Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

IOB Evaluation

Education matters: Policy review of the Dutch contribution to basic education 1999–2009

Education matters: Policy review of the Dutch contribution to basic education 1999–2009 | IOB Evaluation | no. 353 | *Education matters: Policy revie*

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November 2011

Preface

Over the past ten years, basic education has consistently been a high priority for Dutch development cooperation. Because basic education is central to several of the Millennium Development Goals, the Dutch parliament voted in 2001 for a motion to increase aid expenditure for basic education to 15% of overall Dutch official development assistance. This assessment of the results that have been achieved is a welcome contribution to the current debate about finding innovative ways of dovetailing education support with other types of development efforts.

This policy review of Dutch aid for basic education by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, builds on several preparatory studies. Country case studies from Uganda, Zambia, Bangladesh and Bolivia provide insights into the effects of foreign aid on educational infrastructure and, wherever possible, on learning achievements. A detailed review of Dutch NGO programmes that focus on basic education was also carried out for a better understanding of the specific contribution these programmes make to improve the performance of education systems. Furthermore, a comprehensive literature review was conducted in order to synthesize all the information that is available on the effectiveness of different types of education support programmes. Finally, information from international agencies involved in basic education support (EC, World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and the UN Fast Track Initiative 'Education for All') has been considered in order to complete the picture of how effective Dutch development aid has been in supporting basic education.

The report is structured in two parts. Part I outlines the objectives of Dutch support for basic education and traces the expenditure in this sector through different channels. It looks at the ways in which foreign aid, domestic public expenditures and the parents' contributions complement each other in funding education. Part II summarizes the evidence in terms of outputs, outcomes and results in the field of basic education of the activities of the Netherlands in developing countries, channelled through governments and NGOs. It addresses support for basic education in fragile states, in emergencies and in post-crisis situations separately.

Overall, the report provides convincing evidence that Dutch support for basic education has been, in general, highly relevant, well-aligned with other donors and particularly supportive of the priorities of its partner countries. The evidence shows that whereas substantial progress is recorded in terms of access to basic education, the quality of education remains worrisome and drop-out rates are still high. The report goes on to show that NGO programmes are particularly effective in attracting marginalized groups into the educational system, but suffer from similar quality and implementation problems. For the future, the report recommends that aid efforts should focus on the poorest countries and regions, where most is to be gained from providing basic education aid.

The report was prepared by IOB inspector Ms Phil Compernolle with the assistance of IOB researcher Ms Simone Verkaart. Internal quality support was provided by Mr Antonie de Kemp and Mr Paul de Nooijer. An international reference group provided useful feedback to earlier draft versions of this report. The members of this group were Dr. Nick Taylor (JET Education Services), Dr. Yusuf Sayed (University of Sussex), Mr Chris de Nie (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Mrs Ria van Hoewijk (Freeman Management Consulting).

IOB would also like to thank the Governments of Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia; the Embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in those countries; the six NGOs selected for the review of NGO activities; as well as the Ministry's Social Development Department/Education and Research Division, for their cooperation with data collection for this policy review.

We hope that this report – and the publication of the country case studies, NGO review and systematic literature review that form its basis – has paved the way for a new discussion on the poverty relevance of aid to basic education. We also hope that it sheds light on the options for maintaining selective Dutch involvement in supporting basic education policies and programmes in target countries.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
BNPP	Bank Netherlands Partnership Programme
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CoE	Centre of Excellence
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
DSO/OO	Social Development Department/Education and Research Division[1]
EC	European Commission
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDF	European Development Fund
EEPCT	Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition
EFA	Education for All
EPC	Education Partner Country
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Programme
EU	European Union
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FIVDB	Friends in Village Bangladesh
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GBS	General Budget Support
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNP	Gross National Product
HGIS	Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation
HIC	High-Income Country
IDA	International Development Association
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
INEE	Interagency Network on Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IWGE	International Working Group on Education
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LIC	low-Income Country
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Netherlands)

[1] Previously known as DCO/OO: Department of Cultural Cooperation, Education and Research/Education and Developing Countries Division. However, throughout the policy review the abbreviation DSO will be used.

MIC	Middle-Income Country
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRSO	Poverty Reduction Support Operation
PSO	Organization for Supporting Capacity Building in Developing Countries
QPEP	Quality Primary Education Programme
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SALIN	Strategic Alliances with International NGOs
SBS	Sector Budget Support
SMC	School Management Committee
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TK	Dutch House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UN Children's Fund)
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VVD	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WRR	Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy

Summary and conclusions

This policy review discusses the policy on basic education and development cooperation by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' in the period 1999-2009. During the major part of the evaluation period, the education portfolio belonged to the Ministry's fifth policy objective: 'Increased human and social development', and more specifically under operational objective 5.1: 'All children, both boys and girls, should have the chance to go through a full cycle of basic education, and all young people and adults should have the opportunity to increase their levels of literacy and participate in better basic vocational education'.[2]
The report is based on different studies; (1) an analysis of the Ministry's expenditure on basic education, (2) a systematic literature review of the impact of investments in basic education, (3) a review of external evaluations of six Dutch NGOs co-financed by the Ministry, and last but not least, (4) six evaluations in four Dutch education partner countries Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia. Basic education has been narrowly defined as formal and non-formal primary and lower secondary schooling for children roughly between the age of five and fifteen (or older in the case of delays). This demarcation of the scope is justified given that by far the largest share of Dutch expenditure has been devoted to primary education (77% of bilateral education expenditure).

Main findings

The policy review concludes that:

1. The motivation for investing in basic education as part of development cooperation is justified.
Education has been established as a human right by international laws since 1948. A denial of access to quality education is in itself a form of poverty, as argued by Nobel prize winner Amartya Sen long ago. This could have been enough reason for the Netherlands to justify support to basic education. However, there is more. Education plays an important role in sustainable poverty reduction both for individuals and for nations. The economic and social benefits of basic education are particularly high in poor developing countries, and especially for girls.

2. The Netherlands has made an important contribution to the progress towards the Education For All and Millennium Development goals for education through its support to basic education internationally and in education partner countries. Globally, the Netherlands was the fourth largest donor during most of the evaluation period. This was facilitated by a longer term financial commitment to basic education, attention to aid architecture with a strong preference for a sector-wide approach. During the evaluation period, total Dutch aid for basic education amounted to more than €3.5 billion – an average of €350 million a year. A sharp increase in expenditure on basic education occurred around 2001, in response to the government's target of spending 15% of overall development assistance (ODA) on (basic) education.

[2] (TK, 2006c).

3. The Netherlands did not just provide financial resources. It provided support to basic education with the assistance of specialized education advisors in The Hague and in education partner countries. The portfolio also included support for monitoring progress in the sector though research and international data collection and analysis by institutes related to UNESCO. The Netherlands has also been the co-initiator of particularly innovative global initiatives such as the Fast Track Initiative and UNICEF's Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme.

4. However, the education portfolio was very broad and diverse, and as a result also somewhat fragmented. It tackled many different issues, covering an extensive basic education package ranging from pre-primary education up to secondary education, including both formal and non-formal education, for children, youths and adults. This is supported through a variety of channels and with multiple instruments. The input target of 15% has certainly been important in placing education near the top of the agenda. However, it might have reduced the need to carefully consider, on the basis of evidence, what would provide most value for money in the basic education sector, globally and at country level.

5. At country level, remarkable progress has been made in increasing the numbers of children that are enrolled in schools. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the number of children in primary school increased by 48% between 2000 and 2008. The expansion in access included access for girls, for children from poorer families, in rural areas and for children living in countries affected by conflict and emergencies. The Netherlands has contributed to this success by providing support for investments in education, alongside donors, national governments and other local stakeholders in the sector.

6. The sectoral approach, and in particular forms of budget support, has facilitated significant and longer-term support to national education strategies. Combining sector support with general budget support, as done in Uganda and Zambia, enabled the Netherlands to discuss priorities for education at the highest policy level. The active involvement of the Netherlands with the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI), as co-initiator and engaged funder, further enhanced the sectoral approach and aid effectiveness. The recent evaluation of the FTI stresses the need for the current reforms to succeed in order to improve its effectiveness at country level. The country evaluations indicate, however, that the main principles of the FTI (i.e. country ownership and country-level empowerment, as well as donor harmonization) remain relevant.

*7. In all education partner countries the Dutch support to education also included support through NGOs and multilateral organizations. This '**two-pronged approach**' proved complementary to the support to governments.* The review of external evaluations of NGO activities supported by the Ministry provides examples of the specific roles that NGOs are expected to play: development of alternative and innovative approaches to reach particular groups; interventions at grass-roots level mainly aimed to increase participation in education by communities, parents, teachers and students; capacity building of teachers and governments; and lobby and advocacy. However, a cross-cutting issue that emerges from the reviewed evaluations is a concern with the sustainability of NGO education interventions at country level.

8. The sectoral approach to basic education met some constraints in adequately responding to demand-side challenges.[3] The approach, with a strong focus on support to national governments, has been dependent on the varying capacity and commitment of national governments. The sectoral approach also led to a tendency to focus on central ministries, coordination processes and financial accountability. It resulted in a relatively top-down strategy and a concentration on the supply-side of the education sector (shared with many other donors and national governments).

9. The Dutch support to basic education was mostly consistent with requirements at a national level. However, national figures on access to education mask inequalities at lower levels. Still 10% of all school-aged children are not enrolled in school, and many of these live in countries affected by conflict and emergencies. Yet, reaching disadvantaged population groups was one of the main objectives of the 1999 policy. The country evaluations point out that this has required more explicit targeting, often through different aid modalities (for example, complementing support to governments with project support to NGOs). The literature review confirms that 'Education for all' on its own is not enough to create more equitable societies or to provide opportunities for particular disadvantaged groups. Education is part of society, and is subject to the complexities of the society within which it functions. This is an area that warranted more focused attention in the Dutch support to basic education, but requires linking with other aspects of development cooperation.

*10. Dutch support for basic education is still '**unfinished business**'.* Notwithstanding important efforts and investments, student performance is still low, even where it has defied the pressures from exploding enrolments. Returns to primary education have been falling in many developing countries due to rapid expansion of access, low quality of education and changes in the demand for skills in the labour market. Important factors hindering progress seem to be: effective use and allocation of resources; motivation and standards of teachers; learning environment, curriculum and teaching practices; education management (involving school management, monitoring, capacity at subnational government levels); and individual returns to education (including access to post-primary opportunities). The IOB country studies, but also evaluations by the World Bank and EC, provide evidence of how huge the challenge is to simultaneously increase access to education and improve the quality of education and learning. This requires additional effort and different ways of working compared to what has been done so far.

Lessons

The policy review paints a picture of a very broad approach to basic education. The evidence provided by international literature and the evaluations conducted for this policy review, leads to a recommendation to now *focus on access to quality basic education for the most disadvantaged and poor people in countries, regions and groups,* where high marginal returns on investments in basic education (both economic and non-economic returns) can still be

[3] Several of these findings on the sectoral approach (8 and 9) reiterate the conclusions from earlier evaluations, such as the IOB evaluation on sector support (IOB, 2006) and the joint donor evaluation on basic education (MFA, 2003).

expected. This also includes addressing the specific factors that will improve the quality of education for these children.

Moreover, *education has a particular role to play for promoting at least two of the four priorities of the current development policy: security and rule of law and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including maternal health.* The literature review carried out for this policy review confirms the role education plays in the area of security and rule of law. This includes education's role in conflict, the peace dividend created by education provision, the potential mitigating effects of education and the impact on democratization, as well as the impact of conflict on education. Further support to EEPCT requires demonstrating its effectiveness in implementing innovative approaches in those countries, and ensuring there is no overlap with a reformed FTI and country-level support to UNICEF. Moreover, research provides particularly strong evidence that education has an impact on sexual and reproductive health, including maternal health, family planning and HIV/Aids. School-based health education has not always been effective to change behaviour, but it is education in itself that is found to improve young people's responsiveness to SRHR messages, both inside and outside school. Research suggests that programmes aimed at reducing maternal mortality will only have limited success unless combined with improved access to education for women and girls.

Education can also contribute to the other priorities of the current development cooperation policy: food security and water. The Netherlands has not yet been involved in education programs in these areas, but there is some evidence that countries with higher levels of education might be better equipped to deal with environmental challenges such as flooding. Again, this confirms the importance of education in general, rather than requiring a specific education component in the programme. With regard to food security, the evidence for the effectiveness of, for example, basic technical and vocational education on subsistence is still thin.

To conclude, there are still important reasons to focus on basic education, drawing lessons from the experience in the past decade and building on the successes. Safeguarding the most successful parts of the portfolio requires close cooperation with partner country governments, civil society and other donors, including the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and UNICEF for its programme in countries affected by conflict and emergencies. How the shift in Dutch priorities, already started in 2007, will affect the total amount of ODA spent on basic education is uncertain. Given the limited options for offsetting contributions from other donors, this needs to be closely monitored as part of the exit strategy. This exit strategy should include a realistic time frame with consideration given to sustainability and the mitigation of adverse effects. This is particularly important for the poorest population groups and children that have been hard to bring into the education system up till now.

1

Introduction

1.1 Objective

This policy review (*beleidsdoorlichting*) covers the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (the Ministry's) operational objective 5.1 for the period between 1999 and 2009, which states: 'All children, young people and adults have equal opportunities to go through a cycle of quality education that provides them with the necessary skills and knowledge that permits them to fully participate in society' (TK, 2006c). It fulfils the requirements set out in the 2006 government-wide Arrangement for Periodic Evaluation (RPE) (Ministry of Finance, 2006).

According to the RPE, the objective of a policy review is to contribute to the reliability of the policy information used by the Dutch government. Policy reviews are offered to the parliament by the ministers. They offer policy makers the opportunity to learn from past experience and to account for policies being pursued into the future.

Ten years after the last basic education policy is an opportune moment for a policy review. In those ten years, much has been accomplished internationally, though in many developing countries the various education goals set out under the EFA and MDG frameworks still seem far off. With just a few years to go before the frameworks' 2015 targets – and on the eve of the phasing out of the education portfolio – this policy review could provide useful information to the Ministry about the effects that Dutch basic education policy has had internationally and at the level of individual partner countries. Moreover, the results of studies carried out in a number of education partner countries are expected to generate useful findings on how effective education policies and donor support have been in supporting education. This information could both inform further policy development and account for the results achieved so far.

1.2 Scope and definition

The policy review covers the period since the last basic education policy in 1999 and up to 2009. It will cover all three channels of Dutch support for the basic education sector in developing countries: support given to education partner countries through embassies, support given through Dutch non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and support given through multilateral organizations and global initiatives. The emphasis of the review is on the first two channels (chapter 6 and 7).

The country studies referred to in this review focus on the support given to the education partner countries, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia.[4] This is certainly not a representative sample, but it is one that illustrates the different environments and ways in which Dutch support is provided.

[4] The support for basic education in Yemen has not been evaluated because of security concerns. The contract for the joint evaluation of the support for basic education in Benin was cancelled. The evaluation of budget support in Tanzania, which would have included a study of the education sector, was also cancelled in the wake of the announcement of the phasing out of the Dutch country programme.

According to the most recent Dutch policy on basic education set out in 1999, basic education is seen as a broad concept and it is defined as follows (MFA, 2000):

'Basic education meets people's learning needs and enables them to acquire the basic knowledge and the essential skills and values they need for their personal and social development, and to play a useful role in society.'

Under basic education, the policy includes (MFA, 2000):

- The general education and development of very young children, starting before birth (with maternal education programmes);
- Formal and non-formal primary education for children;
- Adult education that aims to strengthen the economic, political and social empowerment of specific target groups;
- Alternative forms of education for children outside school systems to give them the basic knowledge and skills needed to lead productive lives. These comprise programmes specifically for street children, working children, jobless school leavers and homeless young people; and
- Components of the education system that influence the quality and effectiveness of education, such as teacher training, curriculum development, the production and distribution of teaching materials, advisory services, school management and funding systems

However, the concept of basic education is interpreted differently in different countries and by different donors. The age at which school starts, the number of years spent at school, the target group, learning needs and basic skills all vary from country to country. Therefore, in order to make comparison possible, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) has been used to define the scope of this policy review – with the addition that the policy review focuses on basic education for children only (excluding adult education).[5]

This definition of basic education is narrower than the definition in the Dutch basic education policy. It comprises formal and non-formal primary education (the first stage of basic education) and lower secondary education (the second stage of basic education). The first stage mostly begins at age five. Entry to the second stage is generally after some six years of primary education and ends after a total of some nine years of schooling. Often this coincides with the end of compulsory education (where it exists). So in sum, the definition of basic education for this policy review is formal and non-formal primary and lower secondary schooling for children roughly between the age of five and fifteen (or older in the case of delays such as late enrolments and repetition).

[5] The current version of ISCED was adopted in 1997, but the revised ISCED will be presented to UNESCO's General Conference in November 2011. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-education.aspx

Primary formal education plays a major role in Dutch basic education policy (77% of all expenditure on basic education in education partner countries). However, both in the Netherlands and internationally, basic education is increasingly considered to be part of a larger 'education column' that covers a life-long process, potentially ranging from early childhood up to tertiary education. In many countries, the Netherlands has supported wider education sector strategies that also included other education levels. This policy review takes the education column into consideration, but focuses its analysis of effectiveness on the narrower definition (labelled 'IOB definition' in the remainder of this document).

1.3 Methodology

The prescribed components for a policy review are (Ministry of Finance, 2006):
1. Description and analysis of the problem that led to the policy,
2. Description of the policy objectives,
3. Description and motivation of the role of the government in this area,
4. Description of budgets and expenditures.
5. Description of the employed instruments and analysis of the outcomes thereof,

1. Description and analysis of the problem that led to the policy

This component will be answered in chapter 2 through an analysis of the problems and progress in the education sector in developing countries from the 1960s onwards and in particular around the time of the 1999 policy on basic education. Subsequently the Dutch policy on basic education will be linked to the earlier described problems, in order to assess the extent to which the policy addressed these challenges.

2. Description of the policy objectives

After having described the development of the Dutch policy and objectives for basic education since 1999, Chapter 2 concludes that the objectives have not changed much since 1999 though the ways in which they are to be achieved have. Therefore, Chapter 3 reverts back to the objectives as stated in the 1999 policy and presents them schematically in order to extract the intervention logic of the Dutch policy on basic education.

3. Description and motivation of the role of the government in this area

The investments made in basic education have been justified by the Ministry on the basis of the assertion that investments in basic education (and more recently the whole education column) lead to poverty reduction. This motivation of the role of government will be assessed based on an extensive and systematic literature review, presented in Chapter 3.

4. Description of budgets and expenditures

Chapter 4 will describe budgets and expenditures on basic education by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2000, on the basis of the Ministry's management information system (Piramide). It will look into the Dutch target of 15% of official development assistance for basic education and the way in which the expenditure on basic education is spend along different channels and in different countries over time.

5. Description of the employed instruments and analysis of the outcomes thereof
The evaluative part of the policy review is based on two categories of in depth study, reported in respectively Chapter 6 and 7:
- Six country evaluations in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia, using mixed methods and covering the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the Dutch bilateral support to the basic education sector, and
- Review of activities of the six Dutch NGOs with the largest education programmes.

The findings from recent evaluations by main implementing partners, such as the EFA/FTI, UNICEF, EC and World Bank will be integrated throughout the text.

Apart from the policy review, several of the underlying sub studies are available as individual IOB reports:[6]
- IOB Impact Evaluation. Primary Education in Uganda (IOB, 2008a)
- IOB Impact Evaluation. Primary Education in Zambia (IOB, 2008b)
- Learning from NGOs: Study of the basic education interventions of selected Dutch NGOs (IOB, 2011a)[7]
- Lessons Learnt: Synthesis of literature on the impact and effectiveness of investments in education (IOB, 2011b)
- The two-pronged approach: Evaluation of Netherlands support to primary education in Bangladesh (IOB, 2011c)
- Unconditional trust: Dutch support to basic education in Bolivia (2000-2009) (IOB, 2011d) (also in Spanish)
- Unfinished business: Making a difference in basic education. An evaluation of the impact of education policies in Zambia and the role of budget support. (IOB, 2011e)
- Working title: Impact of primary education in Uganda (IOB, forthcoming)

Measuring effectiveness
With regard to measuring education effectiveness, the outcome of education is often equated with schooling in a formal setting. Schooling is then often measured in terms of access indicators, such as the number of boys and girls enrolled at different grades and levels. It must be stressed that this ignores a large group of children, who do not access formal education (for example in countries affected by conflict). However, it is obviously very difficult to capture those children in official, national data.

Moreover, the ultimate test for an education system is not whether it attracts pupils (although this is certainly a pre-condition for any benefit) but rather whether it succeeds in doing what it set out to do. This requires assessing what young people learn, but also the extent to which they are able to use what they learn (including relevance).[8] This is often referred to as measuring education quality.

[6] www.minbuza.nl/iob
[7] Only available in Dutch. Translated from original title: 'Leren van NGOs: Studie van de basic education interventies van geselecteerde Nederlandse NGOs.'
[8] Relevance refers to t*he relevance of education content*, i.e. the way in which teaching and curriculum are adapted to the local context. However, it is also often used to refer to *the relevance of education for generating benefits* after completion (e.g. opportunities, increase in wage earnings).

The measurement of education quality continues to be the topic of fierce debates.[9] Broadly speaking, the efforts to measure education quality can be categorised broadly into two approaches (Nikel & Lowe, 2010). The first approach to measuring quality emphasises the role of education in promoting values and attitudes and bringing about broader emotional and creative development. Measuring this aspect of learning is complex, and comparing between countries, contexts and people, is even more difficult. As such, this approach has not been used much for evaluations, which requires comparing between interventions or over time. It has been used to assess the effects of teaching processes and methods. The second approach focuses on a basic set of cognitive skills – reading, writing and numeracy – as key indicators of learning. These indicators, often test results, have been used to compare across groups, contexts and countries. Standardized tests have evolved as key tools in this respect to compare the performance of groups of children at the same level in different schools. Linking test scores to other country-specific, or school-based or pupil information (e.g. public education expenditure, pupil-teacher ratios, socio-economic status) provides information about causes of the differences in performance.[10] The IOB country evaluations of Dutch support to basic education in Uganda and Zambia, as well as Bangladesh, make great use of such information (IOB, 2008a and 2008b, and 2011c). For Bolivia no such information was available.

Measuring the impact of education goes one step further to ask what the opportunities and benefits are that education, both access and quality, may bring young people? Education can have an impact on a variety of indicators of individual and collective well-being. Indicators include for example, wages, a country's national product, mortality rates, and measurements of political freedom. Apart from the second evaluation study by IOB in Uganda, which looks at the impact of education on employment, the country evaluations have not measured impact (IOB, forthcoming). The literature review provides ample evidence of the impact of education mainly based on quantitative cross-country studies.

1.4 Limitations

As will become evident in this review, the Ministry's education portfolio is very broad and diverse. It covers 65 countries, more than 825 projects and programmes to which the larger number of projects and programmes implemented by Dutch NGOs should be added, and several sections of the education column. It is impossible to be comprehensive even when limiting the scope to the period between 1999 and 2009 or to education for children aged between five and 15 years.

[9] See, for example, the forum 'After 2015: time for an education quality goal?' in Compare, the Journal of Comparative and International Education (Volume 41, Issue 1, 2011). For the MFA this has been explored by Maarse (2011).

[10] Examples of international standardised tests are the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), the Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONIFEM (PASEC) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

The countries selected for more in-depth evaluation, as well as the education programmes included in the NGO review, are not representative sample for all the Dutch support to basic education in education partner countries or for all activities by Dutch NGOs and their partners in the education sector. However, the countries were purposefully selected to present an overview of the world-wide support to basic education by the Netherlands in many different environments and in different ways. The NGO activities reviewed depended on the quality of the external evaluations, so there is a risk of selection bias. Nevertheless, it does provide the opportunity to gain valuable insights into the successes and challenges of the interventions supported by the Dutch NGOs.

The methodology used to evaluate effectiveness is different for each country in this review. This means that it is not possible to compare or rank results between countries. The policy review was also not set up to compare channels of support to basic education. Each expenditure channel has its own comparative advantages, and it would require a different type of study to address the impact of these differences.

The Netherlands is one of many contributors to the international education sector. The support the Netherlands provides to national governments, NGOs and multilateral organizations is not earmarked. In the end, the effect of external aid is only be small compared to the impact of investments made by pupils themselves, their families, teachers and national governments (who remains the largest funders of education). This makes it impossible, and arguably against the very principles of the Dutch support during the evaluation period, to attribute results to any one actor or country. The closest one can go is to provide evidence of plausible links.

The usefulness of the Ministry's financial and management information system is limited. It is not possible to provide detailed information for the period 1999 to 2002. In 2003, the Ministry's information system Midas was replaced by Piramide, a transition that gave rise to many problems because data from the old and new systems were often incompatible. In addition, in the process of constructing an IOB-database it was noted that policy information in Piramide is often incomplete or incoherent. Errors or omissions have been corrected where possible, but it is best to perceive of the data presented here as indicative rather than exact.

1.5 An overview of the report

The first part of the report deals with the context and the policy. Chapter 2 describes the problems and issues in the education sector in developing countries that led to the Dutch policy on basic education and development cooperation. This is combined with a description of the policy objectives to assess the extent to which the policy addresses the main challenges. Chapter 3 assesses the motivation behind the investments in basic education on the basis of an extensive literature review. The first part of the report ends with Chapter 4, which gives a description of Dutch expenditure on basic education through the main channels and in various areas. This expenditure is placed within the context of international and national education expenditure.

The second part of this report evaluates the effectiveness of the Dutch contribution to basic education in developing countries through different channels. Chapter 5 gives an overview of the literature that's available on the effectiveness of various education interventions – many of which have been directly or indirectly supported by the Netherlands. Chapter 6 synthesizes the findings of six studies in four countries about the effectiveness of the Ministry's support to education partner countries, for national governments and for local NGOs. Because multilaterals such as the World Bank, the European Commission and the Fast Track Initiative cooperate with the Netherlands at country level, they are also taken into consideration in this chapter. Chapter 7 focuses on the education activities supported by Dutch NGOs that are co-financed by the Ministry.

Part I: Context and policy

2

Linking the policy to the problems

Analysing the problems that led to the policy that is now under review requires looking back at the state of the education sector in developing countries at the time of the 1999 policy on basic education. This chapter starts off by briefly painting a picture of education in developing countries between 1960 and the international World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) that took place in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The chapter then describes the change in approach that took place between 1990 and 2000 – all of which formed the basis of the 1999 policy.

Ideally, the problems, and the progress, in the education sector need to be viewed with a longer-term perspective and in relation to global economic and political developments. The problem analysis in this chapter provides a global overview, while bearing in mind that not all of the Netherlands' education partner countries had precisely the same problems. Certain Asian countries fared better than other developing countries; while others, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, faced gigantic difficulties.

After describing the Dutch policy on basic education since 1999, the chapter concludes on how the Dutch policy on basic education has addressed the main underlying problems.

2.1 Progress and problems: 1960–1990[11]

In the 1960s and 1970s, developing countries experienced a rapid expansion of primary and secondary education. This was driven by the realization that an educated workforce potentially enhances economic development. The 'human capital school' at the University of Chicago in the early 1960s likened a country investing in education to industry investing in machinery.[12] The convergence of the political will of governments in developing countries with a strong social demand for education made a significant increase in education access possible.[13] On average, the proportion of children of primary school age who enrolled in school was 20% to 30 % higher at the start of the 1980s than it was in the 1960s.

However, growing demand for education and strong population growth resulted in an escalation in the cost of education. In developing countries, public education expenditure as a percentage of gross national product (GNP) increased from an average of 3.3 % in 1970 to 4.3 % in 1977, but then fell again to 3.9 % in 1980. In the early 1980s, the recession in industrialized countries spread to developing countries. Most countries adopted Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) as part of their external support package, which required reductions in all areas of public sector expenditure, including education. African, and even more so, Latin American, countries reduced real spending per pupil at all levels. In 1987, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) published an influential report called,

[11] This section draws heavily on Hallak (1991) – unless another source is mentioned.

[12] For example, Schultz's 1962 Human Capital theory but also Becker, Mincer as the main protagonists of the Human Capital School.

[13] Commitment to education was, for example, as expressed during international conferences in Bombay (1952), Cairo (1954), Lima (1956), and in Karachi and Addis Ababa (early 1960s)

'Adjustment with a human face'. This flagged the negative impact that these SAPs were having on the health and education sectors (UNICEF, 1987).

The supply of qualified teachers could not keep pace with the rapid expansion of the education sector in the 1960s and 1970s. The employment of vast numbers of untrained teachers was a problem that became rooted in education systems of developing countries. In low-income countries the availability of textbooks, for both students and teachers, became critically low. In addition, the relevance of the curriculum was questioned in the light of the changing education needs of developing countries. Curriculums tended to concentrate on academic accomplishments to the neglect of locally relevant practical skills, while primary education was still the final stage of education for most children.

Although school enrolment in the majority of developing countries increased significantly, by the late 1980s education expansion had stagnated and the quality had started to decline. Despite growing demand for education, drop-out rates were high. Gaps in the quality of education widened between urban and rural areas as did the gap in access to education. And girls had even less access to quality education. On average, at the end of the 1980s, 25% of school-age children in developing countries were not in school, and 40% of school-age girls were not in school.

Declining trends in financial allocations to education were long seen as the main reason for these failures. However, by 1990, it was acknowledged that there were other causes, including:[14]

- a lack of political commitment and leadership;
- a lack of education policy and legal frameworks;
- weak capacity at the planning, managerial and operational levels;
- insufficient capacity to monitor and evaluate education development efforts;
- the absence of reliable and gender-specific educational statistics; and
- a neglect of people's basic *learning needs* and a disregard for the relevance of education to people of diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

The first time these challenges were tackled was at the 1990 WCEFA in Jomtien.

2.2 Changing priorities: 1990–2000

Between 1990 and 2000, new approaches were adopted to address weaknesses in the education sector in developing countries, and to improve the effectiveness of aid to education. Over the previous 30 years, the economic perspective on education had strongly influenced the way education had been perceived and defined.[15] Education and training were expected to accelerate development and eradicate poverty by increasing people's

[14] Sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and WB, some 155 Governments signed the World Declaration and a Framework for Action (World Bank, 2000).

[15] In the 1980s and 1990s, the endogenous or new growth theory (e.g. Romer, Lucas) expanded on the human capital theory of the 1960s, and stressed that knowledge is a public good which allows the economy to grow beyond what is possible with the measurable inputs (capital, land). This also pointed out the risk of underinvestment in human capital formation.

income and employment opportunities (Hallak, 1990; Hallak, 1991). When drop-out rates worsened along with a rise in the number of children who had to repeat a year, these were thought to be efficiency problems and were regarded as indicators that resources were not being used efficiently (Webster, 2000).

In response, the 1990 WCEFA introduced a new framework, emphasizing the social and developmental functions of education as well as its economic function. The concept of basic education was defined as:

'Education capable of meeting the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults in order to i) survive, ii) develop their full capacity, iii) live and work in dignity, iv) participate fully in development, v) improve the quality of their lives, vi) make informal decisions, and vii) continue learning' (UNESCO, 1990).

This new framework implied:
- an expanded definition of basic education that encompassed both early childhood education and adult education;
- a greater awareness of the problem of gender disparity;
- a keener focus on education quality and benefits (rather than just efficiency); and
- new approaches to learning, such as active learning and developmental education (Bonwell & Eison, 1991),[16] and the Child-Friendly Schools concept.[17]

The 1990 WCEFA also emphasized the importance of sound policy development and planning, which required (UNESCO, 1990):
- multi-sectoral, strategic national plans, financial feasibility and institutional sustainability;
- improved education information systems for the collection and analysis of statistical data related to the functioning of education systems;
- decision making, governance and management to be partly delegated to lower levels of government and to schools;
- participatory management and leadership skills to involve various stakeholder groups at school and community level in the policy-making process; and
- building partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector, including communities and groups that take responsibility for their own education.

In addition, aid for education was to be improved (UNESCO, 1990). At the time of the 1990 WCEFA, Structural Adjustment Programmes were being replaced by Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. This was to lead to a stronger emphasis on country ownership and participatory processes for policy development that involved domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners. As a result of the WCEFA, donors were called on to explore innovative and more flexible modalities of cooperation. In response, in 2002, the Education for All–Fast Track Initiative (EFA–FTI) global partnership was set up, with the close involvement of the Netherlands (for some of the results, see Chapter 6).

16 Social constructivist theory, influenced by, among others, Piaget (1896-1980) Vygotsky (1896–1934).
17 http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html#A Framework for Rights-Based, Child-Friendly

2.3 Progress and problems: 2000

Progress EFA 2000

The 1990 WCEFA had as its goal to universalize primary education and reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade. By the time the conference met for a second time in Dakar in Senegal in 2000, much work still remained to be done on the education targets (World Bank, 2000; Caillods, 2009).

Overall, the picture of the progress between 1990 and 2000 was rather bleak. The EFA 2000 Assessment highlighted that the challenge was greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, in South Asia, and in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (UNESCO, 2000a). Sub-Saharan Africa in particular was lagging behind with just 60% net enrolment, while net enrolment in Latin America, the Caribbean and East Asia had already reached 100%. In addition, in 2000, special attention was given to countries in conflict or which were undergoing post-conflict reconstruction.

However, some improvements were also reported with regard to (UNESCO, 2000a):

- enrolment and participation at all levels of education, including early childhood care (which had experienced a mere 5% increase in enrolment between 1990 and 1998);
- the number of illiterate adults (which had fallen from 895 million in 1990 to 880 million in 1998), and particularly the number of illiterate women;
- inequities in the area of gender, disability, and ethnic minority were reduced in some countries (though girls still accounted for around 60% of all children out of school at the end of the 1990s);
- the involvement of NGOs, community groups and parents in decision making and operating child-care and education facilities; and
- advances in educational information and analytic and evaluative capacity amongst governments.

In response, six new measurable EFA goals were set for 2015 at the WCEFA in Dakar (UNESCO, 2000b):

1. To expand early childhood care and education;
2. To provide free and compulsory primary education for all;
3. To promote learning and life skills for young people and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning programmes;
4. To increase adult literacy (particularly in women) by 50%;
5. To achieve gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015; and
6. To improve the quality of education for measurable learning outcomes such as literacy, numeracy and other essential skills.

In order to achieve these goals the main principles of the 1990 WCEFA still applied, but additional attention was given to:

- the needs of education systems affected by conflict and emergency;
- education programmes to combat the HIV/Aids pandemic;
- new information and communications technologies;
- the status, morale and professionalism of teachers; and
- global initiatives to provide effective external support for national efforts.

In addition, in 2000, two of the MDGs, to which the Netherlands was committed, were directly applicable to basic education (UN, 2000):

- MDG 2: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (universal primary education), measured by:
  - net enrolment ratios in primary education;
  - the percentage of pupils who start at Grade 1 and finish the entire cycle; and
- the literacy rate in 15–24-year-old men and women.
- MDG 3: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015, measured by:
  - the ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Problems EFA 2000

The main critique of EFA framework was that it had been too donor driven and too reliant on prescriptive blueprints without acknowledging the varying conditions and levels of capacity between and within countries.[18] Weakened political commitment in many developing countries was also thought to hinder progress in achieving the EFA goals.

The feasibility of many of the suggested reforms was also being increasingly questioned around the time of the Dakar WCEFA in 2000. The blueprint approach was said to be limiting the relevance of the education programmes. It was also argued that the pressure to produce results within the ambitious timeframe set by the EFA goals was resulting in simplistic and short-term solutions being taken by national governments and donors. These solutions focused on education quantity rather than quality and were being taken at the expense of longer term, structural reforms. What was being overlooked was the potentially positive role of project assistance to complement programme support, especially in supporting innovations and targeting marginalized groups. Moreover, the narrow focus on formal primary schooling that was inherent in the EFA goals was said to have had a negative effect on other areas of basic education and impeded the quality of education and relevance of basic education.

The procedures and systems required to plan, negotiate, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes were being supported by multiple donors. This placed a heavy burden on administrative systems and the capacity of education ministries in developing countries – and this was in a context where managerial and strategic planning capacity was already

[18] See for critical assessments amongst others: Webster (2000); IOB (2003); Torres(1999).

found to be lacking. The problem was exacerbated by the lack of progress in donor coordination, harmonization of administrative procedures and alignment with local processes.

To sum up, though progress was clearly being made in improving access to education; by 2000 there was a general disappointment with the uneven progress in the education sectors of developing countries, the commitment of national governments and the contributions of donors. Structural problems in the education sector that had been flagged several years before were still a challenge. Such problems included the education of teachers and the quality and relevance of teaching methods. However, the commitment to education for all, and in particular the commitment to basic education, was reaffirmed in 2000. It is in this context that the Dutch policy on basic education was drawn up.

2.4 Dutch policy 1999–2009

Pre-1999 Policy

Between 1966 and 1990, Dutch aid to developing countries focused on i) transferring knowledge to reduce illiteracy, ii) maintaining knowledge by strengthening media, iii) bridging the scientific and technological gap between the North and the South through education and training (including providing grants for education abroad).[19] Primary and adult education received less attention. In 1989, primary education accounted for just 2% of the education programme and adult education accounted for 8% (MFA, 1993).

In 1993, the policy document 'Development Cooperation and Education in the 1990s' was published by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Ministry). It advocated an increase in aid for basic education – a move that had clearly been inspired by the Jomtien WCEFA three years earlier (MFA, 1993).[20] This policy covered all EFA principles, such as a focus on the quality and relevance of education, equal opportunities, and the strengthening of education systems

Policy since 1999

In 1999, the Dutch education policy was updated again, this time with the policy document, 'Education: a basic human right. Development cooperation and basic education: policy, practice and implementation' (MFA, 1999; MFA, 2000). The Ministry aimed to deepen the policy on basic education and improve the effectiveness of aid for education. This was in response to a number of international events (including the preparations for the second WCEFA in Dakar)[21] as well as to changes that were taking place inside the Ministry itself, such as the delegation of tasks to embassies and the commitment to a sectoral approach to development aid.

[19] For a review, see MFA (1993).

[20] The WCEFA in 1990 was also mentioned in the broader development policy of 1990 'A World of Difference'.

[21] Such as the Conference on Child Labour in Oslo (1997), the Social Summit in Copenhagen (1995), the Mid-Decade Review of EFA in Amman (1996), UNESCO's International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg (1997) and preparations for the second WCEFA in Dakar, Senegal (2000).

In line with the domestic and international changes in approach, the 1999 policy stressed that governments were to be responsible for basic education, though civil society was to be encouraged to cooperate with governments in the matter. Even though the definition of basic education used in this policy was the broad EFA definition, encompassing different components, the 1999 policy still focused on primary education.

Basic education was also on the radar outside the Ministry. At the start of the new millennium, a number of proposals were made by the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) members of parliament. These proposals, which prioritized basic education, were widely supported by other MPs (TK, 1999; TK, 2000; TK, 2001). In 2001, the minister agreed to increase the share of expenditure on basic education up to 15% of official development assistance (ODA) within six years. This led to a sharp increase in spending, facilitated by education sector budget support and contributions to the Fast Track Initiative (FTI). As will be discussed in Chapter 4, this input target was never fully met.

In the 2003 policy document 'Committed to each other', the then minister of Development Cooperation set out the general policy priorities for development cooperation for the following years (TK, 2003). Education (including literacy, basic education and low-level vocational training), was one of four priority areas. In 2004, the minister provided greater insight into the Dutch policy on basic education in a letter to parliament that accompanied the report on the joint evaluation, 'Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education' (TK, 2004d).

Rather than addressing the relevance of basic education through the curriculum and teaching methods, the minister announced that the main focus would shift away from formal primary education towards basic education sub-sectors such as vocational training and education, non-formal education and adult education and literacy. However, these policy documents also underlined the Netherlands' commitment to give greater consideration to the quality of education and to support innovations in the education sector.

In 2007, the Social Development Department (DSO) intended to publish a new education policy that would stress an 'integrated approach' to education (DSO, 2007a). Again the importance of education components other than primary education (and even beyond the education sector itself), were emphasized. With an integrated approach, the different components of the education sector would be considered jointly and financed as a whole, building on the experiences of several partner countries.[22] However, no new policy emerged.

[22] Bolivia, Mali, Mozambique and Zambia were considered to be countries that had more integrated education sector plans (DSO, 2007a).

DSO did publish a fact sheet on education in April 2007 (DSO, 2007b). This fact sheet can be seen as an update of the Dutch policy on basic education, even though it was not presented as official policy (that is, it was not presented to parliament). The fact sheet outlined the following priorities:

- Expanding support for pre-school care, early childhood development and secondary education in partner countries and through UNICEF.
- Giving more support to vocational education and training programmes and to further education. This was in response to increases in basic education completion rates.
- Integrating HIV prevention and reproductive health education into the national education plans of partner countries.
- Giving more support to regions and countries where education was suffering as a result of war, conflict and natural disasters.

According to the fact sheet, in addition to sharpening the focus on the education sector as a whole, greater consideration would be given to the issues of capacity development, financial reform and donor coordination and harmonization.[23] Support for the Netherlands' partner countries remained the main component of development cooperation in education, even though provision was made to support other countries through the Dutch contributions to the FTI.

However, times were changing. In October 2007, the then minister, who had been appointed eight months before, presented the development policy: 'Our Common Concern: investing in development in a changing world' (MFA, 2007b). Education was no longer a priority area in itself, though it was closely related to at least three of four new priority areas: fragile states, equal rights and chances for women, and growth and redistribution. As witnessed in subsequent policy documents, the strongest effect of this new development policy was the emphasis it gave to education programmes in post-conflict countries and to technical and vocational education.[24]

In 2008, the Ministry's operational objective was changed to: 'All children, young people and adults should have equal opportunities to go through a cycle of quality education that provides them with the necessary skills and knowledge that permits them to fully participate in society' (TK, 2007b).[25] According to the Ministry, this placed more emphasis than before on the need that young people and adults (rather than just children) have to develop personally and socially (TK, 2007b). Remarkably, it also removed the specification 'both boys and girls' even though at that time it was clear that, for many countries, achieving this objective for girls was more of a challenge than achieving it for boys.

[23] These aims were reiterated in the 2009 DSO fact sheet (DSO, 2009b).

[24] For example, in 2009, the 2007 fact sheet was updated by DSO. Some partner countries had changed (Benin was included, while the programmes in Macedonia and Tanzania ended) and the role of education for 'growth and redistribution' was emphasized (DSO, 2009b).

[25] Before that, the operational objective stated (translated from Dutch): All children, both boys and girls, should have the chance to go through a full cycle of basic education, and all young people and adults should have the opportunity to increase their levels of literacy and participate in better basic vocational education (TK, 2006b).

In 2010, the Ministry's basic education programme changed drastically. The projected reduction of the official development assistance budget from 0.8% of gross domestic product (GDP) to 0.7% in 2012 required drastic cuts to be made right away. These would have particular consequences for the education programme.

In November 2010, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Development Cooperation sent their new policy proposal for development cooperation to parliament (TK, 2010a). Though the policy does acknowledge the role education has played in poverty reduction, it concludes that the Netherlands has no comparative advantage in this field compared to other donors. Education is now secondary to the new policy priorities: water, food security, human safety and fragile states, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.[26] This means that, for example, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the areas of agriculture and water will be continued or expanded, and that education in fragile states might also still be supported. But bilateral education programmes implemented through the Dutch embassies will be reduced or phased out and the contribution to the FTI will be considerably diminished (TK, 2011a).

Box 2.1 *Recommendations by the WRR*

The de-prioritization of basic education followed recommendations by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) in a report on Dutch development cooperation titled 'Less pretention, more ambition' (WRR, 2010; WRR, 2011). Though this policy review certainly does not aim to discuss the priorities for Dutch development cooperation, it does point out some inconsistencies in the WRR's reasoning.

Firstly, the 2011 WRR report acknowledges that investing in quality of education is important for development but that the focus on access to primary education in the last decade has 'caused a great deal of harm' (WRR, 2011). The policy review has identified that - despite a focus on access to primary education - the Netherlands, in cooperation with national governments, NGOs and other donors, has also invested in quality of education and education systems. However, as the country case studies by IOB (but also the World Bank and EC) note, improving quality requires a different time frame and approach and is closely interlinked with access to education.

[26] In the latest budget for the Ministry, the operational objective has been rewritten as 'Good education, well education population and capacity for research and innovation mainly for the benefit of the policy priorities' (TK, 2011c).

Secondly, it is stated that (WRR, 2011): 'In practice, the Netherlands primarily provides a lot of support to education and healthcare because it has always done so: usually there is no more reasoning behind it than that.' However, as illustrated in Chapter 2 of this policy review, the Netherlands focused on basic education only since 1993. Moreover, the Netherlands only really started to devote resources to basic education since 1999, just 10 years ago, at the request of the Dutch Parliament and in accordance with the EFA and MDGs in 2000 (see Chapter 4).

Finally, the 2010 report criticizes the dispersed nature and lack of focus in Dutch development cooperation. The focus on basic education is disputed on the basis of an apparent lack of comparative advantage of the Netherlands in basic education in developing countries (WRR, 2010). Comparative advantage should be assessed in relation to the activities of other donor agencies, and not merely be based on domestic strengths of individual donors. In this respect, different sources used in this policy review identify the Netherlands as a frontrunner internationally in the field of basic education and development cooperation.[27] For example, Dutch support has been crucial for the support of innovative approaches, at international and country level, enabled by the commitment to basic education which allowed more flexibility of funding and risk taking. Moreover, the Ministry has invested in a cadre of experienced education advisors during the past 20 years, as well as cooperated with universities, for example, in the field of education and conflict. Though it is true that the Centre for Study of Education in Developing Countries[28] was dismantled during the 90's, the Netherlands does have considerable experience in particular aspects of the education system (e.g. CITO for testing and assessment since 1968; the Top Institute for Evidence Based Education Research (TIER) established in 2008).

The aims and objectives of the Dutch education programme, as stated in the 1999 policy, are in line with international goals such as those of EFA and the MDGs. The aim and objectives have not changed much since 1999. However, the ways in which the objectives are to be achieved has been modified substantially during the evaluation period. Between 1999 and 2007, education (in particular primary education) was regarded as a driving force for poverty reduction. Between 2007 and 2009, education remained important but played second fiddle to other priorities such as growth and redistribution and fragile states. Since 2010, education has been declared a 'posteriority' – though it retains a function in support of other priorities such as safety and security.[29]

[27] See for instance Winthrop et al., (2011). The Netherlands was ranked as the top performing donor (#1) in basic education by the 2008 and 2010 Global Campaign for Education school reports. In addition, the Netherlands was considered a lead donor in the education sector in various EPC's as described in the IOB country evaluations.

[28] CESO (Dutch acronym): Centrum voor de Studie van het Onderwijs in Ontwikkelingslanden.

[29] See Chapter 6 for a more in-depth discussion of the different roles education plays in supporting fragile states in comparison with the security agenda.

2.5 Conclusions

The problems in the education sector which form the basis of the Dutch policy on basic education are inseparable from wider economic, political and social developments at global and country level, including aid architecture. Within this context, much has been achieved in the past few decades, particularly with regard to enrolment. In the 1960s, 25% of the world's children and 40% of girls worldwide did not go to school. Now, about 10% of all school-aged children are not enrolled (though in low-income countries, this figure is closer to 18%) (UNESCO, 2011). Access to education for girls has also improved, though gender parity in de majority of developing countries has not been achieved.

There have also been major improvements in the approach to education since the 1960s. These have addressed such issues as the neglect of learning needs, the relevance of basic education, the lack of sound national education strategies, the absence of education information for monitoring progress, and the ineffectiveness of aid for education. The new framework for supporting education, which was established at the 1990 WCEFA, has been pivotal in this respect. International developments with regard to education economics and pedagogical approaches influenced this framework, but so too did developments in aid architecture during this period.

However, the tension between improving access to education (which was the direct result of an increased demand for education and from growing populations) and the quality of that education has been flagged since the 1960s. The problem of shortages of qualified teachers, their status, morale and professionalism, has been rooted in the education systems of developing countries and has still not been satisfactorily addressed. Other problems have received more attention, particularly in recent years. Education in conflict-affected countries, for example, has received increasing considerable consideration, as are the challenges to education posed by HIV/Aids, and, more recently, the digital divide.

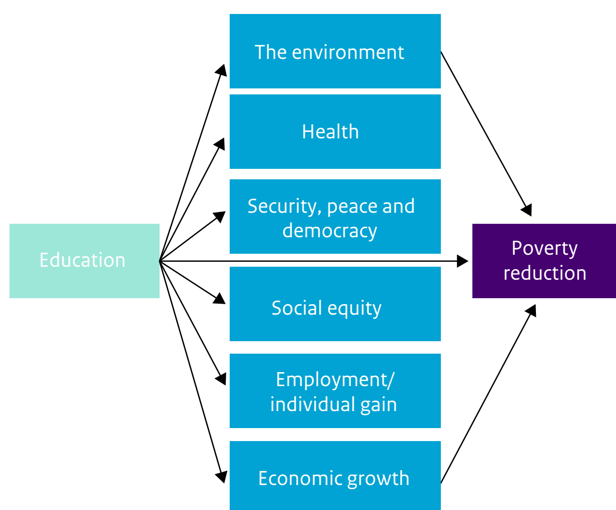
The Netherlands has been focusing on basic education since 1993. Since the country's 1999 policy, quality and relevance of education have been high on the agenda. However, the implementation of the Dutch policy was initially geared towards access to basic education, and in particular primary education (see also chapter 4). This was similar to the policies of many other national and external actors in the education sector and in line with the EFA goals and the MDGs. Since 2007, the broader definition of basic education has been put into practice, mostly in response to changes in Dutch development cooperation such as the new focus on fragile states.

In this way, the Dutch policy clearly addresses the main problems in the education sector in developing countries, as have been expressed in the WCEFA documents of 1990 and 2000. As will be described in the following chapters, since the early 1990s the education portfolio has grown to become very broad and diverse, covering many different issues within a very wide definition of basic education.

3 The motivation behind investing in basic education

This chapter summarizes an extensive systematic literature review of over 100 articles that was conducted to assess the evidence underlying the motivation for the Dutch policy on basic education in developing countries since 1999.[30] The findings of the literature review can be categorised according to six main channels (see Figure 3.1), which will be discussed one by one.

Figure 3.1 *Impact channels*



3.1 Investing in basic education for development

The investments made in basic education have been justified by the Ministry on the basis of the assertion that investments in basic education (and more recently the whole education column) lead to poverty reduction.

This is firstly reflected in the Ministry's overall objectives. During the evaluation period, the education portfolio was housed under the Ministry's fifth article: 'Increased human and social development', and more specifically under operational objective 5.1: 'All children, both boys and girls, should have the chance to go through a full cycle of basic education, and all young people and adults should have the opportunity to increase their

[30] More details on the findings, sources and methodology of the literature can be found in the booklet 'Lessons Learnt' published by the IOB alongside this policy review (IOB, 2011b).

levels of literacy and participate in better basic vocational education'.[31] In the 1999 policy, the rationale for investments in basic education was expressed as follows (MFA, 2000):

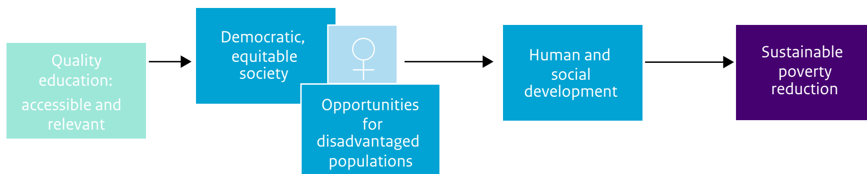
'[The aim of Dutch policy on basic education] is to ensure high-quality basic education, which is accessible and relevant to all, opens up opportunities for the most disadvantaged sections of the population, and contributes to a more democratic and equitable society'.

This expected to be achieved through 'the sustainable improvement of education systems in developing countries', whereby the specific objectives of the policy on basic education were (MFA, 1999; MFA, 2000):

- To maintain and improve the quality and relevance of basic education;
- To achieve social justice by providing equal opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups in order to help them gain a basic level of essential knowledge, values and skills necessary to ensure a productive, peaceful and equitable existence; and accordingly,
- To reduce gender disparities in educational achievement and enhance gender justice through education by promoting the empowerment of women.

This reasoning, extracted from the 1999 policy, is depicted in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 *Rationale for investing in basic education*



However, education is also considered a human right, as is confirmed in the title of the 1999 policy: 'Education: a basic human right'. The policy acknowledges that education was identified as a human right as far back as 1948 as part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And it has been a specific right for children since 1989 (UN, 1989). As a signatory to both treaties, this creates international obligations for the Netherlands.

[31] (TK, 2006c). Translated from the original Dutch text: 'Alle kinderen, zowel jongens als meisjes, hebben de mogelijkheid om volledig basisonderwijs te doorlopen, en alle jongeren en volwassenen hebben de mogelijkheid om te komen tot een hogere alfabetiseringsgraad en om beter lager beroepsonderwijs te volgen.' As discussed in Chapter 2, this was changed to 'All children, youth and adults have equal opportunities to undergo quality education, which provides the necessary skills and knowledge to participate fully in society' in 2007 (TK, 2007b).

The human rights approach to education fits well with the work of economics Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, who argued that poverty is a condition that results from a lack of freedom to choose, and therefore affects an individual's overall ability to function in society (Sen, 2001). Inadequate education and the denial of rights in general are in themselves a form of poverty.[32] This provides a link with the motivation for investments in basic education as a strategy for reducing poverty, for which the evidence will be discussed next.

3.2 Education and poverty – the evidence

Education, especially quality education, generates both individual and social benefits, through a variety of channels:

1. Employment and individual returns

There is strong evidence that education has an impact on creating economic opportunities for individuals in both developed and developing countries. Education leads to increased employability, productivity and higher income potential. The rate of return on education, which is measured as the percentage increase in annual earnings as a result of one additional year of schooling, is approximately 10%.[33] The positive impact that education has is even stronger when quality education has been received (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007).

The returns that education brings to individuals vary, however, depending on the scarcity of skills and education in the labour force. For example, it has been found that, in general, women gain a higher increase in wage from education than men. Yet, wage discrimination means that men still ultimately benefit more from education than women because men earn higher wages.[34]

In recent years, the returns to primary education have fallen in developing countries. This is ascribed to the expansion of education, poor quality of primary education and changes in the demands of the labour market, so that more people have a primary level education compared to the demand for workers with those skills.[35] Box 6.5 describes this phenomenon for Uganda.

The finding that the benefits from primary education have fallen in developing countries (compared to higher levels of education) might at first sight lead to the conclusion that the provision of basic education is no longer helping to reduce poverty. However, better quality

[32] This chapter will focus on the link between education and poverty rather than the other way round. However, poverty (the socio-economic status of students and their families) affects participation and educational outcomes at all levels. See among others: Ross (2005), Willms (2006); UNESCO (2005).

[33] Orazem, Glewwe, & Patrinos (2007) consistent with other studies. The challenges with measuring the benefits of education are described in Patrinos & Psacharopoulos (2011). For instance, in many countries the formal labour force is not a random section of the population and excludes the large informal or agriculture subsistence sectors.

[34] See, for example, in Pakistan Aslam (2007).

[35] Colclough, Kingdon, & Patrinos (2009); Fasih (2008); Fox & Oviedo (2008), Jamison, Jamison, & Hanushek (2006); Tilak (2005).

schooling might well increase the economic gains resulting from primary education. Moreover, primary and post-primary education complement each other.[36] Primary education establishes the basic skills on which further education builds (and so the gains). Education interventions that occur early on in life, even at pre-school level, are found to have the highest returns because of the accumulation of knowledge (Heckman & Masterov, 2007). Also, unskilled workers will remain an important part of all countries' labour markets, particularly in developing countries, even when technological advancement brings changes to the type of skills employers are looking for (as discussed in the next section).

2. Economic growth

As well as having an impact on individual income, education has considerable nationwide macro-economic effects. Educated workers have a positive effect on the overall productivity of a company or sector. Also, an educated workforce accelerates the diffusion of knowledge and facilitates the overall capacity for innovation – all factors that improve the conditions for economic growth.[37]

It is actually access to good quality education that really has a significant impact on a country's prosperity.[38] While certain economic factors such as socio-economic status and GDP can be seen to affect education, evidence shows that the causal relationship is the other way around – it is quality education that causes economic growth.[39]

Hanushek and Woessman (2009) examined the relationship between the number of years children spent in school and GDP growth. When the quality of the education was introduced into the equation rather than just the quantity, the relationship between education and economic growth became more pronounced, education explaining 73% of the variation in growth rather than 25%.[40]

Another study carried out about the 'costs' of education (or rather the costs of not having education), concluded that education and employment gaps for women in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia explain 60% of the difference in economic growth compared to East Asia, where gender gaps in education are much lower.

Hanushek and Woessman (2009) also examined the different effects on economic growth resulting from two particular scenarios: providing basic education for all and providing higher education for a selected group of scientists. They found that a 10% point increase in the share of students that attained basic literacy led to a 0.3% point increase in annual growth (so say from 2.7% annual growth to 3% annual growth); and a 10% point increase in

[36] For example, Autor, Katz, & Kearney (2008) for the United States.
[37] In the 1980s the endogenous/new growth theory of Lucas and Romer acknowledged the externalities of education: the way in which knowledge is a public good that allows the economy to grow beyond what is possible with such measurable inputs as capital and land.
[38] See: Hannum & Buchmann (2005); Aghion et al. (2009); Hanushek & Woessman (2009).
[39] This was challenged by for example Bils & Klenow (2000) and Pritchett (2009) but addressed convincingly in Hanushek & Woessman (2009) and Aghion, et al. (2009).
[40] The authors present results of analyses covering the 40 years between 1960 and 2000 on a sample of 50 OECD countries for which test scores were available (Hanushek & Woessman, 2009).

the number of top-performing students led to a 1.3% point increase in annual growth. Before concluding that supporting high performers is the way to go, it has to be noted that this group is more difficult (and perhaps costly) to target and still needs to emerge from the group with basic skills. Moreover, there is a complementarity between basic and high-level skills, which leads the authors to conclude that 'in order to be able to implement the imitation and innovation strategies developed by scientists, countries need a workforce with at least basic skills' (Hanushek & Woessman, 2009).

3. Health

Research indicates that there is a link too between basic education and the non-economic aspects of poverty such as health status and mortality risks. This link exists in both developed and developing countries, and affects both men and women. At the global level, a 10% rise in the number of children enrolling in primary school is associated with an average 0.9 year increase in life expectancy. Similarly, a 10% rise in numbers enrolling in secondary school is associated with a one-year increase in life expectancy.[41]

Maternal education is found to be important not only in reducing maternal mortality (McAlister & Baskett, 2006; Chowdhury et al., 2007) but also in reducing child mortality and improving the health of infants and children. The explanation for this strong link between (female) basic education and child health are that education (Gakidouet al., 2010):

- Gives mothers a better capacity to understand the information they receive and to act on it – for example, by ensuring that their babies are vaccinated (Hannum & Buchmann, 2005);
- Increases the uptake of health services in general, including fertility control;
- Brings economic benefits (higher income);
- Empowers women and mothers and gives them more independence; and
- Benefits the health of others in the community because it raises the general level of education.[42]

There is also consistent evidence in the literature that basic education for youths plays a role in protection against HIV and Aids, contributes to sexual and reproductive health, and lower fertility rates.[43] This happens even though schooling is also found to be a predictor of higher levels of infidelity and lower levels of abstinence (De Walque, 2009). For example, a study carried out among young people in Uganda found that one additional year of education decreased the probability of becoming HIV positive by 6.7%. This was attributed to the fact that basic education makes young people more responsive to information campaigns both inside and outside school and increases condom use. It was also associated with the finding that educated girls tended to have fewer sexual partners (De Walque, 2004).

[41] Hannum & Buchmann (2005) using DHS data from an unspecified number of countries.

[42] Based on a family health survey covering over 90,000 women in India (Kravdal, 2004).

[43] Literature reviews were conducted by Heargreaves & Boler (2006); Grant & Hallman (2006); Marteleto, David, & Ranchhod (2008). However, the strong evidence that there is a negative relationship between education and the initiation of sex might be confounded by the fact that sexual activity and its consequences (pregnancy, parenthood) are reasons for dropping out of school (Biddlecom et al., 2007).

Interestingly, mere access to education, irrespective of its quality or the inclusion of health education, already improves the health of children and young people – and later on adults and their children in turn. This has particularly important implications for poverty reduction because healthier children are likely to become more productive and better-educated adults, leading to second-round (inter-generational) benefits of education.[44]

4. Equity

The literature reflects the fact that the link between education and equality is highly complex, context-specific and works both ways. Consequently, it is hard to establish with certainty what exactly the impact of education is on socio-economic status, gender parity and ethnic equality.[45]

For example, evidence from Nordic countries suggests that education policies, such as compulsory education, can improve intergenerational social mobility. However, the positive spillover for people from disadvantaged backgrounds was less than for more advantaged population groups. There are two reasons for these results, which have also been found in other countries (Black & Devereux, 2011).

First, inequalities based on gender, poverty or ethnic origin are usually also embedded in a country's education system (e.g. access to education, division of resources, the quality of education on offer, the values engrained in a curriculum and social norms). Second, making education more accessible (including groups who were previously disadvantaged) does not seem to automatically translate into more equality. Mere access to education is not enough to overcome a variety of important contextual barriers, including the content of education (Hannum & Buchmann, 2005).

A recently published review of literature on social inequality and schooling in the United Kingdom reaches similar conclusions. The study examined published evidence on the influence that schools have on overcoming social disadvantage. The overriding conclusion was that while schooling can lead to 'modest improvements for disadvantaged children', its influence is limited by factors beyond the direct control of the school system (Ainscow, et al., 2010).

5. Democracy and peace

Comparing measures of democracy (such as the Freedom House World Index and The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index) and education (literacy and primary and secondary enrolment) do point to a correlation between years of schooling and democracy.[46] A direct causal link is difficult to establish. Many other factors could promote democracy

[44] The research on the impact of health on education is beyond the scope of this review, but Suhrcke & de Paz Nieves (2011) have recently reviewed this literature.

[45] On gender, see SERNAM (2004) for Chile or Aslam (2007) on Pakistan. Hannum & Buchmann (2005) review the evidence on education and ethnic inequality, and cite evidence from, amongst others, Nepal (Stash and Hannum, 2001) and China (Hannum, 2002); Kenya (Alwy & Schech, 2004) and the Netherlands (Tolsma, Coenders, & Lubbers, 2007).

[46] See: Castelló-Climent (2007); Drackner & Subrahmanyam (2010); Glaeser, Ponzetto, & Shleifer (2006).

independently of education; factors such as demographic attributes (age, sex, ethnic and linguistic background, political affiliation and religion), levels of development, ethnicity and access to resources (Acemoglu et al., 2005). However, when controlling for these factors, education is found to have a role in promoting democracy – more so than other factors such as religion and social class (Evans & Rose, 2007; Drackner & Subrahmanyam, 2010). The mechanism through which education promotes democracy is the strong relationship between education and informed citizenship. This is reflected in, for example, voter behaviour and participation in community activities (Dee, 2004; Drackner & Subrahmanyam, 2010). This mechanism is strengthened by more equal access to education and by access to higher levels of education.

In conflict-affected countries, education is said to have 'two faces'. It can exacerbate or mitigate conflict through such issues as access to education, the structure of schooling, teacher recruitment and training, and curriculum content (e.g. language, religion, and history) (Bush & Salterelli, 2000; Smith et al., 2011).[47] Recent literature reviews conclude that the evidence base for the impact of education on conflict and peace building is rather weak (James, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). This does not come as a great surprise given the difficulties of conducting research in often very volatile and often dangerous environments. Positive results have been reported, where education contributed to personal protection (especially for girls), the provision of alternative education and the restoration of normality once the conflict ended. There is less evidence of the impact of psychosocial support programmes, which often form part of education programmes. Research into the effectiveness of technical and vocational education, often applied in conflict-affected states, has mixed findings. It shows that it can improve resilience and increase opportunities (for example, for ex-combatants), but can also lead to frustration if not compatible with labour market demands (James, 2010).

6. The environment

The evidence of the link between education and the environment, more specifically resilience to disaster and reductions in carbon emissions, is still meagre.[48]

There is some indication that countries with higher levels of education might be better equipped to deal with environmental challenges. For instance, 'By mid-century, neutralizing the impact of extreme weather events requires educating an additional 18 to 23 million young women' (Blankespoor et al., 2010). Furthermore, female educating is thought to be a cost-effective way of reducing carbon emissions, partly because educating women and girls affects family planning. However, the exact mechanisms through which education affects the environment require further research.

[47] Of course, education is also affected by conflict (see Chapter 6).

[48] Only six, all fairly recent, studies emerged from the literature search.

3.3 Conclusions

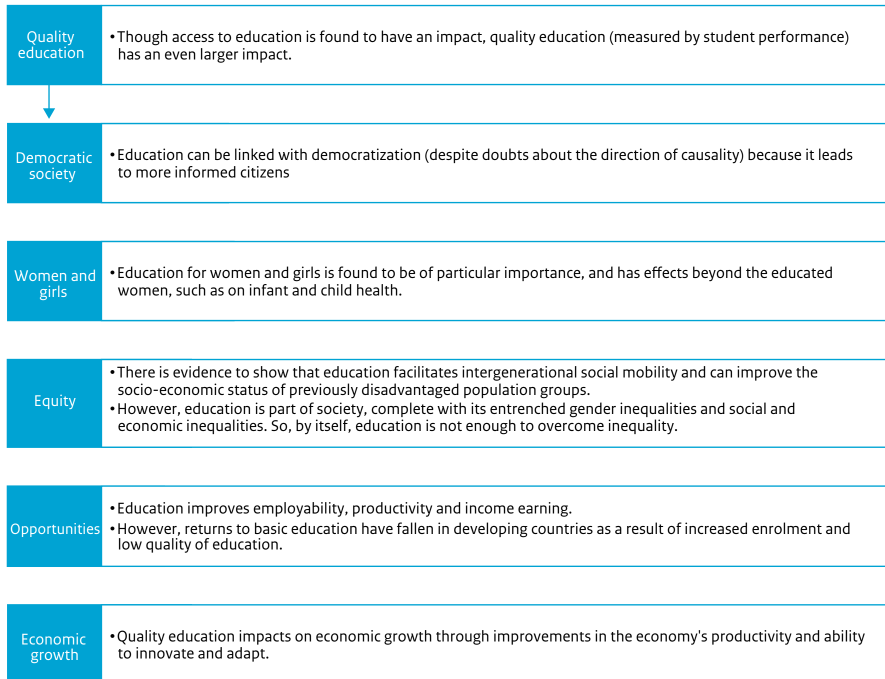
According to international law dating back to 1948, education is a human right. Lack of access to quality education is in itself a form of poverty. This alone might have been sufficient reason for the Netherlands to support basic education. But there is more, as the literature review points out and as is illustrated in Figure 3.3 which follows the line of reasoning of the Ministry.

Education impacts on economic and non-economic aspects of poverty that affect both individuals and countries. Education provides opportunities. Education for women has particular benefits. Quality education has an even stronger impact. It improves the employability, productivity and as a result wage earning of both men and women. The returns to primary education have been falling in developing countries due to increased enrolment and low quality of education. However, in many countries where post-primary education remains out of reach for a lot of youth, completion of primary education continues to be a good investment.

The evidence on the importance of education, and especially for mothers and girls, for improving health is particularly strong. In developing countries, this applies to health status in general, maternal health, child and infant health and sexual and reproductive health including HIV/Aids. There is at least a correlation between education and democracy, whereby more equal access to education enhances informed citizenship. At a macro-level, cross-country analyses have provided evidence of the impact of education on economic growth (and vice versa).

As such, the literature review provides sufficient evidence to confirm the motivation for investments by the Netherlands in basic education as part of the development cooperation. However, there is one caveat. While educational expansion has included disadvantaged groups, one of the objectives of the 1999 policy, there is no strong evidence that this has reduced social and economic inequalities. Education is part of society, and can - by itself - not overcome inherent inequalities (e.g. in access and quality of education, and economic opportunities). This would have required additional effort and close linkages with other aspects of development cooperation policy, such as human rights, gender and inclusive economic growth.

Figure 3.3 *Evidence on impact of education*



4 Portfolio and expenditure

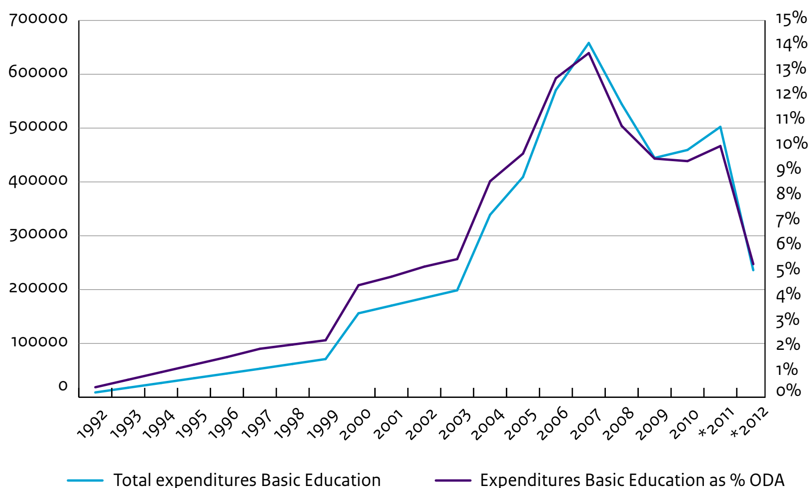
This chapter presents an overview of the Ministry's expenditure on basic education since 1999.[49] It looks into the allocation of expenditures between various channels and for different countries between 1999 and 2009. It also discusses the effect of the input target for basic education. Finally, the chapter analyses the Netherlands' basic education expenditure in the context of other sources of domestic and external funding.

4.1 Total basic education expenditure

As discussed in Chapter 2, in the 1990s the Netherlands started to focus more on basic education in response to the 1990 WCEFA. In 1992, total annual basic education expenditure amounted to €9 million (IOB, 2008c). Basic education received a major boost in the early part of the decade when in response to the 2001 motion Hessing, the minister promised to increase the basic education budget to 15% of ODA by 2007 at the latest. This resulted in rapid increases in expenditure to €658 million in 2007 from €156 million in 2000.

Figure 4.1 illustrates this increase, and also the downward trend as soon as basic education was deprioritized in 2007. The next sharp decrease will occur this year. The announced budget cuts for higher and basic education combined represent 47% of the total proposed reduction in development aid of €958 million (TK, 2011c).

Figure 4.1 *Total expenditure on basic education, 2003-2009 (in thousands of €)*[50]



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HGIS annual reports 2004–2010, HGIS-nota 2011-2012, IOB (2008c).

[49] This chapter collates financial and policy information from the Ministry's management information systems and OECD/DAC data. OECD/DAC data exists of self-reported data provided by the Ministry (thus derived from Piramide and Midas). OECD/DAC data is therefore only used for comparisons with other donors (section 4.5).

[50] The Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation (HGIS) is a separate budgetary construction in the central government budget for expenditure on international cooperation. 1992-2010 are actual disbursements, 2011-2012, (*) are projected disbursements. Since 2007, the HGIS annual reports included expenditure on higher education. Higher education expenditure has been excluded in this and other graphs and tables throughout the document, which means that figures presented after 2006 for total and subtotal bilateral expenditure deviate from those presented in the official HGIS annual reports.

The 15% target certainly drove education expenditure between 2001 and 2007. For example, the FTI allowed the Netherlands to expand its education programme beyond the countries where the Netherlands had a development cooperation relationship. Also at country level, the input target provided the education programmes with seemingly unlimited resources. Embassies were actively encouraged to increase the number of education programmes. However, while the 15% target was said to be 'on track' up to 2007,[51] the target was never quite reached, and it was readily acknowledged that it never would be reached, even if higher education activities were to be included.[52] This was explained by general budgetary reductions and delays in the implementation of both the FTI Catalytic Fund and bilateral programmes in education partner countries such as Ghana, Indonesia, Pakistan, Rwanda and South Africa.

However, the Dutch contribution to basic education is not solely financial. The Netherlands has also invested human resources. Box 4.1 gives a description of the Ministry's investments in know-how, such as the deployment of education advisors and promotion of research and knowledge sharing.

Box 4.1 *Investing in know-how*

The Ministry's education programme is supported by a team of specialized education advisers. As was the case with the financial resources, a sharp increase in human resources occurred after the introduction of the 1999 basic education policy (see Table 4.1). In more recent years, education advisors have increasingly been replaced by generalist staff (some education advisors took up generalist positions in other departments or left the Ministry). This has been the experience of other donors as well. These changes have been attributed to the move towards more programmatic approaches such as general budget support, which hands the dialogue over to generalists and economists.[53]

[51] See: TK (2002); TK (2004a); TK (2004b); TK (2006b); DSO (2006b).

[52] See: TK (2008b); TK (2009b); DSO (2008a); TK (2009b); DSO (2009a).

[53] For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had about 90 education advisors at the start of the decade. This fell to 31 in 2009. One-third of the British Department for International Development's (DFID's) 30 or so education advisors had shifted to generalist positions by 2009 (Steer & Wathne, 2009).

Table 4.1	Education staff in headquarter and embassies, 1999-2011												
	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11
Education advisors	8	15	15	18	18	17	17	15	14	15	13	11	11
Generalist staff					1	1	3	4	4	5	7	7	8
Local education staff	3	7	7	7	8	10	10	11	11	11	11	11	7
Total	11	22	22	25	27	28	30	30	29	31	31	29	26

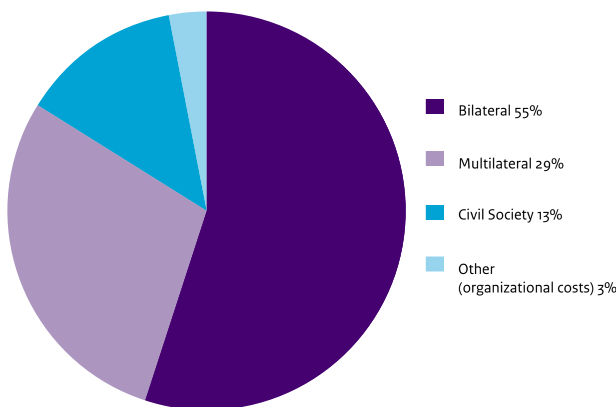
In 2004, the Knowledge Forum (*Kennisforum*) was introduced, in which a broad range of Dutch experts active in the field of basic education (researcher, NGOs, private sector, etc.) provided input for the policy development by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (TK, 2004d). During the evaluation period working groups of the Knowledge Forum have been active on: 1) quality of education; 2) education for work; 3) education in emergencies; 4) and education and HIV/Aids. The Knowledge Forum also served as the basis for the so-called Schokland/Millennium Agreements, where funding was provided by the Ministry for programmes proposed by Dutch civil society and private sector (e.g. in South Sudan and Colombia).

As an example of the support to research; the so-called IS-Academy (International Cooperation Academy) Education and Development (2005-2011) was funded by the Ministry and the University of Amsterdam.[54] The participants of the programme perform research in the area of education and international development. For example, research was carried out on intercultural education in Bolivia. Another area of focus is Education and Conflict, with a series of seminars, lectures and publications. The main outputs of the programme and future research agendas will be discussed during the international seminar 'Education and International Development: Why research matters' that will be held in September 2011.

54 http://educationanddevelopment.wordpress.com/

Figure 4.2 illustrates how support for basic education was channelled from the Netherlands to education partner country programmes (bilateral), multilateral organizations and NGOs. Most funding (55%) was provided through the bilateral channel, which is in line with the policy that is 'geared in the first instance to supporting governments in their efforts to implement national educational reform programmes' (MFA, 2000). The next section describes the various channels in more detail.

Figure 4.2 *Basic education expenditure by channel, 2003-2009*



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HGIS annual reports 2004–2010.

4.2 Bilateral expenditure

Table 4.2 below presents an overview of bilateral expenditure on basic education between 2003 and 2009.[55] Three categories can be distinguished:

- Delegated bilateral expenditure: this can be traced to specific countries, in particular support provided via embassies in partner countries (A).
- Central bilateral expenditure: this is provided through the Netherlands' Ministry headquarters in The Hague (B).
- Attributed expenditure: this category covers basic education expenditure at country level that was not earmarked in advance, but assigned on the basis of fixed percentages, for example, general budget support, debt relief and emergency relief (C).[56]

[55] Before 2003, there was no specification of basic education in the HGIS (Homogene Group Internationale Samenwerking).

[56] Attribution is based on fixed percentages, determined by the Finance Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FEZ/BZ).

Table 4.2 Bilateral expenditure on basic education, 2003-2009 (in thousands of €)

	Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2003-2009	%
Partner countries (with support to education sector)	A	107.400	123.100	112.040	165.429	232.894	265.156	206.690	1.212.709	70%
Non-delegated funds (silent partnership, capacity building, etc.)	B	2.050	6.415	19.827	15.515	28.885	11.760	9.014	93.465	5%
Attribution macrosupport and debt relief	C	18.000	31.500	53.395	40.207	59.697	39.570	23.478	265.847	15%
Attribution other themes (e.g. emergency relief and reconstruction)	C	3.050	14.400	29.870	27.873	28.389	33.416	26.991	163.989	10%
Total	**-**	**130.500**	**175.415**	**215.132**	**249.024**	**349.865**	**349.902**	**266.173**	**1.736.010**	**100%**

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HGIS annual reports 2004–2010.

With regard to the bilateral programmes delegated to the Dutch embassies (category a), the Dutch policy on basic education stresses the importance of donor coordination and harmonization. This has been translated into practice in different ways in the partner countries (see chapter 6). In some, support for national basic education strategies is provided as a form of sector budget support, meaning that the funding for the education sector is channelled to government accounts either directly (for example, Uganda) or through a basket with other donors (for example, Bangladesh and Bolivia). In other countries, the Netherlands has participated in silent partnerships, either as lead donor (for example, in Mali and Uganda with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) or as a silent partner (for example, in Malawi and Rwanda with DFID, and in Nicaragua with the Canadian International Development Agency).[57]

In order to further explore basic education expenditure, IOB has compiled a database of basic education activities that took place between 1999 and 2009.[58] The analysis shows that more than half the bilateral expenditure was in Africa (56%), followed by Asia (34%), Latin America (9%) and finally Europe (1%). The focus on Africa is in line with the focus of the overall Dutch development cooperation strategy.

Table 4.3 Bilateral basic education expenditure by region, 1999-2009 (in thousands of €)

Region	Expenditure	%
Africa	1.102.312	56%
Asia (incl. Middle-East)	680.811	34%
Latin America (incl. Caribbean)	185.105	9%
Europe	21.619	1%
Total	1.989.847	100%

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IOB database.

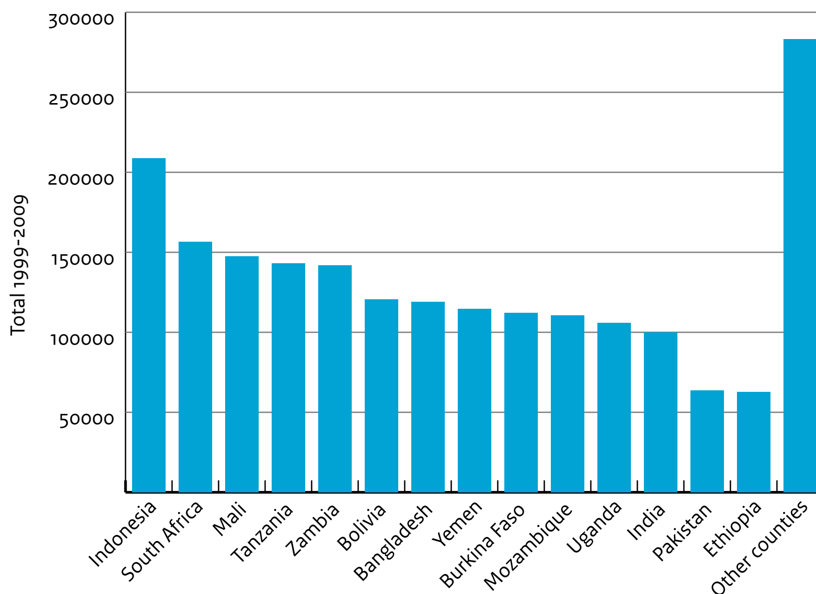
Between 1999 and 2009, 89% of expenditure was in Dutch Education Partner Countries (EPC) with which the Netherlands has entered into long-term structural cooperation relationships (MFA, 2000).[59]

[57] In 2004, the Netherlands elected the education sector as a pilot sector for the harmonization agenda (TK, 2004c). The Netherlands became involved in silent partnerships in several countries. The transaction costs of silent partnerships and the risk this involves to the Dutch engagement in the education sector have been brought up by the Ministry in, for example, the strategic plan 2008 of the Department for Cultural Cooperation, Education and Research (DSO) (DSO, 2008b).

[58] Sources: Piramide and Midas (up to 2003). This does not include attributed expenditure. Minor discrepancies with the HGIS data are the result of adaptations based on a manual cross-check performed by IOB.

[59] Funding to the largest ECP, Indonesia, was primarily allocated through the World Bank and includes support for: scholarships and school-grants; multi-donor trust funds; teacher quality improvement; and ECD-development.

Figure 4.3 *Bilateral basic education expenditure by country, 1999-2009 (in thousands of €)*



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IOB database.

Bilateral investment in fragile states increased sharply between 2007 and 2008 in comparison to expenditure in other countries.[60] This was because fragile states were prioritized from those years onward. However, in 2009, funding for education in fragile states decreased along with overall budget reductions, despite the special attention being given to education as part of the Ministry's safety and security agenda.

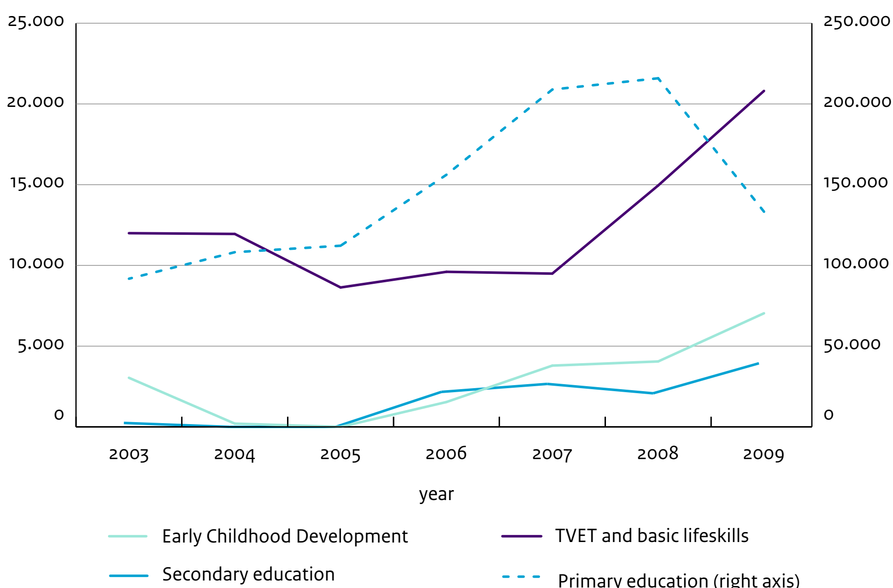
By far the largest share of bilateral expenditure was allocated to primary education (77%). Other aspects of basic education received smaller shares: 7% for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and basic life skills; 1% for early childhood development (ECD); 1% for secondary education.[61] Figure 4.4 presents trends in bilateral expenditure for

[60] Fragile states that received support for basic education from the Netherlands between 2003-2009 include (in order of funding received): Yemen, Uganda, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Sudan, Iraq, Angola, Sri Lanka, Liberia, Eritrea, Haiti, Colombia, Nigeria, Somalia (MFA, 2007b).

[61] The remainder (11%) includes items such as education facilities and training, policy and management, which are not related to a specific level of education. With regard to higher education, from 2004-2010, higher (post-secondary) education expenditure by the Netherlands amounted to €109 million or 20% of the total education budget. In comparison, based on OECD/DAC data for 2002-2009 it was calculated that on average 54% of total ODA is allocated to higher education.

the different levels of basic education.[62] Primary education expenditure, while remaining the largest, diminished sharply between 2007 and 2009 (right axis), while expenditure on ECD, secondary education and particularly TVET (including basic life skills) increased (left axis). This results from shift in policy priorities away from primary to other education levels that was initiated already in 2004 (see chapter 2).

Figure 4.4 *Bilateral basic education expenditure by education level, 2003-2009 (in thousands of €)*



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IOB database.

4.3 Multilateral expenditure

Dutch support for basic education in developing countries is also channelled through multilateral organizations, global initiatives and networks (Table 4.4). These work both at the global level and in individual countries, where they can interact with bilateral education programmes in education partner countries (EPCs).

[62] Expenditure is allocated across education levels based on Creditor Reporting System (CRS) codes. These are broad categories assigned to each activity. Each activity is assigned one CRS-code, so education sector support is generally attributed to the largest expenditure component (often primary).

Table 4.4 Multilateral basic education expenditure, 2003-2009 (in thousands of €)[63]

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2003-2009
Multilateral funds (non-delegated)								
EFA/FTI	14.000	24.750	44.739	152.755	122.583	5.032	680	364.539
UNICEF EEPCT				21.580	53.055	22.200	32.640	129.475
UNICEF ECD						3.700	4.420	8.120
UNESCO IIEP		1.000	1.000	1.110	1.140	1.000	1.000	6.250
FAWE		495	457	457	324	1.480	966	4.178
UNESCO ADEA	143	471	662	407	522	785	680	3.669
UNESCO SACMEQ	260	351		482	525	387	821	2.826
UNESCO (other)	108			830	35	408		1.382
UNESCO UIS						1.110	1.020	2.130
UNICEF (other)	600	68			17			686
Attributed mulitlateral core-funding								
UN organisations (ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNESCO, WFP)	9.250	31.500	26.610	23.310	22.449	27.619	30.023	170.761
WB-Partnership Programme	1.000	1.000	1.725	6.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	14.725
IDA and regional development funds		34.800	31.554	4.484	13.583	16.531	14.858	115.810
European Development Fund (EDF)	2.500	4.900	5.512	5.575	5.983	6.672	7.193	38.335
EU-contribution		7.439	10.489	10.238	13.295	13.505	11.720	66.686
Multilateral	**27.860**	**106.774**	**122.747**	**227.727**	**235.012**	**101.930**	**107.521**	**929.572**

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HGIS annual reports 2004–2010, adapted based on IOB database.

[63] Attribution of core funding is based on fixed percentages that are calculated on the basis of organizations' annual reports by the Ministry's financial department (FEZ/BZ).

The FTI, UNICEF, the World Bank and the European Commission are described in some more detail because of the substantial share of multilateral funding that passes through these organizations. As the United Nations agency for Education, UNESCO also deserves more detailed analysis, particularly because the Netherlands provides extra-budgetary funding for knowledge and information generation by organizations related to it.

Education for All's Fast Track Initiative (FTI)

During the WCEFA 2000 in Dakar, the lack of an effective mechanism to coordinate or pool aid for education was put on the agenda. Moreover, several donors, including the Netherlands, were seeking to scale up the support for education without starting new bilateral country programmes. The Netherlands and the World Bank worked on an initiative to support the best-performing countries in basic education.

A meeting was organized by the Ministry in April 2002 to merge this proposal with G8 discussions about a partnership to support EFA. The FTI was subsequently launched in 2002 with the aim to accelerate progress towards quality universal primary education (UPE). The emphasis was on coordinated action at country level and resource mobilization by in-country donors for national education sector plans, endorsed by the FTI. Two FTI trust funds (managed by the World Bank) provide financial support for the education goals in low-income countries:

- Catalytic Fund for Education: about US$1.5 billion pledged for 2003–2009, currently disbursed in around 37 countries.
- Education Programme Development Fund: US$114 million pledged for 2005–2009.

Since the launch, the Netherlands has continued to be an involved donor of the FTI, for example contributing to discussions on its governance (MFA, 2008b), chairing the Steering Committee and recently acting as a FTI supervising entity in Zambia (instead of the World Bank). Also financially, the Netherlands has been an important donor of the FTI, contributing 23% of the funding (see also in Box 6.1).[64]

UNESCO

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is a multilateral membership organization.[65] Various entities within the education sector work towards two specific strategic programme objectives:

- Strengthening the global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support for national leaderships in favour of EFA, as agreed in Dakar in 2000.
- Giving support to member states by developing policies, capacities and tools that will provide quality education for all and lifelong learning, as well as promoting education for sustainable development. This includes technical assistance and capacity development at country level in sector-wide policy and planning.

[64] Seventeen donors contributed, but just three of them – Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom – accounted for more than 70% of pledges from inception up to 2008.

[65] In the Netherlands, the relationship with UNESCO with regard to development cooperation is managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while UNESCO's work in the Netherlands (e.g. National UNESCO Commission) is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

In addition to the core contributions to UNESCO, the Netherlands provides voluntary, extra-budgetary funding to institutes related to UNESCO for the generation of information and knowledge. Statistical information is gathered in individual countries with the technical support and quality control of these UNESCO institutes. It is analysed at both the country level and at the global level by UNESCO and others before being disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders in the education field.

Table 4.5 Netherlands funding of UNESCO education programmes, 2003-2009

Acronym	Name	NL funding	Period	Description
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning	€6,3 million	2004-2009	UNESCO centre for training, research and capacity building in the area of educational planning and management
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality	€2,8 million	2003-2009	Independent organization, with as members Ministries of Education, that works closely with IIEP to monitor education outcomes (learning achievements) and undertake integrated research and training activities for educational planners and decision makers in the field of quality of education
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics	€2,1 million	2008-2009	Independent institute (but aligned to the strategic and programmatic priorities of UNESCO) established to provide statistical information to analyse effectiveness of national education programmes
GMR	Global Monitoring Report	€1,2 million	2006-2008	An annual publication on the state of the education sector globally produced by an independent, international team based at UNESCO, with support from UIS

Box 4.2 *Effectiveness of UNESCO institutes supported by the Netherlands*

Evaluations of UNESCO's overall education sector programme underscore the urgent need for a reform of UNESCO itself – an initiative which has been actively pursued by the Netherlands.[66] This also affects the institutes funded outside budgets by the Netherlands.[67] Nevertheless, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) are identified in several different evaluations as particular pockets of success within UNESCO (Davis et al., 2009).

In short:

- IIEP is recognized for its expert staff and the high standard of its training in education policy, planning and management, in a variety of formats, in response to requests from ministries of education (Davis et al., 2009). It has also been effective in capacity building within UNESCO.
- The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) has been effective in cross-national data collection and capacity building. Overall, the SACMEQ products were found to be of good technical quality. Evaluators did note, however, potential sources of incomparability in data from SACMEQ (Ercikanet al., 2008).
- UIS was found to have made a significant contribution to the development of education statistics for sector policy and analysis (including data quality assessments and capacity building).[68] At a global level, UIS was able to restore the credibility of internationally comparable education statistics. At a country level, education data quality improved in countries where the UIS has been engaged for a period of time (for example, Ethiopia and Niger).[69]
- The EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 'fills a vital niche in the global report landscape' according to a recent evaluation. The report is useful and relevant to most of the intended audience, mostly donors, policy makers and research communities. However, the GMR should increase its presence and its influence in developing countries and pro-actively target different user groups (Universalia, 2010).

[66] See: Davis et al. (2009); DFID (2011); DVF/FS-CI (2010); Education for Change Limited (2006); UNESCO (2010b).

[67] As noted in the individual evaluation reports, e.g. Universalia (2010).

[68] Davis et al. (2009), confirmed by Ercikan et al., (2008) and Education for Change Limited (2006).

[69] As a result of highly qualified and dedicated staff, extensive networks and independence (Davis & Coulon, 2007).

The Netherlands has contributed to the effectiveness of these institutions – which has benefitted the Netherlands and other UNESCO member states, including the governments of education partner countries and other donors. The knowledge and information generated by the UIS, the IIEP, the GMR and SACMEQ are global public goods that deserve long-term, predictable funding according to the evaluations cited above.[70]

UNICEF's Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme

The EEPCT programme began in 2006 as a four-year partnership between UNICEF and the Government of the Netherlands. With a value of €152 million (2006-2010), it is the biggest single grant ever donated to UNICEF. Additional support of €4 million was provided later by the European Commission and a fifth year was added to the programme.

EEPCT funds support UNICEF education programmes in 39 countries and territories, and have also been used to advance the global agenda for education in crisis-affected contexts. UNICEF sees the EEPCT programme as the 'centrepiece' of its education programme activities in humanitarian crises, post-crisis and transition situations. It seeks to accomplish four principle goals (CGCA, 2010):

1. Improved quality of education response in emergencies and post-crisis transition countries;
2. Increased resilience of education sector service delivery in chronic crises, arrested development and deteriorating contexts;
3. Increased education sector contributions to better prediction, prevention and preparedness for emergencies caused by natural disasters and conflict; and
4. Evidence-based policies, efficient operational strategies and fit-for-purpose financing instruments for education in emergencies and post-crisis situations.

Evaluation findings for EECPT are discussed in more depth in Section 6.6 on the Dutch support to countries affected by conflict and emergencies.

World Bank

Dutch support for the World Bank's education programme was provided as International Development Association (IDA) core funding and through the Bank Netherlands Partnership Programme (BNPP), a multi-donor trust fund for capacity building (IOB, 2009). According to the Ministry's financial department (FEZ/BZ), between 8-21% of IDA funding and 8.6% of BNPP funding has be attributed to the Ministry's basic education expenditure throughout the evaluation period.

[70] The overall evaluation of UNESCO noted that both IIEP and UIS receive relatively strong extra-budgetary funding, but risk funding instability because of UNESCO's low contribution (Davis, Coulon, Sankar, Ogier, & Teague, 2009).

Between 2001 and 2010, the World Bank invested US$23 billion in education programmes in developing countries, with the largest share going to primary education.[71] Since 2006, the share for tertiary and TVET education increased sharply at the expense of primary education. The top-five recipient countries were India, Mexico, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which together accounted for 49% of the World Bank education programme (IEG, 2011b).

As summarized in a recent portfolio review, the main strategy for improving learning outcomes is to improve the quality of the classroom experience. In practice, this means providing better textbooks, more advanced teacher training, effective learning aids, school libraries, classes for poorly performing students and older students, new or improved classrooms, parental participation and grant-supported school-based management. Over the past ten years, the World Bank has put more and more emphasis on policy and management reforms (IEG, 2011b).

As the Netherlands frequently cooperates with the World Bank at country level, the effectiveness of World Bank education programmes is dealt with in Box 6.4 in chapter 6 on the Dutch support to basic education in partner countries.

The European Commission

The Netherlands contributes to European Union (EU) development cooperation, executed by the European Commission (EC), in two ways: (i) through the inter-governmental European Development Fund (EDF), in which case the contribution is reflected in the budget of the Ministry, and (ii) as part of its contribution to the EU budget. According to the Ministry's financial department, 4-5% of EU funding is allocated to basic education. In addition to the financial contribution, the Netherlands, as an EU member state, contributes to EU policy development and implementation through dialogue and cooperation at different levels, mainly at EU headquarters and in Dutch partner countries.

The EC's financial contribution to education flows either through education-specific support or indirectly via general budget support with reference to education. Between 2000 and 2007, €1,9 billion was contracted for education-specific support and €3.2 billion through indirect support. Of the specific support, 52% went through governments as sector budget support (SBS), 17% was channelled through development banks and 12% was allocated through NGOs. Approximately two-thirds (69%) of the EC's specific support for education is geared towards basic and secondary education. India, Bangladesh and Pakistan alone receive 32% of this funding (Particip GmbH, 2010).

Though EC support for education has increased over time, the share of education support decreased in comparison with other sectors. Moreover, the shift in EC support to a smaller number of sectors and the increasing use of general budget support, has led to a reduction

[71] As a whole, the World Bank committed about $23 billion to education programs in developing countries for the fiscal years 2001 to 2010. About two-thirds of that amount was managed by Education Sector staff. Of the commitments managed by the Education Sector since 2001, $6.1 billion was allocated to primary education.

in the number of countries in which education is a focal sector. This is especially so in the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states (Particip GmbH, 2010).

Given that most of the EC expenditure on basic education is spend at country level, the findings of a recent evaluation of the EC support to education have also been integrated in chapter 6 on the Dutch support to basic education at country level.

International networks

According to the 1999 policy on basic education, the main goals of supporting international networks are to provide financial support and to encourage active participation in international fora of education specialists from developing countries (MFA, 2000). The Netherlands funds various international networks:

- The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
- The International Working Group on Education (IWGE)[72]
- The Interagency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE)[73]
- The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

ADEA and FAWE are discussed in more detail in Box 4.3.

Box 4.3 *Examples of networks: ADEA and FAWE*

ADEA is a forum for dialogue for African ministries of education and development agencies active in African education (ADEA, 2008). Thematic and sub-regional conferences have highlighted topics such as the use of contract teachers, education in rural areas and the language of instruction. Other activities include capacity building and training activities and publication and information dissemination.

Dutch contributions to ADEA amounted to almost €3,7 million between 2003 and 2009. The Netherlands also participates actively in the ADEA steering committee and leads the working groups on ECD and on statistics (MFA, 2007a).

A number of evaluations have acknowledged ADEA's unique role (Universalia, 2005; IEG, 2011a). There is anecdotal evidence that its activities have led to improved educational policies in recipient countries (IEG, 2011a). However, there have also been management and funding challenges, difficulties with outreach and reports of varying Working Group effectiveness (Universalia, 2005; IEG, 2011a). In response, ADEA formulated a new strategic plan and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, realigned its Working Groups to its strategic plan and put greater emphasis on outreach activities toward key partners and stakeholders (IEG, 2011a).

72 http://www.iiep.unesco.org/capacity-development/networking/iwge.html
73 Funded through UNICEF EEPCT.

FAWE, one of the ADEA's more successful working groups, has grown into a standalone regional organization. Dutch contributions to FAWE amounted to €4,2 million for the period from 2003 to 2009.

FAWE's mission has been to 'promote gender equity and equality in education in Africa by fostering positive policies, practices and attitudes toward girls' education' (FAWE, 2008). FAWE's strength is said to lie in its membership, which includes female ministers and deputy ministers of education, senior education policy makers and prominent educationalists (Libman, 2006; MFA, 2008a).

FAWE's first strategic plan, which covered the period from 2002 to 2006, set out to influence policy and practice through supporting pilot interventions that addressed key barriers to gender equality in education (Kinyanjui, 2010). FAWE centres of excellence (CoEs) were established in primary and secondary schools as prototypes of gender-friendly schools.[74] The CoE model includes a range of interventions, such as bursaries for disadvantaged girls, gender-responsive pedagogy and management training, and a girls' empowerment programme (Diaw, 2008).

In the current strategic plan, which runs up to 2012, FAWE's mandate moved to policy influencing rather than undertaking interventions, which was deemed to be the responsibility of government. In Kenya, the government replicated the CoE model in 422 secondary schools and allocated 30 million Kenyan shillings for additional infrastructure in each school taking part (Konaté & Assié-Lumumba, 2011).

It is difficult to determine the extent to which FAWE's strategy is contributing to the attainment of gender equity in Africa.[75] A number of evaluations have commented positively on FAWE's programme and regional institutional structure, as well as on the way it influences policy makers in Africa. Its success is linked to its flexibility, combination of regional and country level activities, and its establishment as a broad membership organization involving high level officials (Libman, 2006). However, FAWE's national committees vary in strength, administrative and technical capacity, and ability to deliver and implement programmes (Hoppers & Lifanda, 2005; Konaté & Assié-Lumumba, 2011). Moreover, the forum's dependence on international donors poses a risk to the sustainability of the programme in the long term (Libman, 2006).

[74] Since 1999, FAWE established 19 CoEs in Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania. In 2008 and 2009, it began the process of transforming a further eight government schools into CoEs in Benin, Comoros, Madagascar, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zanzibar. Source (accessed on 22-08-2011): http://www.fawe.org/resource/focus/COEs/index.php

[75] The lack of quantitative result indicators makes this even more difficult (Konaté & Assié-Lumumba, 2011).

4.4 Civil society expenditure

The Dutch policy on education explicitly calls for cooperation between governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) among which NGOs. Local and Dutch NGOs can be supported through Dutch embassies in partner countries. In addition, several (Dutch) NGOs received co-financing support from the Ministry. The largest education programmes are run by: Edukans, ICCO, Oxfam Novib, Plan Netherlands, Terre des Hommes and Woord en Daad. These will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 7.

Since 1965, support for Dutch NGOs has been provided through various co-financing frameworks including the '*thematisch-medefinancieringsprogramma*' (TMF) in 2002, the '*medefinancieringsprogramma-breed*' (MFP-breed) in 2003 and the '*medefinancieringsstelsel*' (MFS) since 2007. The programme, Strategic Alliances with International NGOs (SALIN), operated between 2006 and 2010. Education is also funded indirectly through co-financing arrangements with organizations such as PSO (a Dutch association that focuses on capacity development in civil society organizations in developing countries).

Table 4.6 provides an overview of the Ministry's expenditure on basic education through CSOs between 2003 and 2009, excluding direct support through embassies (which is part of the expenditure described in 4.2).

Table 4.6 Civil society basic education expenditure, 2003-2009 (in thousands of €)[76]

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2003-2009
Co-financing (MFP/MFS)	39.820	40.800	50.058	67.922	52.171	72.522	50.911	374.204
Thematic co-financing (TMF)	108	245	4.300	4.983				9.636
Co-financing international (SALIN)				3.382	3.606	2.000	2.000	10.988
Support capacity building (PSO)			1.425	1.650	1.350	1.150	830	6.405
Other	430			39				469
Civil Society	**40.358**	**41.045**	**55.783**	**77.976**	**57.127**	**75.672**	**53.741**	**401.702**

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HGIS annual reports 2004–2010.

[76] These are rough estimates, based on specific education interventions (e.g. within SALIN and TMF) and the attribution of a percentage derived from the expenditure of the five largest organizations funded through the Ministry's civil society co-financing arrangement (in the case of MFP, MFS, PSO).

4.5 Contributors to basic education

To put the Netherlands' basic education contributions in perspective, this section explores the overall financing for basic education in developing countries. It outlines two main sources: domestic funding (both public and private) and external funding, or aid.

Domestic education financing

The focus on international aid diverts attention from the fact that the main source of funding for education in developing countries is government revenue. To a large extent this is driven by GNP growth, which influences for example the amount of revenue collected through taxation. Table 4.7 indicates that there was an increase in the share of GNP spent on education in low-income countries from 2.9% in 1999 to 3.8% in 2008. Education budgets measured in real (adjusted for inflation) financial terms increased during that period.

Table 4.7 Public education spending, 1999-2008

	Education spending as share of GNP		Real growth rate of education spending	Real growth rate of per capita education spending
	1999	2008	1999 to 2008	2000 to 2008
World	4,6%	5,0%	3,0%	1,7%
Low income countries	2,9%	3,8%	6,8%	3,9%
Lower middle income countries	5,5%	5,6%	3,8%	3,4%
Upper middle income countries	4,7%	4,6%	4,6%	2,1%
High income countries	5,0%	5,4%	2,7%	2,0%

Source: adopted from UNESCO (2011).

Despite population growth and the rising share of school-age children in national populations, increases in education budgets also translated into higher levels of per capita education spending (UNESCO, 2011). A UIS report noted that ten out of 15 sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries with available data experienced both a rise in enrolment and growth in public expenditure per student in primary education, thus indicating that public expenditure increased at a faster rate than enrolment (UIS, 2011).

Domestic financing for basic education is further dictated by the allocation of government expenditure over different sectors, expenditure categories and between education levels. Education often constitutes a major part of total government expenditure. On average, the share of total public expenditure spent on education amounted to 14% globally in 2008. The overall percentage in SSA was 18%, but this hides differences between countries that range from 8% in Congo (2005) to 27% in Tanzania (2008) (UIS, 2011).

Public education expenditure can be divided into two categories, current and capital expenditure.[77] Current expenditure accounts for 60-100% of total public expenditure on education in SSA. Most of this is spent on teachers' salaries, which account for between 70% and 97% of current public expenditure on education – though this can vary considerably between countries, over time and according to education levels (UIS, 2011).

According to UIS, expenditure is not balanced across levels of education, as expenditure per secondary and tertiary education students is generally much higher than expenditure per primary pupil in SSA (UIS, 2011). While it is common to find such elevated costs at higher levels of education when the enrolment ratio is low, it does affect the allocation of resources between those who can participate in the upper levels of education and those who cannot.

Within countries, government funding is complemented by domestic private expenditure, for example from households, NGOs, associations, religious institutions, communities and companies. Private households, for instance, can pay for formal or informal user-fees, exam charges, transport costs, etc. The ratio of private household to public education expenditure was estimated at an average 25% in 16 SSA countries, 30% for primary education (UIS, 2011). Private expenditure can be used to access public education systems or private education (e.g. provided by NGOs, kindergartens). The provision of private education has grown markedly in the last 20 years (Patrinos, Barrerra-Osorio, & Guaqueta, 2009).

Overall, domestic education spending has risen over the evaluation period, including in real terms and per capita. However, the potential to make further investments in the quality of basic education is restricted where a large share of the education budget is captured by teacher salaries, post-basic education enrolment increases and private expenditure is high.

Donor financing

In general, domestic resources far outweigh development assistance. In 2008, donor resources were estimated to account for 5.6% of total public education resources in SSA – though the percentages varied greatly across the region (UIS, 2011). For instance, the amount of ODA that Liberia received for education represented 72% of its public education expenditure in 2008, it accounted for approximately 50% of public education resources in Guinea, Mali and Rwanda, while in countries such as Mauritius or South Africa this figure was 5% or lower.[78]

[77] The former refers to expenditure associated with annually used and consumed items (teacher salaries, books and other operating costs), while the latter refers to expenditure on items that can be used over a longer period of time (school construction, etc.).

[78] The country studies in Zambia, Uganda, Bolivia and Bangladesh provide more detailed information about the basic education expenditure patterns of partner countries supported by the Netherlands.

As can be derived from Figure 4.5, total aid for basic education rose steadily between 2002 and 2009, apart from a dip in 2008, from €1.6 to €4.4 billion, thus withstanding the fluctuating contribution of individual donors.[79] For instance, the reduction in disbursements to education by the Netherlands from 2007-2009, were offset through increased spending by the World Bank on international development assistance, and by the United States, the United Kingdom and France.

Figure 4.5 *Donor expenditure on basic education, 2002-2009 (in millions of €)*

Source: OECD/DAC Statistics, IOB adaptation.

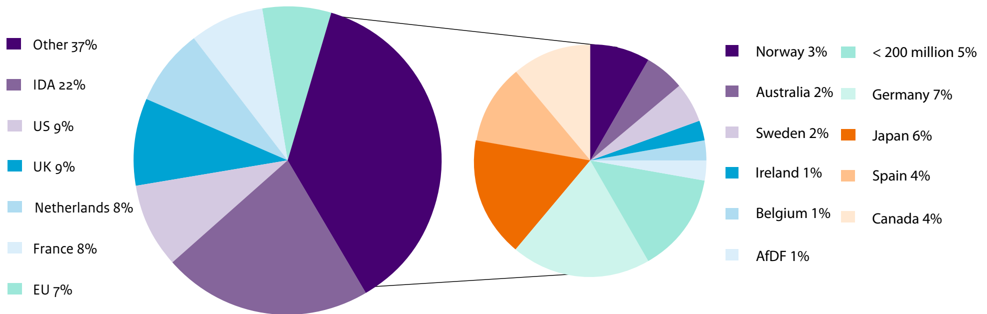
Growth in the volume of aid destined for basic education was largely driven by strong overall growth in aid levels and not by a shift of priorities. In 2006–2007, education accounted for about 12% of all aid commitments, the same level as in 1999–2000. By comparison, the health sector saw its share increase from 11% in 1999–2000 to 17% in 2007–2008 (UNESCO, 2010b).

In terms of actual disbursements to basic education between 2002 and 2009, the Netherlands was the fourth-largest donor, surpassed only by the Word Bank, the United States and the United Kingdom (see Figure 4.6). In the midterm evaluation of the FTI, it was noted that, ‘no donor comes close to matching the Netherlands’ dramatic shift in

[79] This figure is based on adaptations of OECD/DAC data by IOB. The data on basic education expenditure (including ECD, primary and secondary education but not including post-secondary education and 50% of unspecified aid to education) is provided on http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?lang=en# accessed on 24-6-2011. The totals presented in this figure are indicative and may diverge from the HGIS annual report and IOB database data presented elsewhere in the report.

commitments towards basic education … the Netherlands made huge strides in moving up the ranking of donors to basiceducation, from eighth place in 1999 to first place in 2006' (Cambridge Education, Mokoro, Oxford Policy Management, 2010).

Figure 4.6 *Total basic education expenditure by donor, 2002-2009*



Source: OECD/DAC Statistics, IOB adaptation.

As discussed earlier, there has been a decline in Dutch funding for basic education since 2007. The United States as well as Spain are also expected to decrease their aid contributions to basic education. While there are donors increasing their aid to basic education, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, the overall picture looks bleak with bilateral aid to basic education stagnating, at best, and, at worst, significantly declining in the coming years.[80] It is argued that current and future multilateral contributions to basic education are not expected to fill the gap left by donors' withdrawal. This underlines the need for increased efforts to coordinate education aid (Winthrop et al., 2011).

A qualitative study of donor funding pointed to the following determinants of aid allocation to education (Steer & Wathne, 2009): donor prioritization and leadership, issues relating to the aid architecture, and the availability of evidence and how it is used (e.g. in advocacy), were identified as the most important, followed by the absorption capacity of partners, partner demand and donor capacity to be active in the education sector.[81] According to the study, while absorptive capacity has been discussed widely in the literature, it was not considered to be the most significant factor in basic education funding decisions. It was indicated that capacity constraints could be reduced if donors and funding agencies were better coordinated.

[80] Some of the countries with low education indicators that have nevertheless experienced reductions of bilateral aid to education are: Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Zambia, Benin, Mozambique, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Rwanda and Ghana (Winthrop et al., 2011).

[81] Findings based on a literature review, 70 interviews with various donor representatives, 19 in-depth donor agency case studies and two country cases.

However, it is not merely the amount of aid for education that matters, but also the efficiency and effectiveness with which that aid is used. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 6 on the way in which the Netherlands has provided aid for education in partner countries. There has been little attention to this issue at a global level (Fredriksen, 2011).[82] Due to the high share of recurrent expenditure in the education sector, predictability of aid and avoidance of aid dependency are important components of effective aid delivery (Fredriksen, 2010). Countries that depend heavily on external financing for education cannot be confident in their future ability to scale-up or even maintain national education sector plans (Winthrop et al., 2011). This risks affecting the way in which the education sector is organized and managed and lead to aid substituting domestic public expenditure (Fredriksen, 2010).

4.6 Conclusions

Total Dutch aid for basic education amounted to more than €3.5 billion during the evaluation period – an average of €350 million a year.[83] The funding was channelled through bilateral programmes in partner countries (55%), through multilateral organizations (29%) and through civil society organizations (13%). However, the Netherlands did not only contribute with financial resources, it also invested in human resources as part of its education programme, such as education advisors, who participated in dialogue at country and global levels with other donors, as well as in research and knowledge sharing.

More than half the bilateral expenditure was spent in SSA. By far the largest share (77%) of delegated bilateral expenditure went to primary education, followed by TVET and basic life skills (8%). Supported by the introduction of the sector-wide approach and the Fast Track Initiative, the Netherlands' development assistance for basic education increased rapidly after 2000, with a peak of funding in 2007. Though the input target for basic education (15% of ODA by 2007) clearly gave an impulse to the education programme, the target was not reached during the evaluation period.

The Netherlands was the fourth-largest basic education donor during most of the evaluation period. However, since 2007, the Netherlands' expenditure on basic education has been reduced as a result of a de-prioritization of basic education in the Ministry's policies. This decline will be exacerbated now that basic education has been dubbed a 'posteriority' by the present government. Whether this shift in priorities will affect the total amount of ODA spent on basic education remains to be seen, but given the limited options for offsetting contributions from other donors, this certainly demands attention.

[82] One study found that global aid to education had a significant and positive effect on primary schooling enrolment worldwide in the period 1999-2007 (D'Aiglepierre & Wagner, 2010). However, the authors do not unveil the processes through which aid had a positive effect and fail to resolve whether the positive effect happens because aid led to higher enrolment or because aid was awarded to countries with faster growth in enrolment.

[83] More precisely, total Dutch aid for basic education amounted to €3.1 billion between 2003 and 2009. The data before 2003 is not compatible. Basic education expenditure for 1999 to 2002 is only available for the bilateral channel (€410 million in total). However, during that period NGOs and multilaterals were also supported, but no allocations were assigned to the basic education portfolio as was the case since 2003.

Part II: Effects

5

What works?

It has been convincingly established that access to quality education brings social and economic benefits to both individuals and to societies (see Chapter 3). The next question that needs to be asked is what is effective to get children into school and how to help them learn. What works, and why? Because resources are limited, it is necessary to look carefully at ways of achieving the best value for money.

The Netherlands has supported many different education interventions, but these cannot easily be identified because of the way in which this support is provided. The Netherlands supported many NGOs and multilateral organizations which, among other things, built schools, provided scholarships, and trained teachers for informal schools, even in harsh post-conflict contexts. However, it is not possible, or desirable perhaps, to evaluate every intervention supported by the Netherlands because the Netherlands deliberately contributed to broad national education sector strategies or NGO programmes, without earmarking specific interventions.

Because of this, a systematic literature review was set up to provide evidence for plausible links between the types of interventions supported by the Netherlands and the objectives of improving access to school and improving the quality of education. More than 70 studies, predominantly carried out in developing countries, were identified for this review. The detailed findings, references and methodology can be found in the IOB publication 'Lessons Learnt' (IOB, 2011b).

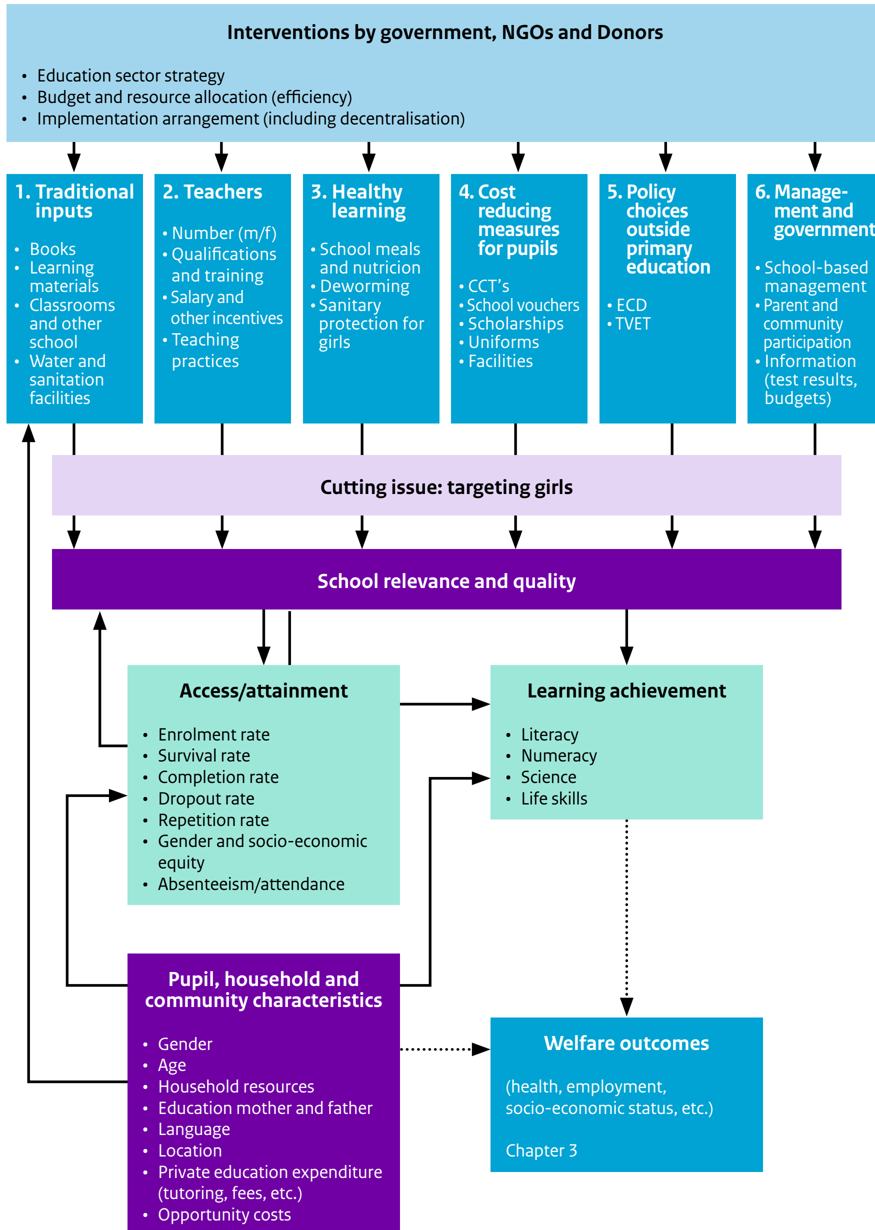
5.1 Interventions

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, the findings of the literature review have been structured in six categories, and one cross-cutting category, of frequently applied interventions, often supported indirectly by the Netherlands:[84]

1. School infrastructure and resources: traditional educational inputs such as books, classrooms and school infrastructure, including water and sanitation.
2. Teachers: teacher numbers, teaching qualifications and incentive.
3. Inputs for 'healthy learning': health and nutrition interventions such as deworming, giving iron supplements and providing school meals.
4. Reducing costs for pupils: cash transfers, vouchers, scholarships and the distribution of school uniforms.
5. Management and governance: for example, decentralization, school management (head teachers, directors), inspectorates, parents' and community participation.
6. Policy choices beyond primary education, such as early childhood education and technical and vocational education.
7. Specific interventions targeted at girls' education (cross-cutting category).

[84] The review focused on the impact of interventions within the education sector, excluding other factors that determine whether children go to school, or whether they learn once they get there.

Figure 5.1 *Interventions*



By no means is this literature review all encompassing. There appears to be, for example, very little research into the effectiveness of different teaching methods and the teaching process in developing countries. However, a more elaborate search specifically focused on different aspects of teaching and pedagogic approaches (for example, curriculum development, language of instruction, child-centred approaches, student tracking, teacher competencies etc.) might generate additional sources of research. This did not fit, however, within the more limited scope of this literature review.

Moreover, the answer to 'what works, and why?' is obviously context-specific. No Top-20 or blueprint exist. Nevertheless, the evidence gleaned from professional literature and the country evaluations in Uganda, Zambia, and Bangladesh does provide some pointers on what has worked to improve the outcomes of the education process in specific cases. In reality, a mix of interventions will work better than standalone projects. And continuous monitoring and evaluation remains essential for improving knowledge of what gets children into school and how they learn best.

5.2 Literature review

A number of promising avenues for enhancing access to education and improving education quality in developing countries emerge from research evidence. Table 5.1 below presents a summary of the main findings of the studies that were reviewed and highlights where relatively firm conclusions can be drawn.[85] The literature used for this overview can be found in the report of the literature review 'Lessons learnt' (IOB, 2011b). Only the country evaluations by IOB will be mentioned in this chapter, as these refer to interventions supported (indirectly) by the Netherlands.

These conclusions all carry certain reservations as many are context-specific and cannot easily be generalized to suit different contexts or larger scales. The ideal mix of education interventions is likely to vary from setting to setting. It will probably be determined by local context, local conditions, prior experience and the aspirations of parents, communities and government. This explains why research results are not always consistent.

Therefore, once the predominantly quantitative research has provided evidence of what works and what does not work, it is important to investigate '*why*?'. Education interventions should not be assessed in isolation, but as a package, in sequencing also matters. This needs to be done using more qualitative research methods to bring to the surface the precise processes that lead to learning.

[85] The table follows the format and borrows from a similar table developed by (Michaelowa & Wechtler, 2006). The table deliberately does not provide estimates of effectiveness or cost-effectiveness, as those are generally incomparable.

Table 5.1 What works?	
Policy measure	**Recommendations from literature**
1. Traditional inputs[86]	
Books and learning materials	• Textbooks are an effective input for student learning in developing countries • One book per pupil in core subjects, and no less than one book for every two pupils otherwise • Other teaching aids such as teacher manuals and wall charts are also useful inputs • The evidence for the usefulness of computers is mixed. Computers, where feasible, might enhance learning if they complement rather than substitute for teaching • Books and teaching aids have to be used effectively, after they have been distributed to pupils (with accompanying teacher manuals)
School infrastructure	• There is very limited evidence that expensive school infrastructure has a significant impact on performance • There is some evidence that a minimum standard for classrooms is important (for example, a roof). Given that infrastructure can easily become a high expenditure item, guaranteeing basic requirements for learning are met would be more cost-effective. • Insufficient evidence of the impact of water and sanitation facilities on girls' participation and performance
2. Teachers[87]	
Teachers	• Reducing pupil-teacher ratios brings only modest impact up to a threshold of about 50-60 pupils in primary education • Double shifts are found to reduce effective teaching time and do not lower costs (when shifts are done by different teachers) • Contract teachers can have a positive impact, but not always and the sustainability of this approach is doubted • Private tutoring has an impact on learning, but raises equity concerns given the cost
Teacher training	• Teacher training can improve performance of pupils • Quality of training for teachers, both at pre- and in-service level, is far more important than the number of years spent studying
Incentives for teachers	• In some cases, incentives and effective control (based on teacher inputs and test results) are found to have reduced absenteeism and improved students' performance • Community and parents' monitoring can be a useful addition to accountability mechanisms • Accommodation and improved access to schools is found to reduce absenteeism • The effectiveness of incentives is more evident in developing countries (where, amongst others, standard salaries are lower) • However, incentives should be designed carefully and closely monitored in order to avoid negative side-effects (such as concentration on final tests, better pupils)

86 (IOB, 2008a) (IOB, 2008b) (IOB, 2011c) (IOB, 2011e)

87 (IOB, 2008a) (IOB, 2008b) (IOB, 2011c) (IOB, 2011e)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Table 5.1 What works?</th></tr>
<tr><th>Policy measure</th><th colspan="2">Recommendations from literature</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">3. Inputs for healthy learning</th></tr>
<tr><td>Nutrition, school meals, iron supplementation</td><td colspan="2">• Effective in improving attendance and enrolment
• Mixed evidence of impact on performance
• May produce unexpected effects when school meals reduce class time
• Full school meals are costly in terms of food and effort
• Therefore, snacks of high nutritional value as an alternative to a full meal might be more useful</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other health: Deworming</td><td colspan="2">• Regular deworming improves attendance and performance for pupils at primary level
• Only relevant in high prevalence areas</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">4. Cost-reducing measures for pupils</th></tr>
<tr><td>Conditional cash transfer programmes</td><td>• There is evidence of impact on enrolment and on increasing years of schooling when targeted at pupils who are otherwise unlikely to enrol
• The evidence on performance is inconclusive</td><td rowspan="2">• Experiments are mostly in Latin America (which has a relatively large private sector), so it may not be possible to replicate it elsewhere
• Requires careful assessment against alternative use of resources for improving education access and quality, given considerable expense and lack of evidence of impact on performance
• Requires careful design (for example timing and targeting of transfers)</td></tr>
<tr><td>School vouchers</td><td>• Only applicable where there is excess capacity in the private sector.
• Though reducing costs, mainly intended to improve quality. Yet, limited evidence of effect on quality of increased choice
• The evidence on attendance and performance is inconclusive.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scholarships and school fees[88]</td><td colspan="2">• Abolishment of school fees has large effect on school enrolment
• Merit scholarships can improve attendance and learning outcomes
• Has positive effects on peers
• Has been combined effectively with rewards for teachers, parents and pupils
• Again, careful design is required taking into consideration side effects and considering context as it may not be possible to replicate uniformly</td></tr>
<tr><td>Financing school uniforms (where relevant)</td><td colspan="2">• Found to be effective in reducing absenteeism, and improving performance
• Only applicable in countries where school uniforms are required (social pressure can exist even if they are no longer obligatory)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other observations</td><td colspan="2">• Cost-reducing interventions are generally effective in increasing demand for education in developing countries.
• Additional targeting might be required for particular disadvantaged and excluded groups of children
• (Perceived) quality, relevance and benefit of education also affect demand for education (see role information below)
• Need to consider side effects, both positive and negative, on other pupils and children in the household</td></tr>
</table>

[88] (IOB, 2008a) (IOB, 2008b) (IOB, 2011c) (IOB, 2011e)

Table 5.1 What works?	
Policy measure	**Recommendations from literature**
5. Policy choices outside primary education	
Early childhood development	• Highly effective in promoting cognitive development and school readiness • Improves performance in school at higher levels • Though costly, still more cost-effective than remedial programmes • Spin-off effects on health and parental involvement in schooling • Of particular benefit to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
Technical and vocational education	• In selected countries in East Asia and Latin America, vocational education can provide employment opportunities (but often at relatively high costs per student) • It has a mixed impact on gender differences in the labour market • There is limited evidence for other developing countries and an absence of research for early TVET compared to post-secondary TVET
6. Management and governance[89]	
Education management (e.g. decentralization, inspectorates)	• Effectiveness depends on capacity of sub-national government levels, schools, parents and communities. Improving capacity of district or municipal officers can improve school performances • Important to monitor equity implications arising from varying financial and institutional capacities • School inspections can reduce teacher absenteeism and improve performance of pupils
School-based management (head teachers)	• Enhanced school management (head teachers, directors) improves learning, for example by improving teacher attendance and teaching, and enhance the use of resources • Head teacher supervision, combined with inspections, can improve teaching processes
Parent and community participation	• Can affect pupil and teacher attendance • However, participation has to have clout, i.e. authority to act rather than merely being involved in school activities
Information (for example on school test results, budgets)	• Information has an impact on access to education and quality of education, through its use in management and governance (for example monitoring and signalling) • Information requires careful design (with regard to the content, use, avoidance of misuse and manipulation)
7. Interventions for girls[90]	
• General policies affecting distance to school, cost of education and quality of education improve girls' enrolment and performance • Specific gender policies that are effective include female teachers and incentives for households to enrol girls in school • Research has identified that inadequate menstrual care forms a barrier to schooling for girls. However, further research is needed to identify what interventions remove such barriers to girls' participation and performance (including provision of sanitary pads, single sex toilets) • Given that there is often a different effect of interventions for girls and boys, it is important to monitor impact of education policies on both girls and boys	

89 (IOB, 2008a) (IOB, 2008b) (IOB, 2011c) (IOB, 2011e), also (Burns, Filmer, & Patrinos, 2011)
90 (IOB, 2011c)

To sum up, supply-side interventions such as books, learning materials, classrooms and other infrastructure are considered rather cost-effective ways of improving learning in low-income countries where such inputs are still relatively scarce. Every child should have at least one book for key subjects at primary level. Without teachers, however, there will be no learning. Yet, in order for textbooks to be used and the contact between teachers and pupils to be productive, effective management of schools and of the education sector as a whole is required. When parents and communities become involved in schools, this has a positive effect on the learning environment. In terms of the demand for education, cost reducing measures that target pupils and their households mostly address access to education rather than learning. Merit-based scholarships seem to be a more cost-effective demand-side intervention that does affect student performance, albeit with mixed evidence from different contexts.

All incentive schemes, such as vouchers but also schemes for teachers, require careful planning, particularly with regard to targeting and timing. It should also be kept in mind that targeted interventions can have side effects that may not be immediately obvious. For example, thought should be given to the potential effects of a scholarship on other children in the household and in the community. Also, teachers can easily improve student test scores if poor performing students do not participate in the tests. Therefore, some incentive schemes included both the number of students participating in the final tests and the test scores as indicators.

It is also important to monitor the effect of education interventions on girls compared to boys. Evidence suggests that girls also benefit from several interventions that target them explicitly, such as recruiting female teachers or offering stipends for girls' education. In the area of sanitary provisions (such as single sex toilets), there is still limited evidence of effectiveness. This is surprising given that there is evidence that this is an significant barrier to access for girls and it is thus often included in strategies targeting girls.

When allocating resources, policy makers do not base their decisions solely on whether an education programme is efficient and cost effective. Certainly, these are important, but there are many other factors that are considered. Feasibility, including political feasibility, matters, as well as the internal politics of the education sector. For example, in many countries, teachers' unions play an important role in determining what education reforms are feasible, and not only with regard to teacher incentives. Issues such as, for example, the decentralization of the education system and the feasibility of school inspections are often politically sensitive. It has also been argued that it is actually not the economic rationale that drives states to provide education, but the importance the state attaches to socialization and the 'inculcation of beliefs' (Pritchett, 2008).

Chapter 6 assesses the effectiveness of the Dutch contribution to the education sector in four of the EPCs. Chapter 7 looks at the support provided through Dutch NGOs. In both instances, support has been provided for several of the interventions described above.

6

Effectiveness – Supporting national education strategies

6.1 Introduction

Following the World Conferences on Education for All (WCEFA) of 1990 and 2000, the Dutch education policy focused on supporting governments to implement their national education strategies. According to the 1999 Dutch policy on education 'the aim is to work with governments and other donors towards sectoral support through budget support for the entire sector, a sub-sector or specific budget headings, or – where cooperation with other donors is not yet possible – through bilateral support.' This way of working fitted with the sectoral approach to bilateral cooperation and set out to 'promote synergy and effectiveness and minimize procedural complexity' (MFA, 2000). The conditions for bilateral cooperation were that a partner country's national policy should prioritize education, and within that sector, basic education (MFA, 2000). Since then, attention has shifted towards supporting the overall education sector strategy, though basic education remains the focal point.

The focus on supporting governments to implement their own national education strategies did not exclude additional inputs from civil society. The Dutch policy on education explicitly called for cooperation between national governments and NGOs at country level. The policy did stress, however, that in order to be sustainable, projects need to be integrated within the sectoral approach and fit with national education sector strategies (TK, 2004d). Local and international NGOs that are active in the education sector in partner countries can also be directly supported by the Dutch embassies.[91]

The 1999 Dutch policy on basic education stressed the importance of donor coordination and cooperation.[92] For example, since 2004, the Netherlands has been working closely with and through other bilateral donors, sometimes in silent partnerships. Dutch support for the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was expected to provide the means for donor coordination and alignment with the national education strategies, regardless of the financing mechanisms used by different donors (as discussed in Box 6.1). Moreover, the country level operations of the World Bank and the European Commission (EC) receive indirect financial support from the Netherlands through the core-funding for the World Bank and EC.

This chapter assesses the ways in which the Netherlands has worked with national governments, national NGOs and other donors in four partner countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia. Despite the variances between the countries selected, it is possible to extract general lessons about successes and challenges from the decade or more during which the Netherlands was supporting basic education in developing countries.

91 Furthermore, several Dutch non-governmental organizations, in receipt of funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the MFS subsidy (Medefinancieringsstelsel), support basic education programmes in Dutch partner countries. This will be discussed in depth in Chapter 7.

92 See for example the definition of the sectoral approach in the 2000 policy: 'Incorporation of the aid into the sectoral policy framework created by the recipient government and seeking maximum coordination with other donors' (MFA, 2000).

In keeping with the terms of reference for these country evaluations, the synthesis of the findings has been categorized into:

- Inputs: direct contribution by the Netherlands
- Outputs: national education sector policies supported by the Netherlands
- Outcomes: results at country level stemming from joint efforts, including the efforts of the Netherlands.

6.2 Country case studies

In 2000 18 countries/regions were identified as education partner countries (EPCs). These were Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Mali, Macedonia, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Africa, Suriname, Tanzania, the Palestinian Territories, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia. In 2006, education sector support for Tanzania and Macedonia stopped, and India ended its aid relationship with the Netherlands. In 2011, an announcement was made to reduce the number of partner countries from 33 to 15, which meant that the country programmes in Pakistan, Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Zambia will all end within the next few years. In the other EPCs, the education programmes will most probably be phased out over the next two to three years (TK, 2011a).

From the EPCs, four were selected for in-depth evaluations: Uganda, Bolivia, Bangladesh and Zambia. In Uganda and Zambia two evaluations were undertaken in 2008 and 2011. The evaluations in Bolivia and Bangladesh took place in 2011. More detail on the Dutch contribution to basic education in Uganda, Zambia, Bolivia and Bangladesh can be found in the individual country reports.[93]

This is not a representative sample as the countries have been purposefully selected to illustrate different stages of development of the education sector, different types of Dutch engagement and very different country contexts (see Table 6.1).

[93] See: IOB (2008a; 2008b; 2011c; 2011d; 2011e; forthcoming)

Table 6.1 Overview and context of selected country cases

Country	GDP per capita[95]	NER primary		Dutch contribution to basic education excl. GBS[96]	Public expenditure on education[97]
	(current US$)	1999[98]	2009	1999-2009 (€ million)	(% of government expenditure)
Uganda	1.217	84	92	106	15
Zambia	1.430	69	91	141	22
Bangladesh	1.416	65	86	119	14
Bolivia	4.419	95	94	101	18
World	10.646	82	88	1.989	14
The Netherlands	48.068	99	99	98.585[99]	12

Source: World Bank Indicators and UIS (date of access July-August 2011).

The Netherlands does not operate in isolation, but in close cooperation with governments in partner countries, NGOs and other donors. Therefore, this chapter also takes into account conclusions about the country operations carried out by the World Bank, the EC and the FTI that emerge from recent evaluations (Box 6.1). Those evaluations are relevant because these organizations are important partners of the Netherlands, at global and country levels.

It is obviously difficult to isolate the effects of Dutch education sector support on education outcomes from other factors that might have had a positive or negative impact (e.g. government policies, socio-economic status of the family, impact of NGO projects, contribution of other donors, financial crisis etc.). With sector-wide approaches (SWAp) as provided by the Netherlands it is particularly hard, and some might claim even inappropriate, to attribute results to the contribution of individual actors.

94 To ensure comparability World Bank Indicators and UIS data were used to calculate the figures in this table (unless indicated otherwise). These data are indicative, for a more thorough discussion of indicators see the IOB country evaluations.

95 2009 or most recent year.

96 General budget support was, however, an important part of the Dutch contribution to the education sector in Zambia and Uganda. Definitions slightly differ. For more information, see countries reports.

97 2009 or most recent year.

98 Uganda data for 1999 is derived from IOB (2008a) and based on Uganda Bureau of Statistics data for 1999/2000. The Bangladesh data for 1999 is derived from IOB (2011c) and based on Household Income and Expenditure Survey data for 2000.

99 This is the Dutch government expenditure on primary education for 1999-2009, the total education expenditure was 330,721 million (www.cbs.nl).

The country studies use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide evidence of possible linkages between the Dutch input and results in the education sector. For Uganda and Zambia, statistical impact evaluation was used to determine the effects of the policies supported by the Netherlands.[100] In Bangladesh a combination of qualitative evaluation of class rooms practices was combined with a statistical analysis to compare support to the government and to national NGOs. In Bolivia the evaluation was more qualitative due to data limitations. However, in each case, it has been possible to identify plausible links between results in the national education sector and the Dutch inputs, through the national policies supported by the Netherlands and other donors.[101]

6.3 Inputs: What did the Netherlands deliver?

The Dutch inputs to education in the country cases being examined here are not only financial and human resources inputs. They also include the specific ways in which aid was delivered and the dialogue that accompanied it.

During most of the evaluation period, the Netherlands was the third-largest bilateral donor to the education sector internationally – only the United Kingdom and the United States gave more. And at country level too, the Netherlands was often among the largest donors. In Bolivia, for example, the Dutch contribution accounts for 24% of total donor commitments, and in Zambia, Uganda and Bangladesh the Netherlands was also among the largest donors.

The Netherlands did not only invest financial resources, but dedicated human resources to support the education sector in the EPCs. In all countries evaluated, the embassies included teams of experienced education experts that were made up of both Dutch and local staff. Also in some countries the Netherlands provided support for technical assistance for the ministries of education, for example in the areas of gender, curriculum development and teacher training.

To date, the Netherlands has been valued by national governments and other donors for its leading role in advancing education aid effectiveness. This has been facilitated by:
- The Netherlands' strong commitment to basic education (including an input target of 15% of official development assistance);

[100] At sector level, which is the focus of the Dutch basic education policy, it is a challenge to establish the so-called counterfactual for an evaluation, i.e. to identify what would have happened without or with different kinds of support. The impact evaluations as have been carried out by IOB in Uganda and Zambia, make use of heterogeneity in implementation of national primary education policies to create the required counterfactual for the evaluation. See: Elbers, Gunning, & de Hoop (2007); IOB (2008a); IOB (2008b).

[101] The methodology for these evaluations is described in the terms of reference for the individual country evaluations (see reports). There are wide variations in availability of information for evaluating the effectiveness of the education strategies (supported by the Netherlands), and in the attention given to this issue by the embassies.

- A strong preference for a sector-wide approach to education support as an answer to the proliferation of projects;
- Commitment to the principles of the Paris declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results and mutual accountability) since 2005;
- Delegating authority to its embassies in partner countries; and
- Education expertise from both Dutch and local staff in countries.

The extent to which Dutch support to national education sector strategies has in effect been aligned, harmonized and coordinated with other donors, varies from country to country and from year to year. In each country, support to governments is combined with support to civil society and multilaterals. However, the composition of the education portfolio in each country case differs (e.g. aid modalities and instruments, focus of support). For example, the Netherlands uses various gradations of sector support to fund government education sector policies, as depicted in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 *Sector support*

Modality	Off budget, non aligned	Partly aligned	On budget, fully aligned
Examples	*Project support, basket funds*	*Social funds, basket and pooled funds, co-financing*	*Sector/general budget support*
Bangladesh			
Bolivia			
Uganda			
Zambia			

In Bangladesh, the Netherlands was initially hesitant to provide support through a SWAp because of the government's poor track record and perceived fiduciary risks. Support for non-formal education was scaled-up instead. At a certain point, the Bangladesh government itself saw the SWAp merely as a mechanism for donor control; and stated its preference for coordinated project support. Currently, while the conditions for full SBS have not been achieved, pooled funding through the Asian Development Bank has been adopted as an interim step. Similarly, in Bolivia, where funding is provided as part of a basket, the conditions for full SBS are also not fulfilled – for example, there is no medium-term expenditure framework. Moreover, the government itself prefers the way in which support for education is ring-fenced in a special account rather than being provided as budget support through the treasury.

In Zambia and Uganda general budget support played an important role in the Dutch support to basic education. It enabled the Netherlands to discuss funding for the education sector at a higher level. In Uganda, sector support was replaced by general budget support between 2003 and 2008. Education funding was notionally earmarked and disbursements depended on progress in the sector. In 2008, the Netherlands moved back from general budget support to education sector budget support because of governance issues and poor results in the education sector.[102] Both in Zambia and Uganda, the general budget support was, however, combined with sector budget support and additional projects with government. For example, in Zambia in 2004, the Netherlands funded the salaries of 7,700 teachers. This enabled the government to remove these teachers from the payroll, which allowed the recruitment of a comparable number of new teachers at a total cost of €9.2 million (IOB, 2011e).

When discussing education aid effectiveness at country level, it is imperative to highlight the global Fast Track Initiative (FTI), which was set up as a mechanism for coordinating support to the education sector at country level. The Netherlands has contributed financially and intellectually to the FTI since its inception.

[102] This was also noted by the World Bank with regard to Poverty Reduction Support Operations (PRSO), which is comparable to general budget support. The review concluded that most countries that used PRSO for education support went back to parallel investment projects. While PRSO did support the education programme (e.g. through dialogue with central ministries), it also lacked the depth of engagement. Parallel sector lending was important to tackle more detailed sector issues and facilitate ownership of line ministries (IEG, 2011b).

Box 6.1 *Aid effectiveness – the Fast Track Initiative (FTI)*[103]

A recent critical evaluation of the FTI concluded that it had reached 'admirable objectives but with insufficient attention given to the mechanisms through which they were achieved' (Cambridge Education, Mokoro, Oxford Policy Management, 2010). More specifically:

At global level:

- The FTI has been an important global forum. It has allowed donors to work across agencies and develop common approaches. It has helped to keep EFA on the agenda by gathering a broad coalition that is committed to EFA goals. The FTI also steered donors towards supporting country-owned plans and processes, thus fostering aid effectiveness.
- The design principles of the FTI (its focus on ownership, aid effectiveness and being guided by national education sector plans) remain pertinent.
- The FTI has been an important vehicle for expanding funding for basic education – not just for the Netherlands, but also for other donors such as Spain and the United Kingdom. However, other donors have not followed suit, and the initiative has had limited impact on resource mobilization both globally and nationally.
- The FTI 'coalition' was, however, under stress from the onset. The FTI was launched while it was still at the design stage and being discussed by donors. For example, not all actors agreed with the initial focus on a select number of best-performing countries, and the FTI was soon open to all countries eligible for international development assistance (IDA). This lack of clarity has affected the FTI's effectiveness (e.g. ineffective communications, capacity Secretariat).

At country level:

- The FTI has been a source of additional support for basic education in several countries (even though the expected 'multiplier effect' failed to occur). Often innovative finance mechanisms were used. The technical support provided by the Education Programme Development Fund was a useful addition to the Catalytic Fund.
- The FTI is mainly seen as a source of funding, not only by partner countries and civil society but also by donors.

[103] Based on the mid-term evaluation of EFA FTI conducted in 2008-2010 (Cambridge Education, Mokoro, Oxford Policy Management, 2010)

- A number of design features hindered the effectiveness of the FTI at country level:
  - Financing of broad education sector strategies, while the focus was on UPE.
  - Unbalanced partnership, focused on donors rather than on recipient countries.
  - Ineffective communications (for example, a blurring of the distinction between monitoring and advocacy), undermining credibility and transparency, and lack of clarity about processes and rules leading to high transaction costs.
  - Capacity building focused more on planning than on implementation (for example, the quality of education sector plans improved, but the FTI had a limited effect on M&E).
  - The aid effectiveness agenda was not delivered convincingly enough (for example, mutual accountability was also insufficient). The progress made by the FTI remained dependent on the existing practice at country level rather than catalysing change.
  - The focus was on one-off endorsements rather than on building continuous relationships.
  - The capacity of the secretariat was limited.

This also has had particular implications for the ability to operate in emergencies, post-conflict countries and fragile states, where, for example, the World Bank (the primary supervising entity) is less active. Strict financing procedures hinder alignment, and national education sector strategies are a particular challenge in those countries.

The recommendations of the evaluation have been taken on board as part of the reform process of the FTI. For example, the restrictions of the relationship with the World Bank have been addressed. Where the World Bank is unable to be the supervising entity, other agencies and donors can be the supervising entity, for example, the Netherlands in Zambia and UNICEF in several fragile states. The board of the FTI has added seats for developing countries and civil society.[104]

In all countries studied, several common challenges have been identified with regard to the SWAp, which was advocated strongly in the 1999 policy. Several of these findings echo earlier, broader evaluations of sector support (see e.g. IOB, 2006) and have been noted for other sectors as well:

- Transaction costs for education ministries are said to have decreased in all countries studied, as was the aim of applying the principles of the Paris Declaration in the field of education. However, transaction costs for donors were high. Given limited capacity of embassies, this risked resulting in inefficient use of resources. This is the case, for example, when education experts were blogged down by administrative procedures and coordination processes, at the expense of attention to the content of the education

[104] http://www.educationfasttrack.org/reform/

programme. To some extent this focus was warranted because of cases of corruption and financial mismanagement in the ministries of education of some EPCs. However, at times more attention was given to financial monitoring than to monitoring of results at school level and among children.
- In all countries evaluated, girls' education did receive special attention, through dialogue with governments, support for targeted projects and use of disaggregated education data. However, the strong drive to provide non-earmarked contributions to national governments' education sector strategies, combined with a reduction of project support and technical assistance - all part of the SWAp - is thought to have been at times a barrier to the targeting and tracking of outcomes for other disadvantaged groups. More explicitly targeted interventions had to be used in all country cases to improve education for children who had hitherto not been brought into the education system (the so-called hard-to-reach, e.g. children with special needs).[105] In most cases, this also required the use of other aid modalities (e.g. technical assistance, project support for governments, NGOs and multilateral organisations such as UNICEF).

Though the focus of the Dutch support to basic education has been on supporting governments, in most countries the Netherlands has taken a *two-pronged approach* to its country education programmes. It has complemented the support it gives to governments with support for local NGOs and the local education programmes of multilaterals such as UNICEF and the International Labour Organization. The share of total education support by the Netherlands that went through NGOs and multilateral agencies varied hugely. In Zambia, only 4% of the support goes through NGOs and local programmes of multilaterals. In Uganda, this figure is 20%, In Bolivia, it is 30%, and in Bangladesh 76% of total education programme support goes through non-governmental channels.

Alternatives to the government support have been used when cooperation with government was not desirable (as was the case initially for support to BRAC). Alternatives were also used to address issues that government had not prioritized, for example, vocational education in Bolivia (FAUTAPO) and education in conflict-affected areas as in Northern Uganda, or to access particular disadvantaged groups (Zambia – FAWEZA; Bangladesh – FIVDB).

In several countries, the two-pronged approach also included efforts to improve relationships between the national government and NGOs in order to promote the sustainability of Dutch support. In Bangladesh, the Netherlands supports a local NGO network, the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). Its aim is to strengthen relationships both between NGOs, and between government and the NGOs. However, here and in the other countries in the sample, there is still scope for increasing the spillover of innovations made by NGOs towards the government and improving the sustainability of their results (as is confirmed by the review of NGO activities in chapter 7).

[105] A similar concern was voiced in the recent review of the World Bank's education programme (IEG, 2011b)

The Netherlands also invests in coordinating its own support at country level. Since 2007 the co-financing arrangement for Dutch NGOs includes a commitment on behalf of the Dutch NGOs to seek coordination and complementarity with the Dutch country programmes, implemented by the embassies of the Netherlands (MFA, 2006a). An internal analysis of the Ministry indicated a wide variation from hardly any contact to structural consultation, and in some cases even joint projects (DSO, 2010). Bolivia and Uganda were identified as the two countries with most intensive cooperation. For example, in Bolivia, the embassy set up a roundtable group, *Mesa de Trabajo en Educación*, to coordinate the activities of the different local, international and Dutch NGOs supported by the Netherlands.

6.4 Outputs: Education strategies supported by the Netherlands

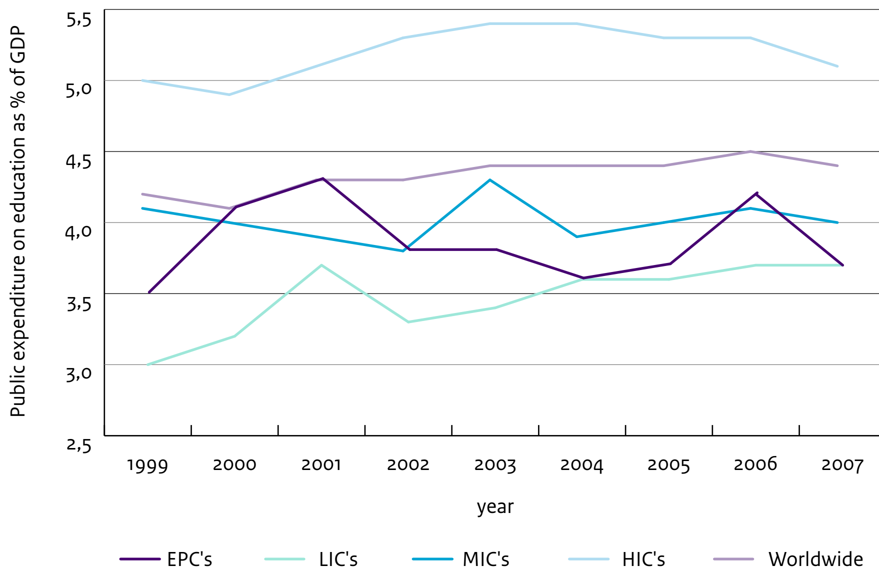
The Netherlands did not implement its own projects but provides support to national education sector strategies implemented by local actors (mainly governments and local NGOs). Therefore, the country evaluations assessed the effectiveness of the four countries' national education sector policies to which the Netherlands contributed.[106] *They also evaluated the financing and management of the education sector in each country.*

Education financing

Domestic government expenditure has been the primary source of funding for the education sector in developing countries. In the countries studied, expenditure on education grew in line with economic growth, and has remained stable as a percentage of GDP over the past ten years. Figure 6.2 illustrates how the average public expenditure on education by the Dutch EPCs is above the average of low-income countries as a whole. In the evaluated countries, expenditure on basic education (primary and lower secondary) still accounts for the largest share of education spending compared to other levels. But its share is declining as a result of increased interest in, relatively expensive, post-primary education.

[106] Chapter 5 discusses in more depth evidence of the effects of specific education interventions on learning. It does this based on a literature review, which includes the findings of the country evaluations in Bangladesh, Uganda and Zambia.

Figure 6.2 *Public spending on education as a percentage of GDP, 1999-2007*[107]



Source: World Bank Indicators and UIS (date of access July-August 2011).

Evidence from Bangladesh and Zambia confirms that external support for the basic education sector has not replaced domestic expenditure. An analysis of the trends in both public and external expenditure on education in Bangladesh between 1990 and 2008 indicates that a 1 % increase in the volume of aid for primary education has been complemented with a 0.3% increase in public expenditure on primary education. Also in Zambia the insistence of donors on increasing domestic resources for education is found to have paid off as domestic expenditure grew by 50% between 2005 and 2009, more than what was required to offset the reduction of the pooled funding for the sector during that period.

With regard to financing of the education sector, the following structural concerns were identified in the country evaluations:

- In several countries, the government's budget allocation for education is limited. For example, Bangladesh's public sector as a whole is underfunded, partly due to tax collection constraints. In Bolivia, much of the education sector budget - more specifically the part that is allocated to popular student grants - is dependent on income from hydrocarbons, which is a volatile source of income to be used for such recurrent expenditure. In Zambia, a large part of the education sector budget, whose share did increase in the past years, is dependent on the copper sector, a similarly volatile source of income.
- Despite high domestic expenditure on education, governments are often dependent on external support for financing key education reforms. A large share of the domestic

[107] Growth rate low income countries for 2005 and 2006 was missing and was extrapolated based on 2004 and 2007 data.

expenditure on education is allocated to teacher salaries (see chapter 4), while donors support capital expenditures and investments. Bolivia's education system became less dependent on external support during the evaluation period, however, 92% of the education budget for investments such as the development and implementation of the curriculum and information and management systems, is still donor funded.
- Local NGOs can be just as dependent on external funding. 100% of the external funding for the *Jonoshilon* programme in Bangladesh comes from the Netherlands. This programme, run by Friends in Village Bangladesh (FIVDB), is found to be effective at providing access to children in very remote areas.
- The Netherlands will pull out of the education sectors in Bangladesh, Bolivia and Zambia in the near future. This is not a result of specific issues with the education programmes in those countries, but rather a consequence of the reprioritization of the Dutch development cooperation programme. It is, however, not the only donor reducing support for basic education. The number of donors to Zambia's education sector was first reduced from 15 to nine (lead by the Netherlands and Ireland) in 2005 as part of a harmonisation strategy. As other donors moved towards general budget support, only four donors remained to form a basket fund (with FTI). Now, three of those four bilateral donors – the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany – will exit the sector in the next few years, leaving the sector with a rather sudden reduction in overall funding. Only Ireland and FTI stay on as donors to Zambia's basic education sector.

Education sector policies

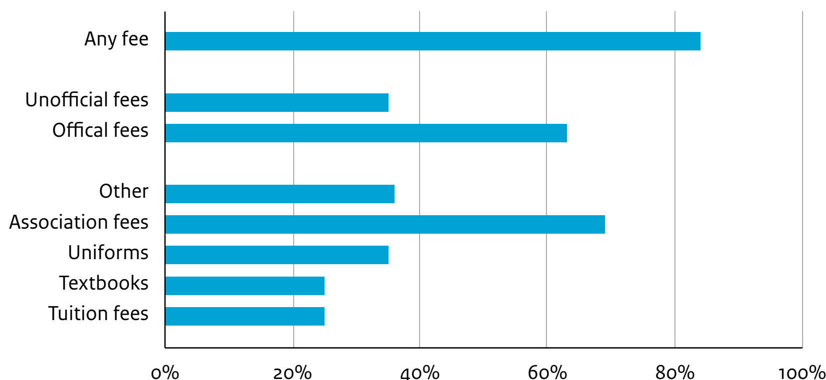
Clearly the education sector does not exist in isolation; it is part of the overall development strategy. The country evaluations have, however, focused on the education sector policies and strategies. Support was provided to both demand and supply side interventions aimed at increasing access and equity and improving the quality and relevance of basic education.

Demand-side interventions

Official school fees for primary education were abolished to improve access to primary education. In Uganda, the president, Yoweri Museveni, announced free primary education for all upon his election as president in 1996. As a result, enrolment exploded from 2.6 million children in 1995 to 8.3 million in 2009. But in Zambia, former president Levy Mwanawasa's similar announcement in 2002 did not lead to a similar explosion in enrolment. Partly because class sizes were capped at around 45, the number of children wanting to attend school could only increase after investments were made in school buildings, classrooms and in increasing the number of teachers. Nevertheless, between 2000 and 2006 total enrolment in basic education grew from 1.8 million to 3.0 million.

Yet, even where it exists, free education is not cheap for families. Figure 6.3 illustrates how, even in countries without official school fees, various payments have to be made. As an example, in Bangladesh costs include transport, uniforms, books, stationery, *tiffin* (snack), mats for the children to sit on at school, monthly fees and, in particular, private tuition. There are opportunity costs associated with education too. Sending children to school instead of to work means a loss of income for the family (as noted in the evaluations of Bangladesh and Uganda, but also found for Bolivia).

Figure 6.3 *Percentage of developing countries charging fees*



Source: Kattan (2006).

In the countries studied, there is evidence that other demand-side interventions such as grants for pupils or their households, have made education more accessible. The evaluations in Bangladesh and Bolivia point to the importance of carefully designing demand-side interventions to ensure that they provide the right incentives. (There is more detail on this in Chapter 5). For example, in Bangladesh the girls' secondary stipend programme led to a shift in resources within households (benefiting girls at the expense of boys) and between schools. Moreover, targeting was found to be poor, which limited the effect on education demand. With regard to the *Bono Juancito Pinto* programme in Bolivia, which gives a small grant to households for all children attending school, there is a similar concern that it might not be a cost-effective way to increase the number of pupils enrolling because of the lack of targeting. As discussed in chapter 5, there is little evidence that such interventions enhance learning (even if they improve attendance).

Supply-side interventions

Over the past ten years, most of the investments made by governments (with support of external donors such as the Netherlands), have been on the supply-side of the education system – supplying schools, teachers and learning materials. The focus on these interventions is not a peculiarly Dutch phenomenon, but has been the same for other donors, multilateral organizations and partner governments. It is linked to the focus on access to education as expressed in EFA targets and the MDGs, which require inputs such as school and teachers (Filmer, Hasan, & Pritchett, 2006).

The leap forward in increasing enrolment would probably not have happened if donors had not concentrated their efforts on supporting relatively straightforward investments in schools, classrooms and the numbers of teachers. Increased enrolment had to be matched with improved supply; otherwise it results in escalating pupil–teacher ratios, sharing books, double shifts and other barriers to learning. Indeed, in the countries evaluated, impressive numbers of schools and classrooms have been built. Books have been distributed and extra teachers have been recruited (see Figure 6.4). For example:

- In Zambia, after years of underinvestment, 3,100 schools and 19,000 classrooms were built. The numbers of teaching staff increased by 26,000 between 2000 and 2010, with the largest increases occurring after 2005. As a result, pupil–teacher ratios remained relatively stable. And this is despite an increase in basic education enrolment from 1.8 million to 3.4 million children between 2000 and 2009.
- In Uganda, tackling the poorly performing state monopoly on publishing textbooks improved production and distribution costs. Locally produced instruction materials, with the participation of schools, is said to have led to better use of these resources. Pupil–book ratios improved compared to 2000 when, on average, four children shared each book. But children are still sharing books. And, as the evaluation reports note, school books are not always effectively used.
- In Bangladesh, special effort was made to increase the number of female teachers by adapting entry requirements and other positive discrimination measures. This increased the percentage of female teachers in formal education from 36% of the total teaching cadre in 2001 to 47% in 2009.
- In a country like Bolivia, where the inhabitants are widely dispersed in some areas, the solution for improving access to education is not always building more schools. The government's education sector strategy also includes the provision of transportation and boarding in order to reduce the distance to schools in rural areas.

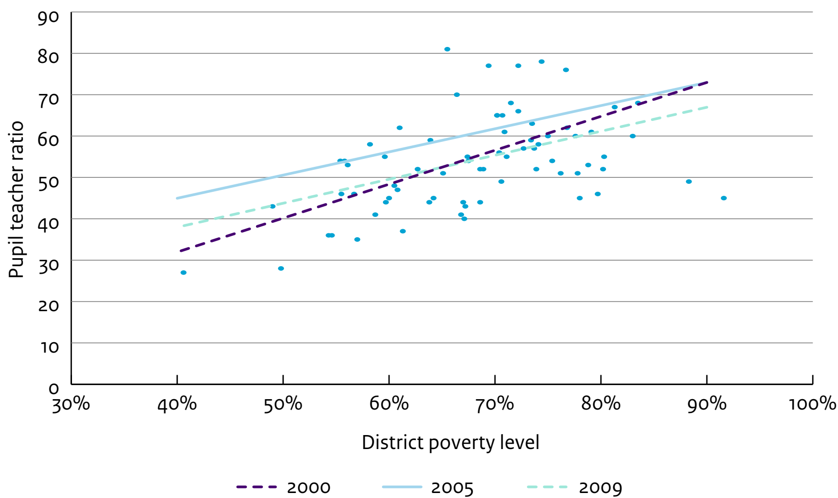
The private sector absorbed part of the increased demand for education.[108] In Zambia, of the 3,100 new schools that opened between 2000 and 2010, a lot were community schools. These are schools set up by communities to overcome barriers to education such as the distance to school and the cost of sending their children to school. 30% of the increase in enrolment between 2000 and 2006 happened in community schools (some of which now receive government support). In Bangladesh, the NGO BRAC provides access to around 1 million children. In addition, an increasing number of children attend madrasah schools (religious schools). This is worrying because the standard of education in these schools has been inadequate. The way in which private schools were integrated into overall education sector strategies varies from country to country. The Dutch support to non-formal and alternative education outside of the public sector also varied between EPCs, depending on how it fitted with support to the national public education sector strategy as discussed above.

[108] Both for-profit and not-for-profit (NGO, community schools), whether or not registered, whether or not offering a formal curriculum, as opposed to public schooling.

Allocation of resources
In many countries, including those in the sample, the allocation of public resources for education has been skewed. For example, urban communities fared better than remote, rural areas and access and standards of education differed between socio-economic groups. Benefit incidence studies that look at the distribution of expenditure in education between population groups or regions can be useful to inform policy development in this area. For example, in Bolivia, analysis uncovered a wide variation in expenditure per student between different departments and municipalities. These variations did not seem to reflect cost differences, or the provision of additional resources for poorer municipalities.

Figure 6.4 illustrates for Zambia how poor districts still have higher pupil-teacher ratios, though the allocation improved between 2000 and 2005. Part of this is explained by the difficulty of posting teachers in rural areas (despite incentives provided by the government). However, enrolment growth has also been larger in rural areas, which exacerbates the differences with urban, richer areas. Moreover, the Zambia evaluation also notes the importance of matching teachers with classrooms rather than classes, to avoid ineffective double-shift teaching.

Figure 6.4 *Pupil-teacher ratios by district poverty level for 2000, 2005 and 2009*



Source: Ministry of Education Zambia; authors' calculations (IOB, 2011e).

Though the EFA strategy has automatically included pupils from poorer population groups and girls, more explicitly targeted interventions are required to improve access to quality education for pupils from disadvantaged population groups (as was the aim of the 1999 policy). In Uganda, special programmes have been set up, with alternative delivery modes (e.g. government – NGO cooperation), to provide education to particular groups of out-of-school children, e.g. from pastoral or semi-nomadic communities, over-aged, and with special learning needs. In Bangladesh, the better primary enrolment figures for girls compared to boys have been attributed to the government's affirmative action policies, the secondary school stipend programme for girls, and NGO education and poverty alleviation policies. The evaluation also notes changes in the society's perception of the importance of education for girls.

Tackling quality

As noted in Chapter 2, education quality has been on the agenda for as long as the Netherlands has been involved in education. However, as becomes clear from the four countries studied, addressing quality is less straightforward than addressing access. It takes time to develop; with challenges at different moments as pupils emerging from the current education system are future teachers for coming generations. Quality depends on fundamentals of the education system, whereby teachers are a crucial input (e.g. teacher training, monitoring, incentives). Above and beyond investing in traditional inputs, quality aspects such as teaching practices, teacher education and monitoring, and school management should be tackled at the same time. The second Zambia report calls this 'software' as opposed to 'hardware' (books and buildings).

In general, less is known about what works best in which context with regard to quality (see Chapter 5). Moreover, addressing quality is even more sensitive in terms of the politics of the education sector and the specific context of a country. In the countries studied this has had implications for the implementation of reforms such as teacher training and school inspections and instruction in local languages (e.g. Zambia and Bolivia). Box 6.2 describes some of the challenges of improving the learning environment.

Box 6.2 *Changes inside the classroom - Bangladesh*

What happens in the classroom determines how effectively children learn, how confidently they progress through the school and how ready the students are to proceed with their education. During the evaluation period several initiatives were taken by the Bangladeshi government, donors and NGOs to promote active learning, an approach which places strong emphasis on children taking an active part in the lesson, through asking questions, working collaboratively with others and speaking out if they do not understand.

According to a qualitative evaluation of teaching practices, the following factors have determined progress in this area (IOB, 2011c):

- Resources: availability and use of classrooms, chalkboards, teacher manuals and teaching aids other than textbooks.
- Class size: with large classes it is more difficult to use a child-centred approach.
- Textbooks: textbooks have not been updated since 1992 and are inappropriate for classroom realities (for example, the textbooks for English rely on teachers being more at ease with the language than they often are). BRAC-published textbooks with simpler language and reduced content worked better.
- Teacher training: the overloaded curriculum and large classes for teacher training, with an emphasis on lecturing, does not promote the use of active learning in the classroom.
- Assessment: passing tests depends on memorization of lessons from the textbooks. In schools where active learning is used most (FIVDB), pupils have lower pass rates for primary school completion examinations as they progress differently through the standard curriculum, but acquire a different set of skills, which is not reflected in the assessments.
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To conclude, the evaluation found that compared to the start of the evaluation period (2000), there has been a positive change in the teaching environment, including the teachers' attitudes towards the students. However, at the same time, there has been little change in the traditional teacher-centred approach and focus on memorization (rote learning). In general, non-formal schools (but not the religious schools madrasahs) have better teaching practices.

Evidence from the country cases and international literature indicates that decentralization, and in particular school-based management and governance, can have a positive impact on school performance (see for example Box 6.3 and chapter 5). The EC evaluation also notes that where decentralization is sufficiently advanced, for example, in Uganda, budget support is more likely to benefit local levels (Particip GmbH, 2010). However, as decentralization has been implemented inconsistently in the case countries, subnational levels of government and schools are left with considerable responsibilities, but limited authority and funding. This risks exacerbating existing inequalities between schools and regions.

Box 6.3 *School management - Uganda*

The first Uganda country evaluation (2008) noted a significant impact of improved school management and cooperation with subnational government levels on student performance. In Uganda, an NGO, Link Community Development, implemented a programme to improve education management at school and district level in close cooperation with the District Education Office and the Education Standards Agency. The project consisted of school management training for head teachers, grants for school development plans, training and support in school inspection, and development of education information systems at district level.

The statistical analysis showed that pupils in project schools had about 50% higher examination scores than pupils in comparable schools elsewhere in Uganda. Better school management, motivated teachers and monitoring by district inspectors contributed to this difference. These results are confirmed by the literature review (chapter 5).

Closely related to the quality of education is the relevance of education. Does it provide skills and knowledge that benefit pupils in their further life, given the specific context in which they live? Relevance refers to the adaptation to the local context of the curriculum, as well as to the potential economic benefits that education generates. It is the second aspect that has received increasing attention.[109]

Donors, including the Netherlands, and governments increasingly invested in post-primary education, particularly in technical and vocational education (TVET). In Bolivia, for example, the embassy supported the *Fundación Educación para el Desarrollo* (FAUTAPO) to develop an extensive TVET programme. The same organisation works with the Netherlands as part of the sustainable economic development programme (amongst others quinoa production). Though TVET fall outside the scope of this policy review, it has been noted that

[109] However, it must be noted that in several countries, such as the Netherlands, the Netherlands has also provided support to policies related to the language of instruction.

there is still little information on whether, how and at what costs investments in TVET contribute to improved employment opportunities for individuals.[110]

Institutional strengthening
The leadership of the Ministries of education in Uganda, Zambia, Bangladesh and Bolivia has grown during the evaluation period. The Netherlands has contributed by actively promoting country ownership and alignment.

However, the capacity of the ministries of education remains a major concern. Institutional strength, or the lack of it, has however not always been a binding constraint to support from the Netherlands, while it does clearly influence the effectiveness of Dutch support provided through the Ministries of education. For example, frequent change of ministers and senior management, and lack of ministerial commitment have hindered implementing and sustaining reforms in all four countries evaluated.

In general, the SWAp assumed that governments build their own capacity through the use of sector support. In some countries, additional support was provided to strengthen the Ministry of Education. There have, for example, been positive experiences when combining sector support with technical assistance in the specific areas of gender, curriculum development and teacher training in Bolivia and Zambia.[111] The evaluation of EC education support also concluded that it is more effective to embed institutional strengthening in government-wide reforms, for example with regard to civil service reforms (Particip GmbH, 2010). Though this is compatible in principle with a sector-wide approach, it has not been pursued successfully in the countries studied.[112]

The Dutch contribution to basic education took into account the risk that a lack of transparency and malfunctioning public expenditure management could lead to inefficient use of resources. The education sector is, just as is any other sector that has relatively large supply side investments, vulnerable to corrupt practices. Special investigations were launched in all countries evaluated. The programme in Bangladesh explicitly took fiduciary risk into account when designing the education programme. Because of the risk, it was decided to start working through NGOs first.

The monitoring of key education indicators improved during the evaluation period in the countries studied. The Education Management Information System is an on-going effort by the ministries of education in Zambia and Uganda. It increases in value each year because it follows schools over time and can be combined with national assessment surveys (as was done for the IOB evaluations). The unique student registration system in Bolivia, Zambia and Uganda provide useful information on the demand-side of education access and

[110] This is also noted in the review of the World Bank education portfolio (on the basis of a summary of IEG evaluations) (IEG, 2011b) and is a finding of the literature review conducted by IOB (Chapter 5, IOB, 2011b).
[111] The EC evaluation noted that the effectiveness of EC sector and budget support was enhanced by the use of technical assistance, e.g. in the area of education quality (Particip GmbH, 2010).
[112] In Bolivia, for example, the education sector was initially part of the wider government reform programme, but once the programme ended prematurely it was not pursued further (IOB, 2011d).

performance. Participation in international assessments (for example, PASEC, SACMEQ, TIMMS, and PISA) allows lessons to be learned from differences between countries. This has been useful for Uganda and Zambia who both participate in SACMEQ.[113]

However, there has been limited use of data for policy development and monitoring by governments and donors. Lack of credible education data has generally not been a reason to hold back sector support for education – even though it seriously hampers results monitoring. For example, the evaluation in Bolivia had to conclude that is was not possible to assess the development of education quality in Bolivia over the past ten years because of a lack of reliable data. The support for education research (in Bolivia and Bangladesh, for example), has been important, but only when it is subsequently used to monitor policies. This is mostly a problem for the governments of partner countries, but the Netherlands should also be interested in monitoring the policies it supports. In all country cases, improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of the education sector also required additional investment in human resources such as fixed-term staff in Bolivia and filling vacancies in Bangladesh.

To end, the recent review of the World Bank's education portfolio is discussed in the next box. This review offers interesting insights into the education sector policies supported by the World Bank at country level. In EPCs these policies are often also supported by the Netherlands. A number of the findings mirror the results of the case studies of the Dutch support for basic education in partner countries.

Box 6.4 *Changes in World Bank portfolio*[114]

With regard to country-level results, it is very plausible that the World Bank contributed, just as has the Netherlands, to those outcomes, without it being possible to attribute any specific result directly to any one of the education programmes. Therefore, the following focuses on what the evaluations found with regard to inputs and education strategies supported.

Evaluation findings with regard to the World Bank education programme:
- An analysis of the project performance reports led to the conclusion that projects that focused on primary education, and those that had access and equity objectives, have performed better than those that focused on post-primary education (especially in low-income countries) and on learning and employment outcomes. Improving the quality of education inputs (mostly classroom inputs) did not necessarily improve learning outcomes.

113 The SACMEQ assessments in Southern Africa are supported by the Netherlands with central funding (Box 4.2).

114 This Box is based on the recent review by Independent Evaluation Group (IEG): *World Bank Support to Education since 2011: A Portfolio Note*, which summarizes World Bank performance reporting and World Bank evaluations (IEG, 2011b).

- A transition from education 'hardware' (e.g. infrastructure) to 'software' (e.g. management) investments was noted as early as 2006. However, attempts to improve sector efficiency, financing, planning and management were less successful than those to improve access or equity (IEG, 2006).

The reviewers note the growing number of projects in lower income countries that have multiple sub-sectors (combining education and economic development for example), expand support to post-primary education, and focus on learning outcomes will increase the complexity of the portfolio and provide additional challenges. Objectives such as fostering quality education, working towards a skilled workforce, promoting effective school management, and encouraging efficient learning are harder to achieve than securing access to education and ensuring that education benefits all children equally.

6.5 Results

This section describes the outcomes and impact of Dutch investment in the education sector in the four countries reviewed. These are the result of the joint efforts of governments, civil society and donors. Therefore they are not directly attributable to Dutch support. However, given the substantial and long-term support to national education policies by the Netherlands in those countries, it is possible to state that the Netherlands did contribute to these results.

Outcomes

Enrolment
At the global level, between 1999 and 2008 (the most recent year for which data is available) enrolment in ECD, primary and secondary education increased (UNESCO, 2011).[115] The numbers of children enrolling in primary and lower secondary schools increased from 64% of the population to 82%, which is a significant achievement even though it is marred by the fact that only 67% of them finish the primary school cycle. Improvements were made in the area of gender parity too. For every ten boys attending school in 2008, nine girls were now also being educated. This is a significant improvement on the 1999 ratio. Reaching the remaining 18% of children who are not enrolled in school in low-income countries remains a particular challenge.

In line with these global trends, enrolment in schools has increased in all country cases. Better access to education has benefitted population groups previously excluded on the basis of their socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity or geographical location. In Zambia, for example, about 50% of the children in the poorest 20% attended primary school in

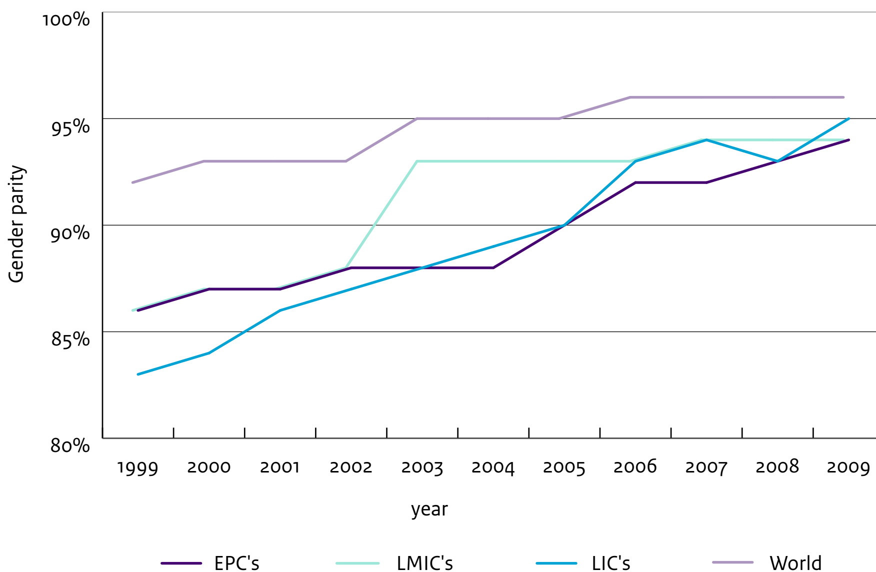
[115] See also Annex 6 for an overview of progress towards the EFA goals.

2001–2002. By 2007, this percentage had increased to 73%. In Bolivia, where enrolment was already relatively high at the start of the evaluation period, the growth in numbers attending school over the past ten years was highest in rural areas.

Gender parity

Parity has been achieved for enrolment in primary education in Bangladesh, Bolivia and Uganda – and has almost been achieved in Zambia. In Bangladesh, it is actually the enrolment of boys, especially from the lowest income groups, that is currently causing concern. Yet gender parity has not yet been reached in all of the Netherlands' EPCs. This is illustrated in Figure 6.5, which illustrates that on average, EPCs perform better than lower income countries and comparable to lower middle income countries. However, the aggregate figures from the various countries mask the fact that there are large gender gaps among particular population groups, in rural areas, and for higher levels of education.

Figure 6.5 *Gender parity index for enrolment in primary education (gross)*



Children out of school

The drop in the numbers of children who do not attend school has been largest in the poor EPC's and, again, for girls. However, the numbers of children not enrolled in school has increased in a number of education partner countries, including Macedonia, Suriname, South Africa and the Palestinian territories. At the global level, more than 40% of the children out of school live in conflict-affected countries (see section 6.6). Also in middle-income and low-income countries, as in the countries studied, there continues to be a hard-core group of children who have limited access to education.

Completion

Completion rates for primary education remain low, even in countries where improvements have been made. In Bangladesh, about 72% of children completed primary school in 2005. But delayed enrolment, drop-out and repeating school years meant that the average age was 14 rather than 11, which would be the expected age at which to complete primary school. Children from relatively wealthier backgrounds are more likely to complete primary school. In Bangladesh, completion by age 14 is almost 90% for the richest 20% of the population; but for the poorest 20%, even by age 15, this figure is just 60%.

The country evaluations identified the following barriers to completion:

- *Socio-economic, cultural and political barriers*: As discussed previously, the direct and indirect costs to education can be high for poor households. The end result of weighing the costs and benefits will also depend on the quality of education and the expected returns to education (see Box 6.5 below). Moreover, in a lot of countries, including those evaluated, cultural practices (e.g. early marriages) act as a barrier for girls to complete their education. Conflict is another disruptive factor (e.g. in Northern Uganda).

- *Delayed enrolment*: This is often related to poverty, safe access to school and parents' perceptions of the feasibility and value of sending young children to school. The opportunity cost of education (the cost of sending a child to school rather than to paid employment) increases as children grow older, which raises the risk of drop out after a limited number of years of schooling.

- *Attendance*: Both household and school characteristics affect school attendance. During a stakeholder workshop in Uganda teachers blamed absenteeism on illness, civil conflict, poverty, negative attitudes towards education of both teachers and students, the lack of facilities and materials in schools, sexual harassment, and the distance students have to travel. In Bangladesh attendance was found to be influenced by household income, education and occupation of parents, health status of the child and the relationship between community and school.

- *Opportunity costs*: In Uganda and Bangladesh, the need to have paid work (but even domestic duties) also affected school attendance and completion, particularly for students from poor families. In the Uganda evaluation, more than a quarter of the poorest 20% families quoted work as a reason for not going to school, compared to 5% of the better-off families.

- *Contact hours*: If children attend, the contact hours with teachers in class are often short as a result of the use of double school shifts and of absenteeism (authorized or not) among teachers. In Bangladesh, for example, there are fewer than four contact hours per school day because of double shifts. The problem is most acute at the lower Grades (sometimes as few as two hours), even though younger children need relatively more teacher attention in order to learn. In Uganda, where teacher absenteeism is problematic, it was found to be highly correlated with pupil absenteeism. A survey amongst teachers indicated illness, inadequate accommodation, poor working conditions, distance, low and late salaries, lack of incentives for performance, and low morale as causes for absenteeism. Analysis from inspection reports suggest furthermore that well-managed schools and monitoring of teachers results in lower absence rates.

- *Drop out*: A lot of children drop out of school completely, particularly children from poorer families.[116] However, drop-out rates are hard to measure and analyse in countries that do not follow the progression of children through the system. For example, in Bolivia, which has high internal and external migration, the introduction of a unique student registration will be very useful to identify which children drop out and which merely move to other schools elsewhere. In Uganda and Zambia such analysis is already possible. Drop out there is related to the costs of education (in particular for girls) and the expected returns (see Box 6.5 for Uganda), as well as the education of parents, kind of school, and valuation of education by children and parents.

Impact

For children who do attend school, learning – measured by literacy and maths tests - has not improved much in the past ten years in developing countries. This applies in three of the four countries assessed for this review. Learning has improved in Bangladesh, but not in Bolivia, Uganda or Zambia. Average performance in national literacy and numeracy tests remains very low, especially for particular groups of children (e.g. in rural areas). This can be explained partly by the fact that improvements in access to education included pupils from poorer families and regions, who are in general disadvantaged when their parents are uneducated and there are limited resources to support learning in the household (e.g. books, electricity). As a result, because of a strong correlation between pupils' socio-economic backgrounds and their examination results, overall results did not improve, while the results of pupils within a specific socio-economic group might well have progressed.

For another part, the low performance of students can be explained by the pressure on the system due to increased enrolment. In Uganda pupil-teacher and pupil-classroom ratios exploded initially after the introduction of free primary education. From 2002 onwards, investments kept up with increased enrolments and these ratios declined steadily over the remainder of the evaluation period. In Zambia, however, the fast increase in enrolment created shortages of teachers, classrooms and books, though the ratios were more or less back at the original 2000 levels by 2009.

However, an upsurge in access to schools, and for children who had previously been excluded, doesn't completely account for the limited attainment of cognitive skills. The poor standard of education in some countries has been on the agenda for many years. It should have been addressed hand-in-hand with improving access to education. As discussed before, and also noted in other evaluations such as the World Bank and EC evaluations, addressing this problem effectively has been a particular challenge.

In developing countries in general, the economic gains that come from having primary education are falling compared to having a post-primary education. This can be attributed to a variety of reasons, which are discussed in Chapter 3. Transition to post-primary education, including technical and vocational education, is therefore increasingly important. In the country cases, transition has increased though it remains lower for girls, for children from rural areas and for poorer children. The Uganda case study, described in

[116] For Uganda it was noted that drop out is highest in the first year of primary education (amongst others due to lack of pre-primary education), however, those children often go back to school.

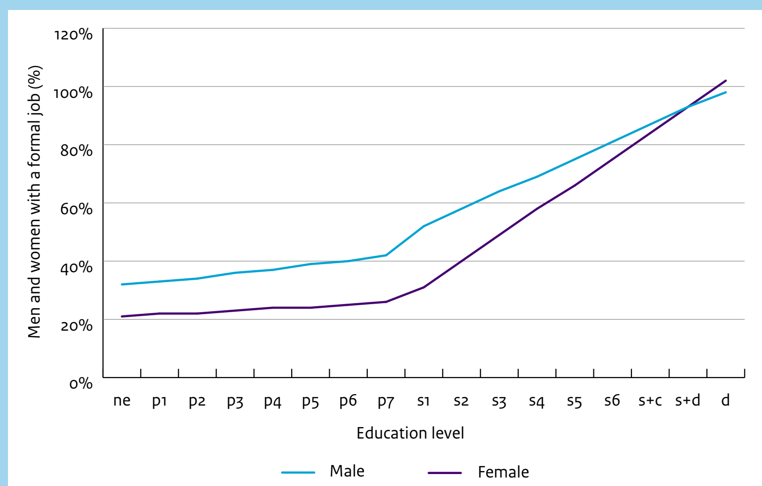
Box 6.5, clearly illustrates how the perception that primary education brings few economic gains and the fact that opportunities to go on to post-primary education are limited, help explain why enrolment increased significantly but drop-out remained high for specific population groups during the evaluation period.

Box 6.5 *Completing primary education and the associated economic gains*

While access improved in Uganda following the abolition of primary school fees in 1996, 40% of the pupils still drop out before completing the primary school cycle. This figure is higher for girls (45%) than for boys (35%), although the differences are levelling out. An analysis of the high dropout rate shows that it is related to the cost of education weighed against the expected benefits that a primary school education will bring. It is worthwhile completing primary education if a student either benefits from completing or can use it to access secondary education and benefit even more. These two aspects have been explored in more depth in a follow-up study of the IOB evaluation in Uganda (IOB, forthcoming).

Figure 6.6 shows the relationship between the number of years spent in education and the percentage of people with a formal job (this was based on the 13–40 years age group). For primary education, there is a relatively weak link between schooling and holding down a formal job. Even those who finished the primary school cycle don't fare well in the jobs market. However, for those who continue education after completing primary education, the impact of each extra year of secondary schooling increases.[117]

Figure 6.6 *Formal employment by gender and education level, 2009*



Source: Education survey, Uganda (IOB, forthcoming).

[117] This is confirmed by the results of regression analysis, which is compatible with international analyses, such as (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 2011).

The economic benefits of having a primary education in Uganda are relatively few because children who have just a primary education do not acquire the cognitive and basic life skills needed for the labour market. Employers find primary school students unsuitable for employment because of their age, lack of relevant skills and their inability to communicate in English. Apart from agriculture and some construction jobs, most employers require a secondary education as minimum qualification. And as primary education becomes more readily accessible, the supply of workers with this level of education increases – while the demand does not. However, in rural areas, the analysis show that spending more years at primary school and completing that level have a beneficial effect on finding a job in a sector other than agriculture and fisheries.

As a result, the majority of primary school students do not go into paid employment; most end up in low-skilled, low-productivity and low-paying activities in agriculture and in informal jobs. Those with more education make a rapid transition to better occupations (Garcia & Fares, 2009).

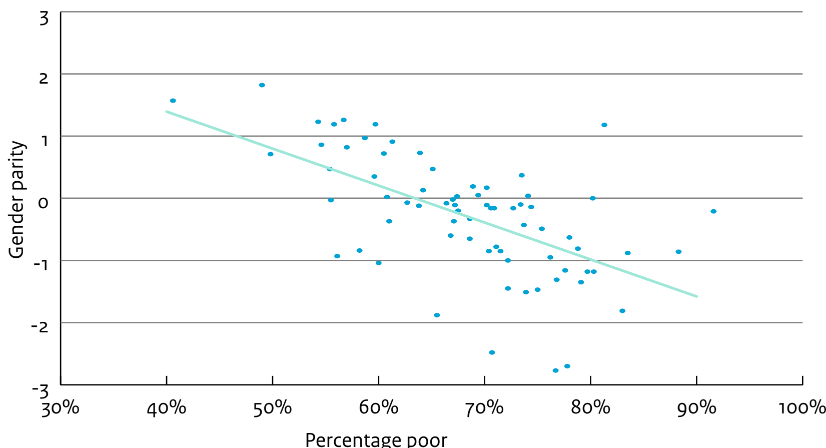
Completing primary education only has significant benefits if it provides access to secondary education, where the returns are much higher. However, enrolment in secondary schools is still low in Uganda. Cost is the main reason for not enrolling in secondary education or vocational training. However, just as for primary education, it is not just about the cost of school fees (which were abolished in 2005), but also relates to the benefits expected from having an education, given the limitations of the labour market. Decisions about whether or not to enrol in secondary school are not made purely on economic grounds. Girls' enrolment in secondary education, for instance, is further hampered by forced early marriage, pregnancies and by a culture that believes it is better to educate sons.

Failure to get either higher education or a decent job creates frustrations among young people. Growing youth unemployment is considered a social threat, as it is thought to lead to disheartenment and social problems such as crime, drug abuse and general alienation (Semboja, 2007).

To conclude, with regard to the trends, it is important to note that in general students who are poor, female or who belong to indigenous groups or minorities, and live in rural areas, still drop out more than others. They also complete primary school later, have lower scores and have fewer post-primary education opportunities open to them. In Bolivia, the average number of years of schooling received by non-indigenous children increased by about two years between 2000 and 2008, while indigenous children received an average of one extra year during the same period. Indigenous children from poor, rural families are particularly vulnerable, which leads to a vicious cycle of poverty and lack of education. Research shows that income inequality in Bolivia can partly be explained by differences in levels of education.

The next graph illustrates how, in Zambia, gender parity in education is correlated with poverty levels.

Figure 6.7 *Equity and poverty at district level, 2009*



Source: IOB (2011e).

Rather than repeating country-specific information that has been described much more profoundly in the various country studies, Box 6.6 uses the case of Mali, another EPC but evaluated by the EC, to illustrate some of the findings.

Box 6.6 *An evaluation of general budget support in Mali*

An external evaluation of budget support operations in Mali was ordered by the European Commission (European Commission, 2011). This is relevant to this policy review because the Netherlands has a relatively large education programme in Mali. The Netherlands provided more than €147 million to Mali between 1999 and 2009,[118] and also represented Sweden and Norway through a silent partnership. Several of the lessons learned in the IOB case studies are confirmed by the Mali evaluation, for example:

On inputs:

- The sector budget support for education has contributed to improved dialogue on sector policies. Dedicated education staff members in donor agencies are considered crucial to improving dialogue in the sector.

118 In 2009, the Netherlands held back the disbursement of funds because of institutional instability.

- Transaction costs were not reduced because of the large number of coordination meetings. The number of projects has also not diminished. Coherence between general and sector budget support should be improved.

On outputs, or policies supported:

- Education sector policies have been linked up the wider government development strategies (such as PRSP). Collaboration with the Ministry of Finance has improved.
- The education sector benefited from the support for government-wide institutional strengthening that accompanied general budget support. The sector budget support did not specifically earmark funds for institutional strengthening, but technical assistance was provided in specific areas. Moreover, the evaluation concludes that through dialogue with donors, the importance of decentralization was stressed, leading to more resources being transferred to lower levels of government.
- Collection of administrative data should be improved.

On results:

- Funds from sector and general budget support are thought to have contributed to the increase in enrolment in and completion of primary school between 2002 and 2009. The net enrolment ratio (NER) for primary education increased from 44% in 1999 to 73% in 2009. The completion rate increased from 36% in 2002 to 59% in 2009. However, there are large regional disparities and though the percentage of girls enrolling rose from 37% in 1999 to 66% in 2009, Mali still has a gender parity index below 0.75.[119]
- National assessments indicate that students in Mali fall below the regional average. They also show that the difference in performance between girls and boys worsened over time.
- The evaluations point out the following determinants of poor quality education:[120] scarcity of textbooks, high pupil–teacher ratios, but even more so the use of multi-grading and double-shifts. Contract teachers seem to have a positive effect, compared to experienced teachers.

[119] UIS statistics in brief. Mali (accessed 22/08/2011).
[120] Measured as determinants of repetition rates.

6.6 Special case: education in conflict and emergencies

With the 2015 target date for reaching the EFA goals approaching, violent conflict is still one of the greatest obstacles to accelerated progress in education (UNESCO, 2011). Conflict-affected countries have some of the world's worst education indicators (UNESCO, 2011).[121] More than 28 million children of primary school age do not go to school. This is 42% of the world total, though these countries account for only around a quarter of the primary-school-age population. Children in poor, conflict-affected countries are also more likely to drop out. The percentage of children who stay on until the last Grade is 65%, while it is 86% in other poor countries.

Dutch policy on education in fragile states and countries affected by conflict and crisis

In 2000, when governments adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, they identified conflict as 'a major barrier towards attaining Education for All' (UNESCO, 2000b). When the Netherlands announced that it would be more actively involved in fragile states mid-2007, the Ministry's education programme included education in fragile states as one of its priorities (MFA, 2007b). More recently, education in fragile states was singled out as a priority for development cooperation for the next few years (TK, 2010a; TK, 2011a).

Internationally, there seem to be two lines of justification for prioritizing education in situations of conflict. One can be called the 'security agenda', which aims to win the hearts and minds of the local population during 'peace-keeping missions' and sees educational reconstruction in conflict-affected states as a means of enhancing the international community's concerns about security (Lopes Cardozo & Novelli, 2011). This reasoning fits well with the current interest in education as part of the Ministry's 'peace and security' agenda. The other justification could be called the 'MDG-EFA agenda'. This perceives a lack of education opportunities in areas of conflict as a core obstacle to reaching the MDGs and EFA. This rationale is more closely linked to the objective of supporting education in fragile states during the main part of the evaluation period.

Education in countries affected by conflict and emergencies is dealt with by various departments within the Ministry: the Social Development Department (DSO), the Peace Building and Stabilization Unit (EFV) and the humanitarian aid department (DMH/HH). The Netherlands aims to support the provision of education services and the restoration and strengthening of the education system 'by investing in improved education responses, strengthening the resilience and sustainability of education systems, increasing the sector's contribution to country stability and reducing fragility, and enhancing the quality of policies and instruments' (Eijkholt, 2011). Where the Netherlands is also active militarily,

[121] From reviewed studies on the impact of conflict on education that are available, three general patterns emerge: (i) even relatively minor shocks can have a long-lasting detrimental impact on schooling; (ii) girls tend to be more affected, in part because of sexual violence; and (iii) the effects are greatest for secondary schooling (Justino, 2010).

Dutch support in fragile states involves an integrated approach that deploys financial and human resources in the three Ds: 'diplomacy, defence and development cooperation' (MFA, 2007b).[122]

As the aim of the Ministry is to provide support 'multilaterally when possible and bilaterally when needed', a wide variety of aid channels can be used to support education in conflict-affected regions (Lopes Cardozo & Novelli, 2011). Without going into depth, the case of Afghanistan is used to illustrate the way in which different channels are used to support education in conflict-affected countries.

Box 6.7 *Afghanistan: using a combination of channels to support education*

In Afghanistan, the Dutch have actively promoted an integrated approach to security, governance, reconstruction and construction as part of the International Security Assistance Force. The creation of a 'peace dividend' is considered important because it lets the population experience the advantages of peace and stability through improved educational services (Eijkholt, 2011).

The delegated bilateral funds for education in Afghanistan for the period 2008–2011 amount to about €10 million per year (about 10% of total annual expenditure). The Netherlands has funded activities across the bilateral and multilateral channels and through civil society organizations (Eijkholt, 2011):

Bilateral:
The aim of the Dutch Embassy in Kabul is to achieve the MDGs and EFA goals. The emphasis is on improving access to education with a special focus on women and girls, and on technical and vocational education and training, particularly in agriculture. Together with other bilateral donors, the Netherlands is supporting the Afghan Ministry of Education's Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP). With technical support from the World Bank, this programme aims for education reform, teachers' education, learning materials and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Education.

Multilateral:
Afghanistan was also covered under UNICEF's Education in the EEPCT. The Ministry of Education, with UNICEF support, enabled the enrolment of 29,180 children in Grade 1 in 815 community-based schools in different parts of Afghanistan in 2008.

[122] UNESCO (2011) warns that blurring the lines between security and development may expose local communities and aid workers to elevated risks, for example, when aid is used or perceived to be part of a counter-insurgency strategy or as an element in the wider national security agenda of donor countries. Glad (2009), for instance, found that military involvement in the construction of schools in Afghanistan made them particularly vulnerable to attack. See also UNESCO (2010a).

In particularly insecure locations, such community-based schools have proved to be effective in offering schooling opportunities that are closer to children's homes (Burde & Linden, 2009).

Civil society:
The Netherlands directly supports NGOs to deliver a range of education services and capacity development activities in the south of Afghanistan. For instance, Save the Children is implementing the Quality Primary Education Programme (QPEP) in Uruzgan Province. This provides accelerated learning classes to help children who have been outside the education system to catch up. They receive certificates allowing them to enter the formal school system.

An analysis of the Dutch role in providing education aid in conflict-affected states over the past few years was carried out for the 2011 Global Monitoring Report. It portrayed the Dutch as playing an important leadership role, in terms of the support for innovative education interventions in conflict zones and the funding commitment (including EEPCT, 20% of country level expenditure on basic education goes to fragile states).[123] The authors, however, do identify a range of institutional challenges. For instance, they found that there was a lack of cooperation and communication between the responsible Ministry departments and that there might be a need to further develop Ministry knowledge capacity in core issues related to education and conflict.

Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT)

The EEPCT programme began in 2006 as a four-year partnership between UNICEF and the Government of the Netherlands. The independent progress evaluation of the programme concluded that EEPCT funds have 'enabled UNICEF to work in a more flexible, timely and responsive manner with partners and governments' to promote a 'more coordinated, higher quality education response' (CGCA, 2010). For example, EEPCT funds were used to revise the minimum standards for education in emergencies (INEE, 2011). The fund allowed for innovative practice because of the flexibility in its implementation agreements, accepting risk as an integral part of the programme (Turrent, 2011). According to the evaluators, UNICEF has established itself through the EEPCT programme as a leading partner in the field of supporting education in emergencies and a significant player in post-crisis transition. For example, UNICEF, with the help of EEPCT funding, has built up the capacity to implement innovative interventions in conflicts and emergencies, among these are Accelerated Learning Programmes for former child soldiers.

At the same time, however, the 'effectiveness and impact of the EEPCT programme as a whole has been limited by a lack of clarity regarding its identity, purpose and goals' (CGCA, 2010). Education section staffing has been insufficient to effectively lead the EEPCT

[123] Lopes Cardozo & Novelli (2011) and IOB analysis of MFA management system Piramide (see chapter 4).

programme. As a result, EEPCT was used more as a fund to support existing UNICEF country programmes than to support the EEPCT's overall programme objectives. The evaluators do note that since 2009, understanding of the objectives of EEPCT at the country level has improved. Another challenge to the efficient use of EEPCT fund resources was the substantial disbursement lag in the first two years of implementation, which has since been resolved. At the time of the evaluation, many of the interventions supported through the EEPCT had yet to produce significant outputs. In addition, outputs that are delivered were not consistently captured by the reporting system. Moreover, the evaluators note concerns with regard to, for example, relevance and sustainability of programmes in West Africa, e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the effectiveness of some of the innovative, alternative financing mechanisms, e.g. Liberia Primary Education Pooled Fund (CGCA, 2010).

Without waiting for the results of the external evaluation of EEPCT, the EEPCT programme was exempted from the general education budget cuts in 2011 because of its connection with security and fragile states (TK, 2010a; TK, 2011a). The added value of working through the EEPCT programme should be assessed carefully. The Netherlands also supports the UNICEF basic education programme with an estimated €6 million through annual core funding, part of which is used for UNICEF country programmes in post-conflict and transition countries.[124] EEPCT allows the Netherlands to explicitly target funding for countries in conflict, post-conflict and emergency situations, more than what is possible through core funding. In countries that are also Dutch EPC, Dutch direct support to UNICEF's country programme can be larger and more influential than the funding through the EEPCT programme (Lopes Cardozo & Novelli, 2011). However, EEPCT can be used to provide additional rapid, flexible funding through the UNICEF system in response to emergencies. Moreover, EEPCT enables funding in countries, such as Liberia, that are not partner countries of the Netherlands (so where the UNICEF programmes are not supported at country level through embassies).

The Dutch government has also been actively involved in a dialogue with the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) partners to explore appropriate financing options for education in fragile states through the FTI (Brannelly, Ndaruhutse, & Rigaud, 2009). For most fragile states, the absence of credible sector plans and high-risk environments meant that they were unlikely to be eligible for FTI support (Turrent, 2011). Initial attempts at opening up the system, for example through a progressive framework for FTI funding, had limited effect. The EEPCT programme was therefore at first regarded as an alternative to the FTI Catalytic Fund for delivering earmarked support to fragile states (Lopes Cardozo & Novelli, 2011). Since then FTI reforms improved its performance in fragile states, for example by allowing other agencies and donors to act as a supervising entity in countries where the primary supervising entity (World Bank) lacks capacity. Moreover, UNICEF and the FTI did come to an agreement to work together more closely. Though there is enough need in these kinds of countries to expand external support, it is important for education aid effectiveness that both UNICEF-EEPCT and FTI make use of their comparative advantages.

[124] HGIS annual report 2005-2009 (see chapter 4).

6.7 Conclusions

The evaluation of Dutch support for national education strategies is based on six evaluations in four countries. These countries - Bolivia, Bangladesh, Uganda and Zambia - are obviously very different. The Netherlands' contribution depends to a large extent on the country context. However, analysing the four evaluation reports in conjunction does point to some general successes and challenges, which have been described above. Some findings of the joint donor evaluation of basic education from 2003 still apply (MFA, 2003). Several of the conclusions are confirmed in other evaluations, such as those on the European Commission and World Bank support for basic education in developing countries.

Relevance

Relevance is defined as 'the extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies' (OECD/DAC, 2002).

The Dutch support to basic education in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia was generally consistent with global priorities and the country's national education sector strategies. In some cases, the Netherlands provided additional support for issues that were considered to have received insufficient attention in government strategies (e.g. support to education in Northern Uganda, TVET in Bolivia, child labour in Bangladesh).

The Dutch support to basic education, and education for all, was certainly consistent with requirements at a national level. However, in order to be relevant to the beneficiaries as identified in the 1999 policy, more explicit targeting of disadvantaged populations has been required.

Efficiency

In this evaluation efficiency refers to the way in which the Dutch support to basic education is provided, focusing on the support to the government's education strategy (e.g. choice of instruments, donor harmonisation and alignment).

The Netherlands has been a significant actor in the education sector in the countries studied, based on its longer term contribution of both financial and human resources (technical expertise) and subsequent convening power, as well as commitment to the SWAp and Principles of the Paris Declaration.

The sectoral approach, and in particular forms of budget support, has facilitated significant and longer-term support to national education strategies. Such longer-term commitment is important in the education sector, where results take a long time to manifest themselves. Links with government-wide reforms and budget processes, and overall development strategies, enhance the sustainability of the education sector strategies that are supported by the Netherlands. Education cannot be dealt with in isolation, but must be treated as part and parcel of a wider national development strategy.

With regard to the principles of the Paris Declaration, most success was achieved by the Netherlands with regard to coordination and harmonization among donors, and alignment to government systems by the Netherlands. This required significant effort of the Dutch embassies; however, transaction costs for national governments seem to have been reduced. The results for ownership are mixed throughout the evaluation period and in countries.

Related to the issue of aid effectiveness, the principles of the FTI (country ownership and country-level empowerment, as well as donor harmonization) remain relevant. The Netherlands supports FTI through central funds but also acts as a partner (e.g. supervising entity) at country level. Recent FTI reforms need to succeed in order to improve its effectiveness in developing countries, including fragile states and countries affected by conflict and crisis.

However, there are also challenges in the approach taken by the Netherlands:[125]

- The sectoral approach, with a strong focus on support to national governments, has been dependent on the varying capacity and commitment of national governments. It resulted in a relatively top-down strategy, focused on central ministries and the supply-side of the education sector.
- Capacity building at subnational government levels has been given less attention, which hindered implementation of reforms, supported by the Netherlands, at decentralised government levels (where applicable) and in schools.
- The commitment to the sector-wide approach (SWAp) and Principles of the Paris Declaration, combined with cases of investigations into mismanagement of funds in the countries studied, led to a concentration on processes and financial accountability, more than on results of the policies supported.
- In Bolivia and Bangladesh the education data generated by the governments' information systems is insufficient to monitor the effectiveness of the policies supported by the Netherlands. Additional support to research is useful but insufficient to address this information gap.

It must be noted that, despite the strong push towards working with governments, in all countries studied the Dutch education programme also included support through NGOs and/or local education programmes of multilateral organizations. This *two-pronged approach* (the title of the Bangladesh study) complemented the support to governments.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness assesses the extent to which the direct results, or output, of an intervention contributed to the objectives, or outcomes. Effectiveness of the Dutch contribution to the education sector is measured by the outcomes of education policies and strategies mainly with regard to access, quality and equity.

A lot of progress was made in the education sectors of the countries studied. The Netherlands (alongside donors, national governments and other local stakeholders in

[125] Several of the challenges with regard to the sectoral approach have also been brought up in the wider evaluation of sector support by IOB (2006).

the sector), has contributed to the expansion of access by providing support for investments in the education sector. This included access for girls, for pupils from poorer families, in rural areas and for children living in countries affected by conflict and emergencies. The progress is particularly strong in countries that started off with low levels of enrolment around 1999.

However, as the title of the second Zambia country evaluation suggests: the support for basic education is still *unfinished business* (IOB, 2011e). National figures on access to education mask inequalities at lower levels, where – among others – girls in rural areas, poorer students in urban slums and certain minority population groups have less access to education and achieve worse results than others.

Reaching excluded, disadvantaged children, the objective of the 1999 policy, required a different, more targeted approach to enhance the effectiveness of Dutch support in this area. This included more explicitly targeted interventions (e.g. addressing demand-side constraints on education outcomes) and working with actors other than government, which were often implemented using a project approach.[126] As will be discussed in the next chapter, but as also emerged from the country case studies in Bolivia and Bangladesh, NGOs have the potential to reach disadvantaged children and develop innovative approaches to tackle the quality and relevance of education. However, there are concerns with regard to the sustainability of many of these interventions.

The six country studies also point out how difficult it is to simultaneously increase access to education and improve the quality of education and learning.[127] While in countries like Zambia and Uganda, a least quality did not diminish despite an explosion in enrolment, overall learning and acquisition of relevant basic skills is still limited in the countries studied. In the countries evaluated, but confirmed by international literature, important factors hindering progress in this area seem to be:

- teaching resources and effective use and allocation thereof;
- standards of teacher education, training and monitoring;
- learning environment, curriculum and teaching practices;
- education management (school management, monitoring, capacity at subnational government levels); and
- individual returns on education (post-primary opportunities).

[126] The joint donor evaluation of external support to basic education already recommended in 2003 'a more pragmatic approach recognizing the positive role of project support in the development of innovative strategies and approaches and in reaching marginalized groups' (MFA, 2003).

[127] As is confirmed by the evaluations of other donors such as the European Commission, FTI and the World Bank (Particip GmbH, 2010; IEG, 2011b).

Sustainability

The evaluation of the longer term impact of the Dutch support to the basic education sector is based on an assessment of the institutions and organisations that implement the national education sector strategy, i.e. the financial and institutional capacity of those institutions to function in the longer run and the way in which the Dutch support has contributed to that.

The Netherlands has invested in the sustainability of its support in different ways, for example:
- joint funding with other donors through different variations of sector support, working with government systems;
- support for institutional strengthening of ministries of education, which is particularly effective when incorporated in wider government reforms; and
- promoting cooperation between NGOs and between NGOs and national governments.

Nevertheless, in all countries there are serious concerns about the capacity of the education system; of the ministries of education but in particular at decentralised government levels (where applicable), which received less attention from the Netherlands. Moreover, it is noted that even though the share of external support to the education sector in the studied countries is small compared to the domestic funding, governments are dependent on donors for key investments in the education sector (e.g. funding of curriculum development, system reforms). More efficient use and allocation of resources (e.g. geographically, between levels of education and specific interventions) would enhance the financial sustainability of the education sector strategies in the countries studied.

For many years the Netherlands has played a significant role in education in EPCs. The work is still unfinished, which gives the Netherlands the responsibility to carefully design its exit strategy for the education sector in those countries. On a country-by-country basis and in close cooperation with governments, NGOs and donors, an assessment should be made of the consequences of the exit.[128] After years of engagement, it is important to ensure that the investments that have been made are not destroyed by too hasty a retreat from the sector.

[128] The joint donor evaluation on 'Managing Aid Exit and Transformation' (2008) lists critical factors for successful exit management, among which the participation of stakeholders in planning and implementation of exit processes, a realistic time frame, fulfilment of ongoing commitments, flexibility on the side of the donor, institutional capacity of the recipient side as well as donor capacity (Slob & Jerve, 2008).

7 Effectiveness – Supporting education through NGOs

7.1 Introduction

This section describes the Dutch contribution to basic education in developing countries through Dutch NGOs. Funding is allocated to Dutch and international NGOs (INGOs) through centrally organized co-financing programmes, and to local NGOs via direct in-country funding organized by the embassies.[129] Dutch NGOs with the largest education programmes in 2008 were: Edukans, ICCO, Oxfam Novib, Plan Netherlands, Terre des Hommes and Woord en Daad.[130] These six NGOs were selected for a sub-study of this policy review, which forms the basis of this chapter.[131]

The study methodology comprised a literature review, interviews with representatives from the NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also comprised a systematic review of external evaluations of basic education activities executed by the six NGOs. The systematic review was based on a limited number of evaluations: not all activities supported by the six NGOs were evaluated and not all evaluations were useful for this study.[132] The quality of 37 reports was deemed sufficient to draw conclusions about the possible effects, successes and challenges of interventions in the areas of access to education, education quality, participation in education, and lobby and advocacy. Some reports also describe outcomes such as learning results and personal and socio-economic development.[133]

The following sections span a wide range of interventions that cover roughly 30% of the basic education expenditure of the six selected NGOs. No all-encompassing conclusions can be drawn because the 37 evaluations were selected based on their quality and do not represent a random sample of NGO education activities. However, the findings are certainly illustrative, and provide valuable insights into the education interventions supported by the NGOs and their partners.

[129] NGO is an ‘umbrella term’ covering many different organizations that tend to share three common characteristics (Riddell, 2007): direct or indirect involvement in humanitarian and development work; the not-for-profit nature of their activities; and, as their name suggests, the fact that they are distinct and separate from both governments and private for-profit organizations. One can distinguish between types of NGOs through where they are based and the level at which they operate: International NGO (INGO) refers to organizations that work across different countries, whereas local NGOs focus on activities in one country.

[130] Source: www.ngo-database.nl

[131] The study excludes slightly smaller NGOs such as Save the Children and International Child Support.

[132] The six NGOs provided 144 evaluations of education activities performed between 2003 and 2010. From these, 85 evaluations satisfied the minimum requirements of this study. An evaluation was excluded from the analysis if it: (i) was not performed by an external evaluator; (ii) concerned a process or organization evaluation instead of effects, or; (iii) more than 50% of the budget was dedicated to activities outside the IOB basic education definition.

[133] The quality of the evaluations was assessed through a review of their reliability, validity and usefulness.

7.2 Working with NGOs

Financing NGOs is one of the Dutch development cooperation instruments. The strong focus on sector support has not diminished the support for NGOs, though it is stressed in the 1999 policy that a country's sector plan should take centre stage (except in fragile states and when dealing with certain sensitive themes like sexuality). There are various reasons why the Ministry cooperates with NGOs:[134]

Added-value of working with NGOs at country level: [135]

- To develop innovative, alternative interventions with the aim of improving access to education, education quality and the relevance of education, specifically in relation to hard-to-reach target groups;
- To use the experience of NGOs with grass-roots participation of parents and communities;
- To build the capacity of local actors such as teachers, governments and unions;
- To generate political and public support for education reforms through dialogue with governments in partner countries and through lobby and advocacy.

Added-value of working through Dutch NGOs as intermediaries:[136]

- To strengthen civil society in developing countries on equal terms;
- To generate public support and involvement with development cooperation in the Netherlands; and
- To improve the complementarity of the bilateral and civil society channels (e.g. through cooperation with embassies).

From the literature arise some common obstacles associated with NGO interventions. Most notable are difficulties in replicating or scaling up innovative approaches and ensuring the sustainability of NGO projects (Rose, 2009; Ulleberg, 2009). Issues connected with sustainability arise because by nature NGO activities are often very local, implemented on a small scale, project-based and dependent on the continued injection of external funds (Riddell, 2007). It is not surprising that the poorer the beneficiaries are, the less likely it is that they are able to pay for services, training or goods. Furthermore, developing country governments may be unwilling to support NGO activities in case these are perceived as an affront to the governments' legitimate role as education provider (Miller-Grandvaux,

[134] Extracted from MFA (2000); TK (2003). These reasons mirror those put forward in the literature, which indicate that donors provide support to NGOs as a result of their perceived greater accountability, efficiency and ability to deliver quality services and work directly with communities (Rose, 2010). In addition, the administrative burden associated with directly contracting a large number of local NGOs can be considerable (Ulleberg, 2009).

[135] During most of the evaluation period, Dutch NGOs were free to provide support outside of the education partner countries. However, it is found that NGOs replicate location choices of official donors and other NGOs (Koch, 2009). Evaluations selected for the NGO review included (* indicates it is a partner country): Bangladesh*, Bolivia*, Burkina Faso*, Cambodia, China, Ethiopia*, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, India*, Kenya, Mali*, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan*, Paraguay, Peru, Uganda* and Zambia*.

[136] The added-value of working through Dutch NGOs falls outside the scope of this review.

Welmond, & Wolf, 2001). The authors note that changing government policy and the way it is formulated might be the most effective way to ensure the success and sustainability of NGO interventions.

7.3 NGO basic education expenditure and policy

The six NGOs made significant investments in basic education. Basic education as defined for this study accounted for the largest budgetary component (€189 million, 2003-2009) of the overall NGO education programme, with an average share of around 64% of the total education budget, or 7% of the total NGO programme budget (Table 7.1). The share of co-financing provided by the Ministry for the entire education programme was 68% on average, but varied markedly between NGOs. All interviewees confirmed that attention is shifting from primary to early childhood development (ECD), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and literacy.

Table 7.1 Total education expenditure by the six NGOs (in thousands of €)[137]

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Basic education (IOB definition)[138]	19.941	21.293	25.226	30.112	31.550	30.327	30.124	188.573
% Basic education in total education programme	57%	58%	59%	62%	71%	73%	69%	64%
Total education programme	34.937	36.966	42.916	48.846	44.548	41.679	43.698	293.590
% Ministry financing in total education programme	72%	78%	67%	64%	66%	66%	64%	68%
Total NGO programme	283.383	351.863	407.218	382.721	390.778	381.677	376.734	2.574.374
% Basic education in total NGO programme	7%	6%	6%	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%

[137] The basic education budgets presented in this table are indicative. Terre des Hommes provided committed amounts whereas other NGOs presented actual expenditures.

[138] Basic education (IOB definition) includes primary and lower secondary education and thus excludes early childhood development, technical and vocational education and training and literacy.

In 2003, the Dutch co-financing system distinguished three NGO intervention strategies: direct poverty reduction, civil society building, and lobbying and advocacy. In their policy documents and during interviews, the NGOs referred to the objectives of improved access to education (including equity), better quality and more relevant education, and increased participation in education.[139] NGO representatives remarked that Ministry funding was particularly useful for financing activities that seemed less attractive to other funders (e.g. private), such as capacity building, advocacy and lobbying.

The NGOs acknowledged that their education programmes intervened in an area that is primarily a state responsibility and stressed that they did not intend to create parallel education systems. Instead their aims were to fill the gaps in formal education systems and start successful innovative projects that could be replicated by the government. The NGOs indicated that they cooperate with government agencies, e.g. education inspections and teacher training colleges, more and more frequently. They said that they strive to ensure the complementarity of their programmes with those of other donors and CSOs.

The six NGOs that were studied all paid attention to cross-cutting issues such as gender inequality and HIV/Aids. The organizations described the groups they target in general terms. They refer to children who are excluded from education and particularly hard-to-reach groups such as street children, girls, children living in remote rural areas, etc. In the reviewed documents there is, however, little evidence of the use of diversified strategies to identify and reach target groups.

7.4 Effectiveness

The broad range of NGO interventions and the paucity of hard data go a long way towards explaining why views on the role of NGOs in development can differ sharply. It is impossible to draw general conclusions about the effectiveness of NGOs, even in a relatively demarcated area like basic education. This equally applies to this study. However, it is possible to gather information and learn lessons about the effects of NGO interventions including the ways in which they succeed and the challenges they face – even if those findings are not representative of the full range of NGO activities in basic education. The following sub-sections describe this.

Access to education

Most evaluation reports discuss interventions aimed at improving access to education. Various interventions were applied to achieve this:

- Investments in infrastructure: schools, classrooms, libraries, sanitation, etc.
- Sensitizing activities on the importance of education: aimed at parents, teachers, school management committees (SMCs), community leaders, etc. (see also section 7.4).

[139] All three intervention strategies are applied to achieve these objectives: direct poverty reduction (74%), civil society building (18%) and lobby and advocacy (8%).

- Non-formal education: bridging courses and accelerated learning programmes to reintegrate students who have dropped out back into the public systems, community and mobile schools, and residential and non-residential education centres.
- Financial support: for sponsorship programmes, school fees, meals, learning materials, teachers' salaries, and support for income-generating activities for parents.

Access to education improved for certain target groups that were not being reached by the public education system because of their geographical or social isolation. These groups included girls, orphans and vulnerable children, children living in urban slums, ethnic minorities, children with special needs, child labourers, street children and children living in conflict-affected zones. There are also indications that there was a reduction in the number of children dropping out of school, which meant that completion rates improved and students made the transfer from non-formal to public education.

Non-formal schools were found to be appropriate for reaching certain vulnerable groups. This was because they were more flexible and could adapt more easily to local languages and culture, socio-economic background, harvesting seasons, etc. The goal of such non-formal education was for students to eventually enrol in public schools. An example is the Alternative Basic Education programme in Ethiopia. This initiative provided about 191,000 children with non-formal education.

Evidence with regard to the effectiveness of cost-reducing measures, such as paying school fees and scholarships, is limited and mixed. Investment in adapting infrastructure such as wheelchair accessibility facilitated the enrolment of target groups with disabilities.

Several evaluations noted that there was no clear strategy to reach intended target groups. As a result, there were no clear guidelines for student identification and selection. The danger of this was that the most vulnerable children would continue to be excluded, and it also ran the risk of creating tensions within communities. Evaluations noted that attention should be paid to the effect of demand-side interventions on other children in the same school, family or community.

Factors found to threaten sustainability of these interventions were: inadequate community or parent ownership and involvement, as well as a paucity of strategies for ensuring access to resources in the future. A strategy for transferring responsibility for projects to the government was also often missing. Without these strategies, funding the maintenance of infrastructure and continuing to sponsor students was deemed unsustainable.

Quality and relevance

In line with international trends, the focus of interventions shifted from improving access to education to enhancing the quality and relevance of education. The NGOs invested in the quality and relevance of education through a range of interventions:

- Educating teachers and school principals on issues such as new didactic methods and teaching styles.

- Facilitating teacher exchanges, working with school inspectors and training peer educators on issues like HIV/Aids.
- Improving or supplementing existing curricula, and providing tutoring and extra-curricular activities.
- Developing teaching materials in local languages and producing information on, for example children's rights.

Evaluators reported an evolution from teacher-centred to child-centred education as a result of some NGO interventions. They saw evidence that issues such as the personal development of children were being highlighted and courses on HIV/Aids, SRHR, gender equality, children's rights and Christian values were being introduced. Other reports indicated that teachers were well motivated, more respectful and understanding of students, adept at addressing sensitive subjects in class, and better at communicating and interacting with students.

Three factors came to the fore from the evaluations as important determinants of improved teaching: (i) the importance of in-service training; (ii) the relevance of that training, and (iii); the degree of cooperation with other actors such as school inspectors and SMCs. Cooperation with the Ministry of Education emerged as another crucial factor for achieving results in the area of education quality, e.g. allowing for the involvement of pedagogic advisors from the Ministry of Education in teacher training. It also stimulated education inspections to follow up on acquired teaching practices.

The evaluations showed that teacher training provided by the evaluated NGOs was less successful when it consisted of incidental courses, was not adapted to the local context, school capacity to monitor quality of teaching was limited or physical access to the training sessions was not addressed. The integration of themes such as SRHR and HIV/Aids into education was constrained when: (i) teachers received insufficient compensation for their extra efforts; (ii) teachers adhered to an official curriculum that excluded these themes and; (iii) teachers did not receive the required teaching materials. Six of the 37 evaluations found that even when teachers' competencies were strengthened, their teaching methods remained traditional with an emphasis on classical lecturing and rote learning. There is not much evidence that the NGOs followed up interventions such as training, which is essential for ensuring their long-term effects.

Participation

NGOs paid considerable attention to stimulating the participation of beneficiaries (23 of the 37 reports). The aims here were to improve the quality of education and to raise awareness of the importance of education. Interventions focussed on the following groups:

- Parents: by strengthening parent organizations; contributing to school policy and monitoring teacher attendance; offering courses on income-generating activities and literacy; and stimulating parents' involvement in school management.
- Students: by strengthening student clubs and councils; offering training on children's rights; running leadership development courses; attending talks on democracy; and training peer educators.

- Teachers: by strengthening teachers' organizations and stimulating involvement with organized pressure groups such as unions.
- Communities: by establishing community schools; involving communities in school management; providing training on budget tracking; and running general community development activities.

Communities, parents and teachers acquired a more active role in school management as a result of some of the NGO interventions. Parents' participation in school management committees (SMC) included becoming involved in school development planning. The reports provide some examples of how SMCs successfully lobbied the government to build additional classrooms, supply food to the school and provide learning materials. Embedding interventions in local community structures was found to be important in increasing ownership. There are examples of NGO programmes that combine participation with support to government decentralisation policies, e.g. to improve participatory municipal planning processes, but these were not evaluated.

Other interventions enabled students to be involved in school clubs and councils. Some students also became involved in the organization of activities such as sports and school magazines and newspapers. One of the reports established that students in schools where interventions were taking place came together more often than did students in control schools. Another study found that students in schools with peer educators had more knowledge about HIV/Aids and had a better attitude to co-students who were infected.

Sensitization campaigns on the importance of education resulted in parents being more willing to send their children to school, more vigilant in ensuring they attended, and better equipped to provide a good learning environment at home. It also made parents more willing to help with homework and to follow up on how their children were doing at school. Parents also monitored the attendance of teachers and availability of learning materials. For example, one particular programme, Enhancing Girls Basic Education in Northern Nigeria, aimed to improve girls' access to education by establishing and supporting SMCs. Enrolment of girls in the area increased from 25% in 2005 to 44% in 2007 (this is not compared with a control group). In addition, the intervention positively affected existing gender roles by including women in SMCs.

However, parent participation was often limited to operational and administrative tasks, such as painting classrooms, renovating furniture and assisting with school meals. While this may have had a positive effect on the learning environment, it did not necessarily improve school policy or the quality of education (see also Chapter 5). Various other challenges were identified such as the ad-hoc nature of training programmes; parents' often limited skills and knowledge; lack of financial means, supervision and support for participation; limited ownership and sustainability of interventions; and unclear divisions of labour and responsibilities between teachers, parents and SMCs. Students and parents often lacked the confidence to participate, and it has been difficult for NGOs to change existing power structures (e.g. in schools, local government).

Lobby and advocacy

Many of the evaluation reports (20 of the 37) described interventions in the field of lobby and advocacy. These were often integrated in the wider education programmes. Most evaluations merely described activities such as establishing coalitions or funding campaigns. Few contained information about participating in relevant decision-making forums or the overall results of activities that influenced policy. The evaluations described the following interventions:

- Policy influencing: directly by partners focusing on subjects such as girls' education, government support for and recognition of non-formal schools, raising education budgets, and bilingual and intercultural education.
- Coalitions: starting or strengthening coalitions of NGOs, parents' associations, faith-based organizations, schools, etc. with a mandate to influence education policy.
- Provision of materials such as brochures, research results, radio access, etc. in order to strengthen their policy-influencing activities.
- Enabling the participation of local NGOs in international lobbying.

A few evaluations provided examples on how the government adapted its policy as a result of successful lobby and advocacy activities. Participation has also been successfully applied to influence policy, with some school committees successfully putting pressure on local governments to improve the school environment. There are also examples of replication and the scaling-up of innovative practices with the government. For example, the lobby network 'Réseau Plaidoyer et Lobbying' was established in Mali between 2008 and 2010 to strengthen the lobby capacity of CSOs in three areas, including education. Results included the adoption of a 3% input target for the national literacy budget and increased attention in district education plans for gender equality, non-formal education and literacy.

A number of context-specific factors influenced the room for lobby and advocacy. These included government decentralization, openness to CSO involvement, the diversity of funding sources and available expertise. Lobby and advocacy activities require specific expertise that some of the partner organizations lacked. Evaluations noted that training in this area should be accompanied by following up on results.

Some particular bottlenecks were identified in cooperating with governments. These included (i) a loss of flexibility and autonomy; (iii) fluctuating political and administrative contexts and a high turnover of government employees; (iii) limited government budgets for replicating and up-scaling NGO activities; and (iv) demand side (community, household) focus of interventions while the government determines the supply side.

International lobby activities were excluded from the study IOB (2011a), though additional literature was reviewed to provide information on the GCE (see Box 7.1).

Box 7.1 *The Global Campaign for Education*

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is a civil society coalition that came together in 1999 to mobilize people across the world to 'campaign for quality, free education for all' (Gaventa & Mayo, 2009; GCE, 2010). To achieve this goal, the GCE carries out campaigns throughout the year, most notably during its annual Global Action Week. The GCE also represents civil society on education issues at key decision-making meetings including those of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) steering committee. In addition, it coordinates national campaigns to lobby the annual meetings of the Group of Eight (G8), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, where it demands long-term financing for education. The GCE also coordinates policy research on different aspects of the Education for All (EFA) agenda. It publishes 'School Reports' of donors and the governments of developing countries which 'grade' contributions to education.

The GCE has emerged as one of the longest-lasting transnational campaigns for education. It attempts to bring together local, national, regional and international voices for change (Gaventa & Mayo, 2009). Its originators wanted to create a new campaign model that was bottom-up and Southern-led, and had broad-based governance and national coalitions. As a result, the GCE itself includes not only other international and regional networks, but also 65 Southern and Northern national coalitions. Over 80% of GCE funds go to support national coalitions.

The GCE's Dutch partners are the Algemene Onderwijsbond, CNV Onderwijs, Edukans, ICCO/KerkinActie, Oxfam Novib and Save the Children Netherlands. The Ministry supported the GCE with almost €15.6 million between 2002 and 2009. Most of the funding (91%) was channelled through Education International, the global federation of teachers' unions, who acted as legal representative for the GCE (MFA, 2006b). In addition, the Ministry directly funded GCE's '1Goal' campaign and GCE's campaign to build the capacity of CSOs.[140]

The GCE is portrayed as a successful example of a campaign coalition. 'Its deep, pre-existing roots in collective organization in the global South' were indicated as important characteristics (Gaventa & Mayo, 2009). However, the GCE has tracked and monitored very little of its own work, so the basic data required to offer a comprehensive assessment of its impact, e.g. use by governments, is missing (Culey, Martin, & Lewer, 2007). Interviewees for the 2007 midterm review reported a lack of overall strategic direction resulting from the GCE's consensual approach. In general, however, interviewees were positive about the GCE and confidently identified achievements in each of its core areas of mass mobilization, policy change and coalition building. A Dutch official, noting that any policy change is difficult to attribute, even claimed that 'GCE and its partners in the Netherlands were a factor in the Dutch Government's promise to dedicate 15% of its development budget to education' (Culey, Martin, & Lewer, 2007).

[140] 1Goal campaign: www.join1goal.org

Outcomes

Most evaluation reports focus on activities and outputs (e.g. schools built, training provided). However, 21 of the 37 evaluations included information on learning results, personal development or socioeconomic status.[141] Impact in these areas is described, but often insufficiently analysed and not substantiated.
Even where outcomes were discussed in depth, it was not possible to determine the effectiveness of NGO activities because the relationship between the outputs provided by the NGOs and the realized outcomes were not analysed systematically by the evaluators. For example, there was not enough reliable information to substantiate a relationship between more participation by parents, pupils and teachers and increases in access to education or the quality of education. In particular, the absence of socioeconomic information about students in the analyses of outcomes confounded findings, as this tends to explain most of the differences in education outcomes.

In some cases, it was reported that learning outcomes of children from the target groups improved over time or when compared to the outcomes of other students. For example, an evaluation in Uganda found that students in intervention schools scored better in the national examination than did children in control group schools. However, other studies reported that learning results in intervention schools were *not* better, and were sometimes worse than the results of children in control group schools, or had deteriorated over time. Without controlling for the socio-economic status of pupils these findings are difficult to interpret.

Interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, pupils and parents indicated that positive changes in personal development have taken place in a number of areas. These include children's motivation to attend and/or complete school, teachers' understanding of children's rights and students' knowledge about HIV/Aids. There is also evidence of improved life skills and an increase in self-respect and confidence among specific groups such as girls, street children, and other marginalized young people. Some minor improvements in families' socio-economic status as a result of education interventions were referred to by beneficiaries and project staff.

Unfortunately there is little evidence in the evaluation reports about factors that contribute to outcomes such as learning. Based on interviews with parents, students and teachers, some assertions are made about the positive impact of better teaching or learning processes. Project staff and beneficiaries attributed this to the implementation of participative learning methods and improved supervision and inspection of school activities. On the other hand, the sometimes poor standard of teaching and weak learning systems constitute a challenge. This is especially so where: teachers lack motivation as a result of low pay, students are subject to rote learning, homework is not corrected, teachers stigmatize students from deprived groups and the available resources are inadequate for keeping up with surges in enrolment.

[141] Only seven out of 11 evaluations with learning results included quantitative data. These were notably on student assessments in mathematics, language, examination performance and graduation results.

7.5 Conclusions

In section 7.2 the expected added value of NGO activities at the country level was summarized as: 1) developing innovative and alternative interventions that are targeted at hard-to-reach children; 2) intervening at grass-roots level; 3) capacity building of local actors; 4) policy influencing through lobby and advocacy.[142]

The evaluation reports provide examples of alternative approaches to reach particular groups. Non-formal schools in particular enabled NGOs to reach certain disadvantaged groups because they were flexible and could adapt to the local context. The main challenges arose with the implementation of a strategic approach to identifying and reaching specific target groups, the scaling up of innovative approaches, the integration of innovations into the public system and the safeguarding of the sustainability of interventions. NGOs need to provide more evidence of the effectiveness and sustainability of innovative approaches in order for the innovations to be useful at a larger scale or in a different context.

Interventions at grass-roots level – which mainly aimed to increase participation in education by communities, parents, teachers and students – contributed to a better learning environment for children both at home and at school. They also increased the focus of parents on the learning outcomes of their children. The Dutch NGOs, through their local partners, are well placed to contribute in this area, though it has been difficult for the evaluated NGOs to change existing power structures. Evidence suggests, however, that the authority to act (rather than to merely be involved) is what determines the impact that participation has on learning (see Chapter 5). The evaluations do not provide evidence on the presumed relation between participation and improved access to and quality of education.

NGOs invested in building the capacity of teachers and governments to improve the quality of education. In certain cases, the acquired skills were applied in the classroom and resulted in a different way of teaching and enhanced student-teacher interaction. In other cases, teaching methods remained traditional. Success factors included the provision of in-service training, links with school management and government institutions, and monitoring of teachers. The challenges that were faced related to the limited relevance of training, restricted school capacity to monitor quality of teaching, teaching sensitive subjects such as SRHR, and insufficient follow-up of interventions.

The Dutch NGOs are devoting more and more effort to lobby and advocacy, often as part of wider education programmes. Examples of successful policy influencing at country level by local NGOs supported through Dutch NGOs have been recorded – for instance in relation to the recognition of non-formal education by the government or an increase in resources for education. Practices need to be carefully tailored to the specific context at which they are aimed. Some of the obstacles identified in the evaluation reports include limited expertise on the part of partners and potential losses of flexibility and autonomy to lobby and advocate, when cooperating with governments.

142 The added-value of working through Dutch NGOs falls outside the scope of this policy review.

A cross-cutting issue that emerges from the evaluation reports is that the sustainability of NGO education interventions is not always guaranteed. Too few of the reports in the sample evaluated sustainability, but some determining factors can be identified. These include financial capacity, organizational strength (through SMCs, for example), cooperation with local authorities in monitoring, potential for replicating and scaling up projects, and the transfer of non-formal students into the public system. Cooperation with developing country governments is important for sustainability, but can be difficult if governments perceive NGOs as an affront to its legitimate role as education provider.

In the context of decreased funding for basic education, it is more important than ever to have robust evidence of which NGO interventions are (cost-)effective.[143] The available evidence is sufficient to conclude that many projects implemented by Dutch NGOs and supported by the Ministry have delivered their intended outputs. Schools were renovated, classrooms constructed, community schools established, teachers trained, students taught, parents supported and access for girls improved. The finding that projects achieved their immediate objectives is clearly important. Yet, on their own, these findings from evaluations undertaken between 2003 and 2009 do not tell nearly enough about results of NGO interventions with regard to outcomes such as learning.

143 NGOs are well placed to apply quasi-experimental approaches, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, to determine how innovative NGO interventions contribute to education objectives and how this may be replicated elsewhere and on scale. Yet, a concerted effort with regard to M&E is needed to realize this potential.

Annexes

Annex 1 About IOB

Objectives
The objective of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) is to improve insight into the implementation and effects of Dutch foreign policy. IOB meets the need for independent evaluation of policy and operations in all policy fields that fall under the Homogenous Budget for International Cooperation (HGIS). IOB also advises on the planning and implementation of the evaluations for which policy departments and embassies are responsible. Its evaluations enable the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary for Development Cooperation to account to parliament for policy and the allocation of resources. In addition, the evaluations aim to derive lessons for the future.

Efforts are accordingly made to incorporate the findings of evaluations into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (the Ministry's) policy cycle. Evaluation reports are used to provide targeted feedback, with a view to improving both policy intentions and implementation. Insight into the outcome of implemented policy allows policy makers to devise measures that are more effective and focused.

Approach and methodology
IOB has a staff of experienced evaluators and its own budget. When carrying out evaluations, it calls on the assistance of external experts with specialized knowledge of the topic under investigation. To monitor its own quality, it sets up a reference group for each evaluation, which includes not only external experts but also interested parties from within the Ministry.

Programme
The evaluation programme of IOB is part of the programmed evaluations annex of the explanatory memorandum to the Ministry's budget.

An organization in development
Since IOB's establishment in 1977, major shifts have taken place in its approach, areas of focus and responsibilities. In its early years, its activities took the form of separate project evaluations for the Minister for Development Cooperation. In the mid-1980s, evaluations became more comprehensive, taking in sectors, themes and countries. Moreover, IOB's reports were submitted to parliament, thus entering the public domain.

In 1996, review of foreign policy and a reorganization of the Ministry took place. As a result, IOB's mandate was extended to the Dutch government's entire foreign policy. In recent years, it has extended its partnerships with similar departments in other countries, for instance through joint evaluations.

Finally, IOB also aims to expand its methodological repertoire. This includes placing greater emphasis on statistical methods of impact evaluation. As of 2007, IOB undertakes policy reviews as a type of evaluation.

Annex 2 Abbreviated Terms of Reference

1. Objective of the policy review

According to the RPE 2006, the objective of a policy review is to contribute to the reliability of the policy information used by the Dutch government. A policy review offers policy makers the opportunity to learn from experiences in the past and to account for the policies pursued. Policy reviews are offered to the Parliament by the Ministers.

The objective of the country studies is to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Dutch contribution to the basic education sector in the selected countries. The focus will be on the effects on basic education outcomes (i.e. learning achievements, with particular focus on women and girls) of national (formal and non-formal) basic education programmes, supported in different ways by the Netherlands.[144] The contribution by the Netherlands will be analysed as one of the many actors in the national education sector, amongst which also other international donors.

Ten years since the last basic education policy is an opportune moment for a policy review. In those ten years, a lot has been accomplished internationally, though in many developing countries the different education goals (EFA, MDGs) seem still far off. With 5 years to go before the end targets of 2015, this policy review will provide useful information for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the effects of the Dutch basic education policy internationally and at country level, both to inform further policy development and account for the results achieved so far. Moreover, the results of the country studies are expected to generate useful evaluative findings on the effectiveness of the national education sector policies and donor support thereof for national governments, in particular the ministries of education, the Dutch embassies and other parties active in the field of basic education.

2. Scope

In general, basic education will be defined according to the last Dutch basic education policy (MFA, 1999; MFA, 2000): *'Basic education meets people's learning needs and enables them to acquire the basic knowledge and the essential skills and values they need for their personal and social development, and to play a useful role in society.'* However, the impact evaluations in the country studies will follow the more narrow ISCED definition (primary education and first stage secondary education), focusing on formal and non-formal education for children and youth. This implies excluding adult basic education and early childhood development and pre-school care. Though it is necessary to demarcate the scope of the evaluation in this way, the policy review and the country studies will take into account that the Dutch policy on basic education views basic education as a broader concept, covering the whole education sector.

The policy review will cover the period since the last basic education policy, from 1999 to 2009. The review will assess all three channels of direct support to the basic education sector in developing countries: bilateral cooperation, multilateral organisations and global

144 The policy review will focus on most measured learning achievements (e.g. reading, writing) but recognises the role of education in pursuing other outcomes (e.g. life skills).

initiatives, and non-governmental organisations. International networks will not be evaluated given that their contribution is mainly indirect, for example through knowledge generation for policy development, lobbying and advocacy.

The countries have been purposefully selected in order to have an overview of the world-wide support to basic education by the Netherlands. This is certainly not a representative sample, but one that illustrates the different environments and ways in which Dutch support is provided. The countries are:

- Country studies finalised (2008):
  - Uganda (follow-up study on-going)
  - Zambia (follow-up study on-going)
- Country studies to be carried out by IOB for the policy review (2010):
  - Yemen
  - Bangladesh

Furthermore, the policy review will draw on other country studies of basic education in:

- Bolivia[145]
- Tanzania[146]
- Benin[147]

Moreover, the IOB evaluation of the bilateral programme in Africa (2008) also contains important information on the support to basic education between 1998-2006.

3. Approach

- The prescribed components for a policy review are:
- Description and analysis of the problem that led to the policy,
- Description and motivation of the role of the government in this area,
- Description of the policy objectives,
- Description of the employed instruments and analysis of the outcomes thereof,
- Description of budgets and expenditures.

145 The Bolivia evaluation will take place in close coordination with other evaluation work taking place in that country (e.g. study by IOB of changes in poverty, including education, from local perspective, and the evaluation of the national education plan by the education donor basket). Though this approach also applies to the country studies planned by IOB in Yemen and Bangladesh, the embassy of Bolivia has requested a different process for that evaluation.

146 In Tanzania, IOB is undertaking the impact evaluation of the education sector as part of a larger evaluation of budget support.

147 IOB is co-funding an evaluation of the education sector in Benin (probably without statistical impact evaluation), which is led by the French development agency (AFD). Though the role of the Netherlands in the education sector in Benin is relatively small, findings from this evaluation will be included in the policy review.

1. Description and analysis of the problem that led to the policy
This component will be answered by providing an overview of trends in basic education indicators since 2000 in partner countries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with a particular focus on girls and women. The Dutch policy will also be linked to developments in the broader context of international development (e.g. donor harmonisation and alignment, MDGs, EFA). Information from the country studies will be used to provide examples of country specific problems and strategies.

2. Description and motivation of the role of the government in this area
The intervention logic in the 1999 Dutch policy on basic education is based on the assumption that investments in basic education (and more recently the whole education column) lead to poverty reduction. This motivation of the role of government will be substantiated through an assessment of the evidence on the link between basic education and poverty and the returns to investments in basic education, based on an extensive literature review. Country-specific evidence, such as the evaluation of the impact of primary education on further education and employment in Uganda, will also be included in this component.

3. Description of the policy objectives

This part of the policy review will describe how the policy of basic education falls under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy priority nr 5: 'Enhanced human and social development', and within that policy priority, under the operational objective nr 1: 'All children, youth and adults have equal opportunity to complete quality education, that provides them with the necessary skills and knowledge to fully participate in society.' The objectives of the Dutch policy on basic education will also be positioned within the global context, where international objectives prevail, such as the Millennium Development Goals, Education for All goals and the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

4. Description of the employed instruments and analysis of the outcomes thereof
The employed instruments can be categorised as bilateral programmes (with different kinds of support to the education sector), international programmes (support to multilateral organisations and international initiatives) and civil society programmes (Dutch and local NGOs and cooperation with the private sector). The overall portfolio of the Dutch basic education policy will be categorised according to these instruments and each of them will be described in more detail.

The analysis in this component will be mainly based on the results of the country studies undertaken by IOB in Uganda, Zambia, Yemen and Bangladesh.[148] These evaluations will cover the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of the Dutch bilateral support to the basic education sector in different countries. Where possible, statistical impact evaluation will be used to determine the effectiveness of the national education policies, supported by the Netherlands. In some countries, this will require macro-level, country-wide research, as

[148] The Tanzania basic education study as part of the budget support evaluation is also expected to provide evidence for this component, though the approach will differ from the Yemen and Bangladesh studies. Hopefully the same applies for Bolivia, depending on the way in which impact will be measured there.

has been carried out in Uganda and Zambia (2008). In others countries it might be more appropriate to assess effects through statistical impact evaluation at lower levels (regional, projects), depending on the country context, data availability and the way in which the Dutch support is provided. However, the country studies will all use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to establish a counterfactual and attribute effects to the national basic education sector policies supported by the Netherlands (for more detail, see country specific terms of reference).

The analysis of the effects of Dutch supported education programmes of multilateral organisations will be based on an extensive review of available evaluation material from those organisations or by external researchers. The policy review will include an assessment of the education activities of Dutch NGOs, co-financed by the Ministry, with the largest education programmes. This assessment will be based on interviews and documentation review. The analysis of effects will rely on existing monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the NGOs themselves, after the reports have been assessed on quality, credibility and usefulness.[149]

5. Description of budgets and expenditures
This component will describe budgets, disbursements and expenditures on basic education by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2000. It will look into the way in which the expenditure on basic education is spent along different channels and in different countries over time. The effect of an input target for basic education (15% of official development assistance by 2007) will also be covered here. The country studies will provide information on the basic education expenditure patterns of partner countries.

4. Organisation

The policy evaluation falls under the responsibility of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IOB). The evaluation will be led by Ms Phil Compernolle, with assistance from IOB researcher Ms Simone Verkaart. Through an international tendering procedure, IOB will contract experienced evaluation teams to undertake the country studies in Yemen and Bangladesh (input for component 4).[150] Each country evaluation team will have expertise of the national basic education sector, quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation, and include experts from the selected country (if not the whole team). The literature review (input for component 2) and the global overview of trends in the basic education sector (input for component 1) will be carried out by IOB. IOB retains the responsibility for the final evaluation reports and the overall policy review.

For the country studies, IOB intends to work in close cooperation with the governments, in particular with the Ministry of Education, Dutch embassies and other donors active in the

[149] The assessment on their usefulness, validity and credibility will be along the lines of IOB (2006), De kwaliteit van programma-evaluaties in het Medefinancieringsprogramma 2003-2006. IOB Werkdocument. Den Haag: Ministerie Van Buitenlandse Zaken.

[150] For Bolivia and Tanzania, different tendering procedures will be used due to the different approach used for these countries. Separate terms of reference will be written for these studies.

education sector. In the spirit of the Paris Declaration and efforts made by governments and donor partners to harmonise, IOB will explore the possibility of working together with other donors active in the education sector. Preparatory discussions with the Dutch education experts and contacts made during the inception visit to the selected countries will be used to establish the appropriate form for this cooperation.

A reference group, chaired by the director IOB, will be appointed for the policy review. This reference group will comment and advise, both in writing and during meetings, on draft country terms of reference, draft country reports and the draft final report of the policy review.[151] Furthermore, for the country studies, country-specific reference groups will be set up by IOB, in cooperation with the Dutch embassies, to comment and advice on draft country terms of reference and draft country reports (members to be identified and invited during the inception visit).[152]

As part of the internal quality control procedures, two other IOB evaluators will comment and advise on the terms of reference and draft reports.

[151] It is expected to take up about 10 days (1 day per draft terms of reference (3), 2 days for the draft country reports (3), 3 days for the draft report of the policy review).

[152] It is expected to take up about 3 days (1 day for the draft terms of reference, 2 days for the draft country report).

Annex 3 Organization of policy review and participants

IOB

- Phil Compernolle
- Simone Verkaart
- Antonie de Kemp (Zambia, Uganda)
- Paul de Nooijer (Bangladesh)
- Jisse Kranen
- Kirsten Mastwijk

Country evaluations

Bangladesh

- Astrid Zwager
- Hillary Thornton
- Hosne Ara Begum
- Menno Pradhan
- Nurjahan Begum
- Rubaya Monzur
- Shahjahan Mian Tapan
- Vincent Paqeo

Bolivia

- Alfonso García Salaues
- Arend Pieper
- Beatriz Cajías
- Miguel Urquiola

Zambia I:

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- Jan Willem Gunning
- Chris Elbers
- Kobus de Hoop
- Bupe Musonda (Ministry of Education)
- Noel Mulopa (Ministry of Education)
- Joe Kanyika (Ministry of Education)
- Yvonne Mweemba Chuulu (Ministry of Education)
- Teza Nakazwe (Examinations Council of Zambia)

Zambia II:

- Charles Ndakala (Ministry of Education)
- Mwila Chikwekwe (Impreuna Consulting)
- Joe Kanyika, Teza N. Musakanya and Shadreck Nkoya (Examinations Council of Zambia)
- Bupe Musonda, Valentine Chitambala and Noel Chiluba Mulopa (Ministry of Education)
- Dominic Nyambe (Ministry of Education)
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- Moses Okurut (Ministry of Education)
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NGO review

- Geert Phlix (ACE Europe)
- Huib Huyse (ACE Europe)
- Lina Neeb (ACE Europe)

Problem analysis

- Ans Smulders

External Reference Group

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- Nick Taylor
- Ria van Hoewijk
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department for Social Development/Education)

- Christel Eijkholt
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Editor

- Adrienne Cullen (Contactivity)

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Data sources

Worldbank: http://data.worldbank.org/
UNESCO: http://stats.uis.unesco.org/
OECD: http://stats.oecd.org

Annex 5 Dutch Basic education expenditure 2003-2009 (in thousands of €)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Bilateral expenditures								
Partner countries (with support to education sector)	107.400	123.100	112.040	165.429	232.894	265.156	206.690	1.212.709
Non-delegated funds (silent partnership, capacity building, etc.)	2.050	6.415	19.827	15.515	28.885	11.760	9.014	93.465
Attribution macrosupport and debt relief	18.000	31.500	53.395	40.207	59.697	39.570	23.478	265.847
Attribution other themes (e.g. emergency relief and reconstruction)	3.050	14.400	29.870	27.873	28.389	33.416	26.991	163.989
Bilateral	**130.500**	**175.415**	**215.132**	**249.024**	**349.865**	**349.902**	**266.173**	**1.736.010**
Multilateral funds (non-delegated)								
EFA/FTI	14.000	24.750	44.739	152.755	122.583	5.032	680	364.539
UNICEF (EEPCT, ECD and other)	600	68		21.580	53.072	25.900	37.060	276.561
UNESCO (ADEA, IIEP, SACMEQ and UIS)	510	1.822	1.662	2.828	2.223	3.691	3.521	16.257
FAWE		495	457	457	324	1.480	966	4.178
Attributed mulitlateral core-funding								
UN organisations (ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNESCO, WFP)	9.250	31.500	26.610	23.310	22.449	27.619	30.023	170.761
WB-Partnership Programme	1.000	1.000	1.725	6.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	14.725
IDA and regional development funds		34.800	31.554	4.484	13.583	16.531	14.858	115.810
European Development Fund (EDF)	2.500	4.900	5.512	5.575	5.983	6.672	7.193	38.335
EU-contribution		7.439	10.489	10.238	13.295	13.505	11.720	66.686

Multilateral	**27.860**	**106.774**	**122.747**	**227.727**	**235.012**	**101.930**	**107.521**	**929.572**
Civil society								
MFP/MFS	39.820	40.800	50.058	67.922	52.171	72.522	50.911	374.204
TMF	108	245	4.300	4.983				9.636
SALIN				3.382	3.606	2.000	2.000	10.988
PSO			1.425	1.650	1.350	1.150	830	6.405
Other	430			39				469
Civil Society	**40.358**	**41.045**	**55.783**	**77.976**	**57.127**	**75.672**	**53.741**	**401.702**
Other attributions								
Organizational costs		15.738	15.441	15.834	16.071	17.207	17.164	97.455
Total expenditure Basic Education	**198.718**	**338.972**	**409.103**	**570.561**	**658.075**	**544.711**	**444.599**	**3.164.739**
Expenditure Basic Education as % ODA	5,5%	8,6%	9,7%	12,7%	13,7%	10,8%	9,5%	10,1%

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HGIS annual reports 2004-2010 with adaptations based on the IOB-database.

Annex 6 Progress towards the EFA goals[153]

	GOAL 1			GOAL 2				GOAL 3					
	Early childhood care and education			Universal primary education				Learning needs of all young people and adults					
	Pre-primary GER			Primary adjusted NER			Percentage who continue to last grade of primary	Secondary GER			Out-of-school adolescents who are lower secondary school age		
	1999	2008	change	1999	2008	change	2007	1999	2008	change	1999	2008	change
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(000)	(000)	(%)
World	33	44	34	84	90	7	93	59	67	14	90.869	73.604	-19
Low-income countries	14	18	29	64	82	28	67	33	43	29	24.713	24.466	-1
Lower middle-income countries	28	42	52	85	90	6	88	52	63	22	59.528	45.241	-24
Upper middle-income countries	50	66	31	94	95	1	94	84	90	7	6.004	3.002	-50
High-income countries	72	77	7	96	96	-0,3	98	99	100	1	1.153	922	-20

[153] (UNESCO, 2011). Primary adjusted NER is the proportion of children of primary school age who are enrolled either in primary or secondary school. Key: GER= gross enrolment ratio; NER=net enrolment rate; GPI=gender parity index

	GOAL 4			GOAL 5			GOAL 6					
	Improving levels of adult literacy			Gender parity in primary education			Educational quality					
	Adult literacy rate (15 and over)			GPI GER			Percentage of students who continue from primary to tertiary			Primary pupil/teacher ratio		
	1999	2008	change	1999	2008	change	1999	2008	change	1999	2008	change
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(F/M)	(F/M)	points	years	years	%			
World	75	83	10	0,93	0,97	0,04	10	11	13	25	25	-1
Low-income countries	55	66	19	0,85	0,93	0,08	6	8	24	40	41	2
Lower middle-income countries	67	80	19	0,91	0,97	0,06	9	10	16	26	26	0,2
Upper middle-income countries	89	93	5	0,97	0,97	0,003	13	14	9	23	21	-10
High-income countries	98	98	0.4	1,01	1,00	-0,01	15	16	4	16	14	-11

Evaluations of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) published between 2007-2011

(Evaluation reports published before 2007 can be found on the IOB website: www.minbuza.nl/iob)

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Photo Cover: Students and teachers at a primary school in Bangladesh.
Paul G. de Nooijer | IOB
Layout: vijfkeerblauw, Rijswijk
Print: OBT Opmeer
ISBN: 978-90-5328-408-7

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This policy review discusses the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy on basic education and development cooperation during the period between 1999 and 2009. During this period, the Netherlands was one of the five largest donors in this area. The report includes an analysis of the Ministry's expenditure on basic education, a systematic literature review on the impact of investments in basic education, a review of external evaluations of six Dutch NGOs co-financed by the Ministry, and last but not least, a synthesis of six evaluations in the Dutch education partner countries Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia.

Published by:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
P. O. Box 20061 | 2500 EB The Hague | The Netherlands
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