priorities and absorption capacity, governments themselves should select the consultants rather than the donor
- u Report primarily to government managers
- u Support government institutional capacity by focusing on skills transfer to civil servants in priority government functions
- u Not be restricted to supporting individual donor projects or programmes
- u Give preferential treatment to national and

*An effective code of conduct would increase donor accountability and facilitate monitoring.*

- regional consultants
- u Ensure that expatriate assistance is complementary to and develops national and regional consultancy expertise
- n Donor co-ordination implies that donors will work to develop co-ordinated and complementary strategies for addressing agreed cross-cutting themes such as *gender*. Since most poor and marginalised people are women and two thirds of children excluded from school are girls, effective, co-ordinated strategies are vital. The EC even suggests that such is the importance of eliminating gender disparities in education that “whilst education policies must be determined by Southern governments and whilst donors must respect local cultural choices, the question of gender is an exception to this rule<sup>6</sup>”.
- n Freeing up additional resources for basic education. This is necessary to implement the Dakar commitments. This should be achieved by:
  - u Allocating a larger share of resources than in the past to support for primary and other forms of basic education. At least 8% of ODA should be allocated to basic education.
  - u Speeding up debt relief through the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative (HIPC II) provided it is earmarked for expenditure on basic social services such as education.
  - u Ensuring that these resources are allocated on the basis of need which implies both co-ordination (to ensure that no countries are overlooked) and coherence (to ensure that funds are distributed in line with poverty eradication and the Dakar objectives).
- n Ensuring that other donor policies are coherent with development policy. Donors should ensure that export promotion policies for example do not negate the effects they are trying to achieve with their development policy.
- n Working to increase co-ordination at an international level in line with commitments agreed in the framework of the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000. EU donors should publicise and implement the EU Code of Conduct agreed in 1996.

## Footnotes

- 1 World Education Forum Framework, paragraph 8 available from [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)
- 2 *ibid*, paragraph 11
- 3 See *Donor participation in the education sector in Ghana*, Rojo Mettle-Nunoo and Louise Hilditch, ActionAid, 2000
- 4 *A comparison of management systems for development cooperation in OECD/DAC members* by Hyun-sik Chang, Arthur M. Fell and Michael Laird with the assistance of Julie Seif. CDC(99)6, p. 51
- 5 <http://www.oecd.org/dac/htm/strength.htm>
- 6 L'éducation et la formation dans la coopération au développement de la Communauté, European Commission, February 1999 from a series on Questions de Développement Humain et Social, No. 12, p.8

# Tanzania

## Executive summary

This study examines donor co-ordination in education policy making in Tanzania and assesses the extent to which the government is able to influence donor activity, and examines weaknesses in the donor co-ordination process. The extent to which donor support benefits marginalised groups, its potential to contribute to effective implementation of Education For All (EFA) commitments, and the extent to which key stakeholders participate in the process are accorded special attention. Based on the findings, the study proposes policy strategies for donors, which could improve donor co-ordination in the sector, for enhanced donor support effectiveness.

### Major constraints and shortfalls identified include:

- n Differences in donor country policies, procedures, guidelines and accounting systems
- n Conditionalities on aid
- n Mistrust between donors and government and lack of transparency
- n Lack of effective participation of beneficiaries and civil society in formulation, design and implementation of programmes
- n Low level targeting of the poor and marginalised groups
- n Accountability problems in government
- n Inadequate capacity in government
- n Frequent changes in ministries, which create instability and affect leadership

### Policy strategies to improve donor co-ordination proposed for donors are:

- n Adopting a participatory approach to aid policy formulation and aid management.
- n Commitment to provide support on a long term basis within a sector wide framework.
- n Commitment to increase support to non-formal education, in particular, targeting of all marginalised groups.
- n Reviewing respective donor country policies on technical assistance with a view to ensuring skills transfer and strengthened local capacity.
- n Promoting dialogue strategies that provide incentive to reach agreement.
- n All donors, in collaboration with government, agreeing to adhere to guidelines that promote transparency and local ownership.

## Introduction

### Background

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world and for the past three decades has been one of the major aid recipient countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. During this period the country has received large amounts of aid from both bilateral and multilateral donors. The main issues in relation to aid have been the extent to which donor policies promote local ownership of development programmes and their effect on the needs and priorities of the country. At the centre of the debate has been the nature of aid co-ordination, a key determinant of aid effectiveness.

Since the 1980s, the education sector in Tanzania has experienced access and quality problems. Although Tanzania has a policy framework aimed at achieving EFA the trend over the past decade has been moving away from, rather than towards the set objectives and targets. For example, between 1981 and 1998, Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) dropped from 98 percent to 76 percent, while Net Enrolment Rate (NER) dropped from 69 percent to 56.7 percent in the same period. The government recognises the key role education plays in improving people's livelihoods and overall societal wellbeing and has made efforts to address these problems. During the economic reform period, the education sector has remained a priority area for government funding. From 1994 to 1999 the share of recurrent discretionary expenditures to the education sector in Tanzania averaged about 24.3 percent of the total government recurrent expenditure.

Between 1995 and 1999, development expenditure on education increased significantly (from Tsh. 1,738 million<sup>1</sup> to Tsh. 11,513 million), 72% of which was provided from foreign sources in 1999. The bulk of expenditure for both recurrent and development budgets was directed towards formal primary education.

Despite the priority status accorded to education, the sector continues to experience severe under-funding, particularly at primary education level. Increases in the budgetary allocation to the sector have remained inadequate to bridge the under-funding gap and informal education in particular is drastically under funded.

The report is divided into four main sections. Section one provides a brief background and describes the study methodology. Section two briefly examines the aid to education policies and practices of selected donor countries and agencies supporting the education sector. Section three examines practices in donor co-ordination,

assesses the extent to which the government is taking a lead in influencing aid policy and controlling donor activity, and analyses weaknesses in the donor co-ordination process. Based on the findings, section four presents proposals for donors on policy strategies aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of donor support.

### Methodology

Two methods were used to collect data and information for this study. First, senior officials in selected missions representing key donors in the education sector were interviewed. These include all EU member states providing support to the education sector and other key donors, bilateral and multilateral. Others interviewed were senior officials in the two Ministries of Education<sup>2</sup> and other relevant ministries, and officials in NGOs and civil society associations representing other key stakeholders in the education system such as parents, teachers and students. Second, a review of literature was conducted, covering areas on donor co-ordination, aid effectiveness and the education sector in Tanzania.

### Donor support to the education sector

Donors supporting the education sector in Tanzania are guided by their respective country aid policies. EU member states are also guided by the Council guidelines<sup>3</sup>. In the education sector, the majority of donors give priority to formal primary education. For example, of the donor countries/agencies included in this study, only France indicated it was not providing support at primary education level. Representatives of donor countries interviewed indicated that, although support is provided according to their aid policies, it has to be consistent with policies and priorities of a recipient country.

All donor representatives interviewed were of the opinion that the sector approach is a more effective way of financing the sector. In addition to specific projects/programmes, some of the donors have also supported activities related to the process of planning and designing a sector development programme (EC, DFID, Ireland Aid, NORAD and the World Bank).

While there is no government/donor agreement on the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) document to date, and implementation is yet to begin there are good examples of several donors providing support to a single project/programme. Both the DBSPE and the textbook programme offer good lessons to learn from, in working towards ESDP.

## Donor targeting of marginalised groups

Analysis of donor supported projects/programmes suggests limited targeting of marginalised groups such as the poor and girls. As a way of ensuring that support actually benefits the targeted beneficiaries, donors have either put in place their own systems, or use government systems to monitor project/programme implementation. Donors indicated however, that often, monitoring systems do not work well and there have been problems of accountability, with funds being misused. It is expected that decentralisation will improve this process. A total of 38 districts are presently piloting decentralised management and decision making over allocation of resources.

There was consensus among the interviewed donor officials that a decentralised system has more potential to ensure effective and efficient delivery of social services such as education and health, than a centralised system. The system promotes accountability on the part of managers and participation by beneficiaries. On one hand, districts are close to people and know their problems well, and on the other, people can participate more effectively and monitor performance, for enhanced accountability. Under decentralisation, funding for recurrent expenditure will be provided to local authorities which will have the autonomy to plan and budget according to their identified priorities. However, a major concern raised by some of the donor representatives interviewed relates to whether officials at different levels of local government have the capacity to effectively assume their new roles.

## How donors involve beneficiaries in the design and implementation of projects/programmes

Participation of beneficiaries in the design, implementation and monitoring of projects/programmes is an effective way of ensuring that projects reflect concerns and priorities of the beneficiaries. However, evidence from interviews suggests that beneficiaries have not been involved at the planning and design stages although some have been involved in the evaluation/review of projects.

Donors perceive the role of civil society in addressing community needs to be very important. Generally, there is agreement that civil society offers an independent voice in influencing policy processes and has a key role to play in mobilising community members and creating awareness. It was observed however, that civil society is not yet well developed in Tanzania and has not assumed its role effectively.

A few donors have taken the initiative to have a dialogue with NGOs in education. Both donors and NGOs mentioned this pointing out for example, that the Tanzania Education Network (TEN/MET) has been consulting donors regularly. Such consultations have taken place between TEN/MET and UN agencies, DFID and other international organisations operating outside Tanzania. Donors advise and encourage participation of civil society in meetings and drafting of documents. Some donors have attended TEN/MET meetings as observers to promote partnership.

The government record on involving civil society in policy processes has improved as indicated by recent developments in policy deliberations. There has been increased recognition by the government of the important role civil society plays in the policy formulation and implementation processes. Initiatives have been made, for example, to involve civil society in deliberations of broad national policies such as those discussing the Technical Assistance Strategy (TAS) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). In the education sector, the initiative has also been taken to involve key stakeholders including civil society in the discussions on ESDP. Eight member NGOs of TEN/MET are members of ESDP Technical Working Groups (TWGs) which were formed subsequent to the report by the appraisers of the ESDP document, which had identified inadequate involvement of other key stakeholders (apart from MOEC) in the ESDP planning and design process as a major constraint.

So far, civil society participation through TWGs has not been very effective. Meetings of TWGs have not been taking place as often as scheduled, and when they have taken place, often attendance had been poor. In some of the meetings, 50 percent or more of the members were absent (Mercer et al, 2000), including civil society and local government representatives. Lack of funds to cover travel and per diem expenses for members from outside Dar es Salaam was pointed out by government officials as one of the factors contributing to poor attendance in TWG meetings.

While civil society participation through TWGs is a step in the right direction, more needs to be done by both government and donors to promote participatory processes. Commitment is required to ensure that participation of civil society in policy formulation and implementation remains part of the process and is not optional. Interviews with members of selected organisations representing parents, teachers and children show that only a few NGOs have taken part in policy deliberations and representatives of a teachers union and a parents association said they have never been invited to participate in education policy deliberations.

## Donor co-ordination in the education sector

Tanzania remains one of the major aid recipients in Sub-Saharan Africa. As such, aid effectiveness and aid co-ordination have been issues of concern for a long time. Overall, government/donor co-ordination has traditionally involved government dealing with each donor separately.

Donor co-ordination also takes place within the donor group (inter-donor co-ordination). Since the 1970s, UNDP and the World Bank resident mission have taken a lead in co-ordinating the donor group. There have also been other forms of inter-donor co-ordination such as that for the EU.

In the education sector, a number of donors, bilateral and multilateral have been providing support. These include United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland, Canada, Japan, World Bank, UNICEF and EC. As in the case of aid co-ordination at the broader policy level, within the sector, the government has traditionally dealt with each donor separately.

## Inter-donor co-ordination in the education sector

Presently co-ordination of donors in the education sector, is undertaken by the EC (since 1996). All officials interviewed indicated that the donor group in education meets regularly when there are issues to discuss and/or decide. Members of the group also share information. At the broader policy level heads of missions also meet regularly. Joint evaluations and reviews have also been done, the most recent being a joint EC/DFID/Ireland Aid evaluation on the use of funds provided by the three respective donors to support the ESDP preparation process (Mercer et al., 2000).

The 1994 EU Council Resolution on Education and Training in Developing Countries highlights the need to strengthen co-ordination between the Community and member states in the area of education and training. The 1996 EU Code of Conduct for education sector funding agencies also provides guidelines on how donors should operate in recipient countries. For example, the Code of Conduct requires that all relevant interventions by a donor be made available to government and other donors, and that they undertake joint reviews and appraisals, and that technical assistance to government should, among other things, focus on skills transfer to civil servants. Generally, officials representing EU member states were aware of the Code of Conduct. One official explained that this was

being adhered to, and that there has even been agreement with non-EU donors in the education sector and with the government, on how to operate. Another official pointed out that donors did not necessarily make reference to the Code of Conduct, but added that how donors operated is not in conflict with the Code. However three EU education sector officials (France, Denmark and a temporary staff member from the Finnish Embassy) indicated that they were not aware of the 1996 EU Code of Conduct.

## Government taking a lead in co-ordination

The 1996 EU Code of Conduct calls for effective aid co-ordination, the key issues being to see to it that policies and priorities of a recipient country guide foreign aid. Donors are expected to support local co-ordination mechanisms under the guidance of government. In the education sector, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) is playing a lead role in co-ordinating the process of putting in place a sector-wide programme.

However, other ministries are also involved and one problem raised in the ESDP appraisal report and reiterated by some of the officials interviewed is that the role of the different ministries is not clearly defined. It is also perceived that MOEC is marginalising other ministries. With regard to government/donor co-ordination, mistrust and lack of genuine dialogue were identified as some of the constraints towards reaching agreement on how to move forward.

Various reports on ESDP, including the Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP) ESDP document and implementation plans have been prepared. However, so far there has been no government / donor agreement on the ESDP document. Stakeholders who participated in the appraisal workshop identified a lack of clear priorities and an unrealistic budget as some of the areas of weakness in the document. A revised draft supposed to have addressed concerns raised at the ESDP appraisal workshop has been circulated for comments.

Both donors and government officials are concerned that the process of planning and designing a sector development programme is moving very slowly or has stagnated. Donors are frustrated at the slow pace. Commitments to the sector have been made but very little has been disbursed because the ESDP is not yet operational. Both sides blame each other for this slow pace. Donors point out problems of lack of capacity and strong leadership in government as major constraints, while government attributes the slow pace to lack of good will and conditionalities on the part of donors. Each side

also blames the other for lack of transparency. There is need to build trust and confidence in each other. There is also an urgent need to speed up the process, particularly considering the poor state of education in the country, and the challenge ahead of attaining EFA commitments.

### **Donor co-ordination practices: an assessment**

Donor co-ordination within the donor group in education has been improving over time. As already noted, donors have been meeting regularly when there are issues to discuss and decisions to make. Donors have been able to agree on issues as a group and to present one position when having discussions with government. In some of the government/donor meetings, a few donors have represented the donor group. One example is the six-member government/donor group consisting of three representatives from each side. The group meets regularly to discuss issues related to the ESDP preparation process.

Analysis in the preceding sections points to a number of problems constraining effective, government-led donor co-ordination. Although government is making an effort to lead the ESDP process it is yet to do so effectively. This can be attributed to institutional weaknesses and individual capacity constraints. This includes under capacity, failure to ensure the participation of key stakeholders in the development process and frequent changes in leadership.

Yet the success of the Uganda Education Strategic Investment Programme (ESIP) is partly attributed to strong leadership that led a participatory process of developing the programme, involving key stakeholders including civil society groups and the poor. Success in Ethiopia sector programmes in health, education and roads has also been attributed to strong leadership that, among other things, resisted an increase in donor presence through technical co-operation (Foster et al. 2000).

Ineffective government/donor co-ordination in the sector is also exacerbated by factors within the donor group, or factors arising out of the government/donor interaction process such as differences in policy guidelines and procedures, conditionalities and mistrust. The process under the project system has been cumbersome, with the government having to deal with each donor separately. Donors have different policy guidelines, accounting systems, and financial years. The ESDP initiative offers an opportunity to overcome these problems, but this presupposes that all donors will agree to pool their resources and provide assistance through a single budget support system.

So far, differences in country policies and guidelines still seem to be a constraint to achieving this. The reluctance of Japan to join the pooled fund for implementation of the sector programme demonstrates this clearly.

All officials interviewed were in favour of a Sector Wide Approach (SWA) and agreed that it will overcome some of the weaknesses of individual projects/programmes and assure sustainability. Generally there is willingness to pool funds if clear and credible plans with priorities are in place. It is possible though that not all donors supporting the education sector will agree to provide budgetary support within a sector-wide framework. In the health sector where the approach is already operational, only seven out of more than twenty donors in the sector have so far joined the basket fund. Failure of all donors to provide support through a sector-wide programme will compromise the effectiveness of the approach in implementing sector priorities.

Technical assistance is another problematic area. One of the concerns expressed by government is how some of the projects are heavily dependent on technical assistance. This was reflected in the process of preparing initial documents for the ESDP. Foreign consultants assumed a lead role in the preparation of initial plans. Views from the government suggest that the reliance on TA is donor driven. Heavy reliance on TA has been found to be a disincentive to the development of local capacity and the policy on TA should be reviewed with a view to ensuring that TA enhances local capacity through skills transfer, and consequently promotes local management and ownership of the process.

Mistrust on both sides was also pointed out as one of the constraints to effective donor co-ordination. This makes it difficult to have genuine dialogue that can lead to agreement on issues of concern on either side. Mutual respect, transparency and building a sense of confidence in each other should be promoted as a means of ensuring effective government/donor partnership. The two sides should be transparent in the way they operate, so as to enhance trust. They need to agree on the modalities of co-operation along the lines stipulated in TAS, and for donors, to adhere to the Code of Conduct stipulated in the statement of partnership for the reform of the education sector and the implementation of ESDP.

## Summary of constraints to effective donor co-ordination

The discussion in the previous two sections, highlights a number of constraints to effective donor co-ordination in the education sector. They include the following:

- n Differences in donor policy guidelines, operating procedures and accounting systems;
- n Conditionalities on aid, for example, TA as a condition for a recipient country to get support;
- n Mistrust between donors and government and lack of transparency;
- n Lack of effective participation of beneficiaries and civil society in formulation, design and implementation of programmes;
- n Low level targeting of the poor and other marginalised groups;
- n Inadequate capacity in government (both individual and institutional);
- n Accountability problems within the government;
- n Frequent changes in leadership in the Ministry, which creates instability and affects leadership.

## Recommendations

The status of basic education in Tanzania indicates the need for increased support by donors despite an increasing trend in donor support to basic education. There does seem to be a willingness among donors to commit more funds. This is consistent with the commitment made at the Dakar World Education Forum, to work towards effective implementation of EFA commitments. The issue is whether aid is provided in a way that ensures that it effectively reaches the targeted beneficiaries and achieves the expected impact. One of the key determinants of aid effectiveness is the process of donor co-ordination. Several factors however, constrain effective donor co-ordination in education. The following policy strategies are proposed as means through which donors could work to improve donor co-ordination in the education sector.

- n Adopt a consultative approach in formulating aid policy and encourage the government to adopt a participatory system involving key stakeholders in the planning, design and implementation of donor supported programmes.
- n Commit to providing support on a long term basis within a sector-wide framework. This will require continued inter-donor dialogue to secure commitment of all donors, and government/donor dialogue and facilitation to make ESDP operational.
- n Commit to allocate more resources to non-formal education and to target all marginalised groups so as to contribute to the attainment of all EFA goals. This could be done through the ESDP once it is operational (it is expected that EFA plans shall be integrated in the programme), and/or through NGOs.
- n Review respective donor country policies on technical assistance so that it is used with a view to strengthening individual and institutional capacities, thereby promoting local management and ownership of the process.
- n Encourage and promote a dialogue process that provides incentives to reach agreement. Evidence from other countries' government/donor partnerships in sector strategies shows that more collegial and informal approaches in dealing with disagreements is an effective way of getting things to move forward (Foster et al. 2000).
- n EU Member States in the education sector should adhere to all guidelines agreed upon, and encourage and work with other donors to develop common guidelines in collaboration with government, and operate along those guidelines.

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## Acronyms

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| BEMP    | Basic Education Master Plan                              |
| COBET   | Complementary Basic Education                            |
| CBO     | Community Based Organisation                             |
| CIDA    | Canadian International Development Agency                |
| CODE    | Canadian Organisation for Development Through Education  |
| CSSC    | Christian Social Services Commission                     |
| DAC     | Development Assistance Committee                         |
| DANIDA  | Danish International Development Agency                  |
| DBSPE   | District Based Support to Primary Education              |
| DFID    | Department For International Development                 |
| EC      | European Community                                       |
| ECU     | European Currency Unit                                   |
| EDF     | European Development Funds                               |
| EFA     | Education For All  |
| ESDP    | Education Sector Development Programme                   |
| ESIP    | Education Strategic Investment Programme                 |
| EU      | European Union   |
| GER     | Gross Enrolment Rate                                     |
| GSES    | Girls Secondary Education Scholarship                    |
| GTZ     | Deutsche Gessellchaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit      |
| HRD     | Human Resources Development                              |
| MOEC    | Ministry of Education and Culture                        |
| MORALG  | Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government |
| MOSTHE  | Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education     |
| NER     | Net Enrolment Rate                                       |
| NGO     | Non - Governmental Organisation                          |
| NORAD   | Norwegian Agency for Development                         |
| ODI     | Overseas Development Institute                           |
| PRSP    | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper                         |
| SASP    | Structural Adjustment Supported Programme                |
| SEMP    | Secondary Education Master Plan                          |
| SIDA    | Swedish International Development Agency                 |
| SWA     | Sector Wide Approach                                     |
| TA      | Technical Assistance                                     |
| TAS     | Technical Assistance Strategy                            |
| TED     | Teachers Education by Distance                           |
| TEN/MET | Tanzania Education Network                               |
| TRCs    | Teachers Resource Centres                                |
| UDSM    | University of Dar es Salaam                              |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme                     |
| UNICEF  | United Nations Children's Fund                           |
| UDSM    | University of Dar es Salaam                              |

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## Tanzania footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> One US\$ is approximately equivalent to Tsh.800.
- <sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) and Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MOSTHE).
- <sup>3</sup> 1994 EU Council Resolution on education and training in developing countries.

# Burkina Faso

## Executive summary

The study's terms of reference, a review of literature on the subject and interviews, all intended to analyse Burkina Faso's basic education policy and the level of donor co-ordination of the European Union's (EU's) Member States and of other major donors, enabled the following points to be developed:

- n On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1999, Burkina Faso adopted a **Ten-Year Plan For The Development Of Basic Education (2000-2009) (PDDEB)**. This plan calls for a programme-based approach and therefore breaks with the project-based approach;
- n Neither civil society (NGOs, trades union and parents' associations) nor the beneficiaries have really been involved in the PDDEB's setting up;
- n Donors to the basic education sector in Burkina Faso support the PDDEB but are of the opinion that its implementation requires an institutional reorganization of the Ministry for Basic Education and Literacy (MBEL) in order to ensure its proper execution and a coherent and transparent management of the resources it receives;
- n The MBEL has no structure in charge of co-ordinating external aid and does not therefore have any centralized information on present and potential external aid at its disposal;
- n Donors to the basic education sector have different project-management procedures and have organized themselves by holding monthly meetings aimed at getting to know each other better and at working towards harmonizing their procedures in order to support the PDDEB;
- n Generally speaking, EU Member States do not provide funds for basic education in Burkina Faso: only three countries out of the eight EU countries that are physically represented in Burkina Faso finance basic education;
- n External aid to basic education is mostly geared towards primary education; very few donors are interested in informal education. Therefore, external aid does not sufficiently reach marginalized populations, whose very low incomes cannot cover the costs of primary education;
- n The EU Code of Conduct has not been disseminated. As a consequence, Member States and other donors are little informed of its content and do not take it into account when designing and implementing their projects.

## Introduction: Burkina Faso at a glance

Burkina Faso is characterized by a young population, of which 47% are aged between 0 and 15 years, and by a high proportion of women and girls – reaching 51.8%. From an economic point of view, 45% of the population lives under the poverty threshold, earning yearly an estimated 72,690 Fcfa<sup>1</sup> in 1998; over 50% of this group live in conditions of extreme poverty (less than 50,000 Fcfa per year). The poverty is directly linked to structural underemployment, to a lack of activities generating income particularly in rural areas, where 85% of the population lives, and to the low income of the informal urban sector.

In 1999, Burkina Faso's external debt reached 888,000 million Fcfa, i.e. around three times the national budget. Although this debt has recently been reduced by 50%, its total remission would enable a very significant improvement of social indicators, which are vital contributors to a real reduction of the poverty index. Indeed, in the UNDP's Human Development Report 2000, Burkina Faso is in 172<sup>nd</sup> position out of 174 countries, a classification based on the Human Development Index (HDI), which measures the level reached by a country in terms of life expectancy, education and real income.

The government of Burkina Faso hopes to achieve better results by implementing the 20/20 initiative, reforming aid conditionalities, the project to set up a joint programme to fight HIV/AIDS and the carrying out of the Ten-Year Plan For The Development Of Basic Education (PDDEB). However, in order to guarantee some measure of success for all of its present and future actions, external aid needs to be increased, real aid, free of conditionalities and better co-ordinated.

## Basic education in Burkina Faso

### What is meant by basic education?

In Burkina-Faso, basic education is defined as *a process aimed at dispensing to all Burkinabè a minimum of education, meeting the country's needs and potentialities*; it is understood to be a *permanent* and *integral* education aimed at improving living conditions and at ensuring individual and collective advancement. Such an understanding of education underlines a direct link between basic education and the fight against poverty.

## Primary education

The gross enrolment rate increased from 31% in 1989/1990 to 40.5% in 1998/1999 (41.1% for boys and 33.6% for girls), indicating therefore an annual increase of 1% during the last ten years.

As for the educable population, it has greatly increased: by 3.5% a year. As a result, primary education is at present not catering for a considerable number of children, particularly girls and young people from rural areas. Primary education is characterized by a lack of school infrastructures. Indeed, in rural areas, almost three villages out of four do not have schools. Pupils need to travel on average around 5.8 kilometres in order to go to school; this distance can even reach 35 kilometres in certain rural areas. Primary education presents several big challenges, such as:

- n Glaring disparities regarding access, linked to geographical situation and particularly to gender;
- n High drop-out rates;
- n Low performance: in the fifth year of primary school, only 25% of pupils on average can read fluently;
- n Lack of relevance: primary school leavers only rarely have the opportunity in life to use the knowledge they have learned;
- n A crucial lack of teachers, particularly in rural areas, and their inadequate training;
- n A generalized lack of collective teaching materials (geography maps, scientific diagrams, etc.) and school books. Furthermore, the content of existing books is not adapted to the aims of Burkinabè education and values.
- n The pupil/teacher ratio is very high. It reaches around 58 on average and sometimes peaks at 125 pupils in certain schools. Notwithstanding regions with low populations, this ratio is constantly worsening. This explains, at least in part, the State's policy of spreading the "double flux"<sup>2</sup> practice in order to reduce numbers in classrooms, and the "multi-grade"<sup>3</sup> system to solve the problem of insufficient school infrastructures.

## Satellite schools

Satellite schools are part of a primary school system whose main objectives are, to reduce drop-outs, to improve girls' access to education, to shorten distances between home and school and, finally, to develop community involvement. A satellite school is characterized by its geographical and cultural proximity with the population, the use of the skills acquired by the child, most importantly, in his or her mother tongue, and the community's participation in the running of the school. The satellite school is set up in villages without primary schools and where the need for education is very

high. This type of school is linked to a larger primary school, to which it intends to send its pupils after the third year, when pupils are in a better physical and emotional state to go there.

## Informal basic education

Informal education consists of Bisongos (informal pre-school education centres), Informal Basic Education Centres (IBECs), Training Centres for Young Farmers (TCYFs) and Permanent Centres for Literacy and Training (PCLTs). All informal programmes of basic education are given in the national languages in rural areas, the main objective being to bridge the gap caused by the lack of formal basic educational system. At present, the Bisongos and IBECs are at the experimental stage and are consequently little developed.

At present, informal basic education is still dominated by teaching young people and adults to read in the TCYFs and PCLTs. Burkina Faso is an essentially agricultural country. Seventy-four per cent of farmers are illiterate which is why teaching young people and adults to read and write should be a priority development factor in view of the many obstacles and limits to primary education, whose expansion and improvement are not foreseeable in the short term. Even if the State claims to be highly interested in literacy, the facts speak for themselves since this same State only attributed 2% of its national budget to this item in 1996 and 0.8% in 1999. Whereas the MBEL's budget increases from one year to the next, the budget for literacy decreases as most of the budget goes to primary education.

## Evolution of basic education policy

### The MBEL's institutional organization

The MBEL's role is to implement and monitor government policy on formal and informal education. In order to perform its tasks efficiently, the MBEL is supported by an institutional organization of central, external or attached departments. As part of the decentralization policy, the MBEL has undertaken to progressively deconcentrate its central departments with the intention of transferring certain operations to local structures.

The law on education strategy stipulates that parents of pupils are to form Parents' Associations (PAs) in order to take part in the management and activities of the schools. Even though PA offices exist in all schools in the country, their contribution to the schools' lives is lower than the tasks conferred upon them. Indeed, these PAs are rather perceived by the MBEL and by the schools' administrations as sources of finance because of the fees to be paid by

the parents. The amount of these fees, which is fixed during the general assemblies by the parents themselves, varies between 1,000 and 2,000 Fcfa per enrolled child. What is worse is that, in many cases, the collection and management of these fees are a source of conflict between on the one hand, the PA offices, even though they have legitimacy, and on the other hand, the schools' administrations, which, whatever the case, "force" certain parents to pay them the fees. When the administration is able to receive the fees, its management of them is somewhat lax and, naturally, no reporting is done. For instance, during the 1998/1999 school year, of a total of 816,393 enrolled pupils paying a minimum of 1,000 Fcfa fees each, only 1/3 of the expected sum was received and managed by the PA offices for the schools' benefit (for buying supplies and teaching materials and contributing to the school canteens); the remaining 2/3 were received by the school administrations and were managed in ways that are still mysterious.

At provincial level, the MBEL has endeavoured to set up forums for dialogue which bring together all operators and partners in basic education. Generally speaking, the lack of guidelines outlining the tasks, representation and attributions of these forums for dialogue means they do not work well. They are rather "rag-bag" structures, in which all administrative departments of the province take part.

#### **Adoption of the Ten-Year Plan For The Development Of Basic Education (PDDEB)**

As the project-based approach practised by the financial partners showed a certain number of disadvantages, such as the inconsistency of certain actions, the interruptions between the end of one project and the beginning of the next, insufficient co-ordination of support by the MBEL's departments or the very short life spans of certain projects that have nothing to do with a developmental logic, the Burkinabè government decided to move away from this approach and adopted the PDDEB, the Ten-Year Plan For The Development Of Basic Education, on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1999.

This measure confirms the priority given to basic education.

The PDDEB's ambition is to bring the percentage of people in education from 40.5% in 1998/1999 up to 70% in 2009, and the literacy rate from 26% up to 40%.

The adoption of the PDDEB appears, in the long term, to provide solutions to the problems of basic education in the long-term human development spirit adopted by Burkina Faso. From now on, all donors will have to confer and to organize themselves in order to support the activities laid

down in the PDDEB and cease to give preferential treatment in their approaches and their priorities to a succession of projects. Donors have therefore been invited by the MBEL to harmonize all of their procedures and to agree to pool their resources in order to fund the PDDEB via the MBEL's departments and no longer through their various temporary implementing agencies. Even if donors have generally adhered to the PDDEB's spirit, their funding of its implementation still raises questions more related to conditionalities, that we shall mention below, 15 months after its adoption by the government.

The process was meant to involve civil society however, it is far from satisfactory in this area. To bridge the gap created by not involving civil society enough, the MBEL has set up a steering committee and specialized subcommittees at national, regional and provincial level, all chaired by MBEL officials. The task of these committees is to see to the planning, control, supervision and evaluation of all of the PDDEB's activities. Apart from MBEL representatives, these committees are required to contain representatives from the donors, NGOs, trades union and PAs. However, although the representatives of these structures (NGOs, trades union and PAs) were expecting an invitation to start committee work, the Forum for Dialogue of the NGOs and Basic-Education Associations in Burkina Faso (CCEB/BF), which was invited to take part in a meeting between the MBEL and the TFPs (Technical and Financial Partners) on the state of progress of the PDDEB, was surprised to note that the committees had already started work and were even somewhat advanced in their calendar of activities and that the partner structures had not received any information whatsoever.

In view of the above, one wonders if the MBEL really wishes to involve its partners or if these are simply unintentional errors or due to the administrative inertia typical of the Burkinabè administration. Donors were hesitant at first, as they were not convinced that this plethora of committees and subcommittees (at national, regional and provincial level) was useful. They then finally adhered to the Plan and committed themselves during the meeting on the state of progress of the PDDEB to take part in the work of the aforementioned committees. The MBEL should therefore strive to stimulate these committees by properly and transparently disseminating all information to the representatives in order to avoid possible frustration.

It should be mentioned here that the CCEB/BF is a collective of around thirty national and international NGOs and associations. It was created in 1995 and its main mission is to optimize dialogue and co-ordination between the NGOs and

associations active in basic formal and informal education in order to enhance and step up their contribution to the improvement of the basic education situation in Burkina Faso. Although the CCEB/BF has operative problems at the moment in view of a lack of co-ordination coupled with institutional autonomy, the MBEL recognizes it as the voice of basic education NGOs and involves it for worse rather than for better in its activities, as was mentioned earlier. The CCEB/BF launched in April a national campaign, in agreement with other civil-society structures (trades union, PAs, women's associations, coalition on children's rights), for basic education aimed at making itself better heard by "forcing" the MBEL to pay greater attention to them so that they can contribute efficiently to developing basic education.

## Funding basic education

### The State

The State, with its national budget for basic education, is the main source of funding. However, the State only spends 11% of its education budget on basic education, of which 98% pays teachers' salaries. This not only considerably limits an increase in school infrastructures and equipment but also the improvement of the living and working environments of the teachers and education staff. Furthermore, these resources are not always managed in the most efficient manner. Against the background of the PDDEB's implementation, the State intends to bring this percentage up to 20% by 2009.

### Parents

According to a survey carried out in July 2000 on the MBEL's decentralized departments as part of the test on new conditions for providing aid, it appears that the mean cost per unit borne by pupils' parents is estimated at 4,003 Fcfa (fees and school materials). Furthermore, the economic reform launched in 1991, which stipulates that users are to pay a contribution to the costs of all services, has increased the impact of poverty on schooling and more specifically on the schooling of girls. In most cases, the participation costs are higher than the communities' production capacities, particularly in rural areas, which means that schools are even more inaccessible.

### External aid

Several bilateral and multilateral donors fund the basic education sector in Burkina Faso. In 1998, external aid to the basic education sector only amounted to 2% of all external aid received by the government. The World Bank, Switzerland, Canada, the United Nations, the Islamic Development Bank, Japan and the United States are present in the sector in this way.

## Aid from the EU Member States

Eight Member States of the EU are physically represented in various ways in Burkina Faso (embassy, consulate or representatives' office). These are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. For various reasons linked to their development aid policies, four countries (Austria, Denmark, the Germany and Spain) do not fund basic education as part of bilateral co-operation. Of the EU Member States, only Belgium, France and the Netherlands really fund a basic education programme in Burkina Faso.

## Aid to basic education and the fight against poverty

Generally speaking, external funds for basic education consist of institutional support to primary education: teacher training, construction of school infrastructures and supply of equipment, production of teaching materials, for example. Yet primary education is insufficiently adapted and is expensive for the State and for most of the population, which is essentially rural. As a consequence, it is a privilege for only a very small percentage of the population. It is therefore a paradox that in spite of all this, donors still attach such great importance to primary education: aspects linked to supporting school canteens in order to improve access in poor areas and the free supply of books or materials in the poorest areas in order to reduce the costs of education mentioned in the PDDEB as factors contributing to the fight against poverty are barely developed. In response to such criticism, donors state that the projects they implement were sought by the government which has moreover contributed to their instructions via the technical structures of the MBEL. However, the reality is quite different since all projects strictly adhere to co-operation policies which not only identify their priority sectors but also set up all mechanisms for their implementation; the government has little room for manoeuvre and often puts up with little for want of anything better.

In general terms, donors do not co-operate with NGOs, claiming that their co-operation is first and foremost bilateral, from state to state. This argument is true all in all, but when one bears in mind the impact that NGOs have on developing the basic education sector in Burkina Faso, it is appropriate to think otherwise. Indeed, they are present on the ground, they are better accepted by the rural population and are aware of their educational needs. NGOs are generally better placed to respond to the numerous and pressing requests for help from marginalized communities. In Burkina Faso, many NGOs have initiated teaching procedures and initiatives, which have contributed to the MBEL's experience. To support

NGOs also means to not only contribute to the fight against poverty but also to improving the educational system as a whole. In order for aid to better contribute to the fight against poverty, donors should take part in gathering funds for the development of literacy, which affects the majority of the population, the poorest and most marginalized, particularly women. In the framework of the PDDEB, the government has the ambition to increase the literacy rate from 26% in 1998 to 40% at least in 2009. In this perspective, donors are invited to truly commit themselves to this basic education sector.

## Donor co-ordination in basic education

### Between donors

In Burkina Faso, donors in the basic education sector are known as Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs) of the basic education sector. Since 1996, in view of the various management procedures for projects and the consequences linked to aid not being co-ordinated, which partially contributes to limiting its impact as mentioned earlier and in view of the PDDEB's inception, the MBEL has encouraged TFPs to create a dialogue framework with the aim of getting better acquainted with each other and harmonizing their activities. This is why, in response to this encouragement, the TFPs initiated in 1997 tentative and sporadic meetings which led to the creation of a co-ordination structure, with the Dutch Embassy taking the lead. Furthermore, they decided to meet monthly with the aim of exchanging information on their respective programmes and of working towards harmonizing their contacts with the MBEL. These meetings are open to all bilateral and multilateral TFPs in the basic education sector and to the CCEC/BF. The following TFPs regularly take part in these meetings:

- n Member States of the EU: Belgium, France, the Netherlands.
- n Other states: Canada, Switzerland, Japan
- n Multilateral organizations: EC delegation, World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

During the first meetings, attendance was rather low as many TFPs did not see the point of them; certain TFPs took part in order to be informed on other participants' programmes but were not ready to impart information on their own programmes. It took patience, time and tact to keep this co-ordination alive. While recognizing the pertinence of such a co-ordination framework, the irregular participation of representatives, who are often busy with tasks in their respective departments, is not ideal for obtaining good results, as absentees

tend to ask questions or lay down conditions already addressed in previous meetings. However, the need for co-ordination is vital for better use of aid. The analysis of the projects carried out by the TFPs shows that the projects were approved in various ways. Their study reveals that they usually share the same basis: the government's submission to the donor, who has the last word. The project is often accompanied by conditions and by rigid and varied procedures: domination of the intervention areas, of the strategies and of the financial procedures by the donors.

However, the question of co-ordinating through harmonizing procedures concerning not only finance but also the content of the projects' activities has been discussed many times during the TFPs monthly meetings, particularly against the backdrop of the TFPs' support in implementing the PDDEB. This avoids redundancy, confusion and competition which might arise as a result of concentrating on certain sectors or on certain regions to the detriment of other programmes that are just as important. The TFPs have created two working groups to find solutions to these issues. Their aims are to enable external MBEL participants to work together in practical terms in implementing the PDDEB and to give MBEL decision-makers scope for effectively co-ordinating the TFPs interventions.

The EC was made responsible for the working group on harmonizing content and the World Bank, on financial procedures. The EC drafted the terms of reference for the working group on harmonizing the content of activities in August 1999, but since then, nothing has happened. The EC judges that it does not have sufficient staff to deal with this and, more particularly, that this question of harmonizing content is not at all a priority in the face of the MBEL's appropriation of the PDDEB and the MBEL's reorganization, which are both under discussion. Once these questions have been resolved, harmonizing content will be self-evident, particularly since implementation will take place through the MBEL. However, the World Bank has summarized the TFPs procedures, revealing that even if, generally speaking, procedures vary, they leave enough room for manoeuvre to enable a national system of technical and financial management of projects to be set up. Indeed, according to the information collected, only the EC has procedures requiring a very strict control; the control of the other TFPs is generally limited to following financial procedures.

It is noted that, following this analysis, the other TFPs have, apart from the EC, remained silent and have not envisaged anything as yet along the lines suggested in the World Bank's document, as they think that it is up to the MBEL to propose this

national management system. Everything seems to lead one to the conclusion that there is no will for harmonization or at least the proof that the TFPs are not entirely free to harmonize procedures as they are attached to their various headquarters. However, to respond to their invitation, it is essential that the MBEL should start the ball rolling as regards setting up this management system and enter into negotiations with the TFPs regarding its application. The TFPs will demonstrate their good will by openly exchanging information on the system that will be proposed by the MBEL and they will be judged solely on this.

In view of this large number of procedures and declarations made by the donors, who claim in general to have consulted with other donors before submitting their projects, it is appropriate to question the real motive of these consultations, if their declarations are to be believed. These can definitely be referred to as lightweight consultations, more used for purposes of information or even curiosity than for harmonization. Proof of this resides in the fact that it has already happened that donors have been surprised to find themselves in the same intervention area carrying out very similar activities (building schools, training staff). Moreover, these consultations often reveal a competitive streak, each representative claiming to know better. More often than not, these claims remain words and are not translated into action.

#### **Co-ordination between the MBEL and donors**

In order to ensure better management of external aid, the MBEL recently created the Education Project Bureau (EPB). It should be noted that, initially, the EPB was used by the World Bank as an implementing agency called Management of Education Project IV. The EPB's tasks are:

- n To ensure the administrative and financial management of all investment, technical assistance and training relating to all basic education projects;
- n To co-ordinate the activities of the various funding and implementing agencies;
- n To implement all of the activities provided for in connection with education projects.

Even if in spirit, the EPB's creation and purpose are very pertinent, reality is proving to be a different matter. The other TFPs have remained suspicious of the EPB, seeing it as an attempt by the World Bank to subordinate them. This no doubt explains why TFPs are continually increasing the number of their own agencies to ensure good management of their own funds.

Thus, without a national structure to co-ordinate the projects, the MBEL has at present no serious centralized information at its disposal regarding the amount of present external aid, the number of

donor projects in basic education and the number of reports produced annually for the donors.

What is known is that the MBEL's Secretary General and the Minister are continuously lobbied and harassed by present donors and by the missions of potential donors as they are the only ones who can communicate on funding questions. It is also known that the large number of agencies co-ordinating projects entails MBEL officials having huge reporting workloads which means their professional lives are "hell" in view of the various rules and procedures to which the MBEL must conform if it is to receive funds. Indeed, each TFP requires reports in various forms, and the main differences lie with the approval of documents and the TFPs' involvement in the daily management of the projects' activities (work programmes, financial reports and periodic narrative reports, approval of expenses).

In general terms, the MBEL has always periodically consulted the TFPs in order to discuss various subjects, but these consultations became more meaningful with the inception of the PDDEB. According to the MBEL, the PDDEB is the reference framework which should enable the activities of all donors to be harmonized according to their activities and taking into account everyone's specifications. The TFPs have declared their availability and have pledged to work towards harmonizing procedures, as mentioned above, but wish to see the MBEL take the initiative and the responsibility for this co-ordination in implementing the PDDEB. This is why, on top of the harmonization of procedures discussed during their monthly meetings, the TFPs also, like other partners of the MBEL, provided co-ordinated contributions during a national forum on literacy. However, the joint mission (see below) has up to now been the high point of the co-ordination between MBEL and the TFPs.

The national forum on literacy was held between 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> December 1999. Its aims were

- n to call upon all actors in literacy to reflect on and find answers to the problems posed in developing literacy and
- n to think about action synergy and partner dynamics in order to encourage quality and convergence for literacy actions and their development with a view to achieving the global planning objectives laid down as part of implementing the PDDEB.

Apart from State representatives, NGOs, rural organizations and the TFPs contributed to the forum's various workshops, and three main recommendations were produced:

- n Organize an internal dialogue and encourage beneficiaries of the funding to be in contact to

- reach convergent consensual strategies;
- n Support the emergence of independent competencies to contribute to enhancing the quality of literacy through various types of intervention: programme design, teacher training, monitoring/evaluation of impact;
- n Build the capacity of state structures responsible for literacy so that they can fully play their roles: for instance co-ordination, research, experimenting with new teaching techniques, training.

On the basis of these recommendations, the TFPs should take more interest in literacy by providing it with additional funds, particularly in view of the creation in the near future of the National Fund for Literacy, whose fundamental purpose will be to mobilize all national, bilateral and multilateral literacy resources.

The joint MEBL-TFP mission around the PDDEB took place between 10<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April 2000. It brought together representatives of the TFP co-ordinating body, resource people and NGO representatives. The mission was co-ordinated by the Dutch Embassy and the World Bank on the TFP's proposal. The joint mission's aims were to:

- n Support the MEBL in improving the PDDEB
- n Assist it in arbitrations
- n Make the PDDEB operational
- n Provide an initial estimate of the PDDEB's costs, taking into account budgetary constraints and global prospects of debt reduction;
- n Reach a consensus between Burkina Faso and the TFPs on a ten-year programme which would constitute the reference and intervention framework for all TFPs.

At the end of this joint mission, the TFPs strongly supported Burkina Faso's aim to use the PDDEB to achieve an enrolment rate of 70% and a literacy rate of 40% by 2009. They estimate that the PDDEB is positive in general terms and that it sets the main guidelines determined by a consensus of all actors. These aims should therefore be maintained, and the TFPs say they are prepared to go along with the MBEL in implementing the PDDEB since, according to them, such a management framework is more trustworthy and inspiring.

However, they hoped for a review of the PDDEB's funding so that it would be compatible with the State's public resources in order to ensure a financial continuity of the system and insist on a major condition: the MEBL's reorganization. While the MEBL approves of this reorganization, it wishes to see this take place during the PDDEB's first phase, but from the TFPs' point of view, this reorganization is a precondition for their funding.

These preconditions seem difficult to avoid at present, particularly since they require the involvement of other ministries and the mobilization of abundant financial resources. However, the MBEL has committed itself to gradually solving these problems and hopes to find a solution rapidly if the TFPs agree to provide funds or some sort of support.

In fact, it seems that the TFPs are not yet prepared to adopt the sector-wide approach recommended for the PDDEB's implementation, particularly since their preconditions will never be objectively substantiated and could be indefinitely contestable. Even if the TFPs claim to agree to finance the PDDEB, it must be understood that they do not share the same vision in the slightest regarding their financial support. While some push the MBEL to work towards setting up a competent and coherent co-ordination structure which will become stronger with the implementation of the PDDEB's first phase (2000-2003) to enable the national implementation of the plan by the MBEL's departments by providing budgetary aid or through the common basket funding in phase two of the PDDEB (2004-2006), others are losing sleep over it. Indeed, this means for them the reduction or even the end of the technical assistance on which they rely. This second category of TFPs thus contributes much to slowing the process by constantly expressing incessant and vague criticisms. Furthermore, the poor attendance at the TFPs meetings, exacerbated by the fact that many participants do not have decision making powers, contributes to creating a mess that is very detrimental to a useful contribution on the part of the TFPs.

#### **Donors and the EU Code of Conduct**

As a reminder, the Code was drafted in the framework of the EU's "Education 2000", created in view of the necessity of harmonizing the Member States' policies since education had become a priority for the EU itself. This harmonization process is also occurring in the United Nations' institutions and in the World Bank; this Code of Conduct is therefore a way of reaching common principles for partners at the level of the international community. During a meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1999, the TFPs present examined the Code of Conduct and approved of its main principles but were of the opinion that it should be adapted to the particular situation of co-operation in Burkina Faso. It was thus decided that each TFP was to analyze it, amend it or add to it in view of a compilation at a later meeting. Over a year and a half has passed and this meeting has still not been held; it seems to have been forgotten. When one is aware of how eagerly certain problems are discussed, one can easily conclude that the TFPs are not very interested in this Code of Conduct, possibly because it does not contain any threat to

their own survival. However, if the EU Member States carried out the provisions of this Code, it would contribute most significantly to accelerating this harmonization. To achieve this, the EC delegation, which until now has done nothing to disseminate this Code of Conduct, should work towards putting the Code's examination back on the agenda of the TFPs' meetings and assume a central role in ensuring its application by the EU Member States in Burkina Faso.

#### Donors and the post-Dakar context

The Dakar Framework for Action drafted at the World Education Forum states that "all States will be requested to develop or strengthen existing national plans of action by 2002 at the latest". Furthermore, it affirms that "no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources", and the international community is to provide more financial resources to support national action plans. Burkina Faso adopted its PDDEB over a year ago, and until now no TFP has really committed itself to fund any of the plan's sections. Hesitations and all kinds of criticisms and prerequisites that look much like conditionality are still ongoing. At the moment, Burkina Faso does not intend to renegotiate its plan for 2002, particularly since the PDDEB as a whole is still subject to debate. As soon as the PDDEB is accepted by donors, its renegotiation should be straightforward, particularly in view of the fact that its implementation plan is cast in three essential phases. Thus, in light of the provisions made in Dakar's Framework for Action, to which the donors agreed, it is essential that the TFPs commit themselves and go beyond good intentions. They should commit themselves, together with the MBEL, to move on from the existing situation to progressively work towards solving problems and achieving the aims of a Basic Education For All in Burkina Faso: that is what partnership is about.

## Recommendations

#### To donors

- n Adopt a sector-based approach and national implementation through the MBEL's structures, laid down by the MBEL and for the PDDEB's implementation;
- n Provide more support for informal education by examining the national forum for literacy's recommendations and by increasing their contribution to the National Fund for Literacy;
- n Encourage all other EU Member States present in Burkina Faso to fund the PDDEB, since the aid they provide to fight against poverty and for development can only be efficient if it supports basic education;
- n Negotiate in a transparent, fair and open manner the harmonizing process of the machinery to be put to the MBEL and commit themselves to applying the resultant consensual decisions;
- n Resume discussions on the EU Code of Conduct, which contains aspects essential to a global harmonization process. To this end, the EC delegation should work towards greater synergy between the Member States present in Burkina Faso;
- n Seriously commit themselves to supporting the PDDEB already in its first phase and to not imposing conditions whose implementation requires huge investment or necessitates wider debates at national level. The TFPs absolutely must consult each other in order to adopt positions on the various aspects of the PDDEB and inform the MBEL;
- n Develop a clear sector-based policy to accompany the declaration and the strategies of Education for All resulting from the World Education Forum held in Dakar;
- n Set up support mechanisms for NGOs, which are closer to poor communities but which often lack the financial resources for an effective implementation of their programmes.

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### People interviewed

Mrs. Marie Ange Sermeus, head of the education department, Belgian cooperation section/ Ouagadougou  
 Mrs. Fati Ouédraogo, advisor in social development, Canadian Embassy/ Ouagadougou  
 Mr. Leo Van Der Zwan, education advisor, Dutch Embassy / Ouagadougou  
 Mr. Adama Ouédraogo, assistant to the education advisor, Dutch Embassy / Ouagadougou  
 Mr. Alain Le Guennou, cultural attaché, French Embassy / Ouagadougou  
 Mr. Makha Ndao, senior education specialist, World Bank / Ouagadougou  
 Mr. Claude Nahon, advisor / social sectors, European Union / Ouagadougou  
 Mr. Boubacar Camara, chargé de programmes, UNESCO / Ouagadougou  
 Mr. Adama Coulibaly, secretary general of the MEBL  
 Mr. André Compaoré, président of the National Council of the Associations of Parents of Primary School Pupils (CNAPEP)  
 Mr. Jean Kafando, secretary general of the National African Teachers' Trade Union of Burkina (SNEAB)

## Footnotes

- 1 1,000 Fcfa = 1.33US\$
- 2 This system enables the number of enrolments in schools to be doubled, but the time pupils spend in school is reduced, and teachers' timetables have increased from 30 to 40 hours per week.
- 3 The idea is for one teacher to alternately teach pupils of two different levels in the same class and at the same time.

# Bolivia

## Executive summary

The present investigation seeks to analyse the current situation with regard to **co-ordination with and between separate donor organisations** in the education sector in Bolivia, and to establish the main advances that have been made and the main limitations that still exist. On this basis, concrete recommendations will be made.

This analysis is based essentially on two sources of information: **primary information** gained through interviews and questionnaires, and **secondary information**, gained from analyses of co-operation and documentation generated in Bolivia.

A part of the opinions expressed showed the Educational Sector to be a *model* for co-ordination between the government and International Co-operation (IC) and coordination between the various donor organisations. The results of the consultation established that the limitations and the proposals put forward at macro level generally complement one another. This can be viewed as an important step forward for action based on shared strategies. However, this complementarity diminishes when we compare certain concrete proposals:

- n The shortcomings of concrete policies and strategies in the various subsectors;
- n Prioritising and optimising the distribution and use of additional financial resources;
- n The need to specify plans and mechanisms;
- n When it comes to information, monitoring and evaluation, perspectives differ strongly between the groups that were consulted.

Given the current situation of co-ordination with and between donor organisations, the author

believes that it is important to reorder the topics prioritised by the different bodies according to the following logic:

### **Participation and decentralisation as cross-cutting themes**

The consolidation and effective application of the Administrative Decentralisation Act and the People's Participation Act<sup>1</sup>, are a pre-condition for any change to existing activity.

### **Information, monitoring and evaluation**

Even greater emphasis needs to be placed on results and qualitative aspects. This is fundamental in order to bring about effective change towards a sector wide approach (*Enfoque Programático Sectorial*).

### **Sector wide approach**

It is important to strengthen planning and management capacities in order to sustain progress and to overcome the limitations presented by the educational system as a whole. The consolidation of this system needs to start from an efficient and effective information, monitoring and evaluation system.

### **Financial and technical co-ordination**

With the necessary adjustments made to the information, monitoring and evaluation systems and the sector wide approach (SWA) consolidated, it will then be possible to define more precisely the direction and amount of external aid, as a function of existing and future national financial and technical capacities.

## Introduction

### Features of the study

#### Objective

To analyse the current situation of co-ordination with and between donor organisations in the education sector and to establish the main advances and limitations, in order to propose recommendations for improvement so as to contribute more effectively to educational development in Bolivia.

#### Methodology

The analysis is based mainly on two sources of information.

- n Primary information: interviews and questionnaires with government bodies, donor organisations and civil society associations involved with educational topics<sup>2</sup>.
- n Secondary information: documents analysing co-operation and co-ordination between donor organisations in the educational area supplied by ActionAid Alliance and the documentation generated in Bolivia linked to the topic under study<sup>3</sup>. (in particular the “Nuevo Marco de Relaciónamiento Gobierno - Cooperación Internacional” – *New Framework of Government – International Co-operation relations*<sup>4</sup>).

It is worth stressing that co-ordination with and between donor organisations is, in the opinion of certain players (municipal authorities, NGOs-Private Social Development organisations (PSDIs), Teachers’ Confederation) a matter solely for the government. This explains an absence of responses, either because the government does not establish sufficient communication with the different players involved, or because certain bodies are opting to remain within their own areas because of the new responsibilities that a change of focus implies.

### General framework

Both the European Community<sup>5</sup> and other multilateral and bilateral co-operation bodies regard it as essential that countries take control of and responsibility for their own development processes and that greater efforts be made in the social area. In this context, the European Community is confronted with the challenge of improving the quality and impact of its contribution, concentrating on a smaller number of priority areas and recognising as a central limitation the lack of an overall Community strategy of sustainable development.

Whilst the present study examines the education sector, obviously there arises the general priority of greater and more effective co-ordination, in particular the need for complementarity between the work undertaken by Member States in developing countries under bilateral co-operation agreements and, in Europe itself, a search for new ways of managing public affairs.

The general framework has a specific importance for the present study in that, on the one hand, it reflects the need to establish clearer rules in terms of relations between the Government and donors and to achieve greater co-ordination between donors. On the other hand the results of the investigation show that more progress is being made in this sector than in others.

### Situation of international co-operation in the education in Bolivia

Some of the opinions voiced present the education sector (in particular the achievements of the Vice-Ministry of Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education – VEIPS) as a model for other sectors in terms of co-ordination between the Government and donors and co-operation between donor organisations themselves. Even so, there is a still a need:

- n to extend and deepen the joint work, by defining or seeking complementarity of policies and strategies in formal and non-formal education;
- n to consolidate co-ordination with and/or between certain donor organisations which still intervene on their own, supporting one-off projects which do not necessarily respond to overall priorities.

The way that the various donor organisations that were consulted are contributing financially and technically to the Educational Reform programme means that the aid is concentrated – under priorities set by the government<sup>6</sup> – in primary education and – under specific agreements with certain institutions – in higher education.

While the degree of marginalisation and drop-outs which existed at the formal primary level required major efforts at this level, it obviously remains necessary to establish a balance with regard to the coverage, pertinence and quality of primary, secondary, technical and higher education and between formal and alternative education. This balancing out implies intervention in a number of areas, and it is precisely these that are the target of the education reform which is right now being carried out in Bolivia:

- n Change in the type of teaching with an emphasis on learning;

- n Curriculum changes to reflect inter-culturality and regional and local features;
- n Institutional strengthening;
- n Initial and in-service teacher training;
- n Provision of infrastructure, furniture and equipment.
- n Improving monitoring and evaluation;
- n Incorporation of cross-cutting themes (gender equality, health and sexuality, the environment, democracy).

It is in this sense that sector wide support is being proposed as an alternative to improve planning and management capacity. This takes the form of defining general and specific strategies for each sub-sector and level, which are then converted into axes of intervention for the various players in educational development. Nonetheless, as different studies point out, and as is also reflected in the results of the study, a vital condition is the effective participation of civil society in the definition, application, follow-up and evaluation of the policies and strategies that have been defined.

Whilst the Bolivian Government has the advantage here of having passed two crucially important laws (People's Participation Act and the Administrative Decentralisation Act); it shares, together with the remaining players involved in development – including donor organisations – the challenge of guaranteeing that what is planned at the central level takes concrete form in:

- n Defining the responsibilities of the national, *departemento* and municipal levels;
- n Granting greater autonomy to Municipal Authorities;
- n Defining the Educational Development Programmes at the departmental / municipal level and the respective Annual Operating Programmes level;
- n Allocating the co-participation resources to the municipalities;
- n Recognising and strengthening the grassroots organisations.

## Analysis

We go on below to detail the results of the analysis as a function of the topics identified earlier, presenting on the one hand a synthesis of what has been proposed at the macro level (Government – International Cooperation Relationship framework and studies on co-operation and co-ordination with and between donor organisations) and, on the other hand, the results of the direct consultation of government bodies, donor organisations and institutions and civil society that are directly linked to the education sector.

## Sector wide approach

According to the MECD-VEIPS<sup>7</sup> the Government – IC Relationship Framework allows the ministry to define the policies and areas of intervention of IC and secures co-ordination with donors by means of Framework and Operational Accords. Even so, the MECD-VEIPS identifies certain limitations. For example, certain donors are financing projects outside the defined policies. Moreover, municipalities are stating that the national institutions are establishing limits, which they justify by reference to restrictions imposed by the donors.

With regard to the donor organisations, we can identify the following advances and limitations.

### Advances:

- n Meetings are taking place between donors to co-ordinate the transition towards Sector Wide Support.
- n In general all players are aiming towards the same objective: supporting the educational reform (ER) and constantly improving coverage, mainly in rural areas and among ethnic groups.
- n The Dakar Framework is becoming an increasingly important reference point.
- n ER has turned into an excellent example of relations between co-operation organisations, something not seen in other sectors.
- n The new Government-IC Relationship Framework constitutes a useful and transparent instrument which facilitates co-ordination.
- n Co-operation is more critical, but also more flexible in administrative terms.
- n The head offices (of the donor organisations) are listening to the positions and arguments of their local offices.

### Limitations:

- n The complexity of the sector in terms of actors and context is making it impossible to guarantee the full application of the Dakar Framework.
- n There is insufficient co-ordination. Certain

- donors are financing projects outside the policies defined by the government.
- n Each organisation is handling its own funds. It will be difficult to convert bilateral into multilateral financing. Everyone is concerned to give visibility to their own contributions and to evaluate their own results.
- n The government is still not assuming full leadership (responsibility).
- n Lack of defined strategies in the non-formal education area.
- n The EC has no doctrine. Everyone is working on a bilateral basis. There is no single diplomacy or single co-ordination. This is in a constant process of construction.
- n The EC (the largest contributor) lacks visibility and legitimacy (there is no agreement on what the countries are seeking together), which leads to the continued existence of bilateral relations.

The NGOs-PSDIs<sup>8</sup> believe that certain donor organisations are having a positive influence on the Bolivian government. Nonetheless, the NGOs have identified various limitations with regard to sector wide support and the work carried out by the donors:

- n Significant advances have been made only in certain sub-sectors (formal and primary education in particular). There are shortcomings in non-formal education.
- n Multilateral meetings are the exception rather than the rule. Access to multilateral financing is through the government.
- n There is no assessment of the co-ordination between donors.
- n Every kind of item has been squeezed under the educational heading (solar collectors, work with women, etc.). Donors have accepted and promoted this.
- n Certain donors believe that it ought to be the NGOs/PSDIs that implement government policies.
- n International co-operation is a "fairy tale".

With regard to these limitations, the MECF-VEIPS and donors ought to consider the following proposals:

#### Proposals

- n The MECD ought to push for an evaluation of coordination between donors and define indicators;
- n Secure greater and more systematic co-ordination; organise aid; avoid the financing of contradictory actions; concentrate resources; apply them under a concerted development plan.

Donors ought:

- n To accept, with regard to sovereignty, to deal with official interlocutors, and to allow for the

existence of national policies and standards, and not to insist on solutions which could apply equally in Zambia, Uzbekistan or Bolivia. It is not the task of international organisations to plan, and even less to implement, educational plans, programmes or projects.

- n To take on board the SWA as a tool for achieving consistency, as a criterion for filtering initiatives or ensuring that they fulfil real needs, and as a criterion for the efficient use of human resources, more objective problem-resolution objectives, investment efficiency and timing efficiency.
- n To emphasise qualitative aspects and ongoing change in order to avoid traumatic transformations which have little chance of actually taking concrete shape.
- n To practice a sectoral strategy which works with joint resources and with a joint administration. To create an inter-agency body for following up and evaluating the joint results.
- n To sign up to the new Government – International Co-operation Relationship Framework.

#### **Increasing and optimising financial resources**

With regard to the increase and optimisation of financial resources, certain advances have taken place in the area of donor policy.

#### **Advances:**

- n Donors are placing pressure on the Government to de-politicise funds. This could facilitate NGO-PSDI's direct access to these funds on the basis of concrete work plans.

The limitations and proposals in this area present themselves as follows:

#### **Limitations:**

- n The matching resources from the government are not always available as they should be.
- n Donors have differing programming cycles.
- n Diversity and lack of knowledge of the procedures applied by the various donors sources for acquiring goods and services.
- n Emphasis is placed on infrastructure to the detriment of quality.
- n Resources are concentrated in formal primary education.
- n Gender discrimination is rife.
- n University level programmes are not contributing to the universalisation of basic education, and there is no equality of opportunity in access.
- n 'Gift power' (financial and technical aid) is tempting recipients to try to negotiate special conditions.

- n Deficiencies in the system of co-financing with matching funding from municipalities. The municipalities are short of resources compared with the *prefecturas*.

#### Proposals:

- n Strengthen the allocation of resources to those programmes which have greater impact in the fight against poverty.
- n Promote a situation where the donors commit resources for the total execution of the programmes.
- n Insist on the multiannual programming of aid.
- n Increase support to initiatives which strengthen countries' capacity to promote quality education so as reduce long-term dependency.
- n Establish programmes and criteria according to the needs of target groups.

### Decentralisation and effective participation

#### Advances:

- n Hearings and evaluations have been established with technical assistance from donors. This results in a better idea of the content of projects and the aid being provided.
- n A series of mechanisms are being implemented with the teaching profession in order to establish relations with donor organisations. This is overcoming the prejudice which exists among schoolteachers with regard to the "anti-teacher" attitude of these donors.

#### Limitations:

- n It is unclear who the social actors are and at what level they participate.
- n Centralisation.
- n Looser collaboration between government and other donors appears to contradict the even greater interest of achieving participation of civil society actors at all levels.

Other limitations identified by the municipal authorities are:

- n Bi- and multilateral meetings are promoted solely for the purpose of providing information.
- n No co-ordination organisation exists at the municipal level (rural area) to capture external aid, efforts are clearly institutional. Municipal authorities request contact with donor organisations but it does not take place.
- n Participation is not a donor requirement. Its priorities are securing and directing the use of the resources.

It is true that the foundations are currently being laid for participation via the National Dialogue. However, certain general limitations exist which

affect all actors in this area:

- n It is difficult for donors to be caught in the middle between the government and civil society when it comes to the defining of policy.
- n Excessive demand is placed on the education sector in relation to structural problems.
- n The capacity of the education sector is at times managed in a demagogic manner: apparently all you need to do is to decide in order to get things done, avoiding and concealing aspects that relate to the management and the complex mechanisms of the system and/or the various actors.
- n A technocratic approach means that citizens do not hear what is being proposed. The theme in question becomes the affair of a particular sector and therefore undemocratic.
- n Political changes threaten the success of structural changes.

At the time of assessing the Government – IC Framework, we consider that participation is not yet a success.

#### Proposals for improving participation

The VEIPS needs to define what it understands by participation. Insisting on genuine participation, starting from and taking real problems into account. Municipal authorities need to take part in defining co-ordination policies with donors and to create a central office, staffed with personnel with decision-making authority, to facilitate transactions between municipalities and donors.

#### Donors ought:

- n To maintain permanent contacts in the countryside and not only in the capital, break bureaucratic knots, be an active party to the processes, assume co-responsibility and not just convert themselves into financiers.
- n To carry out consultations with government representatives to finalise projects, to predefine co-ordination between agencies (though without giving direct support) and to follow the independent processes of society in general in settling conflicts of interests. For all this it will be necessary to create a permanent consultation team.
- n To carry out citizen debates to enable them to achieve a proper balance in their analysis: between education as "everyone's affair" (knowledge, opinion, decision), and the extremes of technocracy.

### Information, follow-up and evaluation

Right now, certain limitations present themselves in these areas: there is a lack of sufficient sectoral information with which to monitor and evaluate results. These limitations come on top of a lack of transparency and the existence of evaluation

mechanisms that do not lend themselves to tests of objectivity. The absence of follow-up and evaluation mechanisms in the training programmes for administrative managers (with whom responsibility for the change lies), and the lack of accumulated experience are also seen as shortcomings in this area.

Despite these disadvantages, advances have also been made. Through initiatives taken at the national level, donors have standardised the formats, dating and content of monitoring and evaluation reports. Donors have succeeded in making joint annual evaluations which place an emphasis on results and which attribute major importance to evaluating the effectiveness of the work through workshops, surveys etc. However, right now this system is not perfect – the NGOs are proposing to donors that a database be created to avoid multiple visits of consultants searching for information similar to that already held by NGOs-PSDIs.

#### Proposals:

- n Establish specific indicators and measurements for each programme between the government and donors.
- n Complete an inter-institutional evaluation. Final reports to be developed jointly by the donors and the beneficiaries.
- n Monitor both the donors and the municipality through constant evaluations from both sides, with the entire educational community taking part.
- n Set up a tripartite supervisory entity between the donors, the municipality and the District Management.
- n Develop a standard format. Right now each donor has its own special forms.
- n Invite NGOs-PSDIs officially to take part in the ER missions. Government bodies are calling for the presence of civil society in certain cases, though not in a sustained and systematic fashion.

### Technical assistance and strengthening local capacities

In the work of the donors, the contracting out of work to consultants has been perceived to weaken ‘dialogue’ between donors and recipients. This is because the lack of staffing continuity means that the parties do not involve themselves adequately in the initiative. Also constant staffing turnover has been seen to affect the stability of the programmes, and there are no established rules governing the intervention of outside consultants.

#### Proposals:

- n Decentralise and grant greater responsibility to local representations of donors to achieve

prompt and appropriate decision-making, which can help in achieving results. Secure adequate analysis capacity by strengthening local representation offices. Avoid the constant staff changes at different levels of the public authorities.

- n Strengthen local capacity.
- n Increase capacity at the central, *departemento* and municipal level through a programme-by-programme focus.
- n Introduce means of strengthening consulting capacity / local procurement. Grant countries greater powers to select the sources of technical assistance as a step towards untying aid. Contract with national and/or Latin American consultants and local services.

### Educational establishments and their role in co-ordination between donors

The educational establishments<sup>9</sup> were also consulted on the importance of having direct relations with donors. The replies clearly reflect both the absence of and the specific need for such relations. The educational establishments emphasise aspects already highlighted by the civil society bodies such as control, better distribution of resources and participation.

The educational establishments appeared convinced of the importance of co-ordination between donors for:

- n the strict control of resources;
- n co-ordinated identification/selection of target groups and promoting an exchange of experience, to obtain better results on the basis of clear, shared objectives, more sustained relationships and valuable and non-centralised information;
- n ensuring that interventions are both systematic and coherent, and co-ordinating methodology and content;
- n analysing the political consequences of their interventions (dependency).

In the consultation with the educational establishments, they identified limitations in co-ordination between donors, such as duplication of activities, political motivation, welfarism and authoritarianism. When the time came to present proposals, it became clear that it was necessary to create an area of interchange between the donors themselves. This could take the form of joint seminars and using personnel specifically dedicated to this co-ordination. Also mentioned was the need for donor organisations to establish direct contact with educational establishments; teachers, pupils and parent associations. Particularly important, at the definition stage, was the monitoring of the specific ER projects.

## Conclusions & recommendations

Whilst the results of the investigation show that co-ordination with and between donors in the education sector is tending to improve, certain limitations which were highlighted by the various bodies that were consulted show that the topic needs to be placed in a wider context, identifying both the fundamental aspects and the effective implementation.

A portion of the actors who were consulted have established the education sector as a *model* for co-ordination between the government and donors and co-ordination between donors themselves in the context of the new SWA. However, the need remains to:

- n widen and deepen the joint work by defining or achieving a complementarity of policies and strategies in primary, secondary, higher and non-formal education;
- n consolidate co-ordination with and/or between certain donors which still intervene on their own, supporting one-off projects which do not necessarily respond to concerted priorities.

In the opinion of certain actors, total responsibility for poor co-ordination with and between the different donors lies with the government. This is either because the government does not establish adequate communication with the various players involved, or because certain bodies have opted to remain within their own areas, given the new responsibilities that a change of focus would imply.

Considering both the current situation of co-ordination with and between donors and the limitations that these place on specific themes but which reduce the possibility of achieving more efficient, effective co-ordination with a greater impact, it is deemed important to reorder the themes prioritised by the different bodies, according to the following logic:

### Participation and decentralisation as cross-cutting themes

The participation of the various actors involved in educational development is vital to achieve not only a concerted definition of policies and strategies, but the application of the same in daily action. This taking on of responsibility presupposes – via a process of effective decentralisation – securing the necessary capacities and granting decision-making authority at different levels to the actors involved. Actions directed at consolidating the SWA and within this, greater and better co-ordination with and between donors, would have to consider both topics as horizontal axes.

## Recommendations

Donors need:

- n To maintain permanent contacts on the ground and not only in the capital, break bureaucratic knots, become active parties in the processes, assume co-responsibility and not just convert themselves into financiers.
- n To carry out consultations with government representatives to finalise projects, to predefine coordination between agencies (though without giving direct support) and follow the independent processes of civil society in settling conflicts of interest. For all this it will be necessary to create a permanent consultation team.
- n To carry out public debates making it possible to establish the right balance in their analysis between education as “everyone’s business” (knowledge, opinion, decision) and extreme technocracy.

## Information, follow-up and evaluation

A new way of considering monitoring and evaluation, **that emphasises results and the quality of results**, is a fundamental prerequisite, to achieve effective change and to attain the objectives of the SWA. There is a need for a change of focus, providing **more in-depth and participative monitoring**, and taking on board the need to respond with **specific and immediate evaluations** to the limitations which are identified during the monitoring process.

### Recommendations:

- n That specific indicators and measurements be established for each programme between the government and donors.
- n That an inter-institutional evaluation be requested; that final reports be developed jointly by the donors and the beneficiaries.
- n That both the donors and the municipality be monitored by means of constant evaluations from both sides, with the entire educational community taking part.
- n That a tripartite supervisory entity be set up between the donors, the municipality and the District Management.
- n That a standard format be developed. Right now each donor has its own special format.
- n That NGOs-PSDIs be officially invited to take part in ER missions. Currently government bodies call for the presence of civil society in certain cases, though not in a sustained and systematic fashion.
- n As part of the actions of the Government-IC Co-ordinating Committee, the monitoring and systematic evaluation of co-ordination with

and between donors needs to focus also on successes and/or limitations in order to incorporate the know-how and experience in future activities.

### **Sector wide support**

The consolidation of the sector wide support for the education sector needs to be based on an efficient and effective information, monitoring and evaluation system with the necessary emphasis given to all the sub-sectors involved, and based on clearly set priorities.

#### **Donors ought:**

- n To accept, with regard to sovereignty, to deal with official interlocutors, and to allow for the existence of national policies and standards, and not to insist on imposing solutions which could apply equally in Zambia, Uzbekistan or Bolivia. It is not the task of international organisations to plan, and even less to implement, educational plans, programmes or projects.
- n To take on board the SWA as a tool for achieving consistency, as a criterion for filtering initiatives or ensuring that they match real needs, and as a criterion for the efficient use of human resources, more objective problem-resolution mechanisms, and more efficient investment and timing.
- n To emphasise qualitative aspects and ongoing change to avoid traumatic transformations with little chance of actually taking concrete shape.
- n To practice a sectoral strategy which works with joint resources and with a joint administration. To create an inter-agency body for following up and evaluating the joint results.
- n To sign up to the new Government – IC Relationship Framework.

### **Financial and technical co-ordination**

Once the necessary adjustments have been made to the information, monitoring and evaluation systems and the SWA has been consolidated, it will be possible to further define the direction and scope of external aid, as a function of existing and future national financial and technical capacities.

#### **Recommendations:**

- n That the “positioning matrix”<sup>10</sup> be adopted as a planning, information monitoring and evaluation tool.
- n That the capacities, not only of donors but also national capacities, both public and private, be taken into account.
- n That financing sources available as a function

of the SWA be identified (excluding those that that are still proposing initiatives outside the boundaries of established, concerted priorities).

- n That differentiated sources of technical assistance be identified in line with the comparative advantages in specific sub-sectors and areas in the context of the SWA.
- n That existing established conditions at the multilateral-bilateral level be evaluated, together with their effects (external debt, limited co-ordination with other donors, failure to strengthen local capacities, differentiated monitoring and evaluation on the basis of predominantly quantitative indicators, differentiated programming), to give new priorities to donors which can contribute more effectively to the consolidation of the educational system.
- n That those sub-sectors and areas be identified that present a greater concentration or lack of support and that the needs for financing and external technical assistance be established in the short, medium and long term as a function of the national capacity for generating resources and local capacities for providing technical assistance in the short, medium and long term.
- n That framework and operational agreements be concluded with the various bodies involved (national and/or foreign) which can secure a co-ordination that reinforces decentralisation and effective participation with differentiated functions and powers of representation.
- n Learn from experience and ensure financial and technical co-responsibility at national and donor level.
- n Introduce monitoring and systematic qualitative and quantitative evaluation, with the appropriate levels of participation (not only bilateral, not only government, not only civil society).
- n Introduce objective measurements of efficacy, efficiency and impact in financial and technical terms.
- n That responsibilities be established for successes and limitations in financial and technical terms.
- n That the participation and the financial and technical responsibilities of every body and organisation involved be redefined on the basis of new and real comparative advantages.
- n That external financial and technical assistance be increased (as an incentive) or reduced in line with the level of national responsibility for the successes and for the limitations that have been detected.

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## Glossary

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| EC    | European Community   |
| IC    | International Co-operation   |
| DEDS  | District Educational Directorates ( <i>Direcciones Distritales de Educación</i> )  |
| EPT   | Education for All  |
| PSDI  | Private Social Development Organisations   |
| MECD  | Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport ( <i>Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes</i> ).                                 |
| NGOs  | Non-Governmental Organisations   |
| PAM   | Attention to Minors Programme ( <i>Programa de Atención a Menores</i> )  |
| PDED  | Departmental Educational Development Programme ( <i>Programa de Desarrollo Educativo Departamental</i> )                         |
| PDEM  | Municipal Educational Development Programme ( <i>Programa de Desarrollo Educativo Municipal</i> )                                |
| ER    | Educational Reform   |
| SAFCO | Administrative, Financing and Accounting System ( <i>Sistema Administrativo, Financiero y Contable</i> )                         |
| SWA   | Sector Wide Approach   |
| VEIPS | Vice-Ministry for Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education ( <i>Viceministerio de Educación Inicial, Primaria y Secundaria</i> ) |

## Footnotes

- 1 Law 1551 on People's Participation and Law 1654 on Administrative Decentralisation, issued in April 1994 and July 1995 respectively, basically plan to grant greater participation and decision-making to municipal authorities and social organisations.
- 2 When it comes to the Government, consultations have concentrated on those institutions most closely connected with the educational sector: the Vice-Ministry of Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education (VEIPS); the Vice-Ministry of Alternative Education and the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technologies, as well as the views of the municipal authorities and the district educational directorates. In the case of the donors (international co-operation), consultations took place with governmental and non-governmental organisations, representing European Union countries that are currently supporting the educational sector, and with the World Bank, as a multilateral co-operation agent. With regard to civil society, it was considered important to gain the opinion of the following institutions: the Episcopal Education Commission, given the Church's role in the educational area, non-government organisations (NGOs) and private social development institutions (PSDI) at the national level, given their substantial presence in non-formal education and the size of the external financing of their operations, and, with regard to formal education, the confederation of Bolivian Urban Teachers, and a certain number of educational establishments (including consultation of school managements, teachers, pupils and of fathers and mothers).
- 3 With regard specifically to the content of the interviews or questionnaires, aspects proposed by ActionAid Alliance based on earlier analyses were taken as reference points, adding to these certain topics related to the current economic situation in Bolivia (degree of knowledge and implementation of the "New Government – International Co-operation Framework", the degree of application and the effect of the People's Participation Act and the Administrative Decentralisation Act, and the current situation and future perspectives of NGOs-PSDIs, taking into account the change towards a sectoral programme approach and the tendency to channel international cooperation resources via the State.)
- 4 Government of Bolivia. Bolivia hacia el Siglo XXI. Nuevo Marco de Relacionamiento Gobierno – Cooperación Internacional. Document presented at the XIIth meeting of the Paris Advisory Group, June 1999.
- 5 Op. cit., pp. 3 and 7.
- 6 Whilst the Educational Reform tackles the different levels and forms of the education system, the main efforts have focused so far on securing access to and improving the quality of primary education through working on the curriculum, increasing the number of teachers, and improving the infrastructure and equipment. This framework also covers the Nuclear Educational Projects (NEPs). Whilst it is planned to improve through these the quality of education in terms of teaching processes, infrastructure and equipment, at the nursery, primary and secondary levels, the available resources and the "upwards" logic of the implementation of the Educational Reform mean that priority is given to primary education.
- 7 Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport / Vice-Ministry of Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education.
- 8 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) / Private Social Development Institutions (PSDIs), national rather than international in both cases.
- 9 We present the main criteria shared by management, teachers, students, fathers/mothers, and Educational Sector professionals.
- 10 Bolivian Government – International Co-operation Relationship Framework





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