



Analysis:

Danish aid for education and civil society involvement in national education sector plans in Bolivia and Nepal

UDDANNELSES

N E T V Æ R K E T

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involvement in national education sector plans in
Bolivia and Nepal

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UDDANNELSES

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.0

The present analysis of civil society involvement in the national education plans from Bolivia and Nepal was conducted by the Danish Education Network (DEN), a network of 24 organisations working with education programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Members include larger development NGOs and smaller 'friendship NGO's' made up of volunteers, as well as, civil society organisations with other main areas of activity, but which are also involved in development projects in the South¹.

According to the Terms of Reference (ToRs) the overall objective of this study is as follows:

“Building capacity of the Education Network’s member organisations to improve their ability to support their own partners in participating and carrying out advocacy work vis-à-vis educational authorities in the South.”

This is a pilot study, and the countries involved have been selected mainly because they are among the few where Danish NGOs work with education and Danida is simultaneously implementing education sector programmes.

The background for this analysis was a report on Danish bilateral cooperation for education conducted by the Network in 2006, titled *“Analysis of Danish Development Aid for Education”* (available in Danish only). Chapter 5 refers to the international framework for involving civil society, namely the 2000 Dakar Declaration on “Education for All”

(EFA)², which underlines the essential role of civil society for the achievement of the EFA objectives: “Importantly, national plans should be drawn up, consulted, implemented and monitored with close involvement of civil society actors in the education sector. Pupils, teachers, parents and communities, as well as, other national and local organisations are those who will enact the national development plans and should be able to influence them.”³ To ensure the involvement of civil society, the analysis calls upon donors to insist on the necessity of these processes, while also supporting capacity-building among civil society organisations, as these organizations are not always sufficiently prepared to enter into a dialogue with the authorities regarding overall educational planning.

The specific objectives of this analysis are:

- The Education Network’s member organisations acquire greater knowledge of underlying reasons for barriers to genuine civil society involvement regarding **national education plans** in the South.
- The Education Network’s member organisations acquire greater knowledge of exemplary cases of genuine civil society involvement regarding **national education plans** in the South.
- The Education Network’s member organisations acquire greater knowledge of their own and their partners’ view of Danish NGOs and Danida’s role concerning the said involvement.

¹ The Danish Education Network (DEN), was established in the year 2000, and Danida has funded network activities since 2004. The network supports capacity building and information sharing, and has organised a number of courses/workshops. Working groups have tackled themes such as, design and management of education programmes, working with baseline studies, qualitative indicators, monitoring and evaluation. Other issues that have been a focus include gender equity, teacher education, informal education, mother tongue/bilingual education, literacy, global initiatives for education, Education for All and Fast Track Initiative (TFI). The network is presently moving towards producing written materials for the purpose of sharing experiences (articles, tools and guidelines). We have a website (in Danish) with a resource database and a monthly newsletter. Another objective is to initiate debates on education and development in a Danish context. Recently, for example, we published a critical study (in Danish), on Denmark’s aid to education. It was presented and discussed at a public meeting with the participation of the Danish Foreign Aid Minister, and has been used by member organisations in information / advocacy activities in Denmark.

² Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2000.

³ Analyse af den danske udviklingsbistand til uddannelse, Marianne Victor Hansen, Uddannelsesnetværket, 2006, s. 23.



The analysis carried out included information collected from two country reports from Bolivia and Nepal⁴. The reports were prepared by local consultants and based on interviews with civil society organisations in education (CSO-E), public education authorities at national and local levels, local counterparts to Danish NGOs, and international donors to education, mainly Danida. This synthesis report is based on the findings of the country reports and is complemented with inputs from interviews done in Denmark with Danish NGOs working with education in both Nepal and Bolivia, three Danida education experts (Technical Assistance Section) and other informants.

The search for examples of “genuine civil society involvement in national education sector plans” as requested in the ToRs has not been easy. The country reports from these two countries reveal that civil society involvement in national education plans has been limited. It has been difficult to identify clear-cut positive example of direct civil society influence on national education plans. Of course, positive experiences of civil society involvement and activities in the education sector have been identified, but their real impact and influence on national education plans is difficult to measure and prove.

Obviously, the national education sector plans are prepared under the influence of a range of factors, and civil society education experiences might exert an influence without being directly promoted or advocated. The process surrounding the drawing up of national education sector plans can only be explained by taking the specific political and educational context into consideration, and the results will often be the outcome of a particular mix of factors and different actors, where direct civil society influence may be difficult to identify.

It should be stressed that the focus of the analysis has been strictly on the national education sector plans. Therefore, the analysis may ignore the positive results and effects of the range of educational activities implemented by civil society in the education sector, as it has not been the objective of the analysis to identify positive experiences in general, but rather to look specifically for effect and influence on the national education sector plans.

Further, this synthesis report will not repeat the cases analysed in the country reports, but shall attempt instead to summarize the general findings and elements from the said reports, while complementing the analysis with the interviews carried out in Denmark and the material reviewed based on international experience.

⁴ The reports are available on the web-site of the Danish NGO Education network: www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk (both reports are available in English, and the Bolivia-report is also available in Spanish).

2. CHANGES IN DANISH AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN EDUCATION 2.0

During the last decade, international cooperation in education has undergone considerable changes. Until 10 years ago bilateral assistance to developing countries, was provided mainly in the form of projects and programmes with a limited scope and geographic coverage, in cooperation with local or national education authorities. With the introduction of the sector programme support approach the national sector ministries (ministries of education, MoE) were, with increasing frequency, selected as the implementing and funded counterparts. National policy and planning was the frame for cooperation, but until the new millennium, funding was often earmarked for specific components of a national sector plan and most often limited to investment costs. Recurrent costs, including teacher's salaries, were often explicitly ineligible for external funding.

In the aftermath of the Rome and Paris declarations,⁵ several of the main donors are funding the countries' overall general development plans/poverty reduction strategies, which include goals set for education in the form of general budget support (GBS). Donors are thus also involved indirectly in the education sector through GBS.

Likewise the intention of donors committed to the Paris Declaration, is to provide funding for education as unallocated (not earmarked) funding of a national sector plan for education. The purpose behind the intention to align the national policy and plan is to ensure national ownership and commitment, but also to avoid uncoordinated and widely dispersed cooperation with very high transaction costs. Cooperation provided as general budget support or as sector budget support can normally fund the overall budget, including both recurrent and investment costs, and cannot exclude teacher's salaries, etc.

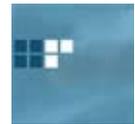
During the last decade, national education sector

plans have been formulated in the majority of countries receiving external funding for education.

National sector plans normally cover a period extending 10-15 years and are based on education reforms, or laws recently passed in the national parliaments. In several cases, national plans are prepared based on the Education for All frameworks, or as a plan that reflects the requirements for obtaining funds from the EFA funding-mechanism known as the Fast Track Initiative (FTI).⁶

In **Bolivia**, a national education sector strategy (EEB 2004) was drafted in 2004 in order to ensure that the comprehensive 1994 education reform would continue to be implemented. It has a sector-wide vision, is projected over a ten-year period and is geared toward consolidating changes in primary education and tackling the transformation of secondary education, as well as, technical education, higher education (university) and alternative education. Based on the strategy, a multiyear plan (POMA) was elaborated and further broken down into annual plans of operation (APOs). Jointly with Sweden and the Netherlands, Danida is financing part of the implementation of POMA, through a funding mechanism known as FASE, which channels the funds through the national finance ministry. A wide range of donors have set up several funding modalities, but the majority participate in the joint donor forum (mesa de educación) headed by the MoE and make efforts to coordinate and harmonize their cooperation. Joint annual reviews are carried out with the participation of invited donors and civil society representatives.

At present, the Constituent Assembly has set up a committee on education, which is debating the minister's proposal for a new Education Law. While the new law is being discussed, POMA is still being implemented, but the attention of civil society



⁵ OECD/DAC Paris declaration, 2005 – www.oecd.org/document

⁶ www.fasttrackinitiative.org



seems to focus more on the new law and less on the present national sector plan.

In Nepal, the five-year sector plan for 2004 -2009 titled “Education for All” is based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and is being funded by a spectrum of donors. Denmark, Finland, Norway, DfID and the World Bank have set up a funding modality for pooled funding through the Nepalese finance ministry. Approximately 80% of Danish funding is channelled through the joint funding modality, while 20% is reserved for earmarked funding, such as technical assistance. Biannual sector reviews are carried out, and other non-pooling donors and civil society representatives are invited to take part in these reviews.

In both countries, Danida is one of the major donors for education and is involved in multi-donor financing of the existing national sector plan, although there are some differences between the modalities and specific shape the funding takes in the two countries. In both cases, Danida is monitoring progress by using the national monitoring system and indicators. In Bolivia, some specific areas of attention are underlined in the agreement as indicators of special concern, such as Bilingual Intercultural Education (BIE). In both programmes, civil society involvement is mentioned briefly in the documents.

While bilateral cooperation for education is channelled through the state and the MoE, the main modality employed by minor Danish organisations working in Nepal and Bolivia is more traditional projects implemented in partnership with local NGOs and funded from the Danida budget item lines for Danish NGOs (frame and single projects). IBIS is working with funding from Danida through a frame agreement and have a programmatic approach together with partners such as indigenous organisations and education entities. In Bolivia, education projects are being carried out by Danish organisations IBIS, Axis (as provider of ped-

agogical input to a project managed by the Danish organisation DIB) and International Solidarity with Children, while the organisation of Danish Folk High Schools (FFD) and the Danish Teachers Union (DLF) are working in Nepal, as is MS (though not a member of the Danish Education Network).

In general, the projects are oriented towards a very poor or marginalized target group, often in close coordination, or even in formal agreement, with local education authorities. The projects differ from the public schools in their methodology, pedagogical approach and curriculum. None of the projects are simply there to fill gaps or finance the normal public education system, but are justified by their focus on a specific target group or in general support for the improvement of the quality of education. A concrete example is education in the mother tongue language and training of teachers in BIE.

In the case of the Danish Teachers Union, the projects have been financed under the Danida programme supporting education. The projects have been oriented towards strengthening the Nepalese umbrella organisation for teacher’s trade unions (TUN) and, most of all, towards capacity building in relation to social dialogue and negotiation with the MoE. The project was initiated because Danida assessed there was a need to strengthen the role of the teacher trade union as a dialogue partner and preferred to involve the Danish sister trade union instead of getting involved directly. At present, an application for further funding in the shape of an NGO grant has been accepted by Danida, so future cooperation between DLF and TUN will no longer be a direct part of the Danida education programme, it originally grew out of.

Currently none of the Danish organisations interviewed support national or regional education alliances, coalitions or networks in Bolivia or Nepal, though IBIS does support alliances in other countries.

3. CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

3.0

According to the ToRs, the purpose of this study is to analyse “civil society involvement regarding national education plans in the South”. It is well known that civil society involvement in education is not a homogenous phenomenon, but is composed of different organisations such as teacher trade unions, school boards, parent organisations, NGOs specialising in education, student movements, churches, community-based organisations, social movements with an interest in education, indigenous organisations, national coalitions, networks of education organisations.

The legitimacy and representativeness of the different parts of the CSO-E is generally up for debate and often questioned. It is quite clear that the roles of the different CSOs vary. While students, teachers and parent’s movements could be considered interest groups, professional NGOs and the church are often implementers of education projects. Some of the informants compare professional NGOs in education with private consultancy firms or education enterprises with their own economic interests. These informants question whether the activities undertaken by this kind of NGO are anything other than the privatisation of education and gap filling for the state.

The term “involvement” is not explicitly defined in the ToRs, but the aim is to analyse how civil society succeeds in getting involved and exercising an influence on national education plans and their implementation. Thus, the focus is on how the CSO-E advocates for their opinions and represents the poor, marginalized and other specific interest groups such as teachers, students/pupils, parents or indigenous peoples.

Both the term “civil society” and “involvement” have caused some problems in the country analysis of Nepal. The report underlines that, until recently, the state of Nepal has not accepted other implementing bodies within formal education and the number of education-focused NGOs is therefore quite limited. Due to the general political situation and history of Nepal, civil society is still incipient and weak, and there is a deep mistrust

between the state structure and CSOs. Involvement of CSO-E in the national sector plan is therefore minimal.

In both countries, the state formally accepts and recognizes overall responsibility for providing basic education to the population, but it is evident in both cases that the state is not yet able to fulfil its obligations.

It is frequently debated what the role of civil society should be in education, besides representing the interests of its constituencies and advocating for their interests. Implementing concrete education projects can fill a gap and ensuring education for people who would otherwise not be able to complete their schooling without special efforts through methodological and innovative approaches. Finally, innovative education initiatives can influence national education policy by setting a good example of alternative praxis.

While the role of interest groups seems to be quite clear and closely related to participation, influence and advocacy, the role of churches and education NGOs – for example - is a subject for discussion. Education projects or programmes implemented by NGOs are very different in nature. Some are innovative, with the objective of introducing new methods, reaching a new or excluded target group or complementing and improving the public education system, while others are so-called gap-fillers, satisfied with simply ensuring that education is somehow taken care of.

Several of the informants underline that involvement and influence by civil society organisations on the national education plan must be based on expertise, and that this expertise can only be obtained through a role as implementer. Thus, actually providing education or service-delivery within education goes hand-in-hand with advocacy and influence on the public education policy and system. The existence of qualified education NGOs capable of advocating for national education policy depends upon the existence of NGOs with specific experience in implementing education projects.





A parallel to the development of the Danish education system was mentioned in the interviews. Although education in Denmark is strictly a responsibility of the state, the public education system would never have evolved the way it did without inspiration from the widespread and very innovative experiments at private schools, folk high schools and educational schools for adults, etc.

On the other hand, it was also mentioned that continuing to provide service delivery might undermine the motivation of interest groups to demand quality education from the state, because it appears easier to apply for new projects from external donors. Projects have a tendency to be a closed circle with their own dynamics, in which those involved do not have an interest in mainstreaming the project and innovative methodology into the public education sector. It is like this, because it is more favourable and secure to maintain an independent structure and set-up, and not least to be better off with an external funding channel, from which funds are more easily accessible than would be the case in the public education system.

Ownership is part of the explanation for this tendency. Precisely because International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and local NGOs are often close to the project, very involved and committed, they tend to hesitate when it comes to running the risk of handing over a good project to other entities. Regarding INGOs, the commitment and dedication from the constituency in the North (Denmark) is often due to the close relationship with, and knowledge of, the project and target group. This is while confidence in the effectiveness of advocacy efforts tends to be low.

While states in the South, at least in the two case countries, increasingly take on responsibility for the education sector and have committed to reaching the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) goal on universal basic education in form of national education sector plans, it seems that the role and practice of CSO-E would change and focus more on influencing national

education policy and planning. National organisations and networks of CSO-E are being established, but the degree to which they are being involved in the design, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the national plans are very different.

Both in Bolivia and Nepal, national education coalitions and networks exist, but direct involvement in national sector plans seems to be limited to participation in the annual sector review, in which external donors invite CSO-E representatives to participate.

In Nepal, the reason for this is the limited involvement of CSO-E in education, while in Bolivia the main reason is said to be the focus on the coming law and current discussion of future developments within the education sector. In Nepal the weak democratic culture and structure excludes the CSO-E, while in Bolivia it is acknowledged that CSO-E is a dialogue partner and a critical watchdog of the government-led development in the education sector. However, in Bolivia the focus is less on the plan than on the overall education policy and law.

Besides the political role as a dialogue partner and watchdog on national education policy and planning, most education CSOs are rooted in the implementation of education projects and experiences. It is not within the scope of this study to provide a definitive description of the role of “implementer,” or provider of services in education as compared to their role as advocates for educational rights. However, it was observed that advocacy within education is often based on concrete experiences founded on practical involvement in the implementation of education projects.

The challenge posed by the need to reach children who are not enrolled in school is often mentioned as an area in which the state needs the assistance of all kinds of CSO-E, especially NGOs that have experience working with difficult-to-reach populations and areas. It is not just a matter of geographical coverage, but also of approach and methodology.

4. EXPERIENCES FROM NEPAL AND BOLIVIA REGARDING CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN NATIONAL EDUCATION PLANS – GOOD EXAMPLES AND BARRIERS

4.0

According to the studies from both Bolivia and Nepal, it is not easy to identify clear-cut positive or negative experiences. In both cases, involvement of civil society in education can be identified, but the specific influence, or even involvement, in the national sector plan is quite difficult to pin down. In both countries, CSO-E representatives are invited to participate as observers in the joint annual sector review carried out by external donors and headed by the MoE.

Danida representatives value this participation, although it was commented that the CSO-E, in the case of Nepal, might have some difficulties in following and influencing the debate in these intensive processes. On the other hand, the country studies have not found any evidence that the annual sector review is an important space in which civil society can exercise influence. Neither country seems to include civil society participation nor representation in the set-up for monitoring national sector plans between annual reviews.

4.1 Bolivia

In Bolivia's current political situation, the actual involvement of CSO-E is considered to be a best-case practice. After the change of government in early 2006, a Constituent Assembly has convened, which has been working over the past 14 months to draft a new Constitution for Bolivia. The Assembly is organized into commissions, and the Education Commission is analysing a bill (*anteproyecto de ley*) for a new education law intended replace the ambitious 1994 educational reform.

Regional meetings with civil society organisations have been held, and over 500 proposals from civil society organisations were handed to the Commission. This is a good example of how CSOs are able to take advantage of the opening of a political space to influence the proceedings and introduce

their own proposals. Notwithstanding, according to the report proposals from civil society generally focus more on the operational dimension and do not reflect the level of discussion of the overall educational policy⁷. There seems to be a need to strengthen capacity for drawing up proposals suited to what they are supposed to feed into.

The study concludes that Bolivian civil society has a solid practice and good experience with regards to advocacy in favour of laws and general principles for education, but has done little to follow up on the actual national education sector plan. There is a lack of awareness concerning the importance and opportunities to exert influence at that level.

The analysis of the situation concerning education in Bolivia reveals that knowledge of the national education sector plan is limited, both among civil society organisations and, even more remarkably, among educational authorities. This is largely due to the change of staff at the Ministry. It means that while a new law is being widely discussed, the ongoing implementation of the current sector plan and strategy is outside civil society's sphere of attention.

There is a general tendency to focus on policy debate and demand the inclusion of proposals from civil society, but when the budgeting and prioritising of resources is done, only few proposals seem to be taken further into the current national plan.

Civil society in Bolivia has relatively many possibilities and channels for influence through the Popular Participation Act, which stipulates the establishment of school boards at local, municipal and regional levels, and is complemented by the formal figure of education councils for the five largest indigenous groups. An obstacle for taking advantage of the structures established in order to exert influence is the rigid division of civil society into four blocks. While the fact is



⁷ Bolivia Study, p. 5.



that civil society everywhere includes actors with contradictory interests, in Bolivia the attitude and lack of willingness to negotiate and embark upon dialogue among different actors is considered to be a serious barrier for involvement.

One of the success stories of civil society involvement in Bolivia is the participation and influence of the indigenous peoples' organisations. During the last decade, indigenous organisations have succeeded in advocating for bilingual intercultural education, and they have managed to participate and exercise influence through the established structures. Their influence on the current proposal for a new law on education is evident, largely because the general political situation in Bolivia today favours indigenous peoples' rights. In several instances, the representatives of the indigenous peoples' organisations expressed satisfaction with their degree of involvement. The study underlines that support and cooperation from IBIS, to the general strengthening and capacity building of indigenous organisations is part of the explanation for their success concerning education.

The overall assessment of the decentralisation of education is positive and the school boards ensure a popular anchorage and involvement of parents and civil society. However, school boards are sometimes also the source of conflicts both between parents and teachers and between parents, mainly because the school boards bear responsibility for ensuring funds for the school.

In Bolivia, the law stipulates that part of the curriculum must be developed locally and reflect local character and knowledge. A local curriculum is an arena for very concrete influence and an occasion for reflection on children's educational needs and the importance of local knowledge. It is an area in which further

exchanges of experience and methodology could be useful, because many NGOs are quite experienced and for example IBIS will give priority to that in a new education programme.

Finally, the study from Bolivia points out that difficult economic living conditions seriously affect the poor population's opportunities to participate and influence policy both at the local, but even more at regional and national levels. Absence from their productive activities and subsequent lack of time and resources does not allow poor people to participate, a situation that is particularly acute in the case of women. In addition, women suffer from traditionally discriminatory practices on the part of men, which further limit their participation. Any effort to strengthen CSO-E involvement should take these basic conditions into consideration.

The national coalition in Bolivia, the Bolivian Education Forum (FEB), is not assessed thoroughly in the study, but from other sources of information⁸, the influence of the FEB in the design of the national education strategy and plan in 2003 is highlighted. However, that same analysis points out that the lack of an action plan implies a lack of planned activities and indicators regarding the success for advocacy and lobbying efforts.

4.2 Nepal

The EFA national action plan covers the period from 2001-2015. It was elaborated on in consultation with a range of stakeholders and CSO-E. The most important outcome was that the consultations resulted in the inclusion of several local issues. The process was organised in seven thematic groups corresponding to EFA goals and a national committee, all of which had CSO-E representation and a strong presence of education experts from universities etc. The committee has not continued to meet

⁸ *Latin America - Study on Civil Society Involvement in education policy dialogue and the EFA process (Draft version - English)*, UNESCO, July 2007, website: http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=54112&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

after the plan was finished and the country study assessed that CSO-E had been involved in its preparation, but not in monitoring and follow-up evaluation.

Specific areas or tasks have been assigned to NGOs that have been involved as implementers, but have also had the opportunity to exercise influence through their praxis and have done so in general terms. This was done by providing inclusive education and reaching the poor and vulnerable populations, such as marginalized ethnic groups.

A serious barrier for involvement of CSO-E in Nepal is lack of confidence and weak relations between the MoE and the CSOs. Due to ongoing conflicts in the country, the government of Nepal and the MoE are very nervous concerning the CSO-E, as they fear that these organizations have an anti-government political agenda. Mutual suspicion is an obstacle for the involvement of the CSO-E in education sector planning.

According to the country report, the involvement of CSO-E in education is mostly seen and experienced at the local level. Partnerships and assignment of NGOs and CSO-E is a common feature under the new structure of school management committees. Although a strong presence exists at local level, the report underlines that:

“Considering the CSO’s capacities, CSOs from district level in particular are very limited in their capacity to exercise influence in, and enter into, a policy dialogue regarding the national education plan. They are more involved in implementation, though at a small scale, with only limited scope and space”.⁹

It was confirmed by other informants that the link and mainstreaming of local experiences into the national sector plan and policy is seldom seen.

A network related to the decentralization and emerg-

⁹ *Nepal study*, p. 21.

ing local school management committees is considered to be the most vital element. This is because it is based on local experiences and claims that the decentralization of education is a means by which ownership and commitment can be asserted by local communities.

The existing network and the Nepalese chapter of the global campaign for education are involved in advocacy and have, for their objective, to influence the national sector plan. According to the country report, very loose organisation is one of the main weaknesses of the network, several of whose organisations have left or become inactive. Between annual campaigns, the network has no real importance and the contact and relation to the MoE is close to non-existent.

In general, several different networks in Nepal lack resources, capacity and leadership. There seems to be room for support in capacity building, but the country study does not specify these needs in greater detail.

4.3 General findings from both countries

In both countries the politicisation of, or even the close relations between, CSO-E, for example teachers unions and political parties, are mentioned as barriers for a more professional involvement of CSO-E.

The decentralization process generally enables the involvement of civil society in education and the concrete implementation of national sector plans.

The inclusion of specific regional or local elements in the curriculum motivates local civil society to get involved and exercise their influence on the local implementation of education.

Innovative education projects targeted at specific poor and marginalised populations are successful





and effective, but difficult to include in national sector plans. Even though there might be some mainstreaming taking place, it is difficult to argue this is a result of the projects being implemented.

There are obvious comparative advantages when involving and assigning CSO-E to education at local level. The local knowledge and expertise from CSO-E is a much-needed added value to education programmes.

None of the studies or partners of Danish organisations have found any relevant experiences with CSO-E monitoring and partaking in the control of the distribution and spending of resources, nor with budget tracking at local or national levels. A recent initiative in Bolivia meant to establish an education observatory was mentioned, but it is too early for it to be analysed. Concrete experiences should be found in other countries.

5. THE EXPERIENCES OF DANISH NGOS SUPPORTING INVOLVEMENT IN NATIONAL SECTOR PLANS

5.0

Of the 24 member organisations of the Danish Education Network, three are working in Bolivia (IBIS, Axis 'only with a specific component of a project managed by another Danish NGO' and International Solidarity with Children). Two others are in Nepal (The Danish Teachers Union (DLF), the Danish Folk High School Movement) and one has been there (CICED).¹⁰

Danish NGOs with a presence in the two countries are working with local counterparts and supporting their implementation of education projects. These projects are generally oriented towards a specific target group or introduce a new methodology. Some of them include elements of advocacy activities based on the project, whether it is to disseminate the methodology, or ensure economic sustainability by handing the project over to the state. None of the Danish NGOs are supporting counterparts involved mainly in advocacy within education, such as networks or national alliances. The DLF project is different in that it is oriented towards capacity building and strengthening the ability of the Nepalese umbrella organisation of teacher's unions (TUN) to engage in social dialogue. DLF is therefore not implementing education activities.

There is no doubt that the projects financed by Denmark are relevant and highly appreciated in recipient countries. That said, there seems to be little relation or even consideration for the projects as being part of the national education sector. Rather, they are perceived as being quite isolated and there is a surprising lack of involvement or knowledge about the national sector plans among Danish NGO officials interviewed in Copenhagen. The dominating focus of Danish NGOs is on the specific project, its results and effects upon the defined target group, and less on the project's relation to the partner's opportunity for influencing national sector plans. However, some examples of involvement and influence can be identified.

In Bolivia, Axis is in charge of a project component oriented towards introducing new game-playing methodologies, which have perspectives for exercising influence, though a strategy for doing so has not been considered. There are agreements with local and national education authorities, but no understanding has been reached as yet on "using" the results or handing over the project to public education.

A new Axis project in Bolivia is set to start in the near future and the role of Axis will contribute by providing a specific pedagogical element in a project on sexual education and HIV/AIDS. The project's objective is to influence the national education sector plan and, by good practice, show the opportunities and concrete ways in which sex education can be brought into basic education. The *raison d'être* for the project and the intentions of the Bolivian counterparts from the beginning are that national policy on sexual education and HIV/AIDS should be addressed. Contacts with the educational authorities have been established from the outset and there is an interest in their experiences. It is still too early to assess whether it will succeed in influencing the national education plan and/or the new education law, or replicate a project in public education. It is the first time the perspective of influencing the national education sector plan is considered and included from the beginning of a project.

In the department of Cusco in Peru, Axis for many years has supported an educational project implemented by a local counterpart. The idea and objective of the project is to design an education and curriculum for children living in the countryside. During the second phase of the project, contacts and agreement with the local (regional) government were established and the result was an agreement to the effect that the project will be taken over and the third phase implemented by the local government.

¹⁰ Axis, IBIS, and DLF were interviewed in Copenhagen. Their partner organisations were interviewed in their respective countries. CICED, a member of DEN (a branch of the Danish education institution and not a NGO) has been working in both countries and was also interviewed in Copenhagen, while International Solidarity with Children has not been interviewed. The Danish organisation MS is not a member of DEN, but works closely on education in Nepal, where MS officials were interviewed. The interviews focused on the two case countries, but were not limited to these only.





This seems to be a success story in terms of influencing educational policy at the local/regional level, as the regional government has included the pedagogical and methodological ideas in its local education policy. Of course, concrete implementation has yet to take place. The success is partly explained by the fact that central actors in the project had good and close relations with politicians in the local government involved in education. This seems to be a general phenomenon – also confirmed by the FFD – namely, that personal relations are a factor for success within advocacy and involvement.

The Danish NGO IBIS has been supporting the indigenous movement in Bolivia over the last 15 years. Support has been geared towards general organisational strengthening, but has also embraced specific projects on bilingual intercultural education (mainly teacher training). Since the 1994 education reform, BIE has been the official education policy in Bolivia and is addressed in the national education sector plan. However, implementation of the policy has been very slow and difficult, due in part to the lack of trained bilingual teachers.

Support from IBIS has addressed this, but in addition, general support for strengthening the indigenous movement in their overall capacity is highlighted in the country study as a contribution to ensuring that the indigenous movement has the strength to claim and demand BIE and ensure that it is implemented and included in the new education law. It is stressed that it is the long-term organisational capacity building efforts that have resulted in the movement being capable of setting the agenda and presenting proposals, more than specific education projects. However, the combination of interventions staged in order to strengthen the movement and ensure experiences upon which to base a future advocacy, seem to be positive.

IBIS is currently supporting teacher training in bilin-

gual intercultural education in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, under an agreement with the regional education authorities (SEDUCA). The project seems to show some very positive results, and might also have some effect on the new law and planning, but it is difficult to judge. IBIS states that support to education projects should only be provided when the perspective is wider than the specific provision of education services, and that advocacy elements should be considered from the beginning, but it is often a challenge to do so and to engage the partners in this way of working.

The Danish Folk High Schools Movement (FFD) is involved in an education project in Nepal, where the folk high school concept is part of a broader natural resource management project. FFD states that the project is in no way related to the national education policy. In other countries, FFD is working with projects where the idea is to hand the project over to local public authorities in order to ensure its economic and overall sustainability, and also as a way to influence the national education system. For FFD there is a dilemma in how it relates to the public education system. On the one hand, the independence of the folk high school is fundamental to ensure that the ideas of self-development and quality adult education are maintained, but on the other, FFD hopes for their projects to have a spillover effect and be replicated in the formal system. In Bangladesh, a project was taken over by the state, but introduced self-financing for the pupils. The result of this was that the poor are now excluded from the folk high school, an outcome which runs contrary to the original idea and target group. In India, a folk high school project included formal examinations, which led to problems for the more alternative content in the curriculum.

The project financed by DLF is aimed at strengthening the Nepalese umbrella organisation for teacher unions (TUN). The main objective is to “strengthen the organisation [...] in playing an active, constructive and

critical role as a social partner in the development of society [...] and that the organisation shall be involved in all decisions regarding conditions for teachers and the education sector.” Unlike the other projects and programmes financed by Danish NGOs, no education activities or services were implemented. Instead, support has been oriented towards strengthening the teacher organisation. The focus is on the role of the said organisation as the representative of the teachers. This also includes its influence on education policy, as reflected in the new TUN programme. Further, the teacher’s working conditions are closely related to the education policy and national sector plans.

It is interesting to note that DLF became involved through the Danida financed programme that influenced MoE-Nepal to consider civil society involvement and start a social dialogue with the teachers. Everyone agreed on the need for capacity building at TUN so it could fulfil this role. The social dialogue process has not been easy and it is difficult to measure if, and how, TUN has influenced the national sector plan. However, there is evidence that the education policy is on their agenda and the dialogue with the MoE embraces the education policy and quality of education. It might be seen as a result of donor influence on the MoE that civil society has been included.

In general, the country studies and interviews conducted in Copenhagen have demonstrated there are many interesting Danish funded activities, including examples from countries other than the two case countries, with positive experiences of influence on local and regional education plans and practices. However, the focus for this study has explicitly been on the national education sector plans. In the majority of projects and programmes included in the study, not much influence or direct involvement in the national education sector plans have been identified as a result of Danish-funded NGO projects, nor have the view of involvement and influence on national education sector plans been discussed in project design and planning.

There is no reason to question that support for the democratisation of the education system through experiences with school boards, participation, mother tongue education and curriculum development, etc. are the areas where projects have paved the way or indirectly influenced the national sector plans. However, this influence and the effects are not explicitly analysed in projects, evaluations or other documents.

It is of course possible that Danish funded projects now, or in the past, may have influenced existing national education sector plans in a manner that has not been identified or considered. It is difficult to measure the effect of such projects on national policy in isolation from the range of other factors that exercise a political influence. It is recommended that Danish NGOs begin to include these kinds of considerations in their monitoring and evaluation work, which should be systematised and followed by a discussion of the lessons learned. It will require that a new methodology is applied for this kind of analysis and that concepts such as involvement, influence, and so on be explicitly defined.



6.0 6. DANIDA'S EFFORTS AND ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY IN EDUCATION



Danida has a clear policy¹¹ of consulting and including civil society organisations in all phases of educational planning. In both Nepal and Bolivia, this seems to be taken seriously and civil society is somehow included in the programme for supporting education. According to the interviewed Danida staff, Danida consistently insists, among the donors, that civil society organisations should be involved and be invited to participate in annual sector reviews.

In Nepal, Danida's initiative to convince the MoE regarding the need to strengthen the teacher's trade union movement and include DLF in the work is a showcase of how different actors can interact and take advantage of each other's proper role and strengths.

At present, some doubts are being raised among Danida staff on how to support civil society involvement in Nepal when the modality is one of channeling support to and through the MoE. Some individuals expressed that support to civil society also should be included and channelled through general support and thus be administered by the MoE. The Nepalese organisations interviewed expressed serious concerns concerning this possibility, as they fear the government and MoE will politicise support and only accept funding if it goes to CSOs that favour the government. This would undermine intentions to strengthen the role of civil society as a critical watchdog.

In Bolivia, Danida is supporting civil society in education in several ways. The sector programme has a component outside the funding of the national plan through FASE, which is mainly oriented towards providing support to the four ethnic councils for education (CEPOs). The support was evaluated in 2005 and the results were assessed to be very pos-

itive. Danida also exerted pressure and supported the holding of the Education Congress in 2006, where all relevant stakeholders participated and discussed the needs and policy for education. At present, Danida is supporting the establishment of the Education Observatory/Watch (*Observatorio de Educación*), which is a network of CSO-E united to follow up on the progress made in Bolivia within Education for All, the national plan, for example with plans for tracking the budget, among other things.

In both countries, Danida's support for the decentralisation of education is also being stressed as a tool to ensure improved civil society involvement and influence at the local level through school management committees and school boards.

In conclusion, Danida considers civil society organisations in education a very important stakeholder, but it has been difficult to identify concrete examples of the Danida pressure among donors to support the involvement of civil society organisations.

¹¹ Both in *Danida 2001: Strategy for support to civil society including support through Danish NGOs and in i.e. new guidelines for budget support (including sector budget support) Danida 2007. Guidelines for the provision of budget support, p. 7, 17, 36.*

7. THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ACTORS AND SPACES FOR POLICY DIALOGUE AND INFLUENCE

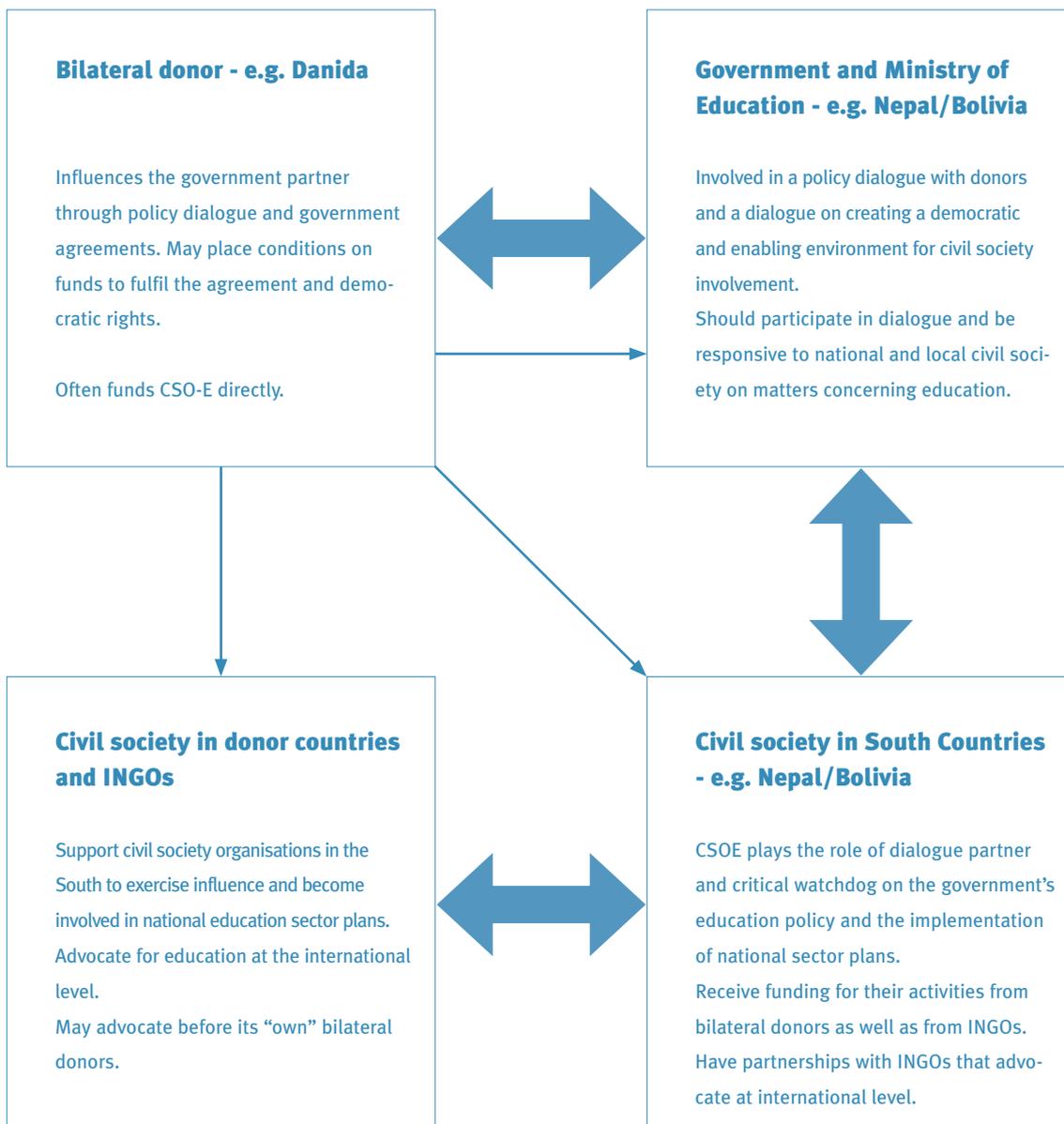
7.0

The overall objective of this study is to analyse how civil society can become involved and influence the national education sector plans and how international cooperation can support a democratic decision-making structure and its practices based on a plan intended to ensure not only ownership by the state, but by society as a whole.

To illustrate the spaces of influence in the interplay

between government, donors and civil society actors the following model has been drawn up.

The wide arrows illustrate how dialogue and influence takes place, while the narrow ones illustrate the funding channels. The dialogue and space for influence between the government and the bilateral donor is obvious. The cooperation in the creation of the national education sector plans is managed by





objectives and monitored closely, although donors may base their monitoring on official mechanisms. The degree of influence exerted by donors may differ significantly from country to country, but donors do have influence and can, at the end of the day, condition their funding to the fulfilment of certain objectives both within the specific education strategy, or to the general democratic conditions and relations between civil society and government. Danida has a strategy for support to civil society, which states that through bilateral cooperation it strives to support an enabling environment for civil society.

In the two countries studied, Danida has complemented its support to the MoE with direct support to the CSO-E, or in the case of Nepal through DLF.

National civil society attempts, to different degrees, to exercise influence on national policy and government planning. The existence of policy spaces for a dialogue vary from country to country.

International civil society organisations support the national CSO-E in their advocacy work and influence efforts made regarding national education sector plans. Through partnerships, a close policy and strategy dialogue is taking place. Further, some of the international NGOs, among them IBIS, strive to exercise influence at the international level concerning global cooperation on education, i.e. through international campaigns Global Campaign for Education (GCE) or pressure on the European Commission and FTI.

The most remarkable finding of this study is that none of the Danish NGOs (except for DLF) seem to advocate or even play the role as messenger for their local counterparts to Danida as one of the main donors. There is in general little contact and communication between the Danish NGOs working

on education in Bolivia and Nepal and Danida. The apparent lack of communication carries an implicit danger that Danida may lose the possibility of acquiring more in-depth knowledge on civil society and access to information and dialogue as an alternative to government/MoE relations.

There is a common understanding between Danida and the Danish education NGOs based on the EFA-framework and Danida's strategy for civil society, that the role of civil society is important and should be strengthened. The strengthening of civil society could take place through international CSOs and be financed directly by the bilateral donor, but it is not within the scope of this study to assess which of the models for Danish support to civil society is optimal. This issue is currently the subject of an interesting international debate.¹²

As mentioned, there is not much political dialogue or even contact between the Danish education programmes and the Danish NGOs working with education. Even the amount of knowledge regarding the approach taken by each institution seems to be limited. The opportunity for Danish NGOs and their partners to access international donors, and through them the public education authorities, is not being properly exploited. Danida does not seem to take advantage of the presence and experience of Danish NGOs in the education sector or use them as an entrance to local CSO-E.

¹² Scan Team Report, Lars Engberg-Pedersen.

8. FINDINGS IN OTHER STUDIES ON CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

8.0

While the conclusions of this study are based on only two countries and very few projects and programmes financed solely by Denmark, some conclusions reached by other studies should be mentioned in order to broaden the scope of this inquiry.

During 2007 UNESCO carried out an extensive study on “civil society involvement in education policy dialogue and the EFA Process.”¹³ Its point of departure lies in the establishment of national coalitions, international and regional networks and the GCE. The study also looked into the existence of policy dialogue spaces and mechanisms for civil society involvement in EFA efforts, to assess whether civil society input is taken into account and reflected on in policies, plans and reports. Regional surveys and national studies in each region have been carried out and a synthesis report is forthcoming. Unfortunately, the country study from Nepal has not been published and Bolivia has only been included in the regional part of the analysis.

The studies reveal numerous good examples of successful advocacy and involvement of civil society in national education sector plans. The studies indicate that the creation of national coalitions and campaigns have paved the way and ensured that the CSO-E in many countries play an active and constructive role as watchdogs and dialogue partners to the government and MoE, thus contributing to the fulfilment of EFA goals.

The study of the Pacific region does not present any concrete examples of civil society contribution in national plans, policies or reports, while in Southeast Asia and Latin America examples are given on CS influence on for example the inclusion of marginalised groups, the banning of child labour, efforts to ensure access for difficult-to-reach children and curriculum development, etc. Most of all, experiences with the establishment of the Education Watch (Observatorio de Educación) organisations are mentioned as positive

experiences useful to monitor and report on the progress in the education sector, the national education sector plans and any advances made towards reaching EFA goals. This also serves as the foundation for the drawing up of proposals and demands.

Some (very summarised) general conclusions relevant to this study are worth mentioning, as they can serve to inspire Danish organisation’s work with education:

- Need to develop methods and indicators for advocacy – there is a widespread tendency to evaluate only the activities, rather than their effect on policies and plans.
- Need for CSOs to demonstrate intellectual credibility in their positions.
- Need for accurate updated statistics and knowledge on education to ensure an effective advocacy effort.
- Enormous need among CSO-E to develop capacity for formulating, agreeing upon and advocating for proposals based on knowledge and credible research.
- Good practices related to CSO participation in policy formulation, review and implementation must be established.
- It is important to set benchmarks for achieving goals for education and ensuring periodic monitoring and review.
- Need for mechanisms by which to establish consensus based on broad coalitions, in order to unite such different and often opposed organisations, and to avoid the dominating influence of party politics.
- Need for more external funding to ensure the independence of the CSO-E and above all to ensure the national coalition and networks and the funds for their policy analysis and research.

In March 2007 the Commonwealth Education Fund

¹³ *Civil Society Involvement in Policy Dialogue and EFA Processes (draft regional reports)*, UNESCO, July 2007. Web site: http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=54112&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.



(CEF) published two comprehensive reports on advocacy in education.¹⁴ One of these is a rather general study on “sustaining civil society advocacy in education”, while the other discusses national coalitions under the title: “Driving the bus: the journey of national education coalitions”. Both reports contain numerous cases of successful advocacy work undertaken by local or national civil society. Some of the criteria for success that were identified are quite similar to the ones mentioned earlier, such as the positive effects of research and well-documented policy proposals, well-planned campaigns and a capacity for analysis enabling civil society to time itself correctly and take advantage of policy spaces whenever they occur.

The studies contain interesting findings and reveal the present challenges faced by civil society to continue to improve their influence in the education sector. One observation is that the newly established national coalitions have a strong donor presence and dominance and a tendency to be very formally structured, although the best-functioning coalitions are those with less donor interference and a rather informal structure.

Regarding the role of civil society, it is an interesting finding from the 16 country studies and 529 interviews contained therein that whilst government respondents view the role of civil society as focussed on service delivery, the donors, INGOs, NGOs and CSOs perceive the role of civil society as threefold:

- To improve the quality of education services for those not reached by the government;
- To participate in the policy process; and
- To act as a watchdog: budget tracking, checking on the government, community voice and whistleblowing.

Only one of 31 government representatives interviewed pointed to the watchdog function and only two to policy participation, while all others stressed the

need for CSO-E in providing education services, especially in remote areas and to marginalised groups or those with special needs, which have not been encompassed by the public education system. Education is seen by many government representatives as a shared responsibility between CSO-E and the state, but is seen as a strictly state responsibility by other actors, such as the CSO-E and the donors. Naturally, this leads to some conflicts in the relationship and interaction between governments and CSO-E, especially when expressed through a lack of political will to open up spaces for civil society influence and involvement. The conclusion here must be that donors have a role to play both in explaining and putting pressure on governments if involvement and dialogue with CSO-E, as set forth in the Dakar Declaration, is to be ensured. If this is not done, the tendency among governments is to let CSO-E assume responsibility for the difficult to reach and marginalised populations.

Regarding advocacy, the study concludes that advocacy is often donor driven and does not grow out of the CSO themselves. The majority of CSOs are unable to establish the linkage between grassroots reality and transform it into policy agendas. The challenge identified is similar to the one found in this pilot study, namely how to ensure a linkage between micro-level projects and the macro-policy level.

Another report titled “Paying the price – why rich countries must now invest in a war on poverty,” published by Oxfam International, has highlighted the watchdog role NGOs can play in monitoring budget spending on education in Malawi. A group of NGOs began monitoring how the education ministry was spending its budget allocation over a three-year period, and simply proceeded to verify whether schools received the materials, textbooks and chalk promised in the budget. It then reported all findings to parliament and the media. The effect has been improved accountability and transparency, and less corruption.

¹⁴ <http://www.commonwealtheducationfund.org/>

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.0

The studies from Bolivia and Nepal have uncovered an important general influence and role of civil society in education, rather than identified specific concrete cases in which civil society succeeded in influencing the national education plan or its implementation. However, they did find themes and approaches that have been included in national planning as a result of influence, advocacy efforts or experiences carried out by civil society, and also effected by other factors. Some cases of involvement and success in exerting influence have been assessed as being successful, because of taking advantage of a unique moment or situation, which cannot be generalised. No concrete cases have been identified as examples of *genuine civil society involvement* as a result of the planned and strategic intervention and involvement by civil society. Nonetheless, several general findings and conclusions on civil society can be drawn from the country studies and are listed in this synthesis report.

The barriers to civil society involvement can also only be explained through a number of factors and reasons, among which the capacity of civil society is only one element. The general political context and democratic tradition of involving and including civil society in policy formulation and planning is the single most influential factor. Analysing civil society involvement and influence in one sector – in this case education – is so closely intertwined with the political scene and democratic traditions and structures in the country, that it can only be understood in conjunction with an analysis of this context.

Both the Nepal case and the Bolivian case are genuine examples of that. The very young and weak democracy in Nepal implies that channels and opportunities for civil society to exert influence are so limited that the examples of successful influence on the national education plan have been impossible to find. In Bolivia, the most obvious experience of positive impact on educational policy is seen at this very point in time, when the

political situation in the country opens new spaces to the influence of civil society, through the convoked and established Constituent Assembly, in which an Education Commission has been and is working on a new educational reform. Although influence here is easy to identify, it is yet too early to assess the results of civil society influence on the coming law - and even more important, but quite unpredictable, is how this new law will be implemented.

In both countries there seems to be a tendency that civil society strives at influencing the overall policy level, i.e. the new education law in Bolivia and also make complaints at the local level regarding into the delivery of education services. The national education sector plan is the plan for implementing overall education policy, but less attention is paid to its elaboration, monitoring and evaluation, although important political decisions and economic priorities are taken in relation to the plan. In Bolivia, civil society actors were heavily involved in the policy formulation of the strategy, but at the moment the plan should have been elaborated, hard decisions were made to prioritise the limited resources and the strategy was left as strictly a vision, without sufficient economic foundation.

From the two case countries, it can be concluded that the Danish organisations (with DLF as an exceptional instance) are supporting or implementing education projects, all of which are oriented towards a relevant target group of poor or marginalised people and have an innovative methodological character that deviates from the general education tradition in the country. The majority of these projects are carried out – together with local civil society partners – under some kind of agreement with local education authorities. Although most projects and programmes have a scope of renewing or changing practice within education, none have a clear strategy of influencing the educational policy and practice over the longer term.¹⁵

¹⁵ A minor project, supported by Axis in Bolivia is an exception, because the project on education in HIV/AIDS is oriented towards providing experiences for how to include HIV/AIDS in the education and ensure that the education plan will include HIV/AIDS at the national level.





Both interviews with the Danish NGOs, as well as, the ongoing professional dialogue with the local consultants hired to carry out the local analysis, have revealed that the question of influence and advocacy concerning the national sector plan is not an everyday question. A majority of those interviewed expressed that this was a new experience, or at least that they seldom reflect upon their project's influence on, or contribution to, the national education policy level. In most cases the project is measured solely in terms of its effect upon the defined and limited target group and geographic area. This seems also to be the case for the majority of partners: their concern is limited to the scope of the project and not very much towards the wider impact, spillover effect or influence the project may have on national or even local education planning.

According to the Danida representatives interviewed in Copenhagen, as well as, in Bolivia and Nepal, their practice reflects the Danish policy of ensuring and conditioning cooperation with the government on the inclusion and involvement of civil society. However, it has been difficult to find concrete stories and a clear picture of how much really is done to ensure civil society involvement in the national education plan. Once the plan is decided upon, the relationship between governments seem to focus more on financial, technical and educational questions, rather than on how civil society is involved in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, in both countries Danish supported decentralisation process does contribute to the involvement of civil society. In Bolivia, the specific component for support to the indigenous peoples education councils in the education sector programme in Bolivia, and the new initiative to support an education watch (*observatorio*) do contribute to ensure the involvement of civil society organisations in education policy and planning.

Danida's strategy for support to civil society stipulate that an analysis of, and strategy for the civil

society should be made in each programme-country. This has not been done in any of the two case countries. Thus, there seems to be room for improvement in Danida's efforts to contribute to fostering an enabling environment for civil society as a whole and the involvement of CSO-E in the education sector more specifically, and to systematising and developing indicators for the efforts to ensure civil society involvement.

Finally, the conclusion was reached that the role and involvement of civil society in the national education plans is not very much discussed - not at Danida, and even less so among Danish NGOs and their partners. Several informants indicated they were satisfied with the interview and expressed that it was a positive experience to be asked to reflect on the education policy level, given that the daily project or programme management tends to focus on the more operational issues. The single projects carried out by Danish NGOs and their partners seem not to be frequently monitored from the perspective of their effect and influence on the national education policy level.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.0

The focus of this study has been on civil society involvement in the national education sector plans, with the objective of identifying recommendations for how to improve and support qualified and relevant involvement. Obviously, several actors have a role to play, but the main target groups for this study are Danish NGOs working with education and involved in the Danish Network for Education. The following recommendations are deduced from the analysis and are oriented towards Danish NGOs working with education. This study will not assess whether the recommendations should or could be followed up by the Network or by the individual organisations. All the mentioned activities stand to gain from Network initiatives that focus on the exchange of experiences and development of capacity in a said area, such as strategy, analysis, etc.

It must be stressed that this study has been a pilot experience and the countries are not necessarily representative of all the countries in which there is Danish cooperation in education. It would be interesting to encompass other countries with different experiences on civil society involvement in the national education sector plan; especially countries where national alliances have succeeded in becoming involved in direct monitoring and budget tracking etc., with regards to the national education plans.

In general, it is important – and must be taken for granted – that the initiatives recommended to Danish NGOs should be carried out together with, in close dialogue and partnership, or at least upon a thorough sharing of knowledge, with local partners.

Recommendations to Danish NGOs working with education:

1. Danish NGOs supporting education through partners in the South should carry out a thorough analysis of the political landscape and their partner's relation to national political parties, in order to avoid being involved in political power games without achieving any real impact on the education policy.
2. When Danish NGOs consider supporting partners and educational projects in the South, it should be carefully analysed - together with the partner - how the project relates to the country's overall national education plan.
3. Danish NGOs should include considerations and strategies on how the project/programme being supported is working or could work to influence the overall national education policy. This might often include funding for alliances, networking, research, advocacy, campaigns, etc.
4. Danish NGOs should – together with their local partners – continue to strive to gain the formal approval of the projects financed by local education authorities. However, they should also attempt to broaden and take advantage of the dialogue and relationship with local authorities to advocate in favour of changes and exercise influence on the national education policy and practice over the long term.
5. Danish NGOs should systematically exchange experiences on how to strengthen their partners as regards advocating and influencing the national education policy and plans.
6. Danish NGOs should dedicate more attention to the national education policy and plans in order not to continue being gap fillers in areas that should and could be financed and tackled by national authorities.
7. Danish NGOs should give priority to establish good and permanent contact and dialogue with





Danida in countries where Danish bilateral assistance includes education programmes or sector budget support. A close dialogue with Danida, as one of the major donors in the education sector, could constitute a space by which to gain access and exert influence and advocacy on behalf of and based on the interests of partners and target groups.

8. Danish NGOs should inform and support their partners and contacts in national networks on the annual sector review and help them to ensure and prepare their participation and influence.
9. Danish NGOs should always attempt to promote the establishment of relations between their local partner and the existing networks/alliances for education in the country to discuss their education initiatives, work together and ensure information is shared in relation to the overall education policy.
10. Danish NGOs should consider the relevance and need for funding national networks/alliances. In some countries, the education alliances have sufficient donors; in others, more donors are needed. Danish NGOs should strive to align their support with their partners' policy and structure, and when supporting partners with other donors, embark upon a dialogue to harmonize all procedures and structures with other donors in order to minimize transaction costs.
11. Further analysis and studies would be relevant on how northern NGOs can advocate for, contribute to and support the improvement of civil society involvement in national education sector plans. This could include several issues, such as the role of school boards, teachers' involvement, general consultation, conflict management and budget tracking.

It is recommended to Danida (including headquarters, embassy staff and programme advisors) that:

1. Danish representations in programme countries should carry out an analysis of civil society and use that analysis as a solid background for strategies on how to support civil society as stipulated in Danida's strategy for support to civil society. This includes how to support a generally enabling environment for civil society involvement.
2. In their relation and dialogue with national authorities (government and MoE), Danida and Danish bilateral assistance to education should (according to Danida guidelines for budget support) work systematically in favour of the involvement and participation of civil society in the design and monitoring of national education plans by setting up indicators for such involvement and monitoring them closely.
3. In the policy dialogue with the government and MoE, Danida should argue for the establishment of a permanent forum for popular participation and influence within the education sector. The concrete forms, i.e. school boards, indigenous people's education councils, teacher trade unions negotiation forums, local school committees, etc., will obviously depend upon the local context.
4. The staff at the embassy, or in programmes working with education, should establish permanent dialogue with national civil society in order to have direct contact to obtain possible "second opinions", as well as, to ensure that the implementation of programme/national education plans are consulted and controlled by relevant civil society organisations and structures.

5. Danida should ensure and insist on the participation and consultation of civil society in the annual sector reviews and other monitoring forums. The best way of ensuring involvement of civil society should be sought in each country.
6. The general trend towards decentralization should be implemented in close dialogue with civil society organisations, including teacher's trade unions, in order to ensure that opponents who hold effective power on the ground do not block the reforms.

Although on the margin of the target group for this analysis, the following is recommended to southern CSOs working with education:

1. Civil society organisations implementing projects in the education sector should consider what role they play in relation to the state's overall responsibility for education, to avoid finding themselves in the role of gap-filler.
2. While preparing education projects and programmes, CSOs relation to national sector plans should be considered. When there is an advocacy perspective in the project/programme it becomes necessary to analyse how to work toward exercising influence on policy and plans.
3. When working with northern NGOs, consider how they can add value and contribute to the relationship with education authorities, carry out advocacy in education at global and national levels, exert influence or provide access to donors for the national education sector plan.
4. The annual sector review should be well prepared in order to ensure influence and positive outcomes.



11.0 11. ANNEXES



11.1 Interviews

IBIS:

Jette Luna, Education advisor for IBIS South America
Sanne Muller, Education specialist at IBIS Copenhagen

Danish Teachers Union – DLF

Tore Asmussen, desk officer Copenhagen

Danish Folk high school association – DFH

Torleif Jonasson

Axis

Niels Boe
Christian Korsgård

CICED:

Johnny Baltzersen
Marcus Balslev

Education advisors at Danida Technical advisory services TAS

Kristian Edinger,
Knud Mortensen
Steen Sonne Andersen

Danish Network of Education:

Eva Iversen, coordinator

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Danida 2007: Guidelines for the provision of budget support.

Danida 2007: Guidelines for programme management.

Danida 2007: *Civil society policy study* by Lars Engberg Pedersen.

Danida 2004: *Evaluation – joint government – donor evaluation of basic and primary education programme II.*

Danida 2000: Strategy for Danish support to civil society in developing countries - including cooperation with Danish NGOs.

Embajadas de Suecia y Holanda, 2005: *Informe de evaluacion de los consejos educativos de los pueblos originarios (CEPOS).*

HNConsultants 2007: *Policy study on civil society issues in Danish bilateral development assistance*, by Lars Engberg-Pedersen.

Oxfam International 2005: *Paying the price – why rich countries must now invest in a war on poverty* by Caroline Bastable and Catherine Robinson.

Skadkjaer Consult 2007: *The Paris Agenda and its consequences for civil society in Kenya*, commissioned by a group of Swedish development organisations.

Scanteam 2007: *Support Models for CSOs at Country Level.*

http://www.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/C7C91205-3115-4BBB-A8BA-CoC83D1F41FB/o/Nordic_SynthesisReportFinal.pdf

Uddannelsesnetværket, 2005: *Analyse af den danske bistand til uddannelse* v. MVHConsult.

UNESCO 2007: Study on civil society involvement in education policy dialogue and the EFA process: Synthesis and country reports
Programme and project documents, reports, notes to Danida board, written and audiovisual information material on the programmes and projects covered by the study.

11.3 Terms of Reference – overall and local studies

Terms of Reference

Analysis:

Danish aid for education and civil society-involvement in the South

The Education Network is a network of 24 Danish organisations working with international cooperation for education in the developing world. Some of them are major Danish development organisations, some are minor, volunteer-based “friendship organisations”, and others are Danish organisations with other main purposes that are involved in development as a minor activities for their organisation. Since 2004, Danida has supported the Network through financing a secretariat and activities with the overall objective to improve the quality of Danish NGO support to education.

In 2006, the Education Network commissioned the study *“Analysis of Danish Development Aid for Education”* (written in Danish). The study included a chapter about the involvement of civil society within the education sector in the South, although it was not the chief focus of the analysis. The Education Network has now decided to initiate a pilot study and analysis to highlight this particular area, namely Danish aid for education and civil-society involvement in the South.

Overall objective

- Capacity building of the Education Network’s member organisations, to improve their ability to support their own partners in participating, carrying out advocacy work vis-à-vis educational authorities in the South.

Specific objectives

- The Education Network’s member organisations acquire greater knowledge of underlying reasons for barriers to genuine civil society involvement regarding national education plans in the South.
- The Education Network’s member organisations acquire greater knowledge of exemplary cases of genuine civil society involvement regarding national education plans in the South.
- The Education Network’s member organisations acquire greater knowledge of their own and their partners’ view of Danish NGOs and Danida’s role concerning the said involvement.

Background

The paper *“Analysis of Danish Development Aid for Education”* Chapter five in the paper refers to the international framework for involving civil society, namely the 2000 Dakar Declaration on “Education for All” (EFA), which underlines the essential role of civil society for the achievement of the EFA objectives:

- “Importantly, national plans should be drawn up, consulted, implemented and monitored with close involvement of civil society actors in the education sector. Pupils, teachers, parents and communities, as well as, other national and local organisations are those who will enact the national development plans and should be able to influence them.”

To ensure the involvement of civil society, the analysis calls upon donors to insist on the necessity of these processes, while also supporting capacity-building among civil society organisations, as these organisations are not always sufficiently prepared to enter into





a dialogue with the authorities regarding overall educational planning.

As for Danida's work in this field, the analysis finds that:

- “the existing Danish-sponsored sector programmes in Bolivia and Nicaragua have built-in special support for the civil societies as particular components. In Mozambique, the sector plan contains financing and activities in support of building parents' councils and school committees. In the other programmes, the role of civil society and potential Danish mediation in this regard is dealt with somewhat sporadically” (our translation).

The paper recommends that Danish embassies and Danida make greater efforts to ensure the participation of national civil society organisations within the education sector in designing, implementing and following up national development plans in all countries of programme cooperation. This can be done with an education sector programme, and greater cooperation can be pursued with Danish and international NGOs aimed at strengthening civil society organisations.

Field of analysis

Against this background, the Education Network wishes to shed light on how Danida, Danish NGOs and their partners in the South engage optimally in processes to ensure civil society involvement in education. This dialogue can be with national and local authorities, creation of forums for participation and exchange between civil society and authorities, capacity building of civil-society organisations, or other means.

Making the analysis representative of all Danish commitments in the field of educational development aid would require far more resources than may be allocated on this occasion. Accordingly, the exercise should be perceived as a pilot study

whose scope may possibly (with financial support) be extended later to a more representative analysis. We wish to start from an exemplary case analysis of two countries that have experienced Danida programme cooperation with Danish-sponsored education sector programmes. The criteria for country selection include geographical diversity, the presence of partners from the Education Network's member organisations, and examples both of positive civil society involvement and of barriers to such participation.

Outputs

1. The overall report

One written report will be produced in English by a Danish consultant, but “fed by” and composed of input from two country reports from Bolivia and Nepal written by two local consultants.

The reports shall present and discuss:

- Examples of genuine civil society involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national education plans, and an analysis of underlying causes of such involvement.
- A description of examples of inadequate or absent civil society involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national education plans, and an analysis of the challenges, problems and barriers hindering genuine involvement.
- An analysis of the civil society organisational view of the role of Danish NGOs and Danida regarding their involvement. If relevant, this should include looking at the policies and strategies in this area pursued by Danida and by Danish NGOs with partners in the countries selected.
- Furthermore, any other actors who could be strategic partners and/or have produced relevant systematisation of experiences regarding civil society involvement should also be part of

the analysis (for instance other donor countries, international NGOs, UNESCO, regional NGO networks, such as ANCEFA (African Network Campaign on Education for All)).

- Recommendations for the work ahead that may be useful for both Danida and members of the Education Network and their partners in the South regarding future efforts to secure the involvement of civil society organisations.

2. Two country-reports from Bolivia and Nepal cover the following issues:

Main questions regarding civil-society organisations in the South

- How do civil society organisations view their own involvement in the two countries selected?
- What are their interests and needs relating to participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national education plans?
- How would they possibly want to be involved?
- What good examples have they experienced?
- What obstacles have they experienced?
- What do they wish from national authorities, Danida and Danish NGOs?

Main questions regarding the role of other actors and interaction with civil society organisations

- What has been the role of Danida in the two countries selected? In addition, what is Danida's overall policy and practice to secure the involvement of civil society organisations?
- What has been the role of Danish NGOs in cooperation with their partners in the two countries selected? Moreover, what are the Danish NGOs overall policies and practices to secure the involvement of civil society organisations?
- Which other actors have influenced the role of civil society in the two countries selected, and how?

Methodology

The work will be performed by:

- Analysing relevant documents both in the South and in Denmark by all three consultants.
- The two local consultants shall conduct interviews with civil society partners, authorities, embassy personnel, and other relevant stakeholders in the South, and the Danish consultant with Danida and Danish member organisations of the Education Network.
- Workshops, both with partners in the South carried out by local consultants and with member organisations in Denmark by the Danish consultant.

Specific part on local studies:

Field of analysis

The Education Network wishes *to analyse and discuss recommendations on how Danida, Danish NGOs and their partners in the South engage optimally in processes to ensure civil society involvement in education*. Whether it be a dialogue with national and local authorities, the creation of forums for participation and exchange between civil society and authorities, capacity building of civil society organisations, or other means.

The exercise should be perceived as a pilot study whose scope may possibly (with financial support) be extended later to a more representative analysis. We wish to start from an exemplary case analysis of two countries of Danida programme cooperation with Danish sponsored education sector programmes. The criteria for country selection include geographical diversity, the presence of partners of the Education Network's member organisations, and examples of both positive civil society involvement and of barriers to such participation and thus resulting in the selection of Bolivia and Nepal.

Outputs

1. The overall report

One report will be produced in English by the Danish consultant, but "fed by" and composed of





input from two country reports from Bolivia and Nepal written by two local consultants. The reports shall present and discuss:

- *A description of examples of genuine civil society involvement* in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of *national education plans*, and an analysis of underlying causes of such involvement.
- *A description of examples of inadequate or absent civil society involvement* in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of *national education plans*; and an analysis of the challenges, problems and barriers hindering genuine involvement.
- An analysis of *the civil society organisations' views of the role of Danish NGOs and Danida* regarding the said involvement. When relevant, this should include looking at the policies and strategies in this area pursued by Danida and Danish NGOs with partners in the countries selected. Furthermore, any other actors who could be strategic partners and/or have produced relevant systematisation of experiences regarding civil society involvement should also be part of the analysis (for instance other donor countries, international NGOs, UNESCO, regional NGO networks, such as ANCEFA (African Network Campaign on Education for All)).
- *Recommendations* for the work ahead that may be useful for both Danida and members of the Education Network and their partners in the South in their future efforts to secure the involvement of civil society organisations.

2. Two country reports from Bolivia and Nepal shall cover the following issues:

Main questions regarding civil society organisations in the South

1. *Context and civil society in Nepal/Bolivia (2-3 p.)*
 - A brief description of the national context.

- Is there a national education plan?
- How has it been elaborated, approved, implemented and financed?
- How was, and is, civil society involved in these stages?
- Which civil society organisations exist (teacher's union, parent's organisations, school boards, NGO's, church, etc.)?
- Who do they represent, and how are they interrelated towards the MoU and the donors?
- Does a national network of educational organisations exist and what is the relationship between the MoE and the organisations, both formal and informal?

2. *Civil society (3-4 p.)*

How do civil society organisations view their own involvement in the two countries selected? How do civil society organisations perceive their own role and opportunities in relation to advocacy and influencing in the education sector?

- What are their objectives, interests and needs relating to participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national education plans? What would be the ideal situation for influencing the development in the education sector? What would it take to get there?
- How would they possibly want to be involved?

3. *Good practice/examples of civil society involvement (3-4 p.)*

What good examples have been experienced?

- A brief description of the experience with emphasis on what, how and why it was a good experience.
- What was achieved, and why was it successful.
- Are there "lessons learnt" that can be useful for others – how, why?

4. *Obstacles for civil society involvement in national education plans (3-4 p.)*

What obstacles have they experienced? What makes it difficult to be involved, and why? What do the organisations consider could be done to reduce or eliminate obstacles?

5. *What are proposals? How do they want to be involved, recommendations from the CSOs to (3-5 p.)*

- The national authorities: Which fora, attitudes and structures should the MoU and public authorities establish to ensure an adequate involvement of CS in education?
- Danida and other donors: What can international donors do to ensure or promote participation and involvement of civil society pressure on MoU, direct consultation, establishing dialogue, and what could be done to realise it?
- Danish (or other international) NGOs: What kind of collaboration, cooperation and support do the CSOs want from the I-NGOs? Capacity-building, common advocacy initiatives, influence towards donors, contact to networks, technical assistance in advocacy and policy and public management?

Main questions regarding other actor's roles and interaction with civil society organisations

6. (2-3 p.) **What has been the role of Danida** in the two countries selected? Moreover, what is Danida's concrete policy and practice to promote and ensure the involvement of civil society organisations in the country and the education sector?
7. (2-3 p.) **What has been the role of Danish NGOs** in cooperation with their partners in the two countries selected? Additionally, what are the Danish NGOs' overall and concrete policy and practice to

promote and ensure the involvement of civil society organisations?

8. (3-5 p.) **Which other actors** have influenced the role of civil society in the two countries selected, and how?
9. (3-5 p.) **Other actors' perception** of good experiences with, and obstacles for, civil society involvement in education. How do other actors such as MoU, local education authorities, donors, Danida and others analyse and perceive the experiences mentioned in paragraphs 1-5? How do they think CS should be involved and which role should they play in national education plans etc.,.
10. (2-3 p.) *Recommendations – how could civil society involvement in national education plans be improved?*
- What can civil society do better – and what are their needs for support to realise it?
 - What can international civil society organisations/NGOs do to improve their support?
 - What can international bilateral and multilateral donors do better, and how should they ensure and support civil society involvement?

Methodology

The work will be performed by:

- Analysing relevant documents (general documents, EFA, FTI, programme documents, national education plans, reviews and evaluations in the country). A list of all relevant documents will be established by all the consultants.
- The two local consultants shall conduct interviews with:

Civil society partners

- National education networks – EFA-networks if existing





- Education NGOs
- Teacher unions
- Parents' organisation
- School boards
- Local organisations on education

Authorities: Ministry of education and local level education authorities, municipalities, other donors, Danida, embassy personnel, and other relevant stakeholders

In Bolivia and Nepal, (parallel/meanwhile the Danish consultant meets with Danida and Danish member organisations of the Education Network).

The learning approach should be emphasised and if consultants have sufficient knowledge of the “appreciative inquiry” approach and methodology, it should be used in order to identify recommendations based on real experiences, and descriptions of what works and what could be better, so that recommendations are realistic and based on experiences.



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