Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries

September 2003
Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education

DOCUMENT REVIEW
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- Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland
- European Commission
- Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
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PREFACE

“Education for all” entails a vision and a set of objectives adopted by the world’s governments and international organizations in Thailand in 1990 and reaffirmed a decade later in Senegal. That shared goal requires new levels and forms of global cooperation, including significant and sustained external support. Alas, progress has been slower than anticipated.

What has happened? What have been the extent, forms, and consequences of external support to basic education in developing countries?

Reflecting the partnership at the core of the commitment to education for all, thirteen international and national funding and technical assistance organizations launched an evaluation of external support to basic education. Four partner countries, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia participated in the evaluation, making it a truly joint effort. The oversight and governance of the evaluation was itself participatory, involving a steering committee which was constituted by the thirteen agencies and the four partner countries and which included representatives of both evaluation units and education departments.

Evaluating aid to education is particularly challenging. External support has both technical and political dimensions, each shaping and supporting, and sometimes obstructing, the other. Education is a marvellously complex, and often only partly visible process, and perhaps the most contested of public policy arenas. The evaluation’s major strategy for addressing these challenges was reflected in its objective, which was to examine the process of external support to basic education provided by international and national funding and technical assistance agencies. The evaluation was thus mainly concerned with external support (aid) and basic education, with primary emphasis on the links between the two.

Partnership and process have been central to the evaluation, both in its content and its conduct. Its focus had three major components. First, what has been the nature and evolution of external support to basic education? Second, what have been the effectiveness and efficiency of externally supported basic education activities? And third, to assess the evolution of the aid relationship more generally, has there been progress in restructuring foreign aid as partnerships for basic education development?

This evaluation has thus had a very broad reach. To assess external support to basic education globally, the evaluators reviewed a very large set of documents, including smaller and larger scale evaluations, project reports, sector studies, and other analyses of aid and basic education. To ground their findings empirically, the evaluators completed four illustrative detailed case studies, with the cooperation and participation of national education officials, in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Zambia.

The evaluators were themselves a distinguished international group, led by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and including Goss Gilroy Inc. and Education for Change Ltd. The evaluation team consisted of experts from the North and from the South.

The evaluation reports draw on the evaluators’ work over nearly eighteen months, including the document review, four country case studies, and the final report. Detailed separate reports on that work are available in both print and electronic format. This report reflects the findings of the document review.
What have we learned? External support has contributed to expanding access to basic education. Funding agencies and partner countries have developed new patterns of cooperation and collaboration. External support is now increasingly routed directly to the education ministry or to the national budget. At the same time, project support continues to have a useful role. The focus on formal primary education has often reduced attention and funding to adult literacy and other out-of-school education programmes. Increased standardization and coordination of approach among funding agencies has been accompanied by inattention to national and local needs and circumstances. The voices of teachers and others in the broader education community remain difficult to hear.

The findings are of course much richer and more detailed than these brief observations! Their presentation is readable and provocative.

Evaluations provide a mirror, helping us to see more clearly the choices we have made and the paths we have decided to follow. Their findings prompt us to reconsider those choices and explore other paths. That is the challenge we are facing today.

Rob D. van den Berg
Chair, Evaluation Steering Committee
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AUCC  Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
BMZ  Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CIDA  Canadian International Development Agency
DAC  Development Assistance Committee
DFID  Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EC  European Commission
EFA  Education for All
EMG  Evaluation Management Group
ESC  Evaluation Steering Committee
EU  European Union
FPP  Foster Parents Plan
FTI  Education for All Fast Track Initiative
G8  Group of Eight (which includes the following countries: United States, Japan, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, the Russian Federation)
GATS  Agreement on Trade in Services
GCE  Global Campaign for Education
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
HIPC  Highly Indebted Poor Countries (Initiative)
HIV/AIDS  Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IMF  International Monetary Fund
JICA  Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDG  Millennium Development Goals
NGO  Non-governmental Organization
ODA  Official Development Assistance
OECD  Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRSP  Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Sida  Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPS  Sector Programme Support
SWAp  Sector-wide Approach
UK  United Kingdom
UN  United Nations
UNDP  United National Development Programme
UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund
UNGEI  United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative
UNICEF  United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
UPE  Universal Primary Education
US  United States (of America)
USAID  US Agency for International Development
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Basic education – While there is no universally accepted definition of what is included in basic education, the Jomtien Conference identified basic education as being the foundation for lifelong learning and human development and recognized that “the diversity, complexity, and changing nature of basic learning needs of children, youth and adults necessitates broadening and constantly redefining the scope of basic education” (Declaration 5).

Basic education programme – A programme is a grouping of activities that support one or more basic education objectives, but which are broader in scope than a project (for example, covering all regions of a country, addressing several components of basic education, using multiple strategies). A programme is usually funded and/or implemented by more than one external agency.

Basic education project – A project is a grouping of activities that support one or more basic education objectives, but which are limited in time and in scope (for example, targeted to one geographic area, addressing only one or two components of basic education, using only one strategy). A project is typically funded and/or implemented by one external agency.

Basic learning needs – Generally, the terms “basic education” and “basic learning needs” are used interchangeably. Basic learning needs generally include “early child care and development opportunities, relevant, quality primary schooling or equivalent out-of-school education for children, and literacy, basic knowledge and life skills training for youth and adults” (Bentall, et al., 2000).

Budget support (direct budget support) – This is external financial support that is provided to the recipient country’s national government, usually through the Ministry of Finance. Budget support can be divided into three categories of increasing constraint:

- General budget support: flows from external sources into the general revenue of the government. Constraints are sometimes in the form of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) conditionalities that require the government to keep spending in certain sectors (typically education and health) above negotiated thresholds;
- Sector support: external funding that is targeted for use in a specific sector or sub-sector; and
- Earmarked sector support: funding that is further constrained or targeted to a specific sub-sector (such as basic education), or even to particular activities within a sector or sub-sector. Within the constraints of sector or earmarked sector support, the line ministry usually has the flexibility to move resources around within the sector or sub-sector.

Education for All – Based on the six goals of Education for All defined in the Dakar Framework for Action, externally supported efforts to attain Education for All could be expected to encompass activities in the areas of:

- Comprehensive early childhood care and education;
- Free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- Addressing the learning needs of all young people and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programs;
• Adult literacy, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
• Elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and achieving gender equality in education; and
• Improving all aspects of the quality of education so that measurable outcomes are achieved by all.

**Macroeconomic budget support** – This is support that is provided to the recipient country’s national government, through the ministry of finance, and is not earmarked for any particular sector.

**Project or programme support** – This is support that is provided by one or more external agencies for a specific set of activities that are defined in the project or programme design and in which there is limited flexibility to move resources between activities.

**Sector** – The operational definition of a sector varies from context to context. In some countries, basic education is considered to be a sector. In others, it is a sub-sector of the education sector.

**Sector-wide Approach (SWAp)** – Generally a SWAp includes support that:

- Is sector-wide in scope;
- Is based on a clear sector strategy and framework;
- Is based on long-term plans;
- Includes host country ownership and strong coordinated partnership with external agencies;
- Is developed and implemented with the involvement of, and partnership with, all local stakeholders;
- Includes the involvement of all main external agencies;
- Is based on common implementation arrangements and effective donor coordination
- Relies on local capacity; and
- Includes provision for results-based monitoring.

**Universal Primary Education (UPE)** – The Millennium Development Goal defines universal primary education as being a state in which children everywhere, boys and girls alike, are able to complete a full course of primary schooling of acceptable quality.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report presents the results of a Document Review carried out for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 support agencies with the participation of four developing countries.

The document review was designed from its beginnings as an integral part of a process with three key elements: the document review itself, case studies of external support to basic education in developing countries, and a synthesis of the evaluation material gathered in the first two processes.

Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia joined the 13 support agencies to form an Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC meets at important points in the evaluation cycle to provide overall governance to the evaluation process. The ESC was the ultimate decision-making body for the evaluation.

A consortium of private firms with experience in evaluation and in basic education carried out the evaluation. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) was the lead organization in the consortium. The consortium included Goss Gilroy Inc. of Canada and Education for Change of the United Kingdom.

Methodology

The preparation of the document review report involved the completion of the following steps in a planned methodology:

- Development of a master list of all documents;
- Review and classification by priority of over 500 documents on the master list;
- Development of a document review grid to be completed for high priority documents;
- Assignment of 107 documents for completion of document review grids;
- Completion of the grids and preparation of thematic papers on key subject matter areas; and
- Synthesis of the material in the documents, the completed document review grids and the thematic papers into this draft report.

External Support to Basic Education

Section 3.0 of the main report discusses in detail the documents reviewed. Based on this material, the main messages from the document review regarding external support to basic education can be summarized as follows:

The Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is sponsored by: the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida, Denmark; European Commission (EC); Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.
Defining Basic Education and Assigning Priorities

One of the enduring controversies over basic education seems to be how to define its core vision, its content, and its priority uses. The controversy also seems to imply that each element of the "definition" of basic education must be shared by all key stakeholders at all times if cooperation is to be effective.

The documents reviewed make it clear that there is a fairly well accepted definition of:

- **The core vision of basic education** – meeting basic learning needs of every person: child, youth and adult;

- **The main functional components of basic education** – early childhood care and development, primary schooling, and alternative education are to provide the same content as primary schooling, early secondary education, and education for out-of-school youth and adults, including literacy programmes but also life skills training; and

- **The core priorities** – which drive basic education and which basic education may in turn address including basic education as a human right, as an element in poverty eradication, as a core area in which gender equality can be sought and expressed, as a means for overcoming other social inequalities, and as a means to address the problems associated with HIV/AIDS.

In fact, the consistency of this general definition of basic education can be seen as one of the achievements arising from Jomtien.

Of equal importance, the documents reviewed illustrate that the establishment and re-commitment to Education for All (EFA) goals at Jomtien and Dakar (and the creation of a forum for consultation and follow-up) really has resulted in a worldwide movement focused on education for all. This movement encompasses bilateral and multilateral agencies, international Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), partner governments and, to some extent, civil society.

If all external agencies, partner governments and key stakeholders were then to act in ways consistent with these three elements of the definition of basic education at all times in policy-making and programming, then the implementation of a global model of basic education could be reasonably said to be complete.

However, as the documents point out, moving from a generally accepted definition of basic education to an operational model that is consistently acted on has proved much more difficult. For example:

- External support agencies have not been able to achieve consistency in how they code expenditures to basic education and report them to either UNESCO or the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As a result, it remains extremely difficult to monitor the financial component of external resource flows in support of basic education in developing countries. This problem has been noted by virtually every report that has tried to develop a systematic overview of external support to basic education, up to and including the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b);
• Partner countries, while accepting the general definition of basic education, have emphasized their need to address problems across their entire education system or to concentrate on a specific sub-set of basic education, normally, formal in-school primary education; and

• The relationship between the EFA goals and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in education remains problematic since there is a tendency for some agencies and governments to overlook the fact that the MDGs do not replace the goals of EFA. An example of how this might happen is found in the EFA Fast-Track Initiative, with its emphasis on the MDGs.

With regard to the latter point, it is important to indicate that the EFA goals do not in themselves represent a total definition of basic education. On the other hand, the EFA goals do relate to most of the commonly accepted components of basic education: early childhood development and education, primary schooling, life skills training and adult literacy, for example. In contrast, the MDGs in education focus only on primary school completion and gender parity. As a result, there is a risk that a strong focus on attaining the MDGs in education will lead to a narrowing of activity and to relative neglect in supporting those other elements of basic education acknowledged in the EFA goals.

The problem seems to be in ensuring that agencies and countries are encouraged to be flexible and set priorities in how they will cooperate to advance basic education, without surrendering to a seemingly continuous tendency for basic education, and the EFA goals to be reduced in operational terms to a much more limited framework of formal primary schooling (and, to some extent, gender parity in primary and secondary school). This tendency should not be exaggerated since many agencies and governments are active in other areas of basic education. Nonetheless, the documents seem to illustrate the need to continuously reinforce the central tenet that basic education is more than formal primary schooling.

*Forms of External Support to Basic Education*

As the literature illustrates, basic education (and education in general) has been one of the key fields in which external agencies have sought to shift aid modalities from project to programme forms, especially Sector-wide Approaches (SWAps), as a matter of both policy and practice (although the project form has proven remarkably resilient during this shift).

The stated motivations for this shift have included reducing the administrative burden on partner countries, making policy dialogue more explicit and, especially, promoting partner country ownership thereby, deepening partnership. In each of these areas, it can be said that, up to this point in time, success is only partial. In the first place, for many external agencies in many countries, the project form has proven advantages and shows every sign of persisting. Also, as the literature points out, the movement to SWAps and other programmatic approaches has to be judged in terms of the continuous development of longer term relationships – as a process of deepening partnership over time, rather than a blueprint for a one-time solution to problems of cooperation.

Finally, the documents reviewed call into question whether, in the short term at least, the SWAp mode of cooperation has resulted in a reduced (some suggesting even an increased) administrative burden.
Conditionality

The documents reviewed dealing explicitly with conditionality have tended to emphasize the negative impact of policy and strategy related conditionalities on the level of national ownership of programmes. They have also questioned the utility of conditionalities in securing meaningful changes in policies and strategies on the part of partner countries. Some authors have suggested a post-conditionality model of external support to basic education with an emphasis on dialogue, shared goals and joint ex-post assessment of progress towards agreed indicators of achievement. This model is put forward as one means of avoiding external controls and, thereby, increasing national ownership of basic education programmes.

The Volume of External Support to Basic Education

There have been at least two major systematic attempts to quantify the flow of external support to basic education in the past three years: one as a preparatory document to Dakar and one for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b). Both make it very clear that the expectation of a substantial rise in the financial component of external support to basic education following Jomtien has not been met. To date, the best efforts to measure external flows to basic education in the period of 1990 to 2002 have concluded either that it remained stable or rose very slighty or, in the latest document, that it may have declined slightly. Whichever is chosen as definitive, what is clear is that Jomtien and Dakar have not yet resulted in the significant increases in the flow of external financial resources (at a global level) to basic education that could reasonably be expected given the commitments made there.

It is difficult to be definitive about why this problem persists, but some of the documents reviewed point to continuing concerns among external agencies regarding the absorptive capacities of many partner countries. They also point to the persistence of historical patterns of development cooperation and the reluctance of external support agencies to provide funding in countries where they do not have a tradition or experience of support, and over reasonably long time frames.

Whatever the reasons for the limitations in the response, there remains a substantial gap between the needed and the expected increases in both national resources and external support devoted to basic education, if even the single goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) is to be achieved.

This problem seems especially intractable when viewed from the perspective of the World Bank led EFA Fast-Track Initiative (FTI). FTI continues to encounter problems of limitations in financial commitments from supporting governments, especially in securing long-term commitments of funds.

It seems that the international community is faced with a major challenge in the area of recognizing and securing the needed long-term commitment of external resources to meet the single commitment that no country should fail to meet – the EFA goals – due to lack of resources. There is clearly an associated challenge in ensuring that the needed resources can be absorbed effectively and, therefore, produce accelerated progress towards the EFA goals. These two challenges are inter-linked in that each seems to have the direct result of making the other more intractable.
Dependency

The most detailed estimates encountered during the document review indicate that, in 2000, external sources provided 13.5% of expenditures on primary schooling in a significant sample of 47 key developing countries. In addition, for the same countries, the total volume of domestic spending on primary education would need to rise an average of 7.5% each year of the 15 years to 2015 for enough resources to be available to achieve UPE. This is more than twice the annual weighted average real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in sub-Saharan African countries during the 1990s. If developing countries are not able to sustain very significant increases in domestic resources allocated to primary education, the overall level of dependency on external resources may be expected to increase (if, of course, external agencies provide increased resources to fill the gap needed to achieve UPE).

While efforts to improve efficiency and reduce unit costs may reduce levels of dependency over time, they have already been assumed in the studies reviewed. Many efforts to improve efficiency (such as reducing teachers’ salaries) may be very difficult to achieve given the structural characteristics of markets for professional services, for example, in the countries concerned.

External Agency Roles

There is considerable discussion in the literature reviewed on the different roles of the external agencies (bilateral and multilateral) involved in supporting basic education. Much of this discussion centres on the question of how roles may be changing in the shift to greater use of programme forms of external support, including SWAs. As noted repeatedly in the literature, observers see this movement as being accompanied by the rise in both the policy influence and technical assistance role of the World Bank.

There is also considerable discussion in the documents reviewed of how the United Nations (UN) agencies, including UNESCO as the lead agency in education, may have fared in terms of profile and roles during this shift. There seems to be no de facto reason why an increased role for the World Bank should lead to a diminished role (or, rather, roles) for UN agencies, although the literature indicates such a shift has occurred. There should be continuing space for advocacy, policy dialogue, and technical assistance in basic education for each UN agency with a mandate in the area.

Externally Supported Basic Education

The tendency for basic education to be reduced in practical and operational terms to formal, primary schooling is noted consistently in the literature reviewed. The factors promoting this tendency include:

- A desire to maximize the impact of national and external resources by concentrating their use in a relatively easily defined domain of action;
- The scale of the challenge in primary education facing many partner countries;
- A belief that expenditures in primary education may be more demonstrably effective than in other areas of basic education;
• Experience on the part of external support agencies in direct support to activity areas in primary education, such as school infrastructure, supplies, curriculum development and teacher training (doing what you know how to do); and
• The apparent priority of formal primary and secondary schooling rising from the MDGs in education.

This is not to deny that external agencies and national governments alike have invested considerable resources and effort in other areas of basic education, including adult literacy and non-formal education. Rather, it points to a continuing need to remain vigilant in protecting the legitimacy, in both policy and programme terms, of action in areas of basic education outside formal primary schooling.

The problem of integrating external assistance to basic education into the policies, programmes and institutional structures of partner countries continues despite such efforts as the movement to sector-wide approaches in a number of countries. Clearly, external agencies remain committed to disparate and uncoordinated operational requirements in budgeting, procurement, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Surprisingly, these problems seem to persist whether external assistance is in project or programme form. Indeed, there seems to be a convincing argument that project forms of assistance are not only appropriate in many organizational contexts, but that they can be developed, designed, implemented and evaluated in a way that integrates them as closely into national systems as is the case for programme support. The key factor seems not to be the form of external assistance (project or program) but the nature of the relationship it supports.

The documents reviewed reinforce the thesis that basic education can be a strong element in an effort to combat poverty. They do not challenge the idea that a poverty-reduction strategy or programme must include initiatives in basic education. They do question, however, the relevance of the content of many basic education programmes and systems in terms of combating poverty. The documents reviewed present the challenge to educators (and policy makers) of determining how to demonstrate that what is learned in basic education will contribute to poverty reduction at both the individual and the societal level. It is a question of urgent importance to many parents and children in developing countries, and is inextricably bound up with issues of quality in basic education.

The documents reviewed do point to significant gains in access and participation in basic education at a global level and in many countries during the decade of the 1990s. The same documents, however, point to the looming gap between current performance in improving access and participation and the goals set for 2015. In other words, the world is not currently on track to achieve the EFA goals according to many of the documents reviewed. More financial resources, better monitoring and feedback, better dissemination and use of best practices and other ideas in education, and a host of other changes seem to be required if the rate of progress is to be accelerated (regardless of whether the goals can or cannot in fact be met).

At the same time, evaluations reviewed by the team point to positive results in specific outcome areas, such as infrastructure development, teacher training, student and parental participation, curriculum development, and monitoring and evaluation. They demonstrate that, despite persistent problems, these activities have contributed to improvements in the institutional capacity of partners and the learning environment for many students.
On the other hand, the same evaluations point out that there are enduring problems in how externally assisted basic education may be improved from a quality perspective. Efforts at measuring learning outcomes often seem to show limited gains from quality improvement activities. Clearly, efforts to expand basic education systems have had more success than those to improve quality. Central to this problem seems to be the issue of teacher training, teacher compensation and the professional and social status of teachers.

The documents point out that there is an inherent limitation to reform efforts if they do not include teachers as meaningful participants in programme development. They further emphasize the paradox of efforts to improve the quality of education while reducing teacher salaries and attacking their professional and social status.

Finally, the documents reviewed make an attempt to assess the impact of basic education from the perspective of girls and women. They have noted significant efforts in programmatic terms to move towards gender parity and promote gender equity through such initiatives as the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative. The evaluations reviewed have reported gains in access and participation for girls, mirroring those for the populations as a whole. On the other hand, the same studies note that continued population growth in countries where education performance is lowest means that the absolute number of girls without access to basic education has risen since 1990.

In fact, the World Bank (2003) states plainly, “the goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 will not be met. The gender gap for low income countries is, on average, 11 percentage points at the primary level, and 19 percentage points at the secondary level” (p. 2). The same document goes on to say that the goal of gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015 can be achieved, but only with country-specific attention and support.

At the same time, it is important to point out that the documents reviewed indicate that the discourse on gender equality and the role of basic education has improved and now focuses on the empowerment of girls and women, rather than preparing girls for reproductive roles.

Nonetheless, the pace of change in basic education systems seems to be much too slow to suggest that attainment of gender parity can be achieved in the time frames envisaged.

**Partnership in Basic Education**

One of the key questions of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education concerns the evolving concept and practice of partnership in development cooperation for basic education, and how that may in turn affect both practices and results in basic education.

Most of the documents reviewed do not directly address concepts and practices in partnerships as such. Rather, they focus on problems or achievements in external support to basic education. These, in turn, illustrate the depth and quality of the partnerships under review.

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2 It is important to distinguish between gender equality, gender equity and gender parity when discussing the impact of basic education for girls and women. It is possible to see gender equality as a goal stated at a societal level achieved when the socially determined meanings of gender will not disadvantage either boys or girls, men or women. Gender equity is a positive normative value to be sought in relations between boys and girls and men and women. Gender parity is one mathematical indicator used to assess whether a given system is moving towards or away from one of greater gender equity.
One of the most important elements of partnership can be found in a common vision of the goals to be achieved and the priorities shared by external agencies and partner countries (including different key stakeholders in partner countries). As already mentioned, there is a basic core vision of the goals of basic education and its component activities shared by most partner countries and external agencies. As also noted, however, there are continuing pressures that seem to narrow the range of agreed activities and sub-sectors, so that the partnership between external agencies and partner countries may focus on formal primary schooling to the detriment of other elements of basic education.

The literature seems to locate much of the evolution of concepts and practices of partnership in the shift from project to programme modalities, and especially to SWAps. There is an implied assumption in much of the discourse that this shift is both inevitable and, inevitably desirable. At the same time, many of the documents reviewed have pointed out that moving from projects to SWAps has not necessarily meant an improvement in the depth and quality of partnerships. Indeed, unless very carefully planned and implemented, these shifts can sometimes weaken partnerships.

The most readily apparent area where SWAps may cause problems in partnership, as presented in the documents reviewed, is in narrowing national participation. SWAps may have the effect of opening dialogue within a specific government to include non-traditional actors such as the ministries of finance, planning, and external cooperation. At the same time, they may deepen the quality of dialogue between external agencies and the core group within a given national government. The documents point out, however, that this process may exclude both those external agencies outside the tent of the SWAp and large swaths of civil society in the partner country. The resultant partnership may have a strong technical base and commitment within the bureaucracy, but be fragile from a wider social perspective.

Nonetheless, the documents reviewed, including policy documents, academic research papers, evaluations, press releases, and presentations by NGOs provide an indication that external agencies and their partners recognize the essential role that improved and deepened partnership must play if external support to basic education is to be effective.

Whether external agencies and their partners can overcome the asymmetries implied in the aid-provider/aid-recipient relationship by changing both concepts and practices in external assistance remains an open question in the literature.

**Implications for Policies and Programs**

As noted in the Evaluation Steering Committee meeting in March 2003, a document review report does not produce conclusions capable of supporting recommendations for action. The Synthesis Report of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is the appropriate place for presenting any recommendations for changes in policies and programmes supported by the results of the evaluation as a whole.

This section attempts to present just a few implications of the material presented throughout the document review report. The most important of these seem to be in the form of challenges identified in the documents reviewed. The challenges identified include:

- Ensuring that basic education encompasses the full range of activities and goals envisioned at Jomtien and Dakar, while recognizing the need for partner countries and external agencies to concentrate resources where they will be most effective;
• Improving the information base on external and domestic resources flows to basic education at a global and national level, so that the international community can at least monitor trends and assess the level of commitment of different actors;
• Ensuring sufficient external and domestic resources are available (and dependable) over the longer term, to achieve the needed acceleration in EFA goal achievement;
• Overcoming problems in absorptive capacity;
• Using research and other tools, to identify effective measures to improve quality in basic education and making the necessary organizational changes and investments to take those measures to scale;
• Ensuring that the content of basic education is not only of high quality but relevant to the needs of children, youth and adults, especially in terms of combating poverty; and
• Improving the depth and quality of partnership at a global and national level through direct efforts to reduce the asymmetry in the relationship between those who provide external resources and those who use them. This implies not only continued commitment to evolving concepts and practices in partnership, but knowledge of those factors that contribute to more fully realized partnerships in areas such as continuity, administrative capacity, participation, and relevance to local context.

These challenges do not stand alone as products of the document review process. They resonate in the experience of the country case study team and can be re-visited in more detail in both the country case study reports and the synthesis report, where the team tries to present suggested viable responses.
PART ONE: BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Document Review

This report presents the results of a Document Review carried out for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education commissioned in February 2002 by a consortium of 13 support agencies with the participation of four developing countries.

The document review was designed from its beginnings as an integral element in a process with three key processes: the document review itself, case studies of external support to basic education in developing countries, and a synthesis of the evaluation material gathered in the first two processes.

Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia joined the 13 support agencies to form an Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC was the ultimate decision-making body for the evaluation.

A consortium of private firms with experience in evaluation and in basic education carried out the evaluation. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) acted as the lead organization in the consortium. The consortium included Goss Gilroy Inc. of Canada and Education for Change of the United Kingdom.

The original schedule and design for the evaluation called for the document review report to be completed before intensive field work began on the four country case studies. This allowed for the results of the document review to be used to inform the conduct of the country studies. In keeping with that design, preliminary drafts of the document review report were prepared in June for a meeting of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG), and in August in time for the September 2002 meeting of the ESC.

The preliminary results of the document did have an influence on the intensive phase of the country case studies that began in September 2002. The mechanism for ensuring this influence was the inclusion of key lessons from the preliminary drafts of the document review in the work of the four case study teams during a Quality Assurance workshop held in Ottawa in mid-September.

However, in August and September of 2002 it became clear that a significant effort would be needed to bring the document review report to a level where it could make a strong contribution to the overall evaluation. It was also clear that this process would need to parallel the work of the country case studies in the autumn of 2002 and the beginning of 2003.

As directed by the ESC and with the guidance of the EMG, the evaluation team developed and implemented a plan for this extended phase of the document review that resulted in a

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3 The Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is sponsored by: the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida, Denmark; European Commission (EC); Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.
substantially new report. Chapter 2.0 below provides an overview of the methodology developed and implemented in the preparation of the document review.

1.1.1 The Purpose of the Document Review


Phase I will focus on document review and analysis and will lay the foundation for the work to follow. The principal analytical and evaluation issues and concerns to be addressed in the review are those enumerated above. That is, the collected documents, which refer to all partner countries, are one set of data to be analyzed in evaluating external support to basic education (p. 13).

To be clear, the document review and analysis is not intended to be limited to a study of agencies and their policies and practices, and the case studies are not intended to focus only on national basic education policies and programmes. Both approaches will generate data on aid and education. Even as they highlight agency orientations and approaches, the documents also address basic education in diverse settings. Similarly, while the case studies are expected to support a detailed analysis of country-level activities, they will provide insights into agency understandings, strategies, and practices (p. 6).

The Framework Terms of Reference illustrates two essential facts about the purpose of the document review:

1. The review is intended to gather and analyze the body of data and information available from documentary sources to be used directly in an evaluation of external support to basic education. Thus, the document review must do more than sharpen issues or point the country case study teams in specific directions. It should answer these questions: What does the available body of documentation tell us about external support to basic education that can be used in an evaluative manner? What information and data in those documents can legitimately contribute to an evaluation? What does it have to say?

2. The questions to be addressed in the document review are the same core issues and questions as those guiding the overall evaluation and the country case studies. This means that the document review must address three different areas of enquiry at three different levels.

The key questions to be addressed by the document review concern:

a) The Nature and Evolution of External Support to Basic Education;
b) Externally Supported Basic Education; and
c) Partnerships for Basic Education.

In the document review, as in the country case studies and the synthesis, these three core areas of enquiry are examined at three different levels:

I. Intents, Policies and Strategies;
II. Practices; and
III. Results.
This basic structure of the issues – three areas of enquiry at three different levels – has been used to guide the organization, focus and structure of all the products of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education.

1.2 Structure of the Report

The report is structured as follows:

Part I: Background

Section 1.0 presents this introduction and overview.

Section 2.0 provides an overview of the methodologies used during the document review and discusses the strengths of the methodologies and the challenges they faced.

Part II: Findings

Sections 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 present the analytical basis and the findings of the document review. These three sections of the report are structured in keeping with the three key areas of enquiry of the evaluation: External Support to Basic Education, Externally Supported Basic Education and Partnership. Further, each area of enquiry is analyzed at three different levels: Intents, Policies and Strategies, Practices and Results.

Section 6.0 provides some analysis and presents the conclusions of the document review, while Section 7.0 discusses the resulting implications for policies and programmes.

Finally, the report includes annexes listing the documents and sources, which have been gathered, organized, classified and reviewed by the document review team and have contributed to the analysis and the results presented in the report.
2.0 Methodology

The process of gathering and analyzing the documents began in February 2002 when the EMG provided the team with a large set of documents gathered from the agencies sponsoring the evaluation. This was supplemented by the AUCC through a web-search for relevant documents. Documents were also gathered from the AUCC’s Information Centre and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. Throughout the period from February to November 2002, members of the ESC also provided the team with references and sent documents by mail and courier. At the same time, evaluation team members gathered documents and references during their work on the country case studies. Those documents with global implications were referred to the team working on the document review.

During the period of April to May 2002, John Wood and John Berry of the evaluation team completed a round of interviews at funding agency headquarters in Europe and North America to identify agency definitions of basic education including strategies and areas of intervention, both generally and in the specific case study countries. In addition to meeting personnel at the sponsoring agencies, they met with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Inter-American Development Bank, the development cooperation directorate of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), including Oxfam (United Kingdom) and Save the Children (United Kingdom).

This first round of the document review resulted in draft reports submitted to the EMG and subsequently to the ESC in September 2002.

Following that meeting, a decision was taken to structure an effort to build on the original work and to prepare a substantially revised document. That effort began in October 2002 and involved a team of five persons:

- Ted Freeman of Goss Gilroy Inc., as the coordinator, lead author and reviewer of documents on international policies and quantitative assessments of aid flows and results in basic education;
- Sheila Dohoo Faure of Goss Gilroy Inc., to assist in review of documents on aid modalities in basic education;
- Annette Isaac, an AUCC associate, to assist in review of documents on national policies and programmes in basic education;
- Richard Maclure of the University of Ottawa to assist in the review of academic literature on external assistance in basic education and on practices in basic education;
- Stephen St. Michael of AUCC, to assist in the review of documents relating to poverty and basic education; and
- Vindu Balani, an AUCC associate, who assisted in the review of documents on gender issues in basic education and on basic education and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Vindu Balani also served as the archivist for the team and took on the task of developing and maintaining bibliographies and preparing material for submission in the electronic database.
2.1 Detailed Methodology

The methodology followed by the document review team in the period from October 2002 until January 2003 included the following steps:

1. Development of a master list of all documents gathered as of October 2002, with additions made throughout the November to January time frame and the documents numbered sequentially. Ultimately, this list grew to over 500 entries.

2. A collective review of the master list of over 500 documents in order to identify duplicates, suggest additions to fill gaps and classify the documents into four categories of priority for review:

   **Priority level 1**: Documents directly pertinent to an issue area of the evaluation and representative of a key stakeholder group or source of expertise with application at a global level;

   **Priority level 2**: Documents, often evaluative in nature, with pertinence to the issues areas of the evaluation, but perhaps repetitive of subjects covered in the Priority level 1 documents and often focusing on a specific country or region;

   **Priority level 3**: Documents that are not directly relevant to the issues of the evaluation, most often national in scope and often outside the four countries participating in the case studies. If documents were being covered directly by the country case study teams they were also placed in this category; and

   **Priority level 4**: Documents so general or unrelated to basic education as to be of questionable value in a review of basic education and that should be removed from the list.

3. The team then developed a four-part document review grid to be used by team members to:

   - Collect the basic information needed to track the document during the review and to support development of the bibliography (identification number, assigned priority level, title, author, publication date, etc.);
   - Classify the document under 14 different categories of subject matter and level;
   - Prepare a brief annotation describing the material covered in the document; and
   - Extract the key findings of the document under the three issues areas and three levels of the evaluation, along with page numbers, quotations and key extracts.

4. The team then reviewed the master list of documents ranked by priorities and assigned 107 high priority documents for systematic review and preparation of completed document review grids. The documents identified for preparation of review grids were then divided among the analysts for completion of the grids and for an analysis of the contents. Annex 4 provides a list of documents selected for the preparation of review grids and for annotation (see Document Review Annexes, a separate document containing Annexes 4 to 7).
5. Review team members then prepared a series of short notes, summary analysis grids and presentations on the subject matter areas of:

- International and national policies on external support to basic education and on basic education;
- Financial flows and global quantitative assessments of results in basic education;
- Modalities of support to basic education, including SWAps and models of partnership in basic education;
- Gender issues and basic education;
- HIV/AIDS and basic education;
- Poverty and basic education; and
- Critical analytical papers of special significance.

These products were presented and discussed at a team working group meeting in December 2002 and made available to the lead author in the preparation of this draft report.

6. All of these products were then brought together for analysis in the preparation of a synthesis report. The interim products (completed document review grids and thematic notes) were used in concert with direct reference to the documents they summarized. In addition, the reports’ authors added documents that were not part of the grid preparation process, wherever they seemed especially pertinent, or supplemented the material in the grids.

7. With the analytical work noted above in place, the team was able to review the earlier draft of the Document Review Report and to incorporate material where it best fit into the revised structure. This was a valuable support to the report development process.

8. In early February, the team was able to go back to the master document list and do a careful review to eliminate Priority level 4 documents (deemed irrelevant to the subject of the evaluation), along with duplicate documents with differing titles, copies of documents in more than one language, and documents that were covered by collections already included in the list. This process resulted in a final bibliography of some 450 documents, which is much closer to the original estimate of the body of information to be collected in this exercise.

9. Finally, the information prepared by the team, including the bibliographies and the classification of the documents, were loaded into a database as one of the document review products.

2.2 Strengths and Challenges

2.2.1 Strengths of the Methodology

The strength of the process rests on the ability of a small team to work together and develop a common understanding of how the documents should be prioritized and what key information should be sought in each of the documents. The process also enabled the team to cover a larger body of information in a relatively short time than could one individual author working on his or her own.
The basic strategy used was to focus on key documents summarizing policy and programme developments in basic education over a significant time frame or providing a specific point of view rather than attempting to indiscriminately review, at the same level of detail, all the possible documentation on basic education, which is both vast and ever-changing.

The process followed also had the virtue of using the same structure of issues and questions during the document review and information-gathering process (through the mechanism of the document review grids) as in the reporting of findings and conclusions. This was a challenge in that the documents reviewed by the team were often structured around totally different organizing principles and a single document might deal with intents, policies and strategies as well as practices, and results in external support to basic education and might move from a global to a national perspective and back again.

In the end, though, the team was convinced that the benefits of maintaining the same-issues structure through information collection, analysis and reporting outweighed the challenges. It also has the added advantage of using the same structure for reporting findings as the country case studies.

Finally, the iterative approach used, with its somewhat pedestrian sequencing of steps allowed the team to identify gaps in the master list of documents and to seek out documents to fill those gaps, often with the help of the members of the EMG and/or the ESC.

2.2.2 Challenges

The document review has clearly proven to be a major challenge for the team of consultants carrying out the Joint Evaluation of Basic Education. In some ways, the most fundamental challenge was gaining an understanding of how best to bridge the conceptual gap between a document review aimed at refining issues and summarizing the current “state of the art” in international thinking on external assistance to basic education, and one which would gather a convincing body of evaluative information and thus represent one of the key methodologies of the overall study. In its efforts to ensure that the document review was able to accomplish the latter, the team had to overcome the following challenges. For each challenge, this section describes the team’s corresponding strategy.

Variation in the Status and Quality of the Documents Reviewed

The documents collected cover a range in official status from the published policies of national governments and multilateral and bilateral agencies to press releases by NGOs and technical papers written in support of project designs. They also encompass evaluations of external support to basic education on a global, regional, national and even local scale, all with varying levels of clarity and quality in information gathering, analysis and reporting.

The main strategy for dealing with this problem has two parts. In the first place, the report concentrates very much on those documents meeting a reasonable standard for evidence gathering and presentation. If a document has serious flaws in the presentation of its argument, the marshalling of evidence, and the linking of evidence to results, it should not be cited in this report. Exceptions are made only when a document presents a distinctive and important point of view. In that case, the report points out any apparent problems in the quality of the information cited.
The second strategy for dealing with the variable quality and status of the documents reviewed has been an effort to convey why a given finding is put forward in a given document. In other words, the reports authors have tried to present the information supporting a finding, as well as the finding itself.

*The Time Frame Covered by the Analysis: Maintaining a Historical Approach*

As the *Framework Terms of Reference* make clear, “Unless otherwise indicated, the Evaluation should focus on the period 1990-2001, with emphasis on 1995-2001 with attention as appropriate to preceding and subsequent events” (p. 5). This means that the document review must span a time frame that included major global events in the conceptualization of basic education and its position as a priority for external agencies and partner countries alike.

Arguably the most important single global event for basic education in the period under evaluation was the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 with its adopting of a Framework of Action and agreement that a joint effort would be made to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA) in the year 2000. As the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001) points out in *Education: A Basic Human Right. Development Cooperation and Basic Education: Policy, Practice and Implementation* it was at Jomtien that “the theme of basic education, focussing on the basic learning needs of all groups (children, young people, adults, women and men) was placed on the international agenda for the first time” (p. 13).

The decade of the 1990s was then closed with the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April of 2000. The World Education Forum built on an assessment of progress in achieving EFA goals by adopting *The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All, Meeting our Collective Commitments*. The Framework for Action re-iterated the commitment of governments to achieving EFA goals and targets for every citizen of every society and included specific goals within the over-arching goal of education for all.

Thus these two very significant international events in Jomtien, in 1990, and Dakar, in 2000, form something of a frame within which much of the activity to be evaluated takes place. On the other hand, there are important antecedents to Jomtien covered in some of the documents reviewed and which the team felt compelled to include in the analysis. The period since the World Education Forum in Dakar has also included many important initiatives and attempts to accelerate the pace of goal achievement. It seems that while the period of highest interest is 1995 to 2001, it is essential that the document review (and the evaluation as a whole) locate its analysis within a reasonably clear historical context.

The report attempts to respond to this challenge by being as clear as possible on the evolution of policies, strategies, intentions, practices and results over the period under review. This is made possible largely because many of the documents reviewed have taken a similar perspective. For example, Bentall, Peart, Carr-Hill and Cox (2001) in *Education for All 2000 Assessment Studies: Funding Agency Contributions to Education for All* provide a very good overview of some of the key policy and research work done in developing and developed countries in the 1980s; work that formed some of the antecedents to the policies and strategies adopted at Jomtien.

In addition to maintaining clarity in the time frames covered by specific documents, the review also attempts to present information, as often as seems practical, in a time-specific way; often through the use of tables and charts that present document contents classified into specific eras in the evolving history of basic education (and of external support).
Ensuring Other Voices are Heard: Especially from Developing Countries

Box 1: A Note on Terms

In the Document Review, as in the Country Case Studies, the evaluation teams had to decide on terms to use for the different international and national actors who play important roles in external support to basic education as both supporters and users of the support being provided.

The team rejected the term donors because it would exclude organizations providing loan funding and because it necessarily leads to a donor-recipient dichotomy that misses many nuances in the relationship of development cooperation.

The team followed the example of the Framework Terms of Reference in using the term partner countries despite some debate whether the term pre-supposed a genuine partnership relationship given that the question of partnership is central to the evaluation. In summary we settled on the terms:

External agency: for any bilateral, multilateral, or non-governmental agency providing support to basic education in developing countries (including a developing country agency assisting basic education efforts in another country);

Partner country: for those countries making use of external assistance provided by external agencies;

Non-Governmental Organization or NGO: for an international or national agency with a mandate primarily focused on development work in education or a sector related to education; and

Civil Society Organization: for an international or national agency with an important stakeholder role in representation, advocacy or implementation relating to basic education, which is not an NGO as described above. Examples would include teachers’ unions, parent associations, church commissions, and other bodies with a mandate beyond the development arena.

Even a cursory inspection of the list of documents first collected by the team from different sources in the spring of 2002 showed how much of the discourse on external assistance to basic education has been funded and published by the agencies providing that assistance. This is not really surprising since the external agencies providing funding, technical assistance and policy support in basic education have considerable financial and technical resources to devote to research, evaluation, policy development and programme and project design activities.

In carrying out (either on their own or in collaboration with partner country agencies) activities such as evaluation or policy research, external agencies often employ academic researchers and/or experienced consultants with a reputation in the field of basic education. These agencies can thereby seem to dominate the published material on basic education and, perhaps, to drive the debates on policies, strategies and priorities.

Indeed, Wilks and Lefrançois (2002) in Blinding With Science or Encouraging Debate: How World Bank Analysis Determines PRSP Policies argue that the World Bank’s ability to fund and to field multi-disciplinary research teams in support of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) preparation gives that agency a virtual monopoly on the content of those policies.

Whether one accepts that hypothesis or not, the preponderance of publications that are written, financed, or published by external support agencies threatens to drown out the voices of those who may not accept the reality represented there. There is a risk that voices representing different perspectives will be missing from any document review of this type. The voices of special importance outside this “mainstream” of information could include:

- Partner country governments, including Ministries of Education, which, for whatever reason do not accept the international “consensus” on priorities, policies, strategies, and most effective modalities for external assistance to basic education. The opinions of these governments may often be heard during plenary discussions or in the corridors of
international conferences, but they do not always find their way into documents summarizing the results. This also occurs in each partner country when negotiations are under way on the eventual design of projects and programmes receiving external support. The final design, review and evaluation documents may not illustrate the extent of host country involvement in the design process;

- National and international NGOs and civil society organizations who do not agree that governments are meeting their commitments in basic education, including commitments to EFA;
- Civil society organizations in partner countries with strong objections to either or both international and national policies and practices in basic education;
- Academic researchers in developed and partner countries who have analyzed external support to basic education with a critical eye; and
- Students, parents and teachers who may disagree strongly with the view from external agencies and national Ministries of Education on what the realities of external support are and how this support is used.

The document review team has responded to this challenge with the following actions:

- Seeking out documents written and/or published in refereed academic journals that deal specifically with issues in external support to basic education;
- Seeking out publications produced by international and national NGOs and civil organizations that may present an alternative perspective;
- Recognizing that many of the researchers and consultants who publish with the support of external agencies are careful themselves to reflect national and local perspectives and to report faithfully on the views of key stakeholders. Indeed, many of the academics and consultants whose work is funded by external agencies are recognized authorities in specific partner countries (and in regions), as well as globally. As a result, a careful reading of what may superficially seem to be an external viewpoint may provide national perspectives; and
- Gathering from the case study teams, national-level documents that express a government viewpoint or the views of key stakeholders, including learners and their families.

Indeed, the document review team has benefited somewhat from the need to revisit this task as it has been able to draw more and more over time on the experience of the case study teams (three country case study team leaders have worked on different phases of the document review). This means that the extensive consultations and interviews with key stakeholders carried out during the case studies are now part of the collective experience of the document review team and have helped to balance somewhat the problem of hearing other voices. The country case study teams made special efforts to hold consultations with learners, families, teachers, church officials, union leaders, and others who might be considered “outside the loop” of dialogue between developing country governments and external support agencies.

In order to highlight some of these perspectives, the findings sections of the report include a number of text boxes with the general title of “Other Voices – Other Viewpoints,” which highlight the positions taken by key stakeholders and analysts when they may not agree either with a consensus view or with the judgement of the evaluation team.

In sum, the document review team has tried to search those documents and illustrate those perspectives that might be lost if too narrow a path in document selection and review had been followed.
Separating the Documents and Their Findings from the Commentary of the Document Review Team

The small team preparing this draft of the document review report includes experienced academics, researchers, and evaluators who have quite literally spent years in the study of development cooperation in general, and basic education in particular. In the past year, they have been involved intensively in interviews, discussions, and workshops on external support to basic education and have read thousands of pages of documents. Not surprisingly, the team members have opinions on the material presented here. The challenge is to make sure that the reader can distinguish easily between what the documents have to say and the opinions of the authors. The best response is to be clear when making references to documents and to point out precisely what are the views expressed. A second response is to make the opinions of the evaluation team clear whenever they may be of interest, especially if those opinions have a basis in fieldwork carried out for the document review or in the general experience of the consulting team.

Another strategy for maintaining a clear distinction between the content of the documents reviewed and the analysis and opinions of the document review team is found in the structure of this report. To the extent possible, the interpretation and analysis of the information found in the documents is presented under the heading of conclusions in Section 6.0. In addition, commentary by the document review team is identified in the main body of the report by placing it in appropriate text boxes.

2.3 Revision Process

Following the meeting of the ESC hosted by UNICEF at its headquarters in New York in March of 2003, the document review team augmented the set of documents and articles to address some of the gaps pointed out by ESC members and to incorporate documents provided at the meeting. A total of twelve new documents were accessed and included in the revision process. They ranged in size and complexity from the 1998 World Bank publication *Assessing Aid: What Works, What Doesn’t and Why* to short notes available on Oxfam’s web-side concerning the implications of the 2002 World Social Forum and its focus on education.

In preparing this report, the evaluation team has attempted to incorporate ESC suggestions regarding a deepened analysis and the reflection of a somewhat more diverse set of voices.
PART TWO: FINDINGS

As already noted, the findings of the document review are presented here using the same issues-based structure as the Country Case Study Reports. It is anticipated that a similar structure will also be used in the preparation of the Synthesis Report of the Joint Evaluation of External Assistance to Basic Education.

Each sub-section of the findings begins with a listing of the key issues and questions dealt. A brief note is then provided on the main documentary sources forming the basis for analysis in that sub-section. References are cited in the text whenever appropriate.

3.0 External Support to Basic Education

The overall evaluation issue is the nature and evolution of external support to basic education over time (1990 to 2001) and how that nature and evolution has been reflected at the level of intents, policies and strategies, practices and results.

3.1 Intents, Policies and Strategies

3.1.1 Issues

The Framework Terms of Reference presents the main issue in assessing the intents, policies and strategies of external support to basic education as:

- What is the broad framework of ideas, understandings and institutions within which external assistance is provided to basic education in partner countries? How has that framework or its major components changed over time? (p. 7)

The Framework Terms of Reference provide an illustrative list of some of the dimensions of this issue and note that the list is not exhaustive. On reviewing the material in the documents gathered, the review team felt it was useful to break down this question into a sequence that seemed to allow for a better presentation of trends over time and that encompassed the examples in the illustrative list. The resulting sub-issues often use the terms should and will because at this level of analysis they remain statements of intents, policies and strategies.

- What are the components of basic education and is there convergence or divergence over time on the definition of basic education?
- What priority did external agencies place on supporting the achievement of goals in basic education and assigning resources to activities in basic education? Why?
- What forms of development cooperation are best suited to providing external assistance to basic education? How has external agency policy towards the form of support to basic education changed over time?
- How has the international commitment to EFA, including agreed targets and timelines, influenced the policies of external agencies in their provision of support to basic education?
3.1.2 A Note on Sources

As already noted, there is a large and rapidly growing body of literature on the changing nature and evolution of external assistance to basic education, much of it generated by the agencies providing that support. It is worth noting briefly some of the more important documentary sources used in this section as they relate to each issue.

Issues 1 and 2: Defining Basic Education and Setting Priorities and Goals

Box 2: Defining Some Essential Terms in Basic Education

The documents covered in this review make use of a range of terms that, while clear in themselves, need to be carefully used in order to avoid confusion. Here is a brief guide to how some are used in this report:

- **Jomtien**: World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien Thailand (1990)
- **Dakar**: World Education Forum, Dakar Senegal (2000)
- **Education for All (EFA)**: Refers to both the basic orientation of the Jomtien and Dakar conferences and the set of goals embodied in the declarations and frameworks for action resulting from each conference. This is very important as sometimes EFA is confused with just one or two of the goals embodied in the Jomtien and Dakar frameworks. EFA assessment and monitoring structures work in relation to the commitments and goals established at Jomtien and Dakar.
- **Universal Primary Education (UPE)**: is but one of the six goals by which Dakar “re-specified” the commitment to EFA and is defined as “ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.”
- **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**: were established by the Millennium Declaration signed by 189 countries in September 2000. MDG goal number two is the achievement of UPE. Number three is the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels by 2015. The MDGs do not cover all six EFA goals.

In this area the review benefited greatly from two extensive survey documents, one prepared as an EFA assessment study in preparation for the World Education Forum (hereafter referred to as Dakar). Bentall, Peart, Car-Hill and Cox in *Funding Agency Contributions to Education for All* not only survey the conceptual antecedents to the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien), they provide a discussion of differing views expressed at the conference by some external agencies and partner countries.

Most importantly perhaps, the document includes a systematic attempt to both define the components of basic education supported by external agencies and to reconcile data from different sources on agency contributions to Education for All in the 1990 to 1998 time frame.

Very much in the same mode of analysis, but with more up-to-date information and broader coverage of the issues, is the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002: Education for All – Is the World On Track?* (UNESCO, 2002b) This document not only surveys the history of EFA from Jomtien to Dakar and beyond, but includes analysis of new steps, such as the EFA Fast Track

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4 The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002: Education for All – Is the World on Track?* is published by UNESCO and was commissioned by them on behalf of the International Community. As the acknowledgement page to the document makes clear, “The analysis and policy recommendations of this Report do not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO.” The report was compiled by a team of authors under the direction of Christopher Colclough. For citation purposes, this document is referred to by the abbreviated title *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002*. 

September 2003 | Document Review
Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries
Initiative (FTI). This source also updates much of the information in Bentall et al. (2000) and extends the time frame of much of the data presented through to 2001.

While these two sources provide a strong analytical framework for addressing issues one and two, the analysis also relies extensively on policy documents from multilateral and bilateral agencies providing support to basic education. These include their own definitions of basic education as well as commitments to EFA goals. Many of the documents directly address the issue of education as a human right as one of the key reasons for making basic education and EFA a priority for development cooperation. Similarly, the regional assessments prepared for Dakar provide a perspective on the evolution of partner country views on basic education and on EFA goals.

Issues 3 and 4: The Form of Support to Basic Education and the Influence of the EFA Goals and Targets on External Agency Policies

The question of the form or mode best used to provide external support to basic education in partner countries has been dominated in the past decade, especially since 1995, by the question of the role of projects and programmes and, especially, the use of Sector-wide Approaches (SWAps). The review team was able to access a rich body of information to address the evolution of agency policy towards SWAps in basic education.

A number of agencies have sponsored or carried out reviews of their experience with different aid modalities in basic education. In addition, academic researchers and NGOs have prepared critical analyses of the difference between stated and actual intentions, practices and results in the area of SWAps in education. Annex 2 presents a table summarizing the policies and practices of external agencies on SWAps and on general budget support. Documents prepared by Feldberg and Tornes (2002), Hasegawa (2002), Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) and Riddell (2002) form the information basis for Annex 2.

3.1.3 Defining Basic Education

As already noted, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001) Education: A Basic Human Right makes the point that Jomtien in 1990 was where “the theme of basic education focusing on the basic learning needs of all groups (children, young people, adults, women and men) was placed on the international development agenda for the first time” (p.13). With that in mind, Jomtien in 1990 seems a good starting point for searching for a definition of basic education.

Preparation for Jomtien involved agreements among UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank, subsequently joined by UNFPA. Nine regional consultations were held prior to the conference. An inter-agency commission with representation from UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank (1990) prepared Meeting Basic Learning Needs: A Vision for the 1990s: Background Document for the World Conference on Education for All. This document was provided to delegates as a guide to the outcomes of these consultations and support to the rationale for the concepts and strategies later contained in the Framework and the Declaration that emerged from the conference.

The conference concluded by unanimously adopting the World Declaration on Education for All and by endorsing the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs.
These two documents were structured around six key dimensions which give some indication of how basic education could be defined at an operational level:

- Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children;
- Universal access to, and completion of, primary (or whatever level of education is considered as “basic”) by the year 2000;
- Improvement of learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an age cohort (e.g., 80% of 14-year-olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement;
- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to perhaps one-half of its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates;
- Expansion of the provision of basic education and training and other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change in impact on health, employment and productivity; and
- Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development, made available through all education channels, including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change.

Skilbeck and Mellor (2000) in *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Global Synthesis* point out that following Jomtien, the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (the “EFA Forum”) was established, with a mandate “to serve national follow-up action and support it effectively” and to “seek to maintain the spirit of cooperation among countries, multilateral and bilateral agencies and NGOs” (p. 10). Thus, the Jomtien conference in effect established a worldwide movement focused on Education for All, which continues, in the aftermath of the Dakar conference, to the present day.

In Article 1, the Jomtien Declaration endorsed a broad functional definition of basic education that embraced “...both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.”

As Bentall et al. (2000) point out, however, the problem of how to define basic education in operational terms soon became apparent. Faced with the task of compiling information on external support to basic education over the period from 1990 to 1998, they concluded “despite commitment to the goal of EFA, there is no common definition of what is and what is not included in this term within the international funding agency community” (p. 11).
On the other hand, when Samoff (2001) describes basic education in *When Progress is Process: Evaluating Aid to Basic Education: Issues and Strategies* he captures a widely accepted vision of basic education which has persisted since Jomtien:

Basic education meets people’s basic learning needs, enabling them to acquire a basic level of essential knowledge, value and skills necessary to further their personal and social development and to play a meaningful role in society (p. 4).

Definitional problems begin to arise, however, when external agencies and partner countries begin to develop policies and programmes in support of basic education because the components may vary considerably from agency to agency and country to country.

The most immediate consequence of this variation in definitions is a severe problem in tracking both domestic expenditures and external support to basic education. As Skilbeck and Mellor (2000) point out, the world education community, when it met in Amman Jordan in 1996 identified concerns over the quality of data as one of four issues detracting from performance in EFA at that point in time (p. 11). Bentall et al. (2000), *The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b), and the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, have all remarked on problems in the definition and coding of external support to basic education as important limitations on the world’s ability to assess progress.

On the other hand, the close proximity of the Jomtien and Dakar EFA goals and the persistent common vision of education to meet basic learning needs suggest that there is a core set of common understanding. What seems to vary (at least for external agencies) is the operational commitment of resources to different categories of support.

Table 1, below, presents a comparison of recent definitions of what is included in basic education gathered from policy documents and evaluations from a representative group of external agencies in the period 1999-2002.

**Table 1: Defining the Components of Basic Education from Agency Documents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Definition of Basic Education: Scope and Components</th>
<th>Document and Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
<td>Scope includes:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal primary education and the first cycle of secondary education (9-10 years depending on the country);</td>
<td><em>Education Sector Policy Paper of the African Development Bank</em> (1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Non-formal contexts such as literacy and other programmes for adolescents and adults; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Early childhood education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
<td>Basic education refers to the period of education provided for children between the ages of 6 and 14, usually equivalent to</td>
<td><em>Education Sector Policy Paper of the Asian Development Bank</em> (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>primary and lower secondary school or nine years of schooling. This has come to be considered the minimum for a person to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improve the quality of life and participate in national development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
<td>Programs to introduce substantive reforms in curriculum, teaching methods, structure, organization, and functioning of</td>
<td><em>IDB Operational Policies: Education.</em> (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>basic, formal and non-formal education at the primary and secondary level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Definition of Basic Education: Scope and Components</td>
<td>Document and Date</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry for Economic Cooperation &amp; Development, (Germany) (BMZ)</td>
<td>Formal schooling for children and young people under the age of 15. Depending on the school system, covers pre-school, primary school and lower secondary school. Also includes out-of-school education programmes to meet the basic learning needs of young people and adults who either have never attended school or left school early (mainly literacy programmes). After Amman (1996) more emphasis on cooperation in the youth sector to better respond to broader concept of “Education for All.”</td>
<td>Development Cooperation in the Field of Basic Education (Specially published by BMZ on the occasion of the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
<td>Basic education is a lifelong process that encompasses formal public education and non-formal schooling. CIDA focuses on UPE and adult literacy but includes early childhood education.</td>
<td>CIDA’s Action Plan on Basic Education (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Danida (Denmark)</td>
<td>Denmark understands basic education to include early childhood development, formal primary (elementary) education for children, non-formal education for out-of-school children, as well as youth and adult education. The most effective way of ensuring universal basic education is through formal primary education.</td>
<td>Education: Danida Sector Policies (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland Aid</td>
<td>The right of all to basic education of acceptable quality is given priority by Ireland Aid, which is committed to helping achieve the International Development Targets on education and the Dakar Framework commitments on UPE. Emphasis is placed on supporting the achievement of locally-set objectives.</td>
<td>Education Policy and Practice Guidelines: Ireland Aid (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan International Cooperation Agency</td>
<td>Within the education sector, basic education will be the priority sub-sector for the coming years. Taking into account Japan’s own past experiences and ongoing programmes in Africa, the strengthening of science and mathematics education at the primary level should be further pursued.</td>
<td>Towards Sustainable and Self-reliant Poverty Reduction in Africa (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>This policy theme comprises the following components: • The general education and development of very young children, starting before birth; • 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 out-of-school children to give them the basic knowledge and skills needed to lead a productive life. These comprise programmes specifically for street children, working children, jobless school leavers and homeless young people; and • Some parts of the education system that influence the quality and effectiveness of education such as teacher training, curriculum development, advisory services, school management and funding systems.</td>
<td>Education: A Basic Human Right (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway</td>
<td>Norway’s definition of the term basic education focuses on primary and secondary education (including technical education and training) delivered primarily by the formal system in an individual country but very often supplemented by private schools run by non-governmental organizations or local communities. Basic adult education is also included in these principles with the main emphasis on formal and non-formal literacy programmes as well as special forms of higher education such as teacher training</td>
<td>Norwegian Support to the Education Sector: Overview of Policies and Trends 1988 – 1998 (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Definition of Basic Education: Scope and Components</td>
<td>Document and Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
<td>While primary school education is the core, basic education includes all age groups, and goes beyond conventional curricula and delivery systems, for example, pre-school and adult literacy, non-formal skills training for youth and compensatory post-primary programmes for school leavers.</td>
<td>Education for All: A Human Right and Basic Need: Policy for Sida’s Development Cooperation in the Education Sector (2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| United Nations Children’s Fund              | UNICEF welcomes the step taken by the international community at Dakar to reaffirm the goal of EFA while also setting higher goals and standards. Components emphasised by UNICEF include:  
• Early childhood development;  
• UPE of high quality;  
• Reducing gender (and other) disparities; and  
| UNESCO                                     | The realization of the six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action will be the overriding priority for UNESCO’s Education Strategy:  
• Comprehensive early childhood care and education;  
• Free and compulsory primary education of good quality;  
• Life-skills education to meet learning needs of all young people and adults;  
• Adult literacy;  
• Eliminating gender disparities; and  
| World Bank                                 | World Bank supports special programmes in basic education aiming to move faster towards the international education targets. Policy directions include:  
• Basic education for girls;  
• Basic education for the poorest;  
• Early childhood development;  
• School health programmes;  
• Innovative delivery;  
• Systemic reform;  
• Governance and decentralization; and  
• Providers and financiers outside of government.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Education: Education Sector Strategy (1999)                                                          |

There are obvious differences in the “definitions” of the different components of basic education as described in external agency documents and illustrated in Table 1. From the quite narrow definition in the Asian Development Bank Sector Policy Paper to the much broader scope outlined in the Netherlands’ Education: A Basic Human Right.
Box 3: The Six EFA Goals (Dakar Framework for Action)

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 20015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to basic education of good quality; and
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

From an external agency perspective, it is fair to say that, despite differences in emphasis, most agencies include in the list of components items from a representative common list including:

- Early childhood care and development
- Primary education provided through formal schooling (with the number of years determined by each country);
- Alternative or complementary programmes that provide the basic education content of primary schooling through non-school or non-traditional methods;
- Early secondary education; and
- Education for out-of-school youth and adults, particularly literacy programmes, but often including life skills training, although not normally vocational, technical or professional training.

In carrying out the country case studies in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia, for the Joint Evaluation of Basic Education, each evaluation team began its work using the above list as a working definition of the components of basic education. They then adjusted that definition to take account of national and locally constructed meanings of the terms. For the result of that effort, see the individual case study reports.

Not surprisingly, the list relates very closely to the six EFA goals of the Dakar Framework for Action. While basic education may represent a wider concept as noted in Samoff (2001), the working definition of activities in basic education that most external agencies are ready to commit their support to correspond closely to the EFA goals. In some ways one could say the components of basic education external agencies include in their policies and definitions represent, for them, the means of achieving EFA.

It is worth considering the question of whether partner countries, NGOs, civil society organizations and individuals have taken part in and accepted the processes that have been used to define basic education and whether they have arrived at the same position as external support agencies.
Beginning with partner countries, summaries of the draft national reports to the Dakar conference captured important nuances in the way that developing countries saw their role in responding to the definitions of basic education and the goals of EFA emanating from Jomtien. As the *Summary of Draft National Reports: The Context of EFA in sub-Saharan Africa* (UNESCO 2000b) notes:

Jomtien’s expanded vision on Education for All indicated the need for alternative pathways, strategies and resources to meet basic learning needs of all people….

Many, however, stated that the initiative and the drive for education in Africa are internal and therefore, it would be misleading to attribute these to some conference only ten years ago. Botswana for example has been following a national education policy for over 22 years and had substantially revised it in the light of internal developments and a changing macro-economic context. Namibia’s own programme was remarkably similar to the Jomtien one, although it had been formulated independently. Countries emphasised their independence from Jomtien while subscribing to its goals. This is because of the importance placed on self-determination, self analysis and self critique in the region...

(1a. 1.6, p. 9).

**Box 4: Other Voices: Dr. Joshua Mugyenye**

This would support the argument that, at least in Sub-Saharan Africa, many partner countries were basically accepting of the definition of basic education (and the EFA goals) as articulated at Jomtien and later Dakar. They were concerned, at least in the assessment process preceding Dakar, to validate their national focus on basic education as pre-dating and not emanating from Jomtien.

Similarly, Jules and Panneflek (2000) in *Education for All in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000. Lighting the Way Forward* put forward a definition of basic education from the perspective of Caribbean states that would seem to be narrower in terms of components than the one listed above:

Basic education is education from birth to secondary, which provides the basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which are needed to be a productive, fully contributing citizen of the national community (p. xxxvii).

Formal basic education covers nine years and is divided into three cycles; a first cycle of four years; a second cycle of two years and a third of three years. These cycles generally cover children from five to fourteen years. It takes into account primary to intermediate or junior secondary education (p. xxxvii).

The same document, however, notes that dedicated efforts were made by Caribbean countries to reduce adult literacy and to extend the provision of education in other essential skill, so the working definition of basic education for these countries goes beyond formal pre-primary, primary and early secondary education into at least adult literacy training and life-skills education.
Problems in the definition of basic education as seen from the perspective of developing countries are more likely to arise in the area of practice than in policy and intents; for practice is where choices have to be made on where to allocate scarce national resources.

For international NGOs, the definition of basic education and the components or activities it may embrace has been much less of an issue than assessing how committed external agencies and partner governments are to meeting the commitments they made at Jomtien and Dakar.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE), an alliance of NGOs and trade unions active in education\(^5\), has produced a series of briefing papers commenting on progress in meeting the EFA goals. As their *Global Campaign for Education Briefing Paper 2002: Historic Year for the World’s Children* (May 2002) makes clear, its recommendations to governments and external support agencies are concerned not with debating the content of basic education and the achievement of the EFA goals, but with raising the pressure on governments to deliver on those goals. This is also the orientation of Watkins (2000) in *The Oxfam Education Report*, a comprehensive review of progress (or the lack of progress) towards EFA goals set in Jomtien and Dakar.

Section 3.2 deals with the elements of basic education that receive the majority of external support, in practice as opposed to in statements of policy and intent.

### 3.1.4 The Priority of Basic Education

If there is a working definition of the elements of basic education as implied in 3.1.3 above, along with a vision of what basic education means, there still remains the question of how basic education is established as a priority for external support (from both the external agency and partner country perspective) and, if so, why.

**Box 5: Jomtien Declaration**

> “Every person – child youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning.”

*World Conference on Education for All 1990*

As Bentall et al. (2000) point out, “the ideas that culminated in the (Jomtien) Declaration were not entirely new but a development of the previous declarations: Karachi 1960, Addis Ababa 1961, Santiago 1962, and Tripoli 1966, when participants committed themselves to achieving Universal Primary Education by the Year 1980” (p. 7).

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These earlier declarations generally linked the priority of education (not yet defined as basic education) to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948. Thus, well before Jomtien, the principle of education as a priority in development was linked to its declared status as a basic human right.

Bray (1986) in *If UPE is the Answer, What is the Question? A Comment on Weaknesses in the Rationale for Universal Primary Education in Less Developed Countries* surveyed some of the rationales raised in the earlier conferences for placing education as a high priority. They included education as a basic human right, as a good investment, and as an instrument that promotes equity, helps with national cohesion, reduces population growth rates and improves health.

By the time of Jomtien, (Bentall et al. 2000, Bray 1986) the earlier declarations were being questioned based on the establishment of targets in primary education only. The emphasis on universal access to primary education had led to a great expansion in primary schooling but with two unforeseen consequences: deterioration in quality in the public system and the growth of separate schools for the elite in many partner countries. There was also a growing recognition that realizing education as a basic human right would require reaching whole groups of the educationally disenfranchised.

Thus, by Jomtien, two of the enduring concerns in basic education for the next 12 years were established: how to improve the quality of basic education and how to reach marginal and disenfranchised groups.

From Jomtien to Dakar and since then, the different rationales for making education in general and basic education in particular a development priority have endured among external agencies, partner countries and national and international NGOs. They have been reinforced by international conferences, throughout the 1990s, that have set goals and development targets recognizing the role of education. These are described in Bentall et al. (2000):

- The 1990 World Summit for Children (New York) which set goals for literacy, access to primary schooling and rates of school completion by the year 2000;
- The 1992 Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro) with Agenda 21 which recognized the role of education for developing capacity and promoting sustainable development;
- The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna) which recognized the need to eradicate illiteracy and the role that education could play in ensuring peace;
- The 1994 Population Conference (Cairo) which recognized the role of education for empowerment, especially of women;
- The 1995 World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen) which reiterated the need for universal access to a quality education, as education is important for reducing unemployment and improving social integration. The 20/20 principle was proposed;
- The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing) highlighted the essential role of education in equity and empowerment for women (this was despite the fact that participants had to lobby to have education included on the agenda at all);
- The 34th meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1996 adopted the report “Shaping the 21st Century which endorsed the goal of UPE to be reached by 2015 and agreed targets for progress toward gender equality and eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2015 (p. 10).
Box 6: Millennium Development Goals

| **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.** |
| Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US$1 a day. |
| Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. |

| **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education** |
| Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. |

| **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women** |
| Eliminated gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. |

| **Goal 4: Reduce child mortality** |
| Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate. |

| **Goal 5: Improve maternal health** |
| Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate. |

| **Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases** |
| Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. |
| Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. |

| **Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability** |
| Integrate the principles of sustainable development in to country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. |
| Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. |
| Have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers. |

| **Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development** |
| Develop further an open, rule based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally. |

While these international conferences did not, for the most part, specifically limit their endorsements of education as a priority to basic education, they had a cumulative effect of reinforcing the priority to all forms of education assistance and to basic education in particular.

The series of conferences of the 1990s endorsing the priority of basic education ended with the United Nations Millennium Summit and General Assembly in New York in September 2000. The declaration established the MDGs including UPE (defined as the ability to complete a full course of primary schooling) by 2015 and the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education by no later than 2015.

The MDGs are interesting on a number of counts. First, they represent an effort to bring together some of the priorities of the international conferences in the 1990s. Second, they illustrate some of the other priorities faced by external agencies and partner countries as they allocate resources and develop programmes in basic education. Finally, the MDGs contain within them priorities (poverty, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and combating HIV/AIDS in particular), which find their way into many agencies’ statements of policies, strategies and intentions in basic education. Indeed, by the end of the decade, many external agencies were explicitly linking the priority of basic education to human rights, poverty eradication, promoting equality (including gender equality, but also equality for ethnic minorities and marginalized groups) and combating HIV/AIDS.

Table 2, below, examines the same set of agency documents on policies and strategies used in Table 1 to review definitions. Instead, it illustrates where the same set of documents have referred to human rights, poverty alleviation, gender equality, equality for ethnic minorities and the eradication of HIV/AIDS as elements in the rationale for providing (and accepting) external support for basic education on a priority basis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Stated Elements of Basic Education as a Priority</th>
<th>Document and Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
<td>BE as a Human Right</td>
<td><em>Education Sector Policy Paper of the African Development Bank (1999)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>BE and poverty eradication</td>
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<td>BE and HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
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<td><em>IDB Operational Policies on Education (2003)</em></td>
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<td>Ministry for Economic Cooperation and</td>
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<td>*Development Co-</td>
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<td>Development (Germany) (BMZ)</td>
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<td>operation in the Field of Basic Education (Specially published by BMZ on the</td>
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<td>√</td>
<td>occasion of the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000)*</td>
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<td>Canadian International Development</td>
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<td><em>CIDA’s Action Plan on Basic Education (2002)</em></td>
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<td>Agency (CIDA)</td>
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<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida</td>
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<td><em>Education: Danida Sector Policies (2001)</em></td>
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<td>Ireland Aid</td>
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<td><em>Education Policy and Practice Guidelines (2001)</em></td>
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<td>Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td><em>Education: A Basic Human Right (2000)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>*Education for All: A Human Right and Basic Need: Policy for Sida’s Development</td>
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<td>(Sida)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Cooperation in the Education Sector (2001)*</td>
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It is important to remember when interpreting Table 2 that the agencies listed may well have emphasized, for example, the link between basic education and HIV/AIDS in other documents than those reviewed here. The check marks in the table refer only to the documents listed and are only to illustrate the overall pattern of development priorities linked to basic education in the policy documents or review reports of a sample of external agencies.

What the pattern illustrates, is the dominance of four of the five rationales noted above: education as a human right, education as a road to poverty alleviation, education as a means of promoting gender equality and basic education as a means of dealing with social inequalities, especially relating to ethnic minorities who have been denied mother tongue education.

HIV/AIDS is not as present in the policy documents reviewed but it can be related to, for example, the World Bank’s emphasis on linking education and child health (World Bank 1999). At the same time it is worth emphasizing that HIV/AIDS as a priority concern of efforts in basic education is very strongly emphasized whenever it is actually present in a given policy document. UNESCO’s Medium Term Strategy, for example, places a strong emphasis on the use of preventive education in responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

An interesting question concerns whether partner countries have shared the sense that basic education is a basic human right and is directly linked to the priorities of poverty reduction, gender equality, social equality and combating HIV/AIDS.

At one level, their participation in the conferences of the 1990s and their endorsement of declarations from Jomtien in 1990 to New York in 2000 (the Millennium Summit and General Assembly) would argue that they share the same concern, at least at a policy level, with the related priorities listed. Indeed, there is some evidence for that in the Draft National Reports UNESCO. (2000b) prepared for Dakar where, for example, Sub-Saharan African countries noted the priority they placed and the progress they had made in reducing gender disparities in primary education.

On the other hand, it is striking to read in the Education for All Assessment 2000: Regional Synthesis Report (UNESCO, 2000a) just how important it was for the countries in the region to re-analyze achievements relating to the six EFA goals in light of “regional priority issues” such as:

- The role of the state and the transformation of the education system, its structure and function;
- Building capacity in educational planning;
- The role of education in national and regional development goals with specific reference to cultural and economic development and its impact on education (p. 4).

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<th>Agency</th>
<th>Stated Elements of Basic Education as a Priority</th>
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<th>Agency</th>
<th>Stated Elements of Basic Education as a Priority</th>
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Box 7: Other Voices: James Mayrides

James Mayrides, UNICEF
Representative in Bolivia 1991

During the multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF programmes Mr. Mayrides responding to questions by the evaluation team members remarked, "I think of UNICEF’s programme in Bolivia as a truck climbing a steep hill. Every so often a new “priority” is dropped from New York or Jomtien or Paris and lands in the truck. No-one ever tells us here in La Paz which old priority we can take out of the truck and will no longer be accountable for. Some day the truck will no longer be able to climb the hill. So when you put together your report on UNICEF in Bolivia remember Jim Mayrides’ truck."

An over-arching concern for the Sub-Saharan countries in the run-up to Dakar was the problem of dependency on external assistance to fund core areas of their education system. Mozambique, for example noted that between 1990 and 1994, external funding accounted for about half the financing of the educational system and about 7% of the total assistance to the country. More alarmingly, perhaps, they noted that aid to primary education had increased substantially in the period but assistance to secondary education had dropped to nil (p. 5).

The sections on practices and results below (as well as the country case studies) will illustrate some of the problems faced by partner countries in maintaining the same priorities as those listed in external agency policy documents. They also illustrate the problems facing both external agencies and partner countries in maintaining the focus of support on the core components of basic education:

- Early childhood care and development;
- Primary education provided through formal schooling (with the number of years determined by each country);
- Alternative or complementary programmes that provide the basic education content of primary schooling through non-school or non-traditional methods;
- Early secondary education; and
- Education for out-of-school youth and adults, particularly literacy programmes, but often including life skills training, although not normally vocational, technical or professional training.

As the African Development Bank (1999) paper notes, partner governments tend to view education systems more holistically and resist having external assistance channelled exclusively to basic education or to direct a disproportionate share of national resources there to the detriment of other areas of the education system. Indeed, Bray (1986) points out that African governments in conferences held in the 1960s and 1970s had argued that, in a situation of very limited resources, post-secondary education should be a priority.

At the same time that partner governments must address the needs of an education system broader than the components of basic education (for example, vocational and technical training and post-secondary education), some external agencies have found it difficult to move aggressively into supporting areas beyond primary education. Multi-case study evaluations and reviews of education assistance commissioned by BMZ (2001), UNICEF (Chapman 2001) and DFID (Alsamarrai, Bennell and Colelough 1999) have all commented on the difficulties that external agencies encountered in moving outside the area of support to pre-primary and primary education.

So it seems that, while external agencies and partner countries can agree on the priorities and components of basic education, there are problems in retaining that focus over time. Interestingly, the problems seem to run in two opposing directions. On the one hand, the scope of
external assistance and national effort tends to broaden beyond the core components of basic education (especially considering the question of lifelong learning) and, at the same time, resource allocations and activities tend to focus on UPE.

3.1.5 The Form of External Support to Basic Education

This issue concerns policies, strategies and intentions with regard to how external assistance should be provided to basic education. The over-arching debate in the documents reviewed concerns the modalities of external support: projects, programmes and sector-wide approaches.

Again, it is important to remember that this level of analysis concerns intents, policies and strategies rather than practices or results. These are addressed in the sub-sections that follow:

Modalities of external support to basic education

A feature of many of the policy documents reviewed is the shift (in policy terms at least) over the decade of the 1990s from reliance by external agencies on mainly discreet and targeted projects to some form of programme or sector-wide approach to providing aid to education. Some of the typical statements of intent to use a different approach to the form of external support include:

CIDA (2002)

Sector-wide approaches (SWAp) are a promising programming tool. A high level of political commitment within and beyond the sector, transparency, accountability and good governance are critical for success. CIDA has recently joined in supporting Uganda’s Education, Strategic Investment Plan which is an example of a highly successful SWAp (p. 18).

Danida (2001)

The main thrust of Danish support to education is through bilateral programmes with a number of countries...This support is provided mainly through Sector Programme Support (SPS) which to a large extent shares the vision, philosophy and strategy of the sector-wide approach.... The Danish SPS is to be part of the collaborative efforts and joint sector programmes with other external agencies under the leadership of the national government (pp. 19-20).

Ireland Aid (2001)

In recent years, Ireland Aid has had a deliberate policy of moving from direct project aid to supporting national sector programmes. From the mid-nineties the nature of many stand-alone projects has changed substantially as initially the management implementation became more fully integrated into the Ministry of Education and eventually the objectives, often substantially reformulated, formed part of the National Action Plan of the Ministry. It is highly unlikely that such stand-alone projects with parallel implementation arrangements will be supported in the future. However, in some countries, where the policy environment is not conducive and/or other essential requirements for a SWAp are not in place then Ireland Aid may support education services in the country through a project approach (p.30).
In principle, the aim is to work with the government and other external agencies towards sectoral support through budget support for the entire sector, sub-sector or specific budget headings or, where cooperation with other external agencies is not yet possible, through bilateral support (p.20).

Sida (2001)

Sida plans to work on Sector Programme Support for education in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mozambique and elsewhere. This form of support entails Sida and other external agencies making a joint contribution to improve the financing of the whole education sector. At the same time, in dialogue with the recipient country, the aid organizations influence how the funds can be used.

One finds similar statements of the intent to use sector-wide approaches in the education policies of the development banks – African Development Bank (1999), Asian Development Bank (2001), and the World Bank (1998). Many authors, for example Epskamp (2000) in Education in the South: Modalities of International Support Revisited, cite Peter Harrold in a 1995 World Bank published report as a source for the main principles of sector-wide approaches. As a result of the early leadership provided by the World Bank, it is not surprising to find that development banks are ready, at a policy level at least, to indicate their intent to use this modality in support of education.

Annex 2 provides a table describing the policies and practices relating to sector-wide approaches and general budget support by 15 bilateral agencies, two development banks (the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank) and three multilateral agencies (the European Commission, UNICEF and UNFPA). The table was developed by a member of the document review team from documents by Riddell (2002), Hasegawa (2002), Feldberg and Tornes (2002) and Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999).

In general terms, the grid shows that the development banks and the bilateral external aid agencies are, at least in theory, strongly positive to the use of sector-wide approaches and budget support as a means of improving aid effectiveness and coordination. On the other hand, for reasons of both mandate and structure, United Nations agencies have had to approach SWAps from a different perspective, emphasizing collaboration in planning and cooperation in the provision of technical support rather than participation in joint funding arrangements.

A challenge for the document review and the case studies was how to assess the movement from project to program, to sector-wide and onward to general budget support when dealing with both policies and practices. Based on documents, including Buchert (2000 and 2002), Epskamp (2000), Jagannathan and Karikorkp, (2000), King and Buchert (1999) and Riddell (2002), the team developed a schematic for classifying the features of different modes of support to basic education. Table 3, below, presents the grid developed by the document review team in October 2002. This was used by the case study teams in the analysis of modes of external support to basic education in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia.

Finally, it is worth examining the motives for the bilateral agencies and development banks, in particular, to emphasise a policy of moving towards sector-wide forms of support in education in general and basic education in particular.
The literature points out that the most common factor leading to the development of the SWAp is the perceived failure of the project approach. The authors noted above especially highlight:

- Lack of coordination among external agencies given that there was no clear framework to focus activities. This results in duplication and overlap of activities and gaps in the coverage of activities;
- Availability of external agency support sometimes distorting government policies and spending priorities;
- Fragmentation of projects, the multiplicity of arrangements for project implementation and reporting and the establishment of project management units resulting in a heavy administrative burden for the government, dissipated government capacity, diluted scarce national resources and required presence of foreign expertise;
- Failure of capacity-building projects and technical assistance to develop capacity in recipient countries;
- External-agency-driven projects undermining recipient countries commitment and leadership; and
- Poor sustainability of many projects – in part because of limited national resources, weak public sector management and poor anticipation of recurrent costs.

These authors also cite external factors such as:

- The impact of structural adjustment; and
- The economic crisis of the 1980s and the lead role played by the World Bank because of the need for macro-economic changes.

Other weaknesses of aid modalities noted were the ineffectiveness of conditionalities, problems with the diversion of project funds to other uses, and a sense that the overall performance of the education sector had been weak.
### Table 3: Schematic for Classifying External Support Modalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Project Support</th>
<th>Programme Support</th>
<th>SWAp</th>
<th>Macroeconomic Budget Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Limited – one or two components within a sector or sub-sector; covers limited number of regions in country; uses only one strategy</td>
<td>Usually covers all regions of a country, addresses several components of basic education, uses multiple strategies</td>
<td>Covers a whole sector (e.g., education) (or sub-sector?)</td>
<td>Covers all public sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership by Government</td>
<td>Limited – includes consultation on design (usually with one organizational unit) and is subject to signed agreement with the government</td>
<td>Limited – consultation on design and subject to signed agreement with the government</td>
<td>Full national ownership – based on national strategic plan/program. Ownership includes government and non-government actors</td>
<td>Full ownership by government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of External Agencies</td>
<td>Limited – to one or two external agencies</td>
<td>May involve a number of (but not all) external agencies</td>
<td>All external agencies involved in supporting the national plan/program</td>
<td>Limited to setting objectives of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Channel</td>
<td>Directly to project activities by external agencies. Usually includes counterpart cash or in-kind contribution</td>
<td>Funding may flow through the government but is usually targeted to specific activities</td>
<td>Through the government (either targeted to specific activities or untargeted); may be, but not necessarily, through common funding</td>
<td>Direct to government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Through a separate execution unit – may be shared with the government</td>
<td>Through a separate execution unit – may be shared with the government</td>
<td>By government</td>
<td>By government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Commitment</td>
<td>Usually short-term – 3 to 5 years</td>
<td>May be short-term or medium-term – 3 to 8 years</td>
<td>Ideally long-term – 5 to 15 years</td>
<td>Usually short term</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It is important to point out that the motivation for exploring sector-wide approaches was not entirely a negative reaction to problems with project assistance. The sector-wide approach also evolved out of new visions of comprehensive, integrated development processes and new approaches to partnership. King, in King and Buchert (1999), noted that the new language about partnership came from both the external agencies and the partner countries. In addition, international conferences from Jomtien through to Dakar had identified and emphasized the need to strengthen the ability of people to handle their own development. In a similar vein, Buchert (2002) points out that partner governments had declared (in the Durban Statement of Commitment, 1998 at the Seventh Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States) their right and willingness to lead development and overcome “imposed conditionalities and dependencies” (p. 70).

A strong case can be made that, by the end of the decade, many external support agencies had signalled their intent to move towards sector-wide approaches in support of education. Key questions for the document review and the case studies, under the heading of practices, were just how much of a shift in that direction was apparently taking place. Another key question concerned how the shift towards sector-wide approaches might be influencing the integration of external support into partner countries’ activities in basic education.

3.1.6 Influence of the Commitment to Education for All on External Agencies

The material presented in Sections 3.1.3 to 3.1.5, above, would seem to argue that the commitment to EFA made at Jomtien and reiterated at Dakar has had a considerable effect at the level of policies, intents and strategies of the external agencies providing support to basic education. Almost all have:

- Accepted the “vision” of Jomtien;
- Defined basic education to encompass most or all of the components relating to the EFA goals (see Table 1);
- Re-confirmed their commitment to the EFA goals (see also Table 1);
- Grounded their conception of basic education in the principle that education is a basic human right linked to poverty alleviation, gender equality, social equality (especially for ethnic and linguistic minorities) and, in many instances, combating HIV/AIDS; and
- Indicated their intent to move towards different modes of external support which, at least in theory, hold out the promise of a more equal form of partnership.

3.1.7 EFA, MDGs and the Fast-Track Initiative

In order to take a closer look at the issue of how the commitment to EFA may have affected the policies, intents and strategies of external agencies, the document review team tried to briefly trace the different influences that have shaped the journey from Dakar in 2000 to the current state of the EFA Fast-Track Initiative in 2003. Our purpose was not to provide a definitive overview or evaluation of the FTI, but to begin to understand how different source documents, conferences, organizational initiatives and research efforts have combined at global level to support the evolution of a policy and programmatic initiative, which is deemed crucial by many different key stakeholders, some who have been very critical and others quite positive. It is worth pointing out that the documents reviewed take different perspectives and sometimes disagree on even the chronology of events leading up to the development and implementation of FTI.
Without doubt, the antecedents of the FTI may be found in the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000. As UNESCO’s (2002) *Medium Term Strategy: 2002-2007* points out, the international community not only re-affirmed the six EFA goals, but made the further commitment that “no country seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources” (p.17).

The global initiative for Education for All is described in the same document as follows:

As part of its mandate, UNESCO is coordinating the global initiative aimed at mobilizing the resources in support of national EFA efforts. The international community will apply a common understanding of the six options for the initiative and adopt others as considered necessary in specific country contexts. The six options are:

(i) increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education;
(ii) ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance;
(iii) facilitating more effective aid coordination;
(iv) strengthening sector-wide approaches;
(v) providing earlier, more extensive and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education; and
(vi) undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress toward EFA goals and targets, including periodic assessments as part of evidence-based policy. (p.17).

The global initiative for mobilizing resources in support of national EFA efforts is clearly focused on the six EFA goals as endorsed in Dakar.

A number of related developments have come to shape the more narrowly focused EFA Fast-Track Initiative. The key shapers of the FTI can be seen in:


This report emphasized, among other factors, the central importance of a national commitment to the implementation of appropriate policies if external financial and technical assistance is to make a difference. It also questioned strongly the ability of external agencies to induce policy change where governments are reluctant through the use of detailed conditionalities.

In a consistent way, the paper also argued that technical assistance and capacity development support provided by external agencies is most effective where national governments and institutions have made their own, prior commitment to a reform program. At the risk of grossly oversimplifying a lengthy and detailed research report, the central prescription many readers and observers took from the report was the need to first identify those countries with either a good policy environment or the clear intent to develop one and then to use financial and non-financial aid to reinforce their strong performance.

- The specification of the MDGs by the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The MDGs are clearly not intended to supersede in any sense the EFA goals, or for that matter any other development goals established by the international community. Nonetheless, the specification of the achievement of UPE by 2015 and gender parity in primary and secondary education as two of the eight MDGs seems to have had the effect of focusing considerable international interest on these two goals.
From this point on, the key milestones in the development of the EFA Fast-Track Initiative seem to focus on the two education-related MDGs and to follow a series of very specific international meetings. Two World Bank documents, An Overview of the Fast-Track Initiative (2002) and Accelerating Progress Towards Education for All (2003) were used to compile the following chronology:

**Box 8: Other Voices: Porto Allegre 2002**

### Other Voices: Porto Allegre 2002 - The World Social Forum

The second World Social Forum was held in Porto Allegre Brazil in January 2002, with a direct focus on education as one of its central themes.

With over 80,000 delegates and numerous sessions, workshops, sub-conferences and special events, the World Social Forum produced a diverse body of opinion on the challenge of education. Some of the key messages summarized by participants and observers at the Forum are the following:

1. There is a global crisis in education, which must be overcome both to provide a basic human right and to overcome poverty and injustice (Global Campaign for Education, 2002);

2. Negotiations on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) represent a strong threat to public provision of free basic education. GATS could undermine efforts to provide funding for basic publicly funded education for all (Oxfam, 2002);

3. GATS implies immediate financial return on needed investments in teacher training and, therefore, likely user fees which are counter to principle of free provision of basic education (Oxfam, 2002); and

4. The EFA Fast-Track Initiative may be the best chance of establishing a global compact to achieve universal primary education by 2015 but the so far the donors have chosen only the smallest and cheapest countries to support (Oxfam, 2002).

One Porto Allegre view of FTI is hopeful but ambiguous. Seeing it as the best hope for a global agreement on new resources but disappointed in the scale of the resources committed as of 2002.

- **July 2001 – G8 Meeting in Genoa.**

  At this meeting the leaders of the Group of Eight (G8) countries⁶ established a task force to “recommend how these goals [the two MDG goals in education] could best be achieved” and appointed Canada to lead the task force.

- **November 2001 – Development Committee calls for an Action Plan on Accelerating EFA.**

  In November 2001, the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (formally the Joint Ministerial Committee of the Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund on the Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries) called on the World Bank to prepare an Action Plan to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the MDGs for education.

- **March 2002 – The International Conference on Financing for Development.**


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⁶ The United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, the Russian Federation.
• April 2002 – EFA Meeting in Amsterdam

The Netherlands and the World Bank sponsored a conference in Amsterdam where developing countries and external partners agreed on “broad principles for scaling up EFA efforts” and the Netherlands committed 135 million Euros.

• April 2002 – World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings in Washington D.C.

The Development Committee of the World Bank/IMF approved the Fast-Track Initiative.

• June 2002 – G8 Meeting in Kananaskis (Canada)

The G8 leaders agreed to increase bilateral assistance for achievement of EFA and to work with bilateral and multilateral agencies on the implementation of FTI.

• June 2002 – FTI Launched in Washington D.C.

Eighteen countries were invited to join FTI and became eligible for policy and financial support, based on two broad criteria – an existing Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme and an effectively implemented education sector plan. At the same time, six large-population countries were invited to receive technical and analytical assistance to help create an enabling environment for full participation in FTI.

• November 2002 – FTI Donors Meeting, Brussels

The FTI supporting countries (the EC, CIDA, Netherlands Development Cooperation, UNESCO and the World Bank) met and endorsed seven country programmes.

• March 2003 – FTI Donors Meeting, Paris

In the words of World Bank (2003) “donors agree on modus operandi for FTI and secure funding for the seven countries and agree on an operating framework for FTI” (p. 10).

There are two important phenomena that seem to come together in the development of FTI to this point in time: concentration on the MDGs for education and the influence of both the 1998 World Bank paper on Aid Effectiveness and the Monterrey Consensus.

Indeed, the World Bank’s 2003 paper comments that FTI:

Is based on the Monterrey Consensus – the premise that development aid yields higher returns where countries are accountable for results and where there is a record of successful policy and institutional reforms. Reforming countries could expect to receive additional aid, within the notion of the “development compact” (p. 8).

Besides whatever operational issues may arise in the implementation of the FTI there are two important ways in which its evolution seems to run counter to the general trend in development of policies and strategies in basic education at a global level as described in the sections above:

7 The Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education has attempted to use the term external support agencies rather than donors. Donor is used here as quoted from official FTI reports and documents.

8 Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Guyana, Honduras and Nicaragua.
• By focusing on the MDGs for education, the FTI runs the risk of promoting the notion that these two goals are the sum total of Education for All to the detriment of all other dimensions of EFA; and

• The concentration on better performing countries, which would seem to run counter to many of the external agency policies that heavily emphasize the concept of basic education as a human right for all people everywhere (and explicitly including adult literacy and other forms of alternative education).

The question of early experience internationally and in specific countries regarding FTI is dealt with more fully in the country case studies.

3.2 Practices in External Support to Basic Education

This section addresses the overall issue of:

• How have the practices of support to basic education changed over time?

In doing so it focuses on the following questions:

• What changes have occurred over time in the volume of external support to basic education?
• Has there been a move from project to other modalities of support to basic education?
• How have roles in policy dialogue, technical assistance and funding changed over the period of 1990 to 2002?

3.2.1 The Volume of External Support to Basic Education

Determining the overall volume of external flows to basic education since Jomtien has been a perennial problem in the literature. The problem has received increased attention since Dakar and its re-specification of the EFA goals. It was beyond the scope of this document review to attempt another quantitative assessment of all financial flows to basic education as reported by external agencies. Fortunately, the review is able to access different systematic efforts to quantify the flow of external resources to basic education over time.

Bentall, et al. (2000) first tracked the trend in total bilateral commitments to development cooperation for the period of 1990-1997 and noted a strong downward trend over the first seven years of the decade. They reported that bilateral commitments to Official Development Assistance (ODA) had declined from current US$41.5 billion in 1990 to US$35.8 billion in 1994 and continued downward to US$31.0 billion or a decline of just over 25% based on current prices (p. 19).

9 The document review team was not able to find an explicit reference which confirmed that FTI funds were to be exclusively used in the pursuit of the two MDGs on education but the 2002 World Bank document An Overview of the Fast-Track Initiative does imply this very strongly when it states, “In November 2001, the Development Committee called on the World Bank to prepare an Action Plan to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the MDGs for education. The EFA Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) is a central element of this Action Plan.”
Against that trend, they noted that the bilateral agencies responding to their survey supplied data showing the share of ODA committed to the education sector had either stayed the same or increased in the period (p. 19). Bentall et al. then used a combination of DAC data (until 1997) and survey information gathered from external agencies (until 1999) that also supported the idea that bilateral commitments to the education sector had increased as a proportion of a declining allocation to ODA in the period of 1990 to 1999. They also report that (based on survey data showing higher shifts into basic education than the corresponding DAC data) the commitments to basic education, as a percentage of commitments to the education sector as a whole appear to rise slightly throughout the 1990 to 1999 period.

Finally, Bentall et al. come to the following conclusions based on the combination of: falling overall commitments to development assistance over the period of 1990 to 1997; small shifts towards a higher share of ODA to education; and a significant (self-reported) shift into basic education from other forms of education allocation by bilateral external agencies:

On the basis of commitments data, the amounts allocated to the education sector have fallen in line with commitments overall. (But see the caveats about this trend). On the other hand, one positive element stands out vis-à-vis Jomtien: the proportion of all commitments to basic education has risen as a proportion of commitments to the whole education sector; so that the allocation to basic education as a proportion of all bilateral commitments have also risen; and the volumes of aid to the basic education sector have been stable or has risen slightly over the decade [Emphasis added] (p. 29).

This is not the re-allocation of resources that many who attended Jomtien or who reviewed the commitments made at international conferences throughout the 1990s expected.

In fact, as the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b) was to point out in November 2002, using DAC data available to the end of 2000, the situation regarding total commitments of external support to basic education when measured in dollar terms seems to be worse than Bentall et al. estimated two years earlier.

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b) presents a more stable picture of total official development assistance, combining bilateral and multilateral disbursements to show the total rising from current US$52 billion in 1990 to US$59.9 billion in 1994 and falling back to US$49.6 billion in 2000 (p. 166). On the other hand, it reports a significant drop in the share of bilateral ODA to education (from over 10% in 1995 to under 8% in 2000) (p. 167). Most significantly, and in contradiction to the trend noted by Bentall et al., it reports that the share of bilateral funds devoted to basic education rose very slightly when comparing the period from 1993 to 1996 with 1997 to 2000, from 19% to just 21% (p. 169). Especially disturbing in this picture is the fact that the share of reported bilateral education spending at the secondary level doubled in the same period from 7% to 14%, while post secondary education rose from 32% to 34% (p. 169). Care must be taken in interpreting this data since the single largest category of allocations is “unspecified.”
So the combination of stagnant overall disbursements to official development assistance during the decade, a decreasing proportion of bilateral ODA devoted to education and a very modest increase in the share of education funding going to basic education leads to the conclusion:

Total assistance to education [emphasis added] from all bilateral and multilateral sources combined stood at an estimated US$5.98 billion in 1999 and at US$4.72 billion in 2000. As regards its composition, the more optimistic estimates shown in the table suggest that external funding to basic education [emphasis added] was about US$1.34 billion in 1999 and approximately US$1.45 billion in 2000. It has been seen in the analysis in Chapter 4 that this is equivalent to only about one-quarter of the additional external assistance likely to be needed each year to 2015 in order to achieve universal primary education alone. Thus, aid to primary schooling would need to be quintupled, much of it concentrated in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in order to achieve universal primary education alone (p.172).

Box 9: Commentary: Expectations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Commentary From the Document Review Team: Expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to point out that the systems and processes most external agencies use for allocating resources to programmes at country level result in significant time lags between a global commitment and actual allocation and disbursement. Typically, post Jomtien, most of the agencies reviewed produced new basic education policies within one year to 18 months. Bilateral agencies programme their resource allocations in a given country over a three- to five-year time frame under an agreed country strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thus, for bilateral development agencies, one would expect a rise in post-Jomtien financing to basic education on, or about 1994-96 perhaps rising after that. In some countries (such as Bolivia) this seems to have been the case but it clearly did not occur at a global level where allocations of external financial support to basic education appear to have been stagnant or to have fallen slightly over the period under review.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Because this takes account of UPE with gender equity only, external funding agencies would need to increase aid for EFA still more, if all six Dakar goals are to be achieved.

Thus, the report points to a decreasing share of ODA to education and a stagnant share allocated to basic education. The result reported is a sizeable gap between the external funding available to basic education in 2000 and the annual amounts needed to supplement national resources in achieving the EFA goals by 2015.

Not surprisingly, observers from outside government agencies have commented harshly on what they see as a failure by external agencies to meet the commitments made at Jomtien. Watkins (2000) makes a strong summary of NGO views in The Oxfam Education Report:

The level of aid spending on basic education is a function of three factors: overall aid flows, the share of aid directed towards education, and the distribution of spending between various layers in the educational system. Since 1990, international aid to education constituted a fixed share of a diminishing aid budget, with basic education accounting for a small share of the total spending. Aid spending on basic education has fallen in real terms, which is the opposite of what was promised at Jomtien (p. 234).
Watkins’ views are echoed in briefing papers (May and November 2002) from the Global Campaign for Education. In commenting on the Fast-Track Initiative the Global Campaign for Education (November 2002) briefing paper pointed out:

Existing aid flows to education are grossly inadequate given the scale of the challenge facing the world’s poorest countries. Recent estimates show that $10bn to $13bn is needed annually to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of Universal Primary Education by 2015. Yet between them, the major bilateral agencies are currently committing just $700m a year to basic education – or just 2 cents in every dollar of aid. (p. 5)

It should be noted that the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b) estimates annual aid to basic education at US$1.45 billion in 2000 (see above).

Nonetheless, the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b), Watkins (2000), and the Global Campaign for Education (November 2002) would seem to agree that external funding for basic education did not rise in the 1990 to 2000 period and that it remains at levels far short of what is needed to attain even the single EFA goal of UPE. This is a far cry from full achievement of basic education if we accept that basic education can, to some extent, be achieved through the attainment of the EFA goals.

Finally, it should be noted that the period since Dakar has seen important efforts to accelerate the flow of external support to basic education, most notably through the Fast-Track Initiative but also including efforts by bilateral agencies to increase the volume of funds committed and disbursed to basic education.

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b) points to the following stated new commitments to education by a range of agencies.

**Table 4: Commitments of New Resources to Education in 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Commitment of New Resources to Education in 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G8 Countries</td>
<td>Monterrey, March 2002: Significantly increase support from bilateral agencies to countries that demonstrate strong policy and financial commitment to education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>April 2002, commission aid for education to be doubled. EU to mobilize US$1 billion per year for EFA. By 2006 the EU, collectively, will reach the target of at least 15% of its aid budget going to education (from 11.3%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>September 2002, separately from G8 EFA Action Plan, pledged an additional US$2 billion for education over the next five years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>April 2002, committed 135 million euros for education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>June 2002, pledged to increase ODA for basic education by 15%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>September 2002, significant increase in aid to education including doubling overall aid to Africa by 2006 US$1.5 billion, excluding humanitarian aid and debt relief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>ODA for basic education to increase by 50% for 2001 to 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>Increase IDA support for basic education by US$700 million.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While these commitments remain just that, there is some evidence that external agencies and governments are responding to the stark message of Dakar: that significant new aid resources would be required if the re-specified EFA goals were to be possible.

On the other hand, it is not clear that some of the new initiatives will result in the increased financial resources for basic education that had been expected even as recently as 2002.

The World Bank’s report *Accelerating Progress Towards Education for All* prepared for the spring 2003 Development Committee meetings points to gains by FTI (p. 9) in areas such as:

- Raising the political profile of education and public awareness of EFA;
- Strengthening government commitment;
- Sharpening focus on outcomes and policies; and
- Improving coordination.

At the same time, the report points to significant problems and issues for both supporting and participating countries, including slow fund raising, need for longer term support, lack of an agreed financial framework, the prevalence of aid to preferred (rather than performing) countries, fragmented approaches to financing, input-driven lending and the need to monitor outcomes (p.11-12).

The report is particularly frank on the slow fund raising process for FTI:

> While the political commitment to EFA and FTI has been consistently strong, the financing response has been more measured. Donors have been slow to reallocate funds for FTI and it is proving difficult to secure financing for countries that have traditionally not received much donor support. The initial proposals identified a total financing gap of $430 million over three years for the first seven countries; this number was revised to about $300 million, largely on the basis of absorptive capacity, out of which about $200 million was committed by the time of the donors’ meeting in March 2003. The estimated gap is wider in the last year of the three-year period (p. 12).

Thus it seems that even the most recent attempts to accelerate funding for some components of EFA continue to encounter problems both in terms of external agency willingness to provide increased longer term funding and problems in the absorptive capacity of partner countries.

### 3.2.2 Practices in Modalities of External Support to Basic Education

The literature on experience with newer forms of external support is not limited to a discussion of aid to basic education, or even education as a whole, nonetheless, there is a body of academic and evaluative literature focusing on the extent that external agencies have moved into the new modalities in the area of education and some of the difficulties encountered there. This section summarizes some of the main findings of the documents reviewed regarding the fit between the ideal design of sector-wide approaches and practices in education by external agencies in different partner countries.

*The Experience Base with SWApS*

- Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) noted that, in 1999, there were about 25 to 30 SWApS being developed or implemented – mainly in Africa and Asia.
Hasegawa (2002) indicates that most are for programmes in Africa, but in Asia there are examples of the use of SWAps in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Nepal, Cambodia, Laos, and Bhutan. Health and education are the most prominent sectors of implementation.

SWAps are predominantly found in the social (education and health) and infrastructure sectors – where the public sector is the predominant provider of services.


The following sections identify areas where the documents reviewed indicate there are differences between rhetoric and reality with respect to the various characteristics of SWAps.

Are SWAps Sector-wide?

Most SWAps in the education sector are restricted in scope – they focus on a sub-sector and address only government funded primary education with a formal stated focus on basic education. They typically do not address secondary, technical and higher education reforms (Smith in Epskamp Ed. 2000).

Is There a Clear Strategy and Framework (Planning)?

A number of weaknesses are identified in the documents with respect to the strategic frameworks and plans on which the SWAps are based.

- There are weaknesses in the links with overall development frameworks.
- Links between education reform and poverty reduction are tenuous (Ratcliffe and Macrae 1999).
- There is an absence of links to public expenditure reviews (Ratcliffe and Macrae 1999).
- A lack of integration of different development frameworks – several agencies raised issues of integration with poverty reduction financing instruments and PRSPs (Switzerland, Finland, DFID, Netherlands, France) and with the proliferation of development frameworks, particularly in countries where the Ministry of Finance has not played an important role in the development of a SWAp (Riddell 2002).
- While some authors note that the planning frameworks for SWAps in education lack a long-term strategic vision (Ratcliffe and Macrae 1999), others point to the restrictions inherent in over-defining the framework and emphasize the importance of seeing a SWAp as a process rather than a blueprint. Schmidt (2001) for example, points to the need for a fine balance between over- or under-planning the process for the development of the framework. There is a need to communicate the process to all stakeholders, without having too many manuals or ready-made processes. The less planned and more adaptable the inter-agency dialogue, the more successful it may be.
- The focus of an education SWAp needs to be more on the intended direction of change than established formats. They should not be seen as formula to achieve what is not achieved with project support. On the planning side, the development of a strong SWAp in education is a complex, evolving process that needs to be home-grown and to build on the strengths of positive practices. (Buchert 2002) (Schmidt 2001) (Foster, Brown, Norton, and Naschold 2000).
• Some authors argue that there are no uniform solutions to the challenges in the education sector and highlight the importance of sector analysis that is specific to the country (Netherlands 2000).

• Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) list other deficits in the strategy and planning framework of SWAps in education including:

  • Lack of effective poverty assessments;
  • Insufficient analysis of the impact of the SWAp on other sectors (health, malnutrition, transport);
  • Lack of agreement on realistic and achievable targets; and
  • Insufficient linkage between policy and budgets making it difficult to avoid unrealistic targets and recurrent budget expectations (also noted in Schmidt 2001).

• Foster et al. (2000) point out that when the strategy behind a SWAp becomes too ambitious this often results in selective implementation – government implements the parts of the SWAp that result in high benefits and low costs. As a result, external agencies may be excluded from the selection process, and the programme will respond to political pressures.

Do SWAps Involve and Partner With All Local Stakeholders?

Much of the literature reflects that there has been limited involvement of the broad range of stakeholders outside the core partner agencies such as the Ministries of Education in partner countries. Excluded groups include other ministries of government and civil society organizations. Particular reference is made to the limited involvement of civil society, including NGOs. Foster et al. (2000) argue that when there is community involvement, it tends to be about community contributions, not community participation in decision-making and true ownership. Hasegawa (2002) argues that bilateral agencies have taken different stances with respect to working with and through NGOs at country level. He indicates that the United Kingdom regards NGOs positively for their advocacy role, but is more cautious with regards to service delivery due to concern about bypassing public services. Most other bilateral agencies (except France) are also noted as emphasizing collaboration with NGOs.

Do All Main External Agencies Participate?

Most external agencies have expressed their intent to move towards SWAps (see Annex 2). On the other hand Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) confirm that there is significant reluctance on the part of some external agencies to subscribe to the SWAp approach. In a similar vein, external agencies have taken different stances and/or played different roles on SWAps. As indicated by Buchert (2002), this is sometimes based on their different philosophies on education and development.

Epskamp (2000) maintains that, generally speaking, the Mediterranean countries (France, Italy, Spain) have opposed any form of sector support because it would require sacrificing national economic interests.
Which Agencies Provide Leadership in Sector-wide Approaches?

With regards to leadership, some bilateral external agencies have taken a lead role in promoting the SWAp (primarily Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands).

Virtually all the documents surveyed point out that the World Bank has clearly played a strong lead role among the multilateral agencies (a point born out by the experience of the case study teams).

Some, for example Schmidt (2001), argue that the World Bank is a natural leader in the SWAp process. The reasons include:

- Its capacity and experience with respect to high level negotiations;
- Its ability to assess political and macro/sector economic prerequisites;
- Its ability to process and release funds quickly and flexibly;
- Its analytical capacity and strong field presence;
- The extent to which it works increasingly through local staff;
- Its ability to attract the best national talent; and
- The extent to which it can work through the IMF to influence funding decisions important for ongoing macroeconomic reform processes.

However, most analysts are cautious about the role of the World Bank. Buchert (2002) notes that the World Bank seems to have exercised considerable influence on the SWAp design process, and – as Schmidt (2001) also notes – has been unwilling to harmonize its procedures.

Schmidt (2001) also argues that although the World Bank has made important contributions to the SWAp debate, it treats Sector Investment Programs as projects requiring detailed blueprint of proposed actions. It also frequently appears inflexible, and maintains its own priorities. According to Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) this occurs despite the fact that the World Bank has recognized the importance of changing management culture – an area overlooked by others. The Bank sees the need for an extensive management assessment and change process in advance of SWAp implementation.

Some authors, for example Mundy in King and Buchert (1999), argue that the World Bank’s “prescription” seems to be focused on the more efficient use of inputs and the introduction of privatization and choice to increase efficiency, as well as greater reliance on cost-recovery, and the shift of resources from higher to primary education. When implementing new modalities – SWAps and conditionality-based lending – the World Bank continues to emphasize economic outcomes rather than the intrinsic value of education. They see the Bank-led process as a top-down, expert-led, depoliticized model of educational change.

When the World Bank was associated with SWAps in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mozambique, Buchert (2002) noted a similarity in the discourse in all three countries. The SWAps were all set in a macro-economic and political framework thus enhancing negotiations and decision-making at senior levels of government. However, this process requires expertise beyond the education realm and may exclude some key actors. Similarly, Sedere (2000), reporting on a SWAp experience in Bangladesh, reported that an untimely move by the World Bank (as lead agency in the consortium) to promote a SWAp harmed the primary education sector. Sedere argues that the primary education sub-sector in Bangladesh was previously well-mobilized under a cohesive umbrella of projects and that the development of the SWAp led to a slow-down in sub-sector activities.
Finally with regards to leadership, according to the documents reviewed, the role of the UN agencies in promoting SWAps has been limited. They have not played a central role in education SWAp policy/strategy deliberations (either at headquarters or country level), although they could play a powerful role according to Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999).

Common Implementation Arrangements and Coordination?

Some authors report limited successes in the development of common administrative arrangements for programme and project implementation under SWAps. This has occurred mainly through harmonized review procedures, with some agreements on common management and coordination structures. On the other hand, Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) argue that large bank-funded programmes supported by bilateral external agencies already had made significant strides through common appraisal and review missions and that this was not dependant on a SWAp arrangement.

Some authors, for example Hasegawa (2002), argue that the ultimate in common implementation practices and agency coordination is the relationship of a “silent partner” – a practice sometimes engaged in by Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Others such as Buchert (2002) are more sceptical, citing the difficulties that the UN agencies have had in developing common procedures. Swift in Epskamp (2000) supports this view, noting that separate implementation arrangements continue, with inadequate transparency, aid tying and different eligibility rules and rules of international competitive bidding.

3.2.3 Roles in Policy Dialogue, Technical Assistance and Funding

Box 10: Commentary: Changing Roles

The literature on sector-wide approaches detailed above has noted the strong leadership role, which has been taken on by the World Bank regarding the planning, negotiation and coordination of sector-wide approaches in education (and sub-sector programme approaches in basic education).

The country case studies provide the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education with an opportunity to explore in some detail in four countries how policy dialogue, technical assistance and funding arrangements have changed over the past 12 years. On the other hand, the documents reviewed do provide some outline of the changes worth examining in the case studies.
• Mundy (1999) argues that the sector-wide approach has coincided with a stronger role for the World Bank and a diminished role (in policy dialogue) for the UN agencies. Ratcliffe and Macrae have argued that UN agencies could play a stronger role in both policy dialogue and technical assistance than they have in the latter part of the 1990s.

• Wilks and Lefrançois (2002) argue that the World Bank’s central role in the development of PRSP combined with its ability to fund and to field multi-disciplinary research teams gives the Bank a near-monopoly on the content of those policies. When combined with its role in SWAs, this ability of the Bank to marshal technical resources and expertise and to fund significant research in support of policy development seems to have given it an increasing role in policy dialogue in basic education.

• As indicated in Annex 2, and as pointed out by Hasegawa (2002), Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) and Riddell (2002), the external agencies representing Sweden, the Netherlands, and (to a lesser extent) Denmark have taken a lead role among the bilaterals in pressing for use of sector-wide approaches in supporting education. They have often been supported in this by the agencies of the United Kingdom and Ireland (and less often by Canada). The country case studies may illustrate if this can lead to a group of influential bilateral agencies working in concert with the World bank (and sometimes the appropriate regional development bank such as the InterAmerican Development Bank in Bolivia) to form a core set of agencies with key roles in policy dialogue, technical assistance and funding. The case studies should demonstrate what effect this may have on the relative influence and roles of UN agencies.

• UNESCO itself has been designated with a central role in the EFA planning process and with the monitoring of progress towards EFA. Its many publications produced for the International Consultative Forum on Education for All provide ample evidence of that role. The commissioning and publishing of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) by itself provides UNESCO with a clear and central role in the post-Dakar efforts to implement basic education as expressed in the EFA goals.

• On the other hand, there is some concern over how the development of EFA plans may compete with other planning processes associated more closely with large resource flows. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) provides a frank overview of some of the difficulties in the EFA planning process at country level:

  Some countries are in the process of developing an overarching poverty strategy, a long-term education sector investment framework and an EFA plan, all at the same time. Malawi is a case in point. The pressure to develop these three different levels of policy analysis and planning are often external. They flow directly from requirements established by the World Bank, bilateral agencies working on sector programmes, and indirectly from the wish to respond to, and report on, the international commitments made in Dakar and elsewhere. Articulating a productive relationship between the three is challenging, particularly in systems with limited planning capacity. The different demands of agencies can result in planning exhaustion….
Towards the end of 2002, it is extremely difficult to judge the extent to which new and separate EFA plans will have a well-defined place in the pantheon of national planning instruments. This judgement may be further complicated by the new proposals and planning submissions for the World Bank Fast-Track Initiative which may form another instrument in the ledger of planning requirement (p. 107).

There are other trends in the roles played by agencies in policy dialogue, technical assistance and funding, some are captured in Section 4.2, below, on the practice of externally supported basic education. However, in terms of the bridge between the document review and the country case studies, this issue of how policy dialogue and technical assistance roles have changed over the past decade and how they link to planning processes, modalities of aid and the volume of funding provided by lead agencies is perhaps the most relevant.

3.2.4 Conditionality

The bulk of the literature reviewed did not present a consensus view on conditionality, and particularly, the role of conditionality in developing and implementing SWAps in basic education. There was some indication, however, that conditionality is often applied in relation to programme funding in the form of:

- Existence of an agreed PRSP and a recognized programme to reform and/or strengthen basic education as noted in regard to the Fast-Track Initiative by the World Bank (2003); and
- Participation by leading partner Ministries and Agencies in programmes of public sector reform (Foster et. al. 2000).

Foster, Brown, Norton and Naschold, in *The Status of Sector-wide Approaches* (2000), point out that the development of overly ambitious sector plans (a form of internal conditionality) during the development of SWAps can have a further negative impact on the capacity of the partner government agencies. Boeren in Epskamp (2000) points out that the very instruments used in planning SWAps tend to be external-agency owned and developed (logical frameworks, public expenditure reviews) and are less familiar to partner country agencies, which further limits their ability to maintain ownership in discussions around conditionality.

T. Collins and L. Higgins provide the most extensive discussion of conditionality among the documents reviewed in their report, *Seminar on Sector-wide Approaches with a Focus on Partnership: Dublin Castle, Ireland February 8-10. 2000: Seminar Report.*

The seminar in question allowed for a full discussion of conditionalities, described by one participant as “the shadow side” of ownership (p. 12). The report notes, “Whereas ownership implies a condition of self-regulation, conditionality suggests one of external regulation, supervision and direction” (p. 12).

Jones, a participant at the seminar, proposed the following definition of conditionality:

Mutual arrangement by which a Government (recipient) takes, or promises to take, certain policy action, in support of which an International Financial Institution (IFI) or other agency will provide specified amounts of financial assistance (p. 12).
Debate at the seminar indicated that conditionality was not as benign as this definition might suggest. The “arrangement” is often more “hierarchical” than “mutual” with the agenda driven more by agencies than by governments. Further, participants pointed out that the threat of withdrawal of funding on failure to comply with conditions is always implicit and sometimes explicit (p. 12).

Jones distinguished different levels of conditions:

1. Project level – delivery conditions related to project objectives;
2. Sector level – related to sector policy or expenditure commitments;
3. Macro-economic level – relating to variables concerned with aggregate policy and/or expenditure commitments; and

Seminar papers suggested that conditionality has failed to result in sustainable improvement in economic policies or institutions and is unlikely to get government to move in direction it was not already planning on moving in anyway. Participants noted Killich’s conclusion, “conditionality is not an effective means of improving economic policies in recipient countries. The incentive system … is usually inadequate in the face of differences between donors and governments about objectives and priorities” (p. 13). This was reported as one of the reasons for the World Bank’s apparent move away from ex-ante conditionality towards ex-post conditionality by emphasizing a proven track record by the partner government.

One of the participants in the seminar identified the basic principles of a model of partnership to replace conditionality:

- Ownership – partner government commitment to the programme being supported;
- Selectivity – the need for external agencies to be more discriminating (selective) in countries they work with;
- Support – aid should deal with contingencies or financing gaps, rather than focusing on policy reform; and
- Dialogue – build consensus between government and external agencies around the country strategy and expenditure review processes.

These principles are broadly consistent with the view of some that agencies should abandon conditionality in favour of a process of dialogue with government and a commitment to greater government ownership (p. 14).

Another participant at the seminar, Florence Malinga of Uganda, while reviewing the Education Sector Investment Programme in Uganda, identified some of the prerequisites of “post-conditionality”:

- A shared common goal between all partners;
- An agreed framework of cooperation;
- Regular consultation and review;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Continuous feedback; and
- The implementation of joint activities (p. 14).
In summary, the Dublin Castle Seminar in 2000 seems to have developed a consensus view that ex-ante conditionalities were seldom successful in achieving meaningful changes in policies and strategies. They also identified a basic set of principles and pre-conditions allowing for a replacement model, termed post-conditionality, featuring a more developed process of dialogue, greater national ownership, and an emphasis on ex-post measures of sector performance.

3.3 Results In External Support to Basic Education

The key issue in this section concerns:

- What have been the results and consequences of external support to basic education?

The sub-issues focused on include:

- The results of the volume of external assistance in terms of national and international planning to meet EFA;
- The results of the different forms of external support to basic education; and
- Results of changing roles in policy dialogue, technical assistance and funding.

3.3.1 Results of the Volume of External Support to Basic Education

The main question regarding the volume of external support to basic education over the past decade concerns the size of any funding gap between what is needed to provide basic education and what is available from the resources of partner countries when combined with external financing. Up to now, the most serious work on a funding gap has all been focused on the most readily quantifiable of the EFA goals – the attainment of UPE.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) provides a detailed overview of three separate studies carried out for UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank in an attempt to estimate the cost and prospects for achieving UPE. The three studies are carefully compared in UNESCO (2002b). All three studies had to deal with:

- The estimated cost of increasing primary school enrolment to achieve UPE on per-student and aggregate basis;
- Any reductions in system costs which could come from improved planning, better allocation of resources, reductions in the rate of repetition, etc.; and
- Available national resource from government and private sources to meet those costs.

Of the three studies, only the World Bank study provided estimates of the amount of external funding required and, therefore, attempted to identify any gap in resources both domestic and external.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) provides an intensive analysis of the three studies and conclude that the World Bank estimates are more systematic and based on more empirical evidence but that all three produce similar conclusions. The three efforts taken together support the conclusions that UPE by 2015 will require the following:

- Public spending on primary education, as estimated in all three studies taken together, would need to increase by between US$4.3 billion and US$8.4 billion per year over the period (p.138);
• World Bank estimates that on average US$2.5 billion in annual external resources will be required each year to achieve UPE (p.140);
• If we add together the costs of achieving UPE and gender parity by 2015 as estimated in the World Bank study, the annual external aid requirement for primary education climbs to as high as US$5.6 billion (even assuming important gains in efficiency and consistent economic growth in many countries) (p. 172);
• Estimated external assistance to basic education in 2000 of US$1.45 billion is only about one-quarter of the additional external assistance likely to be needed each year to 2015 to achieve UPE alone (p.172); and
• None of the above estimates include the costs of meeting the early childhood, adult literacy and life skills goals re-specified at Dakar (p.175).

The results of this survey of three different efforts at estimating the cost of just one element of the EFA goals indicates that there is a continuing and serious gap between what will be required from external resources and what is currently being provided if there is any hope of achieving the EFA goals and providing basic education for all by 2015.

3.3.2 The Question of Dependency

There is some concern in the documents reviewed over the question of dependency as partner countries rely on considerable volumes of external support in their efforts to expand the reach of basic education in pursuit of the EFA goals. The EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) draws on the World Bank publication Achieving Education for All by 2015: Simulation Results for 47 Low-Income Countries (2002) to point out that total expenditures on primary education in the countries studied stood at US$7.4 billion in 2000, of which an estimated US$1.0 billion came from external sources. Thus, external support accounted for 13.5% of all resources spent on primary education in this large sample of countries at risk of not achieving UPE (for a list of the countries studied see p. 139 of the EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b).

The proportion of expenditures on primary education accounted for by external resources may well rise over the 15 years from 2000 to 2015 given the need for continued commitments of more resources to meet the levels needed to achieve UPE.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) notes (p.141) that the required rate of growth in domestic resources devoted to primary schooling in order to meet levels of expenditure required for UPE amounts to an average annual growth rate of 7.5% per year over 15 years. Since 33 of the 47 countries in the study are located in sub-Saharan Africa, where weighted annual real GDP growth was just over 3% throughout the 1990s, this seems like a very tall order indeed. If the gap between resource needs and developing country revenue growth is made up by increased flows of external resources (which admittedly does not seem to have occurred between 1990 and 2000) then an increasing level of dependency may result.

K.C. Tung, in Assessment of Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa 1990-2000, identifies a number of cost-saving and cost-sharing mechanisms used by governments in the region in their efforts to overcome dependency and to promote sustainability. These include:

• Inviting the private sector to play a part in delivery;
• Use of mass media and distance education;
• Alternative forms of government provision of basic education including Koranic schools and/or community schools;
• Double shift teaching to maximize use of infrastructure;
• Automatic promotions to increase internal efficiency and reduce repetition rates;
• Book rental services to reduce textbook costs; and
• Decentralization in an effort to make better use of existing but limited external resources.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that the studies reviewed by The EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) included built-in assumptions regarding efficiency gains in the unit costs of UPE. These gains in efficiency are anticipated in the very calculations pointing to the looming gap between domestic resources and the cost of meeting this most quantifiable of EFA goals.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) further points out (p. 140) that some of the hoped-for gains in efficiency may be very difficult to achieve. For example, reducing teacher salaries where they are high relative to GDP per capita may prove extremely difficult in countries where structural features of the economy (i.e., shortages of skilled workers and a small formal sector) tend to result in salaries for all professional workers higher relative to per-capita income than in more industrialized countries. It also seems difficult to simultaneously energize the school system to achieve UPE, while cutting teacher salaries.

Finally, as already noted, the Fast-Track Initiative with its influx of additional resources but lacking sufficient longer term commitments, may have the effect of exacerbating dependency in the short- to medium-term if the increased levels of spending are not sustainable when FTI funding is expended. In summary, the problem of dependency on external financial resources was already considerable in 2000 and can be expected to deepen over the next 12 years.

3.3.3 Results of Different Forms of Support to Basic Education

Changing Modalities of External Support to Basic Education: Overall Results

Authors of most of the documents surveyed agree that it is too early to identify the impact of SWAps on development objectives in education. Even where changes have occurred, they cannot normally be attributed to the use of a sector-wide approach.

On the other hand, some authors have drawn some preliminary conclusions on the results of the movement towards sector-wide approaches and the processes of developing those approaches:

• Schmidt (2001) notes that the overall initial impression is that education sector performance has improved. However, he notes that, although the situation may have improved as sector-wide initiatives take over from the project approach, this does not mean the situation is satisfactory; and
• Epskamp (2000) is less positive, noting, “The sectoral approach has been parachuted in from above without ever having been properly tested. It is not based, as it should be, on a carefully constructed theoretical model and there is no evidence whatsoever that it will work” (p. 257).

Most authors have identified lessons learned on the process of setting up and implementing a SWAp. Although some noted some positive improvements, most identify areas where the rhetoric is different from the reality in the field. Foster, et al, (2000) for example, indicate that the “criteria
defined have often gone far beyond the actual achievement so far in those operations usually defined as taking a sector-wide approach” (p. 6).

Host Country Ownership and Partnership with External Agencies

Schmidt (2001) notes that the initial impression is that there has been increased recipient country ownership. However, most authors point to limited success in recipient country ownership and the realization of genuine partnerships or, like Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999), indicate that success in this area is highly variable under a sector-wide approach. Some of the observations by different authors include:

- There is a remarkable degree of consistency in SWAps across countries, reflecting the extent of external agency influence and the limited extent to which governments have assumed ownership (Boeren in Epskamp, 2000 and Foster et al., 2000);
- The strategies are largely shaped by the external agencies and often overlook elements of citizenship, rights and nation-building (Feldberg and Tornes, 2002);
- The SWAp process tends to be top-down, involving senior levels of government, with limited involvement below or outside government (Foster et al. 2000);
- Developing a SWAp requires consistency in underlying aims and understanding between governments and external agencies. This may be difficult to achieve if governments are unwilling to involve external agencies in sensitive political issues (Boeren in Epskamp, 2000);
- Problems with leadership have affected all SWAps. It can go one of two ways – if external agencies are not coordinated, then the government takes over, agencies are excluded and there is a lack of transparency. On the other hand, if governments do not exercise leadership, external agencies take over and recipient government ownership is compromised. (Schmidt, 2001);
- The rhetoric on mutual respect, transparency and trust cannot hide the underlying differences and structural relationships between aid providers and aid recipients (Buchert, 2002);
- There is an over-reliance on external consultants and technical assistance (Swift in Epskamp, 2000). Swift notes particularly the lack of national ownership of the majority of the analytical studies used to prepare sector-wide approaches;
- The instruments used in SWAps (logical frameworks, Public Expenditure Reviews, etc.) may limit local ownership, and their implementation may lead to timing and pacing that is not sensitive to national systems (Boeren in Epskamp 2000); and
- There are often pressures on external agencies to disburse, and this can override the principles of ownership (Boeren in Epskamp 2000).

Mercer et al. in the synthesis report of the Evaluation of EC Support to the Education Sector in ACP Countries (2002) describe the advantages and disadvantages of the use of SWAps in European Commission support to education as follows:

A sector wide approach (SWAp) is a marriage between government ownership and efficient sector management and well-coordinated donor funding. The SWAp has been shown to be the optimal way to implement education programme aid. Its advantages include global vision, flexibility, avoidance of duplication and integrated activities. Its disadvantages can include high transaction costs, dominance by the strongest donors, concentration on macro-level policies and limited local participation [emphasis added] (p.x).
The question of how the shift from project to programme and sector-wide approaches impacts on the sense of national ownership will be a key focus of the country case studies carried out for the Joint Evaluation of Basic Education since each of the countries (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia) has programmes with elements of a programmatic or sector (or more accurately sub-sector)-wide approach to the changing modality of external support to basic education.
4.0 Externally Supported Basic Education

This section focuses more closely on how external support to basic education has been combined at a policy, practice and results level with the agencies, systems and processes actually working to meet the need for basic education in each partner country. As such, it relies less on external agency statements of policies or agency-funded reviews of practices and results of the external agencies’ own activities and orientations. Rather, this section attempts to draw more on the following different types of documents:

- Agency funded, but partner country focussed, evaluations of externally supported basic education activities, especially where there appears to have been significant local participation;
- Academic journal articles presenting the results of research on the policies, practices and results of externally supported basic education activities; and
- Critical comments by international and national NGOs and civil organizations regarding the actions of external support agencies and partner governments in utilizing external assistance to improve national achievements in basic education.

4.1 Externally Supported Basic Education: Intents, Policies and Strategies

This section focuses on the question:

- Within the policy framework of basic education in partner countries, to what extent and in what ways has external support been integrated?

Sub-issues include:

- Common understanding and specification of basic education; and
- Coherence of the national policy framework with policies of external agencies.

4.1.1 The Understanding and Specification of Basic Education

This question concerns whether or not national partners in planning for basic education, reflect the global definition of basic education as described in Section 3.1 above (with its core vision, basic components and EFA goals).

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report:2002* (UNESCO, 2002b) tries to address at least a good part of this question by surveying completed EFA Action Plans and PRSPs to see to what extent they reflected the EFA goals. If, as we have argued, the EFA goals themselves relate to the components of basic education (early childhood care and developmental activities, primary education, life skills, adult literacy) then national EFA plans and PRSPs reflecting the goals would imply an acceptance of the component elements of basic education.

The Report came to the following conclusions after surveying 40 completed EFA’s and 16 PRSPS:

- Whether in PRSPs or EFA sector plans, there is often a failure to develop a clear relationship between the diagnosis of education and poverty on the one hand, and the education actions and outcomes that are proposed in plans and strategies on the other. A World Bank study of PRSPs and girl’s education also suggests a weak linkage between identification of the need and priority actions (Burnett and Winter, 2002, as quoted in *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (UNESCO, 2002b, p. 113);
• There are not enough clearly set intermediate targets;
• While there are broad indicators of intentions to increase expenditure on education and improve internal efficiency, there is rarely detailed costing (p. 113).

This suggests that national partners may agree in principal with the definition and components of basic education and the related EFA goals, but they reserve the right to specify their own targets and to select which components to emphasize.

As Bentall et al. (2000) observe, external agencies and national governments together may agree to focus on a sub-set of the components (and related goals) out of concerns for efficiency. At the same time there is a temptation for national governments to focus on the education system as a whole.

4.1.2 Coherence of National Policy Framework and Policies of External Agencies

Interestingly, most of the literature reviewed is written from the opposite perspective: how well do the policies of external support agencies mesh with national policies in education, particularly in basic education?

The EFA Global Monitoring Report:2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) finds that an analysis of the content of national EFA sector plans and PRSPs indicates a basic acceptance of the policies implied in the EFA goals but without a great deal of specificity (i.e. without clear targets) and on a somewhat selective basis. This does not really address the coherence of partner country and external agency policies on basic education, however, because the policies of external agencies may not be consistent from one country to the next, or among external agencies.

In some ways, the Joint Evaluation of Basic Education will need to rely closely on the reports of the country case study teams in addressing this issue. The case studies focus directly on the development of national policy over time and the influence of external agencies on those policies.

The work done to date on the case studies suggests that formal national education policies in the four countries are worked out in a dialogue between the national authorities and international agencies providing support to basic education. The ability of a given national partner to ensure that policies are clearly tied to its own priorities (even when shared with most external agencies) depends on a number of factors including the technical capacity of the Ministry of Education and the willingness of external support agencies to fund capacity development and technical support to planning and policy development.

Those authors who have examined the process of developing large programmes of support to the education sector, including sector-wide approaches (Hasegawa, 2002; Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999 and Riddell, 2002) have detailed a process whereby the education policies of external supporters and national partners are brought together in a common planning framework during the preparation of sector-wide approaches. As already noted, Buchert (2002), Schmidt (2001) and Riddell (2002) have questioned whether that results in programming that reflects a common approach to education policy, or which too closely follows the lead of the World Bank.

Similarly, Collins and Higgins (2000) have emphasized the negative impact of policy and strategy related conditionalities on the level of national ownership of programmes. They have suggested a post-conditionality model of external support to basic education will be more effective in promoting ownership.
4.2 Externally Supported Basic Education: Practices

This section focuses on the questions:

- At the operational level of basic education, to what extent and in what ways has external support been integrated?
- Does externally supported basic education address global priorities and does it encompass all or most of the components of basic education?

4.2.1 Operational Integration of Externally Supported Basic Education

This is one of the key questions for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education. It is also one where the richest body of data should be expected from the country case studies in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia.

The document review team has chosen to address the issue through the examination of a collection of evaluations of basic education support conducted across a range of sample countries. The same set of evaluation reports is relied on to address the results of externally supported basic education in Section 4.3 on results. The evaluations surveyed by the document review team for this purpose include:

- Heidt and Müller (2001) Prospects of Success of Basic Education Project; for BMZ;
- Al-Samarrai, Bennell andColelough (1999) Primary Education Synthesis for DFID;
- Mercer, Melchiori, Sirtori and Sikoska (2001) Evaluation of EC Support to the Education Sector in ACP Countries: Country Report Dominican Republic; and

Here and in Section 4.3 below these evaluations are referred to as BMZ, DFID, UNICEF, EC, and Foster Parents Plan (FPP) Netherlands for easier reference. The sample of reports was selected because it provides three agency summaries of evaluation studies (BMZ, UNICEF and DFID), on national level evaluation by an NGO (FPP Netherlands) and one project focused evaluation at country level (EC). Table 5, below, highlights the findings of these five evaluations regarding the operational fit between external assistance to basic education and the operations of national partners.
Table 5: Integration of External Support to Basic Education: Selected Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Report</th>
<th>Findings on Integration of External Support to Basic Education</th>
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| BMZ 2001          | • Basic education projects should be integrated into the existing structures of the partner as early as possible and before the end of the project term; and
                      • The executing organizations of all projects are the respective education ministries. The projects are, in substance, integrated in the education sector and in part are directly accountable to the minister, who delegates this responsibility if necessary. |
| UNICEF 2002       | • Confusion between UNICEF and government or NGO partners about roles and responsibilities was frequently cited as a limitation on effectiveness; and
                      • Incompatibilities between personnel systems, accounting regulations, procurement procedures and information flows sometimes caused problems with partners (government and NGOs). |
| EC 2000           | • The integrated development programme for primary education at local level (PRIDEP) was not coordinated with similar World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank projects; and
                      • Insufficient attention had been given in project design to development of human resources for follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of project activities. |
| DFID 1999         | • During the project phase (until 1993) innovations introduced in a number of different countries – particularly the cascade training of teachers, but also the use of teacher advisory centres – were often based on insufficient evidence as to their effectiveness. Active learning methods employed in many projects were also imported uncritically from very different social and educational contexts; and
                      • The recognition that project scope and implementation had to be fundamentally changed was also marked by increased awareness that a strong sense of ownership was crucial to success. |
| FPP Netherlands   | • By strengthening communities and cooperating directly with government at local and national level FPP is trying to increase the effectiveness of the national education policy and strategy, including the accountability of the public sector as a result of more articulated demands from a segment of civil society. |

This somewhat eclectic set of findings indicates that external agencies have become increasingly aware of the need for operations in basic education (especially primary education) to be more closely integrated with the operations of government over time. It is interesting that FPP Netherlands emphasized a strategy of integrating with government policy and operations at a local as well as a national level.

In an interesting counter-perspective to the question of how external assistance should be integrated with the operations of governments, especially through formal schools, Heynemann and Todoric-Bebic (2000) have called for more integration with “traditional” associations including religious schools. They argue that conditions arising from economic crisis and from structural adjustment programmes have contributed to the enfeeblement of secular political structures and a revival of religions and other value systems. As globalization threatens local cultures, there has been a retreat from secularism and a revival of such cultures in many regions – one that external support agencies have not been able to deal with.

4.2.2 Externally Supported Basic Education and Global Priorities

As noted in Section 3.1.4 above, when external agencies identify basic education as a priority, they tend to link that priority to development concerns of education as a human right, poverty alleviation, gender equality, social equality (especially for ethnic and linguistic minorities) and
efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. Also as noted in Section 3.1.4, at a global level, there are good reasons to conclude that partner countries share these priorities. Participation in the many conferences between Jomtien and Dakar (and the Millennium Summit and General Assembly of the United Nations) at least implies that the education components of the many directives emanating from those conferences have as much meaning for partner countries as for the external agencies.

On the other hand, documents such as the national and regional assessments prepared in preparation for Dakar, and statements by regional agencies such as the African Development Bank, indicate that, for each specific partner country and region, some of the global priorities have more or less urgency depending on national history, organization of the education system, political realities, cultural norms, and the realities “on the ground.”

This section examines the question of partner country ownership of global priorities through the lens of three different but related priorities: poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS, and gender equality.

**Poverty Alleviation**

This is perhaps the most widely accepted global priority linked to basic education at the level of national policy (with the possible exception of education as a human right). As Bray (1986) pointed out well before Jomtien, external agencies and national partners participating in conferences in the 1960s uncritically accepted the proposition that education was a good national investment to reduce poverty.

Further, the work of George Psacharopoulos (see *Returns to Global Investment in Education: a Global Update*, 1994) on the social and private rates of return to investment in different forms of education in the late 1980s and early 1990s had an important influence on external agencies and national partners alike. It seemed to provide national partner governments with real evidence that by increasing national expenditures (using domestic and external resources) on the primary schooling component of basic education, they could increase national growth rates and have a direct impact on poverty. Subsequent studies by, for example, Bennell (1996) have argued that in some regions, in particular Sub-Saharan Africa, the relationships found by Psacharopoulos may not apply. They further argue that rate of return analysis is not really an effective tool for assessing the impact of primary education on poverty.

Be that as it may, there is still strong evidence that partner governments planning investments in education, and in particular, basic education emphasize a clear link between, at the very least, UPE and poverty alleviation. One indicator of this is found in the PRSPs prepared by partner governments in relation to access to resources under HIPC 1 and 2. As stated in the *The EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b):

PRSPs are taking on increasing importance for overall national development policy and planning in the world’s poorest countries. Globally, forty-eight countries are in the process of developing interim or full PRSPs. These are designed to describe a country’s economic and social policies over a 3-year or longer time horizon… (p. 107).

The *Global Monitoring Report* survey of sixteen full PRSPs completed up to July 2002 concludes that while education is recognized as a significant dimension of policies to reduce poverty in PRSPs, the absence of standardized, comparable education indicators leads to considerable variation in the depth to which education is reflected (p. 111).
At least with regards to poverty, partner country PRSPs and EFA plans where they exist (UNESCO 2002b) tend to draw the link between poverty and education (if not always explicitly basic education). On the other hand, Chapman (2001) notes in *A Review of Evaluations of UNICEF Education Activities 1994-2000* there is often a very weak conceptual link between primary education and poverty alleviation in the programmes and projects supported by external agencies in partner countries. Researchers and evaluators from Bray (1986), to Bennell (1996), Bentall et al. (2000), and Chapman (2001) have increasingly questioned the simple equation between UPE and poverty alleviation. One of the most frequently asked questions in the meetings of the different teams carrying out the country case studies concerned what is to happen to all these children when they have completed primary schooling? Are they to be employed? Where?

In the same vein, Mercer et al. (2002) in *Evaluation of EC Support to the Education Sector in ACP Countries* deal with the problem of education and poverty reduction, especially through the lens of UPE:

The evaluation team investigated how the fight against poverty was measured in EC-supported education programmes/projects during the 1990s. No specific consideration seems to have been given to the interaction between education and poverty reduction in any project implemented.

A UPE policy *per se* does not guarantee universal access to education. While education sector reform may target poverty reduction, it does not target the poor as a special group. Specific policies and measures are needed to reach the poorest. Strengthening the link with community development and adult literacy led to positive effects on drop out rates (p. xi).

There is an apparent need for external agencies and partner governments to focus on the links between basic education and poverty alleviation. Oxfam International (2000) in *Education Now: Break the Cycle of Poverty* points out that national policies in areas such as the withdrawal of education charges including school fees and charges for supplies may have an important effect in improving the link between basic education and poverty alleviation.

*Gender Equality*

Many evaluations of efforts to improve gender equality, for example Sida’s publication *Mainstreaming Gender Equality: Sida’s Support for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Partner Countries* (Mikkelsen, Freeman, Keller et al., 2001), have noted that partner country commitments to improvements in gender equality are sometimes (but clearly not always) more formal than real; and it can be difficult to advance gender equality in that context. In fact, one must recognize that the EFA goals are more properly seen as an effort to attain gender parity in the sense of equal access to and completion of primary and secondary schooling as but one measure of equality.

One rough measure of the degree of acceptance by national governments of the gender related EFA goals can be found in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b) in the survey of EFA and MDG goals appearing in 16 different PRSPs completed by July 2002. Table 6, below, presents the breakdown of goals cited.
Table 6: Reference to EFA Goals in 16 Completed PRSPs as of July 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFA Goal</th>
<th>Frequency Cited in 16 PRSPs</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expanding Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Universal Access and Completion of Primary Education</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Meeting Learning Needs of Young People and Adults</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Achieving 50% Improvement in Adult Literacy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Eliminating Gender Disparities in Primary and Secondary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Improving All Aspects of the Quality of Education</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While one might argue that universal access to and completion of primary education implies a commitment to gender equality, it seems more striking that the most explicit gender related EFA goal (number 5) ranks at the bottom of the table in terms of frequency of citations in PRSPs, where it is joined by adult literacy.

It is important not to read too much into such a small sample, covering only 16 countries. Nonetheless, there is some indication that the goal of gender parity expressed at a global level may have a lower profile for national countries than the goal of UPE.

At a global level, there have been important programmatic initiatives in promoting the achievement of the gender related EFA goals. The United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), for example, is one programmatic response to the challenges of attaining the MDG goals relating to girls education, as pointed out in Consultations with NGOs about UNGEI: Partnering for Girl’s Education in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, published by UNGEI in June 2002.

**Combating HIV/AIDS**

Table 2 in Section 3.1.4 illustrates that six of thirteen external supporters of basic education had indicated in the policy documents reviewed that they see a strong link between basic education and poverty alleviation, for example. Interestingly, Bentall et al. (2000) in their review of external funding to basic education list only Canada as linking basic education and HIV/AIDS (p. 43). This suggests that HIV/AIDS as a priority linked to basic education began to develop more momentum among external agencies after 2000.

The urgency of the link between HIV/AIDS and basic education for external agencies is perhaps best illustrated in three documents reviewed by the team:

While they differ somewhat in content and interpretation, all three emphasize the different ways that HIV/AIDS negatively impacts on education systems in the areas of:

- Declining demand negating investments in infrastructure, equipment and supplies;
- Undermining gains made in education over the prior period;
- Increasing the number of orphans;
- Increasing costs to train and replace planners, administrators, teacher trainers and teachers;
- Affecting girls more negatively than boys and hurting efforts to address gender; and
- Impeding the attainment of EFA goals.

All three studies emphasize that education, including life-skills education, can be an effective (and cost-effective) preventive strategy to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

Not surprisingly, the partner country response to the priority of HIV/AIDS seems to be dependant on the scope and scale of the challenges directly presented to that country by HIV/AIDS. The African Development Bank (1999) identified the link between HIV/AIDS and basic education as a direct concern for countries in the region. Similarly, Tung (2000) and UNESCO (2000a) in *Education for All Assessment 2000: Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Synthesis Report* noted that for many sub-Saharan countries, combating HIV/AIDS was a priority for the education system.

One may expect, as the priority link between HIV/AIDS and basic education receives more attention at a global level, it may be more present at the national partner level. Of the four countries visited by the case study teams for the Joint Evaluation of Basic Education, only one was outside the sub-Saharan region. Bolivia as an Andean country is perhaps typical of partner countries where the HIV/AIDS pandemic is not yet a high-priority national concern. In reviewing Bolivia’s plans and programmes in basic education it was clear that HIV/AIDS was not a priority for those planning and administering basic education in Bolivia.

### 4.3 Externally Supported Basic Education: Results

This section focuses on the questions:

- What progress has been made in basic education from the perspective of learners and their families?
- From the perspective of those involved in basic education, what have been the institutional results of externally supported basic education activities? What has worked and what has not?

#### 4.3.1 Progress in Basic Education

This issue deals with the question of results for learners and their families of externally supported efforts in basic education at three different levels:

- As measured globally through EFA monitoring mechanisms;
- As reported in the sample of evaluations; and
- Under the specific heading of gender equality.

*Global Measures of EFA Progress*

The latest global measure of progress towards the EFA goals is provided in UNESCO’s *EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b). One of the measures used in that report (p. 15) is a combination of three quantitative indices of primary net enrolment, levels of adult literacy...
and gender parity in primary school gross enrolment. By tracking where countries are now and analyzing trends in changes country-by-country over the 1990s, the report comes to the following conclusions:

- 83 countries have already achieved the three goals or have a good chance of doing so by 2015;
- 43 countries have made progress in the 1990s but at least one goal [of the three combined goals] is likely to be missed by 2015; and
- 28 countries are in serious risk of not achieving any of the three goals…

The third, high-risk group consists primarily of countries in sub-Saharan Africa but also includes India and Pakistan. It covers just over 25% of the world’s population. This is where the overall challenge of EFA is greatest (p. 16).

While this assessment is more oriented to the future than assessing past results, it is based mainly on a review of trends over a decade and projecting that trend towards the future. It is a very sobering prospect to think that 25% of the world’s population live in countries where the promise of meeting the EFA goals by 2015 is very much at risk. It makes it difficult, at a global level at least, to speak with confidence of quality basic education being accessible to all by 2015.

Watkins (2000) estimated that by 1995, around 125 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 were out of school. Regarding the rate of progress since Jomtien, he writes:

Measured against the original Jomtien target of universal primary education by 2000, there has been a huge shortfall in achievement. It is hard to quantify the extent of this shortfall. But if net enrolment had increased on an annualized basis at the rate required to achieve the 2000 goal, there would have been 61 million fewer children out of school in 1995 (p. 77).

The Global Campaign for Education is perhaps more blunt in its statement of the problems (November, 2002):

Education is a basic right. It is also the keystone of poverty eradication efforts. Yet more than half a century after this right was enshrined in the UN declaration, education is in crisis in the world’s poorest countries. 125 million children – nearly 60 percent of them girls – are out of primary school. Many times that number of children receive an education that is so curtailed or of such low quality, that they acquire few of the tools needed to escape from poverty. Nearly one billion adults are unable to read or write. The education crisis is a massive violation of basic rights and threatens to undermine global efforts to eradicate poverty (p. 3).

Admittedly, all three analyses present the part of the cup that is empty in that they concentrate on those not being reached by basic education. It is difficult to assess how much worse the situation would have been without the large scale increases in the scope of primary education systems, which occurred in the 1990s. However, as the evaluations reviewed for this document indicate, that very expansion brought about a renewed focus on problems in the quality of basic education supported by external agencies.

**Results in Externally Supported Basic Education as Reported in a Sample of Evaluations**

Table 7, below, summarizes the findings of the sample of evaluations reviewed in the area of results for learners and their families:
Table 7: Evaluation Findings on Results for Learners and Their Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Report</th>
<th>Findings on Results for Learners and Their Families</th>
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| BMZ 2001          | • It is recommended that programmes continue to emphasize quality since available data show that, although in many countries an increase can be seen in the school enrolment rate, what is being learned is not appropriate to development of needed life skills;  
                      • There are weak points in projects regarding the participation of parents; and  
                      • Social and cultural impacts take place on various levels. In Latin America, for example, the contribution of basic education to the democratization of society and to elimination of social inequities is emphasized. |
| UNICEF 2002       | • Stipend programmes generally were effective in getting more children in school; and  
                      • Activities aimed at reaching out-of-school youth were generally regarded as successful. Sometimes, however, results were either mixed or hard to determine. |
| EC 2000           | • The main achievement was a high level of pedagogical innovation and teacher training in all three provinces. |
| DFID 1999         | • The new emphasis on primary schooling has probably resulted in British education aid having a greater impact upon poverty alleviation and gender inequality. Project documents also make much more serious references to gender equity and poverty reduction than before. Too often, however, project design has done little more than to recognize the problem. Too little relevant analysis of the extent and importance of poverty and gender inequality is undertaken and attempts to provide solutions have often been weak. |
| FPP Netherlands   | • Parents had significantly improved their affinity with and appreciation of schools and schooling;  
                      • Pupils were more interested and proud of their schools which were hitherto quite dilapidated and falling apart; and  
                      • Teachers were now more regular and interested in teaching. This was more so when given the textbooks to keep and use rather than when kept centrally. |

Perhaps because agency-led evaluations tend to focus on what needs to be improved, Table 7 paints a mixed picture of the results of basic education relying on external support. The table also illustrates the fact that evaluations of this type tend to focus on intermediate level results and process issues rather than a direct attempt to assess the results for learners and their families.

This very basic picture will need to be re-assessed in light of the information on results for learners and their families produced by the four country case studies.

Results Relating to Gender Equality

This was one results area where the document review team was able to access and review a considerable body of information. This section summarizes some of the more important surveys and evaluations of gender equality and basic education accessed by the team.

In all, the document review team drew on 12 different documents presenting evaluation information regarding the results of efforts to improve gender equality (or simply address gender parity) in basic education programming. The documents reviewed covered such areas as:

- Gender policies in education in Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (Swainson, 2000);  
- Girls’ education in Guinea (Sutton, Tietjen, Bah and Kamano, 1999);  
- Girls’ education in Zambia (Mitchell, Blaeser, Chilangwa and Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe (1999);
• USAID efforts to improve girls’ education (Benoliel, 1999);
• Efforts to improve girls’ education in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Malawi (Stromquist and Murphy, 1996);
• The state of education in South Asia (Rampal, 2000);
• Evaluations of external agency support to girls’ basic education (15 agencies) (Stromquist, 1994);
• Increasing girls’ and women’s participation in basic education (Stromquist, 1997);
• Gender implications of developing agency policies on education and training (Leach, 2000).

These studies collectively support the conclusion that progress in supporting girl’s access and use of basic education has been made in some areas, but that in other areas there has been an increase in the gender gap. Supporting arguments for this conclusion made in the documents include:

• There has been increased enrolment of girls in primary school: however, because of population growth and the tendency for lower progress in the areas of highest growth, the absolute number of girls or primary age (worldwide) out of school has risen since 1990. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are most disadvantaged in this regard; and
• There were 875 million illiterate persons in the world in the year 2000, of which women still constitute almost two thirds, a proportion practically unchanged since 1990.

On the other hand, key aspects of the discourse on girls’ education have changed in a positive way in the period since Jomtien (Hyde and Miske, 2001):

• International awareness of girl’s education as an issue has increased significantly;
• Emphasis has shifted from documenting barriers to engaging in advocacy and action;
• The formation and wider development of partnerships and networks among various groups devoted to gender equality has created a more permanent force for advocacy;
• Educators now have a deeper understanding of the barriers to girls’ education; and
• The agenda has shifted from one of making girls better mothers to an agenda that encourages the autonomy and empowerment of women and girls.

There are important programmatic responses under way in an effort to address at least the MDG goals relating to gender parity and to girls’ education, which should be acknowledged at this point. As already pointed out, the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative is but one of these responses.

4.3.2 Institutional Results of Externally Supported Basic Education

This section deals with the results of externally supported basic education at the level of individually supported activities such as teacher training, curriculum development, infrastructure, and management improvement and evaluation to assess how those working in the basic education system may have benefited from externally supported activities. It also looks at the issue of quality in basic education. The main information base used for this issue is the sample of five evaluations analyzed in Section 4.3.1 above. The institutional results of externally supported basic education as assessed in the five sample evaluations are summarized in Table 8 below.
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learner-Centred Education</td>
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<td>Teacher Training and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother-Tongue Education</td>
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Table 8: Results of Externally Supported Basic Education Activities as Reported in a Sample of Evaluations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of External Support</th>
<th>Results of Externally Supported Basic Education Activities as Reported in the Evaluations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>project implementation decentralization is a preferred strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quality Improvement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partnership</td>
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</table>
While the findings listed in Table 8 above are by no means exhaustive, they do point to some preliminary lessons, which might be useful in preparing a synthesis of results for the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education:

- Infrastructure construction and improvement is an important use of external support and it affects externally supported basic education in significant ways. Analysis of externally supported basic education should not overlook the role of infrastructure support in increasing access;

- Curriculum development is a strategy chosen to enhance quality, but it needs to be monitored for impacts which are hard to demonstrate;

- Teacher training is another strategy for improving quality with an assumed, more than a proven impact. In particular, models of teacher training used need to be carefully assessed and not imposed from other systems;

- Learner-centred education is a popular initiative, but it is difficult to prove how much of an impact it may have on outcomes. It does seem to have an observed impact on student animation and participation;

- Mother-tongue education and intercultural/bilingual education have particular social importance in Latin America;

- Management problems continue to inhibit the effective use of external support to basic education as it is integrated into national and local systems. These seem to derive from two inter-related factors: the need to strengthen local capacity and the need to ensure that external support agencies work harder to integrate their support into national and local planning and implementation systems;

- Evaluation and monitoring remain problem areas in externally supported basic education. There is a need to continuously work to improve national and local systems of monitoring;

- Quality is an enduring problem for externally supported basic education. In fact, efforts to expand systems and improve access have had more success than efforts to improve quality. Quality is often pursued through system reform, which does not take into account the needs and viewpoints of teachers and students. Curriculum development, teacher training and development of improved materials are all important strategies for improving quality, but they have not been planned and implemented carefully enough, and demonstrating their impact on quality has proven very difficult;

- For the bilateral agencies, the single most emphasized strategy for partnership improvement is seen in the movement to a broader approach and, eventually, to a full sector-wide approach to providing external assistance to the education sector; and

- For UNICEF, the EC and FPP Netherlands, partnership is to be strengthened through better integration with national and local government operations and a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities between external agencies, governments and NGOs.
It is interesting that the question of teachers and their roles in education reform, effective teacher training, and quality improvement is a recurring theme in the five evaluations under review. Independent analysts have written extensively on the need to place teachers more directly at the centre of efforts to reform the education sector and improve the quality of basic education in many countries.

Villega-Reimers and Reimers (1996) argue persuasively that the estimated 60 million teachers delivering education services in developing countries were largely absent from the planning and development of education reforms. In fact, they argue that education reforms often consider teachers mainly as impediments to effective change and quality improvement. Similarly, Avalos (2000) argues that the decline in the status and general conditions of the teaching profession during the 1990s made the professionalization of teacher training more difficult. Teacher training institutions are characterized as inherently conservative and resistant to change, so are unlikely to react positively to efforts to improve the professional status of teachers.
5.0 Partnership

5.1 Partnership for Basic Education: Intents, Policies and Strategies

This section deals with the questions:

- To what extent and in what ways has the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the intents, policies and strategies of external support to basic education?
- How have modalities of partnership in basic education evolved over time?
- What have been the common areas, and the differences in the approaches, evolving strategies and experiences of the various partners?

5.1.1 The Evolving Concept of Partnership

One of the questions this issues implies is: how has the model of partnership in basic education evolved since Jomtien? This needs to be answered before considering how it, in turn, may have influenced intents policies and strategies in external support to basic education.

Box 11: Commentary: Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review Team Commentary: Is Partnership the Main Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In developing this section it became clear to the review</td>
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<tr>
<td>team members that much of the material presented in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sections 3.0 and 4.0 can be seen as dealing with issues of</td>
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<tr>
<td>partnership. If “progress is process” as Samoff has written</td>
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<tr>
<td>in discussing the issues underlying the Joint Evaluation of</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Support to Basic Education, perhaps a key</td>
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<tr>
<td>question concerns the amount of progress in the process</td>
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<tr>
<td>as it evolves, hopefully, towards a more fully realized global</td>
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<tr>
<td>partnership.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In synthesizing the results of the five key documents of the evaluation (the four country case studies and this report) the team can usefully focus, at least in part, on how processes have attempted to deal with the inherent asymmetries in the relationship between external agencies and partners in developing countries.

Specifically, the case studies and the document review can be brought together in light of the information that they provide on those factors that promote or impede a more fully realized partnership in the areas of:

- Continuity;
- Administrative capacity;
- Roles and participation;
- Relevance and adaptability to local context; and
- Modalities of external assistance and their effect on partnership.

Central to this examination will be an effort to examine whether more fully realized partnerships in basic education may also lead to greater results.

One component of partnership can be seen in discussions in Section 3.1 above, concerning the apparent common acceptance by external agencies and partner countries of the globally expressed definition of basic education and the EFA goals. This is tempered somewhat by the fact that national partners (UNESCO, 2002b) are often selective in which component they may place in a priority position for both external support and national effort (reflected to some degree in the importance that they may place on different priority EFA goals).

At the same time, the evolving concept and model of partnership in basic education has recently been associated by many external agencies with a declared intent to move from project approaches to larger programmes and, ultimately, to sector-wide approaches in education (and in the basic education sub-sector). The document review noted recommendations or policy commitments to move to a sector-wide approach in support to basic education in documents from the

Thus, there is a fairly well documented (although quite recent) intent on the part of many external agencies to move towards a sector-wide approach to providing external support to basic education. As King in King and Buchert (1999) argues, there is a link between the sector-wide approach and the language of partnership used by external agencies and national partners. The dialogue pre-supposes an interest on the part of national partners in taking more of an ownership role over the management of external resources, and a willingness on the part of external agencies to cooperate with such ownership.

If one accepts that the intent to move to sector-wide approaches (in different forms) represents one important element of the evolving concept of partnership in basic education, then the relevant question becomes: how does the newer form of external support influence policies and strategies over time?

As Section 3.2.2 presents in considerable detail, in action sector-wide approaches often deviate from the ideal model presented in conceptual papers and manuals. Some argue that the actual content of the sector-wide programmes of support changes little from previous practice. Examples of this include the fact that the practice of joint assessment and review missions for large World Bank projects receiving support from a group of bilateral agencies preceded the development of the sector-wide approach mode of providing external support.

The literature suggests that, to the extent that it is actually happening, the move to a sector-wide approach as a form of partnership in basic education may have two effects on the actual content of education programming:

- It has coincided with a stronger role in policy dialogue in basic education for the World Bank and a diminished role in policy dialogue for the UN agencies, (Mundy, 1999; Wilks and Lefrançois, 2002); and
- It has resulted in an intensive dialogue which includes more ministries and non-educationalists on the government side and the larger funding agencies on the other side, and a consequent diminishing of dialogue with other key stakeholders (Buchert, 2002).

It could also be argued that one aspect of the evolving concept of partnership in Basic Education has been a re-commitment at Dakar and in the two years following, to a more significant effort by both external agencies and partner countries to meet the EFA goals for 2015. As The EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2002 (UNESCO, 2002b) points out (see Table 4, above), 2002 saw significant commitments of new resources for basic education by a large group of countries and organizations. Not the least of these was the development of the World Bank-led Fast-Track Initiative, despite the subsequent problems noted in securing sufficient long-term financing.
5.2 Partnership for Basic Education: Practices

This section deals with the following question:

- To what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the practice of external support to basic education?

The evolving model of partnership in basic education can be said to have three major components:

- Basic agreement on the definition of basic education as articulated in Jomtien and re-specified at Dakar;
- Intention by the external agencies to deepen their commitment to partnership, often, but not exclusively, through use of sector-wide approaches or similar arrangements for support of basic education (allied to a desire and willingness on the part of national partners to use sector-wide programmes); and
- Re-commitment by external agencies and national partners to increased effort (and increased allocation of resources to basic education) especially in the period since Dakar.

The evidence as to how this model of partnership is actually being applied in practice is actually quite mixed.

Ridell (2002), Hasegawa (2002), Feldberg and Tornes (2002) and Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) have all shown that, despite the common intent to move towards sector-wide approaches, there are important differences in the level of commitment to this approach to partnership across agencies. The World Bank, the regional Development Banks and Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden form a more committed group than, others like Canada who maintain a more pragmatic approach. Similarly, some countries providing external assistance to basic education such as Japan and France have shown strong preference for a project approach to funding external support (Epskamp, 2000).

In a given partner country, if there are serious differences among external agencies regarding the form of support, there will also be a serious problem of how to effectively link external support in the form of discrete projects, to larger, sector-wide programmes funded by a coalition of external agencies.

Finally, even where there is common agreement among the external agencies supporting basic education and between those agencies and the national government, there remain important limitations in the way that the SWAp mode seems to be able to promote national ownership and true partnership. Schmidt (2001) has pointed out that the World Bank, despite its promotion of the sector-wide approach, treats Sector Investment Programs as essentially large projects with detailed blueprints of proposed actions (line-item budgets for example) and frequently appears inflexible while maintaining its own priorities in negotiations with other external agencies and with governments.

Collins and Higgins (2000) have also reported on the link between conditionalities and the move to SWAps and have noted that ex-ante conditionalities are increasingly viewed as both ineffective in supporting policy change and counter-productive in supporting the increased national ownership that is expected to accompany transitions to SWAps. A post-conditionality model suggested at the Dublin Castle Seminar (2000) would eliminate ex-ante conditionalities in favour
of a more intensive dialogue before and during the programmes being supported, and an integrated process of programme assessment.

In summary, if the sector-wide approach or a similar framework for external support to basic education is to result in a deeper partnership between external agencies and national governments, there will need to be considerable work done on each specific SWAp to improve the partnership elements of the form. This will require a greater level of commitment on the part of external agencies to ceding larger elements of ownership to the partner countries themselves.

One might even question whether a commitment to making other forms of external support more flexible and more integrated to partner country policies, management systems and operations would not have more effect on partnership and in a shorter time frame, than a complex effort to plan and implement a sector-wide approach to basic education.

5.3 Partnership for Basic Education: Results

This section deals with the following question:

- From the evidence available, to what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the results and consequences of external support to basic education?

This issue did not receive very much direct attention in the literature on basic education reviewed by the team. Authors did deal with such issues as:

- The volume of external support to basic education on a global basis and whether it meets the commitments made by agencies at Jomtien and Dakar (Watkins, 2000; UNESCO, 2002b);
- The extent to which new modalities in the delivery of external assistance were being implemented and influencing programme content (see Section 3.2, above); and
- The different activities in basic education which are supported by external assistance and which seem to promote improvements in access and quality (see Table 8, above).

On balance, though, it did not seem that many authors view evolving practices in the provision of external assistance as a new form of partnership. Most, for example Schmidt (2001), Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999), and Epskamp (2000) saw many of the common factors that inhibit partnership (such as the use of contradicting and overly detailed budgeting requirements) persisting within the “new” forms of programming. Some, for example Buchert (2002), have noted that the rhetoric on mutual respect, transparency and trust, cannot hide the underlying differences and structural relationships between aid providers and aid recipients.

Overall, the body of evidence in the documents reviewed by the team would support the conclusion that many of the longer term problems in establishing true national ownership and real partnership between national governments and external agencies have persisted from Jomtien to Dakar, and on to the present. There appears to be a commitment to close the gap between rhetoric and reality, and the sector-wide approach may be a good mechanism for doing so. On the other hand, the mechanism itself is not yet seen as strongly promoting a deeper partnership.
6.0 Conclusions

In many ways, it seems problematic to draw evaluation conclusions based on the evidence gathered during a review of documents, even where many of those documents are themselves evaluations or evaluative surveys and assessments. The authors of the body of documents gathered and reviewed for this project do not always agree on how the evidence presented should be interpreted. At the same time, many of the apparent conclusions one can draw should wait for confirmation or rebuttal from the country case studies before being termed conclusive (perhaps in the synthesis report).

This section is used, therefore, to provide an analytical overview of some of the key findings of the document review and to pose them in the form of tentative conclusions. These conclusions may subsequently be reinforced or contradicted by the results of other elements of the evaluation.

6.1 External Support to Basic Education

One of the enduring controversies over basic education seems to be how to define its core vision, its content, and its priority uses. The controversy also seems to imply that each element of the “definition” of basic education must be shared by all key stakeholders at all times if cooperation is to be effective.

The documents reviewed make it clear that there is a fairly well accepted definition of:

- **The core vision of basic education** – meeting basic learning needs of every person: child, youth and adult;

- **The main functional components of basic education** – early childhood care and development, primary schooling, and alternative education are to provide the same content as primary schooling, early secondary education, and education for out-of-school youth and adults, including literacy programmes, but also life skills training; and

- **The core priorities** – which both drive basic education and which basic education may in turn address, including basic education as a human right, as an element in poverty eradication, as a core area in which gender equality can be sought and expressed, as a means for overcoming other social inequalities, and as a means to address the problems associated with HIV/AIDS.

In fact, the consistency of this general definition of basic education can be seen as one of the achievements arising from Jomtien.

Of equal importance, the documents reviewed illustrate that the establishment and re-commitment to EFA goals at Jomtien and Dakar (and the creation of a forum for consultation and follow-up) really has resulted in a worldwide movement focused on education for all. This movement encompasses bilateral and multilateral agencies, international NGOs, partner governments and, to some extent, civil society.

If all external agencies, partner governments and key stakeholders were then to act in ways consistent with these three elements of the definition of basic education at all times in policy-making and programming, then the implementation of a global model of basic education could be reasonably said to be complete.
However, as the documents point out, moving from a generally accepted definition of basic education to an operational model that is consistently acted on has proved much more difficult. For example:

- External support agencies have not been able to achieve consistency in how they code expenditures to basic education and report them to either UNESCO or the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. As a result, it remains extremely difficult to monitor the financial component of external resource flows in support of basic education in developing countries. This problem has been noted by virtually every report that has tried to develop a systematic overview of external support to basic education, up to and including the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b);

- Partner countries, while accepting the general definition of basic education, have emphasized their need to address problems across their entire education system or to concentrate on a specific sub-set of basic education, normally formal, in-school primary education; and

- The relationship between the EFA goals and the MDGs in education remains problematic since there is a tendency for some agencies and governments to overlook the fact that the MDGs do not replace the goals of Education for All. An example of how this might happen is found in the EFA Fast-Track Initiative with its emphasis on the MDGs.

The problem seems to be in ensuring that agencies and countries are encouraged to be flexible and set priorities in how they will cooperate to advance basic education, without surrendering to a seemingly continuous tendency for basic education, and the EFA goals to be reduced in operational terms to a much more limited framework of formal primary schooling (and, to some extent, gender parity in primary and secondary school). This tendency should not be exaggerated since many agencies and governments are active in other areas of basic education. Nonetheless, the documents seem to illustrate the need to continuously reinforce the central tenet that basic education is more than formal primary schooling.

As the literature illustrates, basic education (and education in general) has been one of the key fields in which external agencies have sought to shift aid modalities from project to programme forms, especially SWAps, as a matter of both policy and practice (although the project form has proven remarkably resilient during this shift).

The stated motivations for this shift have included reducing the administrative burden on partner countries, making policy dialogue more explicit and, especially, promoting partner country ownership, thereby deepening partnership. In each of these areas, it can be said that, up to this point in time, success is only partial. In the first place, for many external agencies in many countries, the project form has proven advantages and shows every sign of persisting. Also, as the literature points out, the movement to SWAps and other programmatic approaches has to be judged in terms of the continuous development of longer term relationships – as a process of deepening partnership over time, rather than a blueprint for a one-time solution to problems of cooperation.

Finally, the documents reviewed call into question whether, in the short term at least, the SWAp mode of cooperation has resulted in a reduced (some suggesting even an increased) administrative burden.
There have been at least two major systematic attempts to quantify the flow of external support to basic education in the past three years: one as a preparatory document to Dakar and one for the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO, 2002b). Both make it very clear that the expectation of a substantial rise in the financial component of external support to basic education following Jomtien has not been met. To date, the best efforts to measure external flows to basic education in the period of 1990 to 2002 have concluded either that it remained stable or rose very slightly or, in the latest document, that it may have declined slightly. Whichever is chosen as definitive, what is clear is that Jomtien and Dakar have not yet resulted in the significant increases in the flow of external financial resources (at a global level) to basic education that could reasonably be expected given the commitments made there.

It is difficult to be definitive about why this problem persists, but some of the documents reviewed point to continuing concerns among external agencies regarding the absorptive capacities of many partner countries. They also point to the persistence of historical patterns of development cooperation and the reluctance of external support agencies to provide funding in countries where they do not have a tradition or experience of support, and over reasonably long time frames.

Whatever the reasons for the limitations in the response, there remains a substantial gap between the needed and the expected increases in both national resources and external support devoted to basic education, if even the single goal of UPE is to be achieved.

This problem seems especially intractable when viewed from the perspective of the World Bank-led EFA Fast-Track Initiative. FTI continues to encounter problems of limitations in financial commitments from supporting governments, especially in securing long-term commitments of funds.

It seems that the international community is faced with a major challenge in the area of recognizing and securing the needed long-term commitment of external resources to meet the single commitment that no country should fail to meet – the EFA goals – due to lack of resources. There is clearly an associated challenge in ensuring that the needed resources can be absorbed effectively and, therefore, produce accelerated progress towards the EFA goals. These two challenges are inter-linked in that each seems to have the direct result of making the other more intractable.

There is considerable discussion in the literature reviewed on the different roles of the external agencies (bilateral and multilateral) involved in supporting basic education. Much of this discussion centres on the question of how roles may be changing in the shift to greater use of programme forms of external support, including SWAps. As noted repeatedly in the literature, this movement is seen by observers as being accompanied by the rise in both the policy influence and technical assistance role of the World Bank.

There is also considerable discussion in the documents reviewed of how UN agencies, including UNESCO as the lead agency in education, may have fared in terms of profile and roles during this shift. This is an issue for further investigation in the country case studies, but there seems to be no de facto reason why an increased role for the World Bank should lead to a diminished role (or, rather, roles) for UN agencies. There should be continuing space for advocacy, policy dialogue, and technical assistance in basic education for each UN agency with a mandate in the area. The question to be assessed in the country studies concerns how these agencies have continued in their roles and interacted with the large bilateral and multilateral funding agencies during a period of movement towards programme funding and SWAps.
6.2 Externally Supported Basic Education

The tendency for basic education to be reduced in practical and operational terms to formal, primary schooling is noted consistently in the literature reviewed. The factors promoting this tendency include:

- A desire to maximize the impact of national and external resources by concentrating their use in a relatively easily defined domain of action;
- The scale of the challenge in primary education facing many partner countries;
- A belief that expenditures in primary education may be more demonstrably effective than in other areas of basic education;
- Experience on the part of external support agencies in direct support to activity areas in primary education, such as school infrastructure, supplies, curriculum development and teacher training (doing what you know how to do); and
- The apparent priority of formal primary and secondary schooling rising from the MDGs in education.

This is not to deny that external agencies and national governments alike have invested considerable resources and effort in other areas of basic education, including adult literacy and non-formal education. Rather, it points to a continuing need to remain vigilant in protecting the legitimacy, in both policy and programme terms, of action in areas of basic education outside formal primary schooling.

The problem of integrating external assistance to basic education into the policies, programmes and institutional structures of partner countries continues despite such efforts as the movement to sector-wide approaches in a number of countries. Clearly, external agencies remain committed to disparate and uncoordinated operational requirements in budgeting, procurement, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Surprisingly, these problems seem to persist whether external assistance is in project or programme form. Indeed, there seems to be a convincing argument that project forms of assistance are not only appropriate in many organizational contexts, but that they can be developed, designed, implemented and evaluated in a way that integrates them as closely into national systems as is the case for programme support. The key factor seems not to be the form of external assistance (project or program) but the nature of the relationship it supports.

The documents reviewed reinforce the thesis that basic education can be a strong element in an effort to combat poverty. They do not challenge the idea that a poverty-reduction strategy or programme must include initiatives in basic education. They do question, however, the relevance of the content of many basic education programmes and systems in terms of combating poverty. The documents reviewed present the challenge to educators (and policy makers) of determining how to demonstrate that what is learned in basic education will contribute to poverty reduction at both the individual and the social level. It is a question of urgent importance to many parents and children in developing countries, and is inextricably bound up with issues of quality in basic education.

The documents reviewed do point to significant gains in access and participation in basic education at a global level and in many countries during the decade of the 1990s. The same documents, however, point to the looming gap between current performance in improving access and participation and the goals set for 2015. In other words, the world is not currently on track to achieve the EFA goals according to many of the documents reviewed. More financial resources,
better monitoring and feedback, better dissemination and use of best practices and other ideas in education, and a host of other changes seem to be required if the rate of progress is to be accelerated (regardless of whether the goals can or cannot in fact be met).

At the same time, evaluations reviewed by the team do point to positive results in specific outcome areas, such as infrastructure development, teacher training, student and parental participation, curriculum development, and monitoring and evaluation. They demonstrate that, despite persistent problems, these activities have contributed to improvements in the institutional capacity of partners and the learning environment for many students.

On the other hand, the same evaluations point out that there are enduring problems in how externally assisted basic education may be improved from a quality perspective. Efforts at measuring learning outcomes often seem to show limited gains from quality improvement activities. Clearly, efforts to expand basic education systems have had more success than efforts to improve quality. Central to this problem seems to be the issue of teacher training, teacher compensation and the professional and social status of teachers.

The documents point out that there is an inherent limitation to reform efforts if they do not include teachers as meaningful participants in programme development. They further emphasize the paradox of efforts to improve the quality of education while reducing teacher salaries and attacking their professional and social status.

Finally, the documents reviewed make an attempt to assess the impact of basic education from the perspective of girls and women. They have noted significant efforts in programmatic terms to move towards gender parity and promote gender equity through such initiatives as the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative. The evaluations reviewed have reported gains in access and participation for girls, mirroring those for the populations as a whole. On the other hand, the same studies note that continued population growth in countries where education performance is lowest means that the absolute number of girls without access to basic education has risen since 1990.

In fact, the World Bank (2003) states plainly, “the goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 will not be met. The gender gap for low income countries is, on average, 11 percentage points at the primary level, and 19 percentage points at the secondary level” (p. 2). The same document goes on to say that the goal of gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015 can be achieved, but only with country-specific attention and support.

At the same time, it is important to point out that the documents reviewed indicate that the discourse on gender equality and the role of basic education has improved and now focuses on the empowerment of girls and women, rather than preparing girls for reproductive roles.

Nonetheless, the pace of change in basic education systems seems to be much too slow to suggest that attainment of gender parity can be achieved in the time frames envisaged.

10 It is important to distinguish between gender equality, gender equity and gender parity when discussing the impact of basic education for girls and women. It is possible to see gender equality as a goal stated at a societal level, which is achieved when the socially determined meanings of gender will not disadvantage either boys or girls, men or women. Gender equity is a positive normative value to be sought in relations between boys and girls and men and women. Gender parity is one mathematical indicator used to assess whether a given system is moving towards or away from one of greater gender equity.
6.3 Partnership in Basic Education

One of the key questions of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education concerns the evolving concept and practice of partnership in development cooperation for basic education, and how that may in turn affect both practices and results in basic education.

Most of the documents reviewed do not directly address concepts and practices in partnerships as such. Rather, they focus on problems or achievements in external support to basic education. These, in turn, illustrate the depth and quality of the partnerships under review.

One of the most important elements of partnership can be found in a common vision of the goals to be achieved and the priorities shared by external agencies and partner countries (including different key stakeholders in partner countries). As already mentioned, there is a basic core vision of the goals of basic education and its component activities shared by most partner countries and external agencies. As also noted, however, there are continuing pressures that seem to narrow the range of agreed activities and sub-sectors, so that the partnership between external agencies and partner countries may focus on formal primary schooling to the detriment of other elements of basic education.

The literature seems to locate much of the evolution of concepts and practices of partnership in the shift from project to programme modalities, and especially to SWAps. There is an implied assumption in much of the discourse that this shift is both inevitable and, inevitably desirable. At the same time, many of the documents reviewed have pointed out that moving from projects to SWAps has not necessarily meant an improvement in the depth and quality of partnerships. Indeed, unless very carefully planned and implemented, these shifts can sometimes weaken partnerships.

The most readily apparent area where SWAps may cause problems in partnership, as presented in the documents reviewed, is in narrowing national participation. SWAps may have the effect of opening participation in dialogue within a specific government to include non-traditional actors such as the ministries of finance, planning, and external cooperation. At the same time, they may deepen the quality of dialogue between external agencies and the core group within a given national government. The documents point out, however, that this process may exclude both those external agencies outside the tent of the SWAp and large swaths of civil society in the partner country. The resultant partnership may have a strong technical base and commitment within the bureaucracy, but be fragile from a wider social perspective.

Nonetheless, the documents reviewed, including policy documents, academic research papers, evaluations, press releases, and presentations by NGOs do provide an indication that external agencies and their partners recognize the essential role that improved and deepened partnership must play if external support to basic education is to be effective.

Whether external agencies and their partners can overcome the asymmetries implied in the aid-provider/aid-recipient relationship by changing both concepts and practices in external assistance is an important question for the other elements of the evaluation.
7.0 Implications

As noted in the Evaluation Steering Committee meeting in March 2003, a document review report does not produce conclusions capable of supporting recommendations for action. The Synthesis Report of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education is the appropriate place for presenting any recommendations for changes in policies and programmes supported by the results of the evaluation as a whole.

This section attempts to present just a few implications of the material presented throughout the document review report. The most important of these seem to be in the form of challenges identified in the documents reviewed. The challenges identified include:

- Ensuring that basic education encompasses the full range of activities and goals envisioned at Jomtien and Dakar, while recognizing the need for partner countries and external agencies to concentrate resources where they will be most effective;

- Improving the information base on external and domestic resources flows to basic education at a global and national level, so that the international community can at least monitor trends and assess the level of commitment of different actors;

- Ensuring sufficient external and domestic resources are available (and dependable) over the longer term, to achieve the needed acceleration in EFA goal achievement;

- Overcoming problems in absorptive capacity;

- Using research and other tools, to identify effective measures to improve quality in basic education and making the necessary organizational changes and investments to take those measures to scale;

- Ensuring that the content of basic education is not only of high quality but relevant to the needs of children, youth and adults, especially in terms of combating poverty; and

- Improving the depth and quality of partnership at a global and national level, through direct efforts to reduce the asymmetry in the relationship between those who provide external resources and those who use them. This implies not only continued commitment to evolving concepts and practices in partnership, but knowledge of those factors that contribute to more fully realized partnerships in areas such as continuity, administrative capacity, participation, and relevance to local context.

These challenges do not stand alone as products of the document review process. They resonate in the experience of the country case study team and can be re-visited in more detail in both the country case study reports and the synthesis report, where the team tries to present suggested viable responses.
ANNEXES

Annex 1: Bibliography


Bray, M (1986). If UPE is the answer, What is the question? A comment on weaknesses in the rationale for Universal Primary Education in less developed countries. *International Journal of Education Development 6*, 3, pp. 147-158.


UNESCO. (2000b). *Summary of draft national reports: The context of EFA in sub-Saharan Africa.* UNESCO.


### Annex 2: Policies and Practices of External Agencies on Sector-wide Approaches

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<tr>
<th>Country/Agency</th>
<th>Policies/Practices on SWAps and General Budget Support</th>
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<td><strong>Bilateral Agencies</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
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**SWAp policy and practice**: “AusAID’s overall approach to aid delivery is set out in AusAID’s Strategic Plan Improving Effectiveness in a Changing Environment. The key thrust of this plan is to improve the Australian aid program’s policy and programmatic impact and effectiveness through strengthened analytical and strategic effort. A recent Senior Management Seminar on new approaches to aid delivery affirmed AusAID’s key priority is to ensure a focus on development outcomes. The form of aid delivery flows from an overall strategic framework for the country or sector. However, there is a recognition that activity designs need to be less prescriptive, more flexible and focussed on the achievement of key outcomes and outputs” (Riddell, 2002).

**General budget support policy and practice**: n/a

| **Belgium** | 

**SWAp policy and practice**: Government Policy supports more programme-based approaches and interventions, but the transition has been slow and difficult and the project approach still dominates. “An interdepartmental working group has been working on guidelines and principles to be applied in case of budget- or sector-support in developing countries. As a result the Minister of Budget has agreed to proposed criteria, but has also insisted on maintaining in each case well-defined (Belgian) control mechanisms to be able to account for the aid provided (Letter of November 2001). Joint agency mechanisms in such an endeavour are accepted and recommended” (Riddell, 2002).

**General budget support policy and practice**: n/a

| **Canada** | 

**SWAp policy and practice**: “CIDA has a long tradition of project-based development cooperation. Its formal involvement in SWAps is just beginning and has involved a mix of modalities to date” (Riddell, 2002).

“Although it does not yet have a formal policy on SWAps, its definition of a SWAp includes a long-term joint financial commitment to both recurrent and capital investments; ownership by stakeholders; building on a common approach to financing and procedures; and capacity building of recipient government. CIDA is strengthening its support of program-based approaches. Since November 2002, it is contributing to ten SWAps, including education SWAps in Burkina Faso, Mali, Uganda and Bangladesh. The SWAp in Burkina Faso involves participation in joint funding. Another ten SWAps are under consideration. Project support is likely to continue to account for a large part of CIDA’s support for the short- to medium-term” (Nasegawa, 2002).

**General budget support policy and practice**: CIDA has provided general budget support to the education sector in Uganda and is considering support for poverty reduction in Tanzania. Conditions for providing budget support include recipient government commitment to reform and the integration of adequate capacity-building activities.

| **Denmark** | 

**SWAp policy and practice**: “Denmark introduced Sector Programme Support (SPS) [comparable to a SWAp] as the main modality of bilateral development assistance to the developing countries selected for more comprehensive co-operation (max. 20) in 1994. … The main principles in SPS are the ownership of the recipient country, long term and broad support to a national sector policy framework, integration of the support in local institutions, co-ordination, continuous dialogue, and flexibility” (Riddell, 2002).
Country/Agency | Policies/Practices on SWAps and General Budget Support
---|---
**Germany**
- **SWAp policy and practice**: The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) spelled out its future strategy on program-based approaches. Co-financing of SWAps in the form of basket funding and co-financing of PRSCs are the preferred forms of German programmatic aid. Germany is participating in more than ten SWAps, mostly in Africa. The major characteristics of a SWAp include coherence and consistency with sector policy and budgets; emphasis on recipient country government, participation of all stakeholders in planning and implementation; and strengthened coordination.
- **General budget support policy and practice**: The criteria for providing general budget support include past aid performance, macroeconomic conditions, and adequate financial management capacity.

**France**
- **SWAp policy and practice**: France considers that project approaches are more efficient than programme aid. Its assistance to SWAps is primarily through project assistance. France considers that financial transparency and ownership of the respective country are prerequisites of SWAps, and therefore capacity building must be fully undertaken where such prerequisites are not met. France does not participate in common funds.
- **General budget support policy and practice**: France does not provide direct budget support, indicating that it was believed that the project approach was more efficient.

**Finland**
- **SWAp policy and practice**: Finland has no policy statements on SWAps, however it views SWAps positively. Finland participates in the formulation and implementation of sector programmes and poverty reduction strategies in cases where the policies expressed in them converge with the Finnish goals set for its development policy and provided that the partner country is considered to possess adequate capacity and is committed to good governance. Assistance to SWAps mainly supports health and education programmes in cases where direct sectoral or general budgetary support is not possible. Where projects are in line with the country's set priorities, those responsible for project administration will try, as far as possible, to build on and further develop the partner country's own administrative structures. Finland does not participate in common funds.

**France**
- **SWAp policy and practice**: France does not participate in common funds.
- **General budget support policy and practice**: France considers that there are many cases where projects are more efficient than programme aid. It believes that the project approach was more efficient.

**Germany**
- **SWAp policy and practice**: In November 2001, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) spelled out its future strategy on program-based approaches. Co-financing of SWAps in the form of basket funding or co-financing of PRSCs are preferred forms of German programmatic aid. Germany is participating in more than ten SWAps, mostly in Africa. The major characteristics of a SWAp include coherence and consistency with sector policy and budgets; emphasis on recipient country government, participation of all stakeholders in planning and implementation; and strengthened coordination.
- **General budget support policy and practice**: The criteria for providing general budget support include past aid performance, macroeconomic conditions, and adequate financial management capacity.
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<tr>
<th>Country/Agency</th>
<th>Policies/Practices on SWAps and General Budget Support</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General budget support policy and practice:</strong> “Germany is currently considering providing general budget support in two countries. It will provide this support if the following conditions are met: maximum development impact, strengthened ownership and sufficient monitoring capacity” (Nasegawa, 2002).</td>
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</table>
| **Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland/Ireland Aid** | **SWAp policy and practice:** “Ireland Aid SWAp policy is articulated in the Ireland Aid Guidelines, 2001, both in the context of specific sector policies and overall Ireland Aid policy” (Riddell, 2002).  
**General budget support policy and practice:** “General budget support to the Ministry of Finance is considered a separate aid modality to SWAps. To date this form of intervention has accounted for a relatively small share (approximately 7%) of the bilateral aid programme. Budget support can be provided to partner countries with good policy reform track records, acceptable budgeting, accounting and auditing, and good governance records (Riddell, 2002).” |
| **Japan** | **SWAp policy and practice:** “JICA, in principle, considers that SWAps and the PRSP process, fully owned by host countries, are important. The shift from project assistance to programme assistance and the application of common procedures for assistance, however, are being debated” (Riddell, 2002).  
**General budget support policy and practice:** n/a |
| **Netherlands** | **SWAp policy and practice:** “Netherlands considers involvement in SWAps for up to four sectors in each of the 22 priority countries in the Netherlands’s aid program, including SWAps in the education sector in Bolivia and Zambia” (Nasegawa, 2002).  
“Since 1998 Dutch policy has promoted SWAps as the organising principle for Dutch bilateral aid. Ideally, sector policies should be determined within the framework of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of the receiving government or a similar development plan.” (Riddell, 2002) The SWAp is defined as “a cooperation approach based in a long-term program, and aims to provide aid towards a sector policy framework prepared by the recipient country.” The major elements of a SWAp include commitment of the recipient country, a long-term perspective and cooperation, coordination and dialogue among agencies. The Netherlands participates in common funds for SWAps in four countries, including the education sector in Bolivia (Nasegawa, 2002).  
**General budget support policy and practice:** “The Netherlands has provided general budget support in four countries and has recently started support in a fifth country. Direct budget support will be provided based on the results of the policies of multilateral agencies and dialogue on policies with recipient countries; macroeconomic policies of the recipient countries; good governance/organizational and institutional capacities; and policies on social development and the social sector” (Nasegawa, 2002). |
| **Norway** | **SWAp policy and practice:** “In March 2002 the Norwegian Government presented Norway’s Action Plan towards 2015 for Combating Poverty in the South, which will be the overall guidelines for Norwegian development cooperation for reduction of poverty. The action plan confirms the focus on real national ownership of partner country’s plans and programmes as well as need for increase of coordination of external agency efforts, in order to reduce the administrative burden on partner countries. The action plan states that Norway will continue to scale down project assistance and to increase the portion of sector programme and budget support, based on the partner country’s own development and poverty strategy” (Riddell, 2002).  
“Although Norway does not have an official policy on SWAps, in 2001 it was supporting six SWAps in health and education, mostly in Africa. Its contribution through programme funding (including general budget support) is currently less than 1% of the total bilateral aid budget. It has provided support through common funds in three countries” (Nasegawa, 2002). |
General policies and practices on SWAPs and general budget support:

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<tr>
<th>Country/Agency</th>
<th>SWAP policy and practice</th>
<th>General budget support policy and practice</th>
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| Norway         | General budget support policy and practice: “Norway has provided general budget support in three countries. Although it has no formal set of official criteria, it modifies general budget support to incorporate sector policies and conditionalities. The assessment is made on the basis of a detailed review of the recipient country’s economic policies, fiscal management systems, and past performance. The assessment includes an evaluation of the country’s commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and good governance.” (Nasegawa, 2002). |接收支持者受至少七个国家（Nasegawa, 2002）.

General budget support policy and practice: “Norway has provided general budget support in three countries. Although it has no formal set of official criteria, it modifies general budget support to incorporate sector policies and conditionalities. The assessment is made on the basis of a detailed review of the recipient country’s economic policies, fiscal management systems, and past performance. The assessment includes an evaluation of the country’s commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and good governance.” (Nasegawa, 2002). |

| Sweden         | SWAP policy and practice: “The Swedish Government has reinforced its commitment to a sector-wide approach. It has instructed Sida to increase its efforts to participate in such processes, and to shift from project to programme support, whenever possible. The sector programme is seen as a joint programme of work with the recipient country, with equal status to the central and the sector programmes. It aims to improve the efficiency of aid and to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation. Sida has provided general budget support in ten countries. Conditions for providing general budget support include macroeconomic stability, commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and good governance.” (Riddell, 2002). | 接收支持者受至少七个国家（Riddell, 2002）.

General budget support policy and practice: “Norway has provided general budget support in three countries. Although it has no formal set of official criteria, it modifies general budget support to incorporate sector policies and conditionalities. The assessment is made on the basis of a detailed review of the recipient country’s economic policies, fiscal management systems, and past performance. The assessment includes an evaluation of the country’s commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and good governance.” (Nasegawa, 2002). |

| Switzerland    | SWAP policy and practice: “Switzerland’s development and cooperation policy provides a conducive framework for participation in the development of sector-wide approaches. SDC maintains a strong involvement in SWAP approaches, seen as a key component of its development cooperation policy. Swiss budget support is provided in 22 countries, including nine for education and health sectors. Conditions for providing budget support include macroeconomic stability, commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and good governance.” (Riddell, 2002). | 接收支持者受至少七个国家（Riddell, 2002）.

General budget support policy and practice: “Norway has provided general budget support in three countries. Although it has no formal set of official criteria, it modifies general budget support to incorporate sector policies and conditionalities. The assessment is made on the basis of a detailed review of the recipient country’s economic policies, fiscal management systems, and past performance. The assessment includes an evaluation of the country’s commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and good governance.” (Nasegawa, 2002). |

| United Kingdom | SWAP policy and practice: “The UK has a clear policy on SWAPs, which includes a commitment to development by the recipient country. Human rights and good governance are key considerations in selecting countries for SWAPs. The UK supports education and health sectors, with a particular focus on African countries. The conditions for providing budget support include macroeconomic stability, commitment to poverty reduction, and human rights.” (Nasegawa, 2002). | 接收支持者受至少七个国家（Nasegawa, 2002）.

General budget support policy and practice: “Norway has provided general budget support in three countries. Although it has no formal set of official criteria, it modifies general budget support to incorporate sector policies and conditionalities. The assessment is made on the basis of a detailed review of the recipient country’s economic policies, fiscal management systems, and past performance. The assessment includes an evaluation of the country’s commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and good governance.” (Nasegawa, 2002). |
Country/Agency | Policies/Practices on SWAps and General Budget Support
--- | ---
United States | **SWAp policy and practice:** “USAID views SWAps first and foremost as potentially useful frameworks for enhanced coordination between recipient governments, their partners, and other relevant stakeholders, thereby reducing transaction costs and ultimately improving aid effectiveness. Such a view allows for a mix of aid delivery mechanisms – tailored to individual country circumstances – in supporting any given SWAp. Agency contributions to SWAps can and should vary considerably based on their different strengths, legal and political constraints, and available assets, whether in the form of cash, kind, or technical knowledge. ... Sub-Saharan-based field offices are now being encouraged to make greater use of programme assistance where appropriate. Seed money is being made available to field offices to assess and identify new opportunities” (Riddell, 2002).

“USAID has participated in sector-wide programme support in about twenty countries, mainly the sectors of education, health and agriculture and mostly in African countries. It has supported common funds in three countries but through the mechanism of a separate account located in the US and using the non-project assistance (NPA) scheme” (Nasegawa, 2002).

**General budget support policy and practice:** “Currently the US does not provide general budget support” (Nasegawa, 2002).

Multilateral Agencies

Asian Development Bank | **SWAp policy and practice:** “The Asian Development Bank’s policy on sector support is outlined in a 1996 policy. It supports pure programme loans where a sector requires large-scale support and policy reform. It is examining the scope for sector development loans that are a hybrid of programme support, discrete investments and capacity building technical assistance” (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999).

**General budget support policy and practice:** n/a

UNFPA | **SWAp policy and practice:** “In its involvement in sector-wide approaches, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) seeks to ensure that population; reproductive health and gender concerns are fully addressed. In that respect, UNFPA collaborates with its partners to build national capacities in those areas. UNFPA has been, therefore, an active participant in SWAps. UNFPA views itself as a collaborating, rather than a funding partner, by offering technical expertise, experience and know-how, besides playing a pivotal advocacy role. UNFPA funds have not been pooled into common baskets. Instead, parallel funding mechanisms have been used, with the agreement of governments. However, UNFPA Representatives have recently authorized to transfer programme funds into a common account administered by a government agency or other UN agency. New programme guidelines are being formulated that will contain criteria for entering SWAps, as well as reporting and auditing requirements” (Riddell, 2002).

**General budget support policy and practice:** n/a

UNICEF | **SWAp policy and practice:** “The priority areas for UNICEF’s ongoing engagement with, and support to SWAps include: a) continued participation is SWAp consultations; b) provision of technical support for SWAps; c) assistance for the incorporation of cross-sectoral concerns such as nutrition, gender, participatory approaches, etc., and the promotion of linkages between sector strategies and broader frameworks such as poverty reduction strategies; d) advocacy for UNICEF organizational priorities; e) facilitation of participation of civil society; f) increasing collaboration with other UN agencies; g) further development of UNICEF staff capacity to contribute to SWAps; and h) continued review of experiences and documentation of innovations and good practices in the context of SWAps” (Riddell, 2002).
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<td>General budget support policy and practice: n/a</td>
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**UNICEF**

UNICEF has supported the implementation of SWAPS under the Sector-Wide Approach to Education (SWAE) framework. The activities include:

1. **Support to National Education Systems**: UNICEF has provided support to national education systems in a number of countries where SWAPS have been implemented. This support has included assistance in the development and implementation of SWAPS, including help in the design and implementation of national education sector plans. UNICEF has also provided technical assistance to countries in the development of SWAPS, including support for the development of sector-specific strategies and policies.

2. **Support to Sectoral Partnerships**: UNICEF has supported partnerships between national education authorities, other donor agencies, and civil society organizations to implement SWAPS. UNICEF has provided technical assistance to these partnerships, including support for the development of joint action plans and monitoring mechanisms.

3. **Support to Sectoral Reform**: UNICEF has supported efforts to reform education systems to make them more effective and accountable. This has included support for the development of new management structures and decision-making processes, as well as the introduction of new financing mechanisms.
### Annex 3: Document Review Grid

**Analyst:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Part One: Document Identification and Classification</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document ID Number:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned Priority Level:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
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<td>Book:</td>
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<td>Journal:</td>
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<td>Publication Date:</td>
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<td>Number of Pages:</td>
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<td>Sponsoring Agency(ies):</td>
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<td>Place of Publication:</td>
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<td>Area (Global, Regional, National):</td>
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<td>Confidentiality:</td>
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<td>Internet Site:</td>
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<td>Language: English</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Part Two: Document Type</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) <strong>Global level</strong> statement, declaration, or review of policies, strategies and intentions in basic education: __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) <strong>Multilateral agency, bilateral agency or international NGO</strong> statement of policies, strategies and intentions in basic education: __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Statement of policies, strategies and intentions in basic education representing the views of a <strong>particular developing country:</strong> __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Policy statement or research paper or operational review/evaluation dealing with <strong>modalities</strong> of support to basic education including sector-wide approaches, programme assistance and models of partnership: __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) <strong>Quantitative analysis</strong> of either external support to basic education at a global/regional level or results in basic education: __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Evaluation/research report/ conceptual piece on <strong>gender</strong> and basic education: __</td>
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<tr>
<td>7) <strong>HIV/AIDS</strong> and basic education: __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) <strong>Poverty</strong> and basic education: __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Review and/or assessment of external support to basic education (and its effectiveness) as published in peer reviewed <strong>academic journals:</strong> __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) <strong>Critical reviews</strong> of practices in external support and in basic education (normally non-governmental): __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Policies and practices in basic education in <strong>E-9 countries:</strong> __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Reviews/evaluations of <strong>changing practices</strong> in basic education at learner level: __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) <strong>National/Regional</strong> policies, strategies and evaluations: __ (indicate region).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Other: __ (please specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: More than one classification is possible. For example, a multi-year review of quantitative results in gender and basic education would be classified in categories 5 and 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part Four: Content</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Nature and evolution of external support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1 Intents, policies and strategies: What is the broad framework of external support in partner countries? How have the results and consequences of external support to basic education changed over time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 Practices: How have the practices of support to basic education changed over time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3 Results and consequences: What have been the results and consequences of external support to basic education in partner countries?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Basic education receiving external support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1 Intents, policies and strategies: Within the policy framework for basic education in partner countries, to what extent and in what ways has external support been integrated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2 Practices: At the operational level, how has external support been integrated?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each issue and sub-issue, briefly summarize the key findings, conclusions or lessons learned present in the document which are relevant to the issue. Do not force findings and conclusions where evidence does not support it. Do not give undue importance to support findings. Key information can be summarized as well. Do not focus findings and conclusions when evidence is not sufficient. A. Nature and evolution of external support. B. Basic education receiving external support.
B.3 Results and consequences: From the perspectives of those involved in basic education in Bolivia, what have been the results and consequences of external support to basic education?

C. Partnerships for basic education development

C.1 Intents, policies and strategies: To what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the intents, policies and strategies of external support to basic education?

C.2 Practices: To what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practice of partnership influenced the practices of external support to basic education?

C.3 Results and consequences: To what extent and in what ways have the evolving concept and practices of partnership influenced the results and consequences of external support to basic education?

Other Issues
Annex 4: Documents Selected for Review Grids, by Type of Document

1. *Global level* statement, declaration, or review of policies, strategies and intentions in basic education


2. *Multilateral agency, bilateral agency or international NGO* statement of policies, strategies and intentions in basic education


Canadian International Development Agency. (2002). *CIDA’S action plan on basic education.* Hull, Quebec, Canada: Canadian International Development Agency.


Mortensen, K. (1999). *Danida’s contributions to Education for All* (Response to request, on 26 August 1999, from ODI/DFID to supply information for the Assessment 2000 study of Funding Agency Contributions to Education for All).


NORAD’s support to the education sector with focus on primary, secondary and basic adult education: Basic principles. (1995).


3. **Policy statement or research paper or operational review/evaluation dealing with modalities of support to basic education including sector wide approaches, programme assistance and models of partnership**


### 4. Evaluation/research report/conceptual piece on gender and basic education


UNICEF. (2002). *Quality education for all: From a girl’s point of view.* New York: UNICEF.


5. **HIV/AIDS and basic education**


6. *Poverty and basic education*


7. **Review and/or assessment of external support to basic education (and its effectiveness) as published in peer reviewed academic journals**


Bray, M (1986). If UPE is the answer, What is the question? A comment on weaknesses in the rationale for Universal Primary Education in less developed countries. *International Journal of Education Development 6* , 3, pp. 147-158.


8. **Critical reviews of practices in external support and in basic education (normally non-governmental)**


9. Regional/national policies, strategies and evaluations


UNESCO. (2000). Summary of draft national reports: The context of EFA in sub-Saharan Africa. UNESCO.
Annex 5: Bibliography, by Author


Bray, M. (1986). If UPE is the answer, What is the question? A comment on weaknesses in the rationale for Universal Primary Education in less developed countries. *International Journal of Education Development* 6, 3, pp. 147-158.


Canadian International Development Agency. (2002). *CIDA’s action plan on basic education.* Hull, Quebec, Canada: Canadian International Development Agency.


*Education for All: A comprehensive strategy to operationalise the Dakar framework for action on Education for All (EFA)* (Preliminary draft). (2002, March).


EuropeAid Cooperation Office. (2001). *Staff working document: Report on the implementation of the European Commission’s external assistance* (Situation at 01/01/01). European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office.


The impact of training school committees, head teachers, and ward education coordinators on education development in Tanzania. Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania: Government of Tanzania/UNICEF.


International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO. (1996). *Development of indicators for educational planning in Eastern and Southern Africa* (Results of the work carried out by the national teams at an intensive sub-regional training course on Using indicators in planning basic education: Methodological aspects and technical tools.). Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO.


Mortensen, K. (1999). Danida’s contributions to Education for All (Response to request, on 26 August 1999, from ODI/DFID to supply information for the Assessment 2000 study of Funding Agency Contributions to Education for All).


NORAD’s support to the education sector with focus on primary, secondary and basic adult education: Basic principles. (1995).


Annex 6: Bibliography, by Title


Danida’s contributions to Education for All (Response to request, on 26 August 1999, from ODI/DFID to supply information for the Assessment 2000 study of Funding Agency Contributions to Education for All). Mortensen, K. (1999).


Development of indicators for educational planning in Eastern and Southern Africa (Results of the work carried out by the national teams at an intensive sub-regional training course on Using indicators in planning basic education: Methodological aspects and technical tools.). International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO. (1996). Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO.


If UPE is the answer, What is the question? A comment on weaknesses in the rationale for Universal Primary Education in less developed countries. Bray, M (1986). International Journal of Education Development 6, 3, pp. 147-158.


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Quality education for all: From a girl’s point of view. UNICEF. (2002). New York: UNICEF.


Staff working document: Report on the implementation of the European Commission’s external assistance (Situation at 01/01/01). EuropeAid Cooperation Office. (2001). European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office.


Summary of draft national reports: The context of EFA in sub-Saharan Africa. UNESCO. (2000). UNESCO.


The impact of training school committees, head teachers, and ward education coordinators on education development in Tanzania. Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania: Government of Tanzania/UNICEF.


The situation of Palestinian children and women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. UNICEF. (1997). Jerusalem: UNICEF.


Annex 7: Documents, by Agency

**African Development Bank**


**Asian Development Bank (ADB)**


**Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**


**Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Danida (Denmark)**


Mortensen, K. (1999). *Danida’s contributions to Education for All* (Response to request, on 26 August 1999, from ODI/DFID to supply information for the Assessment 2000 study of Funding Agency Contributions to Education for All).


**Department for International Development (U.K.)**


**European Commission (EC)**

EuropeAid Cooperation Office. (2001). *Staff working document: Report on the implementation of the European Commission’s external assistance* (Situation at 01/01/01). European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office.


**Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**


**Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (Germany)**


**Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**


**Department of Foreign Affairs (Ireland)**


**Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**


**Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs**


**Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)**


*NORAD’s support to the education sector with focus on primary, secondary and basic adult education: Basic principles.* (1995).


**Overseas Development Administration (ODA)**


**Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**


**Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)**


**United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**


International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO. (2000). Development of indicators for educational planning in Eastern and Southern Africa (Results of the work carried out by the national teams at an intensive sub-regional training course on Using indicators in planning basic education: Methodological aspects and technical tools.). Paris: UNESCO.


**United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**


The impact of training school committees, head teachers, and ward education coordinators on education development in Tanzania. Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania: Government of Tanzania/UNICEF.


UNICEF. (2002). *Quality education for all: From a girl’s point of view.* New York: UNICEF.

**United Nations (UN)**


**United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**


**World Bank**


