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Stepping Up Finland’s Global Role in Education

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2018

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/310306

Reinikka, R, Niemi, H & Tulivuori, J 2018 'Stepping Up Finland’s Global Role in Education' Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki. < https://um.fi/julkaisut/-/asset_publisher /TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/selvitys-opetusalan-kehitysyhteistyosta >

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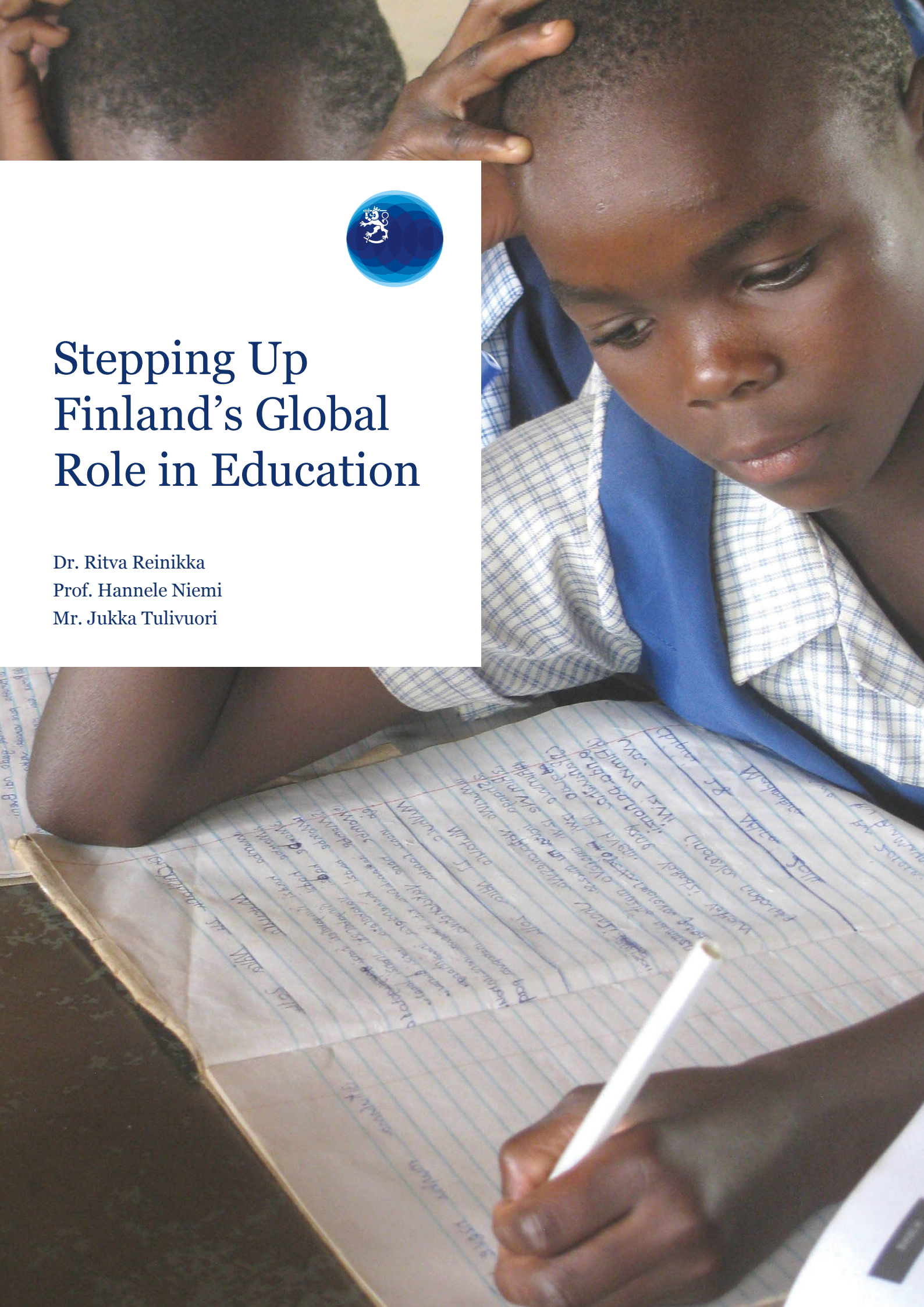

Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education

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This report can be downloaded through the homepage of
the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at https://um.fi/julkaisut

Cover photo: Cecil Bo Dzwowa / Shutterstock.com
Layout: Innocorp Oy, 2018

ISBN 978-952-281-583-5 (printing)
ISBN 978-952-281-584-2 (pdf)

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August 2018

This report was commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland to Niras Finland. The report is the product of the authors, and responsibility for the accuracy of the data included in this report rests with the authors. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

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Executive Summary

The global education agenda—especially the Millennium Development Goals—has been oriented towards access to schooling. It has been a big success by historical standards. But, by now, it has become clear that the quality of education has not progressed in lockstep with access to schooling. This is also reflected in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: SDG-4 is squarely about education quality.

The learning crisis

Today much of the developing world faces a learning crisis in basic education (primary and lower secondary school). Despite spending years in school, students are not gaining even basic literacy and numeracy. Many cannot not read a single sentence or paragraph, or calculate simple divisions or fractions.

As highlighted by the Education Commission, by 2030, half of the world's children and young people—about 800 million, including about 400 million girls—will not possess basic skills. The learning crisis thus threatens to divide the world into two: one half where young people have access to a good education system which gives them multiple skills, while the other half enters an education system that fails them completely (so that they don't learn even the basics). The Service Delivery Indicators collected in Africa show that behind the learning crisis there is often a teaching crisis.

According to the World Bank, in low-income countries—where Finnish foreign aid is largely concentrated—only 14 percent of students reach the minimum proficiency in math by the end of primary school. Indeed, it is in the low-income countries where the learning crisis is most acute. In lower middle-income countries 37 percent reach the minimum proficiency. Even in upper-middle-income countries only 61 percent reach this minimum. If Brazilian 15-year-olds, for example, continue to improve at their current rate they will not reach the OECD's average Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) score in math for 75 years. In reading, it would take them 263 years. These statistics highlight the urgency of the problem.

Education in Finland

Thanks to its high PISA scores, the Finnish school system (K-12) is regularly brought up as an excellent example in various international conferences, newspaper articles, and academic work. Its strong equity policies, professional teachers, and devolution of responsibilities stand out. Trust in education and teachers is one of its key characteristics. This trust is reflected in the fact that there is no national testing in basic education or inspectorate in the Finnish education system.

Hundreds of delegations of policymakers and education specialists trek to Finland every year to learn from its experience first-hand. Many countries facing the learning crisis are also keen to find out what Finland has done to achieve good-quality learning for all.

Finnish development cooperation in education

Given the gravity of the learning crisis and Finland's own strong reputation in basic education, one would expect education to be a major theme in Finnish development cooperation. But this is not the case. Finland has been absent from many global education forums. In bilateral aid the share of education

has remained relatively small: from 5 to 9 percent in 2006-2016, with disbursements between EUR30 million and EUR55 million per year (constant 2010 prices). In brief, Finland is not taking full advantage of its own educational expertise and reputation.

This is not to say that nothing has been done. Education has been part of Finnish aid for the past 50 years, but never very prominently. This is reflected in the fact that Finland has not updated its education policy for development cooperation for more than a decade. As a result, a strategic approach is missing and the field remains fragmented. Ministries, agencies, civil society organizations (CSO), universities, and other actors do not operate in coordination among themselves or with each other.

Strategic leadership and thematic priorities

The overarching recommendation of this report is that Finland steps up its global role in education. This role can be expanded in an influential way to help address the learning crisis. But this requires strategic leadership, cooperation among stakeholders, and knowledge of the local context.

Today thematic leadership and management are limited in Finnish aid. Programs and projects are implemented in 'instrument-related silos.' A strong thematic profile for Finland in education—its most credible global brand—would mean breaking these silos in one way or another. Thematic management requires that all education activities are looked at jointly from the perspective of Finnish aid objectives, irrespective of the instrument or administrative unit.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) needs to exercise strategic leadership in Finnish development cooperation. This report recommends, as a first step, that MFA establishes a multi-stakeholder Steering Group, co-chaired with the Ministry for Education and Culture (MEC). The initial task of the Steering Group should be to oversee the preparation of a new education policy for stepping up Finland's global role in education in development cooperation. Important members to include are the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), CSOs working in education, universities, Education Finland, which focuses on education exports, and other relevant stakeholders.

The report recommends education quality and learning as the primary theme for Finland's stronger global role in education, together with five sub-themes:

- Supporting coherence of the entire educational system;
- Strengthening school leadership and teachers' professional development;
- Collaborating on teacher education programs;
- Supporting learner-focus in basic education; and
- Sharing Finnish experience in education reforms, including their political context.

The Finnish hallmarks have been girls' education and education of children with disabilities. While these should continue, it is becoming clear that the systemic issues underlying the learning crisis cannot be solved by targeting alone. To address the learning crisis, including girls and children with disabilities, systemic reform is required.

The report also recommends that development cooperation becomes more closely integrated in Finland's other international educational activities, such as its 2017-25 international higher education and research policy, education exports, and edtech start-up activities. While each of these activities has a different objective and operates mostly in different countries, there are many synergies and shared human resources.

Finland's voice on international educational forums

As part of stepping up of its global engagement in education, Finland will need to participate more actively in key multilateral education forums, especially the Global Partnership for Education, 'the only existing global partnership in the sector.'

Finland is currently an executive board member in UNESCO. This offers an excellent opportunity to focus on Finland's strongest suit—basic education—by bringing up the learning crisis prominently to UNESCO's daily agenda and working with other members to help find solutions to it. UNICEF's education (and other) work is action- and field-oriented and very much in line with Finnish priorities. Finland should restore its financial support to UNICEF to the previous level (and beyond) and contribute to its policies and operations, to tackle the learning crisis.

The EU was seldom referenced in background documentation and during interviews, unlike other multilateral agencies. Yet, the EU and its member countries are jointly the world's largest donor. Going forward, Finland should prioritize education in its EU engagement in development cooperation, become a much more active member state in this regard and, in the EU context, provide substantive and strategic leadership in helping address the learning crisis.

Finland should continue and, if possible, expand its current work on education with international financial institutions. It would also be most useful to participate in and take advantage of global public goods addressing the learning crisis and effectiveness of educational reforms in 'learning crisis' countries.

As part of the process to formulate a new education policy for Finnish aid, full consideration should be given to education in crises, emergencies and humanitarian assistance. In that context, it would be important to consider participation in the Education Cannot Wait initiative, as well as expansion of the role of Finnish professional CSOs in this area.

Bilateral cooperation

Education sector programs provide the best available avenue for donors to help tackle the learning crisis. These programs focus on the entire system of education, allow taking up big topics like learning, reduce duplication, and provide a convenient forum to review progress and discuss problems and their solutions. In its bilateral programs Finland is, therefore, well positioned to step up its substantive engagement in education—the stage is set. Ethiopia, a large African country with 100 million people, is an excellent example of how it can be done and what can be achieved. The contribution to education sector programs can be intensified by engaging with Finnish institutions systematically, especially EDUFI, universities, and other relevant stakeholders. The delivery mechanisms of technical support need to be streamlined so that administration does not consume too much of the limited resources.

MFA should also explore cost-efficient ways of engaging interested low and lower middle-income countries—beyond the long-term partner countries—in a dialogue with relevant Finnish education policymakers, officials and experts on key aspects of coherent education systems and their reform.

Cooperation between Finnish and developing country higher education institutions would benefit from re-orienting it towards a more strategic and prioritized approach sectorally and geographically. Education, especially work focused on the learning crisis, should be a priority sector. Projects ought to be longer term, larger and include a research component. Development research should equally be supported more strategically than it is today.

The conclusion of multiple evaluations of CSOs' development cooperation is that broader impacts on the ground could be achieved through joint efforts. Limited cooperation or pooling of funds has restricted the potential to increase the scale of delivery, leverage resources, and to create complementarities. MFA is encouraged to incentivize CSOs to develop joint programs around thematic areas where CSO expertise is strong, including support to education. Equally, evaluations encourage a closer relationship between CSOs' development activities and Finland's country strategies.

Finnish human resources

There is a need to strengthen the Finnish human resource base in education for international development. MFA, together with the proposed Steering Group should find ways to encourage Finnish universities, including the faculties of educational sciences and teacher education as well as departments of economics, to engage in education research globally and offering development-oriented programs and courses in their areas.

To be effective, strong expertise of and experience in the Finnish education system need to be combined with field experience from developing countries. Given the critical importance of knowing the

local context, secondments and volunteer programs can be important. Short-term training used to play a significant role to familiarize Finnish education specialists with development cooperation—it is up for a revival.

The report recommends, therefore, that MFA (i) reviews its secondment policy with a view of making it more strategic in terms of the sector; (ii) initiates exploratory work towards establishing a Finnish expert capacity deployment facility in education, initially, for select UN agencies; and (iii) takes a lead to make Teachers without Borders a national volunteer program in education, with a focus on addressing the learning crisis.

Financing

Money, particularly when well-spent, has a role but it cannot be Finland's main contribution. Its expertise and experience, if well-harnessed, has a potential to make a much bigger difference. At the same time, the current level—and share—of Finnish aid for education is very small when compared to, say, other Nordic countries. To deliver on the recommendations of this report—and meaningfully to step up Finland's global role in education—the level of financing should go up to 100 million euros per year in the next four years.

Apart from education, there are few other global themes where Finland has so much to offer for international cooperation in terms of expertise, knowledge and experience. The learning crisis warrants the proposed investments and Finland's stronger contribution.

1. Introduction

Schooling has expanded vastly world-wide over the past few decades. But it is also becoming clear that access to school is not enough as students in many countries—despite years in school—are not learning even the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. UNESCO has described the situation as a 'learning crisis.' The learning crisis is particularly severe in many low and middle-income countries but also in some rich countries.

As highlighted by the Education Commission, the world risks to be divided in two halves: one half where children and young people learn in school and gain important skills needed for further study, life-long learning and for the labor market, and the other half of the world's children and young people whom their education system fails and who leave school without learning even the basics.

Finland surely is in the first half, the far end of it. It has a great reputation in basic education globally ever since the results of the OECD's first Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) became available in the early-2000s. In the first four PISA rounds, Finland was the best country in the overall ranking. It has been particularly strong in science and reading literacy, but has also been among the top countries in mathematics. Albeit its position relative to other (especially Asian) countries weakened in PISA 2012, Finland was still among the high-performing countries. The Finnish school system provides highly equal educational opportunities irrespective of the students' socio-economic background and place of residence (Välijärvi and Sulkunen 2016).

The Finnish school system (K-12) is thus regularly brought up as an excellent example in various international contexts— conferences, newspaper articles, academic work—and hundreds of delegations of policymakers and education specialists trek to Finland every year to learn from it first-hand. Many countries facing a serious learning crisis are also keen to find out what Finland has done right to achieve good-quality learning for all.

Given the learning crisis and Finland's strong brand and reputation in basic education, one would expect basic education to be a major thematic area in Finnish development cooperation—in order to take more global responsibility for learning for all. But this is not the case. Finland has been absent from many international education forums and in bilateral aid the share of education has remained relatively small. In brief, Finland is not taking full advantage of the country's own educational expertise, experience and reputation in its development cooperation.

This is not to say that nothing has been done. Education has been part of Finnish aid for the past 50 years, but never very prominently. It has not been considered a deliberate priority. Instead, Finnish development policy has, over the years, highlighted broader themes, such as sustainable development, human rights and democratic society, or other sectors, such as water, energy and natural resources. As a result, a clear strategy is missing in education and the field remains fragmented. Ministries, agencies, civil society organizations, universities, and other actors do not operate in coordination among themselves or with each other. The Finnish hallmarks have been girls' education and education of children with disabilities. The learning crisis compels us to see these concerns in a new light. While very important, the systemic issues underlying the learning crisis cannot be solved by targeting girls or some special groups alone. To address the learning crisis requires systemic reform.

This report, commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA), is about the big picture. It makes a case for stepping up Finland's global role in education, especially in basic education in low and lower middle-income countries where the learning crisis is most acute. The report argues that, in its development cooperation, Finland should

make much more use of its strong international reputation and credibility in education. Equally, cooperation with low and lower middle-income countries—even if funded by foreign aid—should not be seen in isolation from other Finnish international engagements in education, such as education exports, or policies on international engagement in higher education and research.

The report is meant for several audiences. First, a key audience is decision-makers on the directions of Finnish aid regarding its thematic priorities and financing, both inside and outside government. The report makes a case for a bigger role for education in Finnish aid, both proportionately and in absolute terms. It offers concrete ideas and recommendations on what can be done to step up Finland's global role in education. Second, another important target group is the Finnish education community at large, in the public and private sectors, and in academia and practice. For Finland to be able to step up its global role in education it is this community that needs to be engaged more actively than before. Why? Because it is not just about money. Money, particularly when well-spent, has a role but it cannot be Finland's main contribution. Its expertise and experience, if well-harnessed, has a potential to make a bigger difference. Third, we hope that the report will provide a platform for dialogue domestically among various stakeholders, within the EU, as well as with partner countries, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and international financial institutions working in education.

1.1 What the report covers – and what it does not

As per the terms of reference (Annex I), this report attempts to do the following:

1. *Summarize key evidence and the narrative of the learning crisis—and how best to address it—in light of recent international education reports. The focus is on basic and lower secondary education (section 2).*

While important areas as such, this report does not cover university education (except when it links to teacher education), vocational education (except when it links to vocational teacher education), nor early childhood education. The focus is on basic and lower secondary education where the learning crisis is most acute. Also, basic and lower secondary education provide foundational skills without which upper secondary, university, or vocational education are not possible. Basic skills must be learned by all; they cannot be leapfrogged.

Even if we do not discuss vocational education in this report in any detail, it is an area that might be interesting to consider for Finnish aid separately, given its strong 'supply' in Finland and high 'demand' in many low and middle-income countries, including conflict-affected countries. A number of Finnish universities of applied sciences (ammattikorkeakoulu) have been active both in institutional cooperation in developing countries and in education exports. Similarly, early childhood education could also be considered separately.

There are also many factors outside the school that affect learning, such as the home environment, income level, local and national politics, and so forth. However, in this report we focus on the education system.

2. *Highlight key characteristics and success factors of the Finnish basic education system—the education narrative of Finland in light of available studies and stakeholder interviews (section 3).*

Education is clearly an issue that energizes interest in Finland from countries across the board. Given the topic of this report, we keep the needs of the countries with learning crisis in focus when discussing the Finnish education system.

3. *Suggest strategic themes or areas where Finland, thanks to its own experience and expertise, could contribute effectively to help address the learning crisis (section 3).*

As the overarching theme we propose **education quality and learning**. The report also develops a number of sub-themes in addition to the current priorities of girls' education and inclusive education. While the latter two themes should be maintained, they require some shift in the approach. Specifically, targeting alone is not enough when the education system does not support learning. When that is the case, one needs to engage in system-wide reforms as well.

Once the final decision on the sub-themes has been made, additional analytical work is required to develop and articulate them in more detail. Such analytical work is beyond the scope of this report.

4. *Review the track record of education in Finnish aid, including multilateral, humanitarian and bilateral aid, as well as development cooperation of civil society organizations (sections 4, 5 and 6).*

We explore important (mainly inter-governmental) multilateral forums where Finland has been present—or absent—including humanitarian aid. We also examine what has worked well and what has not worked well in bilateral education cooperation and the development cooperation of civil society organizations (CSOs). Again, we take the viewpoint of the learning crisis. A review of the track record is important as stepping up Finland's global role in education would, by no means, start from a clean slate.

5. *Look for 'pearls' that may have gone unnoticed, apart from describing and bringing together the rather fragmented field of Finnish aid in education over the past couple of decades (sections 4, 5 and 6).*

These 'pearls' or success stories include concrete achievements in various areas of educational expertise, thematic areas or components of education programs supported by Finnish aid.

6. *Explore links to education exports, edtech, and the private sector (specifically Finnfund) which are among the priorities of the Finnish Government's 2016 policy program (section 7).*

While the target countries in commercially-based educational activities—education exports—are mostly different from the countries supported by Finnish aid, the domestic human resource base is often the same. Field experience gained in one area is an asset in the other.

7. *Propose practical ways for a step-up of Finland's global role in education, especially regarding strategic leadership and organizing coordination and collaboration of stakeholders (section 8).*

Stepping up Finland's global role requires a stronger strategic approach than what the situation is today as well as more organized stakeholder cooperation, including government agencies, CSOs, universities and others. It also requires a buy-in from across the political spectrum to be sustainable.

8. *Offer practical suggestions on how to strengthen the Finnish human resource base for an effective global role in education, including new programs (section 9).*

We ask and attempt to answer: What does it take to create a 'critical mass' of education expertise for Finland to be able to assume a meaningful, productive and visible international role? By 'critical mass' we mean adequate numbers, deep in substance, and fully conversant in major international education challenges, especially regarding the learning crisis. How best can one acquire field experience from what are often completely different institutional settings? We also examine past and current university degree programs and courses, secondments, volunteer programs, and short-term training courses as these are what one needs to build on for the future.

Throughout the report we offer recommendations when discussing the various areas and topics—this was also a suggestion from some reviewers of the draft report. Section 10 at the end of the report contains our main—most important—recommendations.

1.2 Sources of information

This report is based on the following sources of information:

- A review of published and unpublished documents, reports and articles (references in section 11). Especially, available evaluation reports provide useful background material.
- Over 60 in-depth interviews of stakeholders in Finland and the international education arena either in-person, by phone, or by email (list of interviewees in Annex II).
- An email survey administered for the Finnish civil society organizations that receive program-based support from MFA and work in education in developing countries.
- Focus group meetings. Specifically, prior to commissioning this report, MFA had established a multi-stakeholder working group which contributed to the drafting of the terms of reference. We held two separate sessions with this multi-stakeholder working group, one in March and the other in June 2018. These meetings were very valuable, especially for developing the recommendations contained in this report.

2. The learning crisis – and how best to address it

There has been a massive expansion in schooling globally over the last few decades such that nearly all children enroll in primary school. The recent expansion is impressive by historical standards. In many developing countries, net enrollment has greatly outpaced the historic performance of today's industrial countries. The number of years of schooling completed by the average adult in the developing world more than tripled from 1950 to 2010. By 2010 the average worker in Bangladesh had completed more years of schooling than the typical worker in France in 1975 (World Bank 2018). Although drop-out is a concern, most children today finish primary school (and more). While inequalities in access to, and completion of, basic schooling across socio-economic status, gender, residence, and ethnicity have been reduced by the drive to universality, important issues of inclusion still remain.

Schooling has expanded especially fast in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). But unlike elsewhere, SSA will have to continue this expansion as its population projections show almost a doubling of the 5-14 age cohort by 2050. A slow demographic transition means that new school-age cohorts are larger than the previous ones. For example, to reach its access targets by 2030, SSA must nearly double the teaching force that was in place in 2010 in primary and lower secondary education, even at current high pupil-teacher ratios (Alavuotunki and Reinikka 2017).

However, while access to education has increased, quality of basic education has not improved—in many cases it has even declined over the past two decades. Education professionals have always been concerned about the quality of education. But there is now an increasing recognition more broadly of a learning crisis—a term coined by UNESCO in its annual report in 2014. Similarly, Education Commission's 2016 report points out that schooling is not same as learning, and the 2018 World Development Report (WDR) highlights 'learning to realize education's promise' (World Bank 2018).

2.1 What does the learning crisis look like?

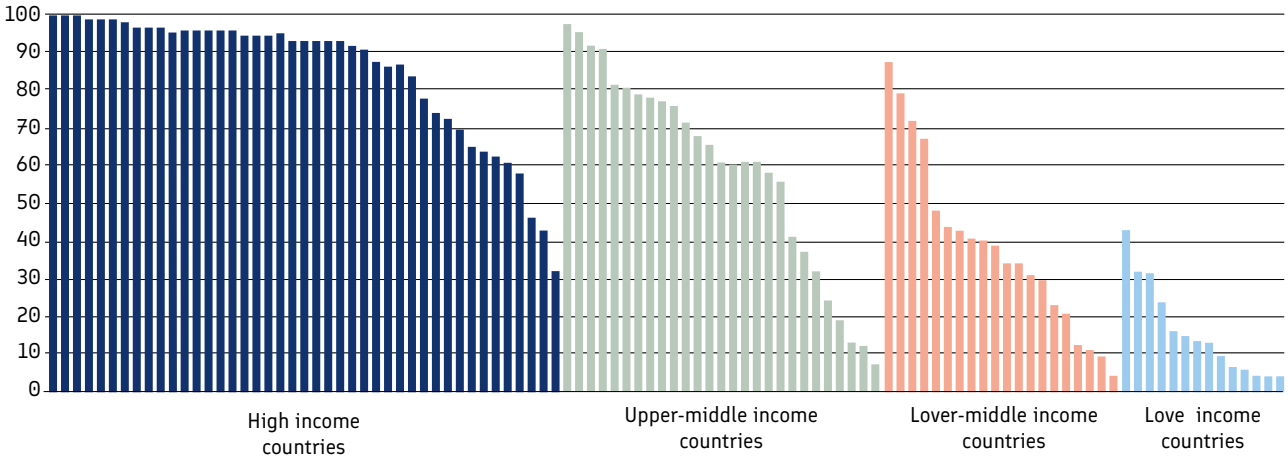
There is a steadily increasing body of evidence that in many countries learning profiles are too shallow, that is, students learn far less than expected in the curriculum (which in itself can be too ambitious). Many children emerge from their schooling experiences inadequately prepared for adulthood and the labor market (Pritchett 2018). Here are some key facts on learning outcomes that reveal the extent of the learning crisis:

- In three dozen developing countries, only half of adults aged 20 to 64 who have completed five years of school can read a single sentence (UNESCO 2014).
- By 2030, more than half of the world's children and young people—over 800 million, including about 400 million girls—will not have the basic skills (Education Commission 2016).
- In South Africa, despite some improvement since 2002, three quarters of the grade nine students still had not acquired a basic understanding about whole numbers, decimals, operations or basic graphs in 2011 (Spaull 2013).
- In East Africa, when grade 3 students were asked to read a simple sentence "The name of the dog is Puppy," three-quarters did not understand what was said (World Bank 2018).
- If Brazilian 15-year-olds continue to improve at their current rate they will not reach the OECD's average PISA score in math for 75 years. In reading, it would take them 263 years (World Bank 2018).

No uniform learning assessment has been administered in all countries but combining data from various learning assessments makes it possible to establish a globally comparable "minimum proficiency" threshold in math for 95 countries (World Bank 2018). Below this threshold, students have not mastered even basic skills, whether making simple

Figure 1

Percent of end-of primary students who meet minimum proficiency tresholt for learning in math



Source: World Bank 2018

computations with whole numbers, using fractions or measurements, or interpreting simple bar graphs.

As can be seen from Figure 1, in high-income countries, nearly all students achieve the minimum proficiency in primary school. However, there are a number of high-income countries where it is not the case. The latter include Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries and some Latin American countries. While performing poorly on learning, they can afford, if they so wish, outside help to improve. It is therefore no wonder that these countries are among the focus countries for Finnish education exports.

But in other parts of the world the share of end-of primary students who reach the minimum proficiency threshold for learning in math is much lower. In low-income countries—where Finnish bilateral aid is mostly concentrated—only 14 percent of students reach this level. Indeed, it is in the low-income countries where the learning crisis is most acute. In lower middle-income countries 37 percent reach the minimum proficiency. Even in upper-middle-income countries only 61 percent reach this minimum.

Yet, literacy and numeracy are not only core competencies but also the foundation for higher and lifelong learning, as well as for innovation and adoption of new technologies. Laying this foundation cannot be leapfrogged. Fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy must be learned—there are no shortcuts. Hence, basic education for all is critical—basic education where children actually learn while in school (Alavuotunki and Reinikka 2017).

As highlighted in the 2018 WDR, struggling education systems lack one or more of four key school-level ingredients for learning:

- *First,* children often arrive in school unprepared to learn—if they arrive at all. Malnutrition, illness, low parental investments, and the harsh environments associated with poverty undermine early childhood learning.

- *Second,* teachers often lack the skills or motivation to be effective. Most education systems do not attract applicants with strong backgrounds to teacher education. Beyond that, weak teacher education results in teachers lacking subject knowledge and pedagogical skills. This is evident, for example, in the Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) data discussed below (sections 2.1.1 and 4.5).

- *Third,* inputs often fail to reach classrooms or to affect learning when they do.

- *Fourth,* poor management and governance often undermine schooling quality. Although effective school leadership does not raise student learning directly, it does so indirectly by improving teaching quality and ensuring effective use of resources.

Globally, the world has moved from the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For education this means a shift from access to schooling to learning outcomes—or from quantity to quality. In order to make progress towards the ambitious new education goals which are part of the SDGs, such as "relevant and effective learning outcomes" (target 4.1) and that "all youth…achieve literacy and numeracy" (target 4.6), the pace of progress in improving learning—and learning levels at school completion—will have to accelerate dramatically as the current pace of improvement is, on average, far too slow.

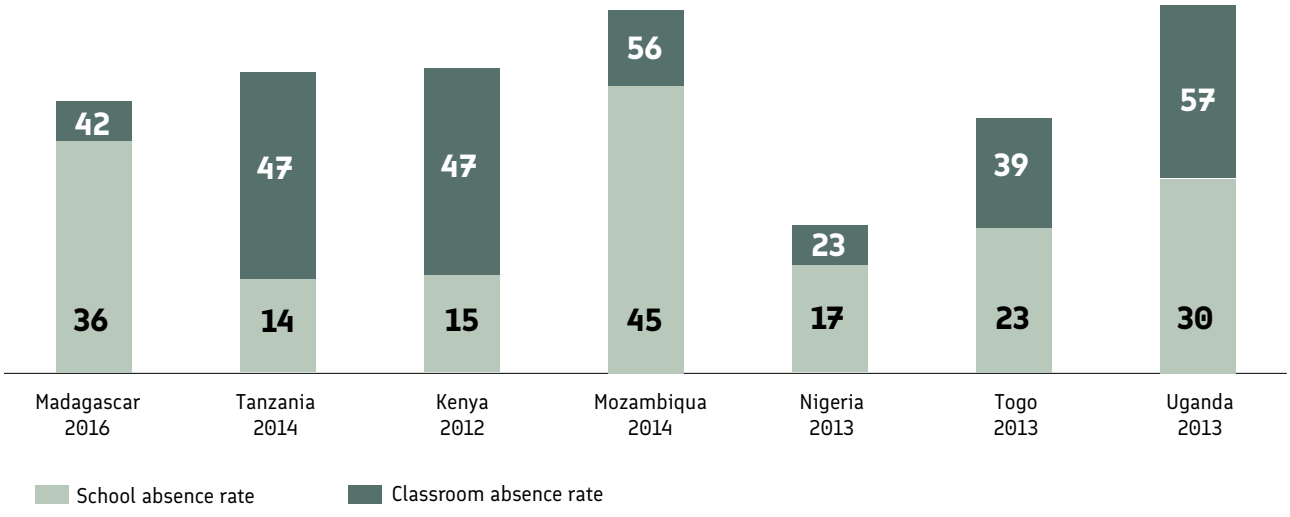
2.1.1 Evidence of a teaching crisis

Good teaching is critical for learning—the teacher is the most important school-specific factor for learning (Rand Corp. 2012). In the face of the learning crisis, new diagnostics have been developed to dig deeper, with a focus on teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and their motivations. The Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) in Africa show that behind the learning crisis there is a teaching crisis (see also section 4.5).

Nationally representative school survey data from Nigeria—Africa's most populous country—for example, show that fewer than 6 in 10 teachers could do a simple division problem, something almost 9 in 10 teachers in Kenya could do. Using surprise visits, the SDI also collects data on teacher absence from school and from classroom. In Mozambique, one of the long-term partner countries for Finland, 45 percent of teachers were absent from school on any given day. In other words, teachers did not come to school at all when they were supposed to. Although the survey did

Figure 2

What teachers do in Africa



Source: Service Delivery Indicators

not reveal the reasons for teacher absences, these are likely to include motivational issues, long distances between home and school, sickness, personal matters, collecting salary, and so forth. The absence from classroom was even higher at 56 percent in Mozambique (Figure 2). So, some teachers, even if at school, did not come to the classroom to teach when they were supposed to. In sum, these data reflect serious shortcomings in the entire education systems.

2.2 What will it take to get to universal quality education?

It has been a significant achievement to build the political will to mobilize resources—both domestic and external—that have dramatically expanded access to schooling for children across the world. But important as this achievement has been, there is much more that needs to be done if its economic, social, and political benefits are to be reaped. So, what will it take? The ongoing international research program 'Research on Improving Systems of Education' (RISE; details in section 4.5) suggests the following elements for the agenda of achieving universal quality education:

First, the resources devoted to expanded educational opportunity need to be used in ways that can produce learning, not just attendance at school, and the kind of learning that can produce competencies, skills and capabilities.

Second, one has to be committed not only to the learning of some, but to the learning of all as a matter of social justice, economic prosperity and civic capacity. This has to start with the first entry in the school system and be pursued with each individual continuously from grade to grade, not only at the time students are admitted to higher levels of education.

Third, the commitment, knowledge, and resourcefulness of the teachers is key. The administrative systems and managerial processes to ensure the quality of teaching have to begin with quality information about individual student performance and the approaches that the teachers are using to move students along.

Fourth, while the system has to focus on individual students and distinctive groups of students—different ages, languages, social backgrounds—it also has to be accountable for performance at the aggregate level of the school, local community, city, and the nation.

Fifth, while the system as a whole will remain largely publicly financed and managed, government ought to explore ways how the performance and equity of the system as a whole might be improved through the private sector in an accountable and transparent manner.

Sixth, the dramatic acceleration in learning needed to address the learning crisis will require governments to adopt and successfully implement strategies to improve their systems of education. Creating accountable and effective systems that recruit, retain, and motivate good teachers requires system-level reform. Countries must overcome technical and political barriers by deploying data and metrics for mobilizing actors and tracking progress, building coalitions for learning, and taking an adaptive approach to reform.

2.2.1 Universal quality education is best for equity

While it is important to get all children into school—especially those with challenges that are context-specific, such as gender, poverty, disability, or refugee status, it is equally important that all students learn when they get to school. When education systems suffer from major shortcomings, measures aiming at universal early conceptual mastery of basic skills is the best equity policy. However, the promotion of universal mastery of basic skills is often hard in practice, while targeted actions are easier to measure and justify to policymakers and financiers.

Achieving early years' universal mastery would be progressive on all disadvantaged categories. A well-meaning donor targeting a special group in a badly functioning education system that does not support learning may just be a wasted effort. In that

case, it would be better to focus on system-wide issues, and move away from 'singular' narratives—such as girls' education or education for children with disabilities—and always pose the question: Are these important target groups actually learning? If not, what system-level issues need to be addressed so that girls and children with disabilities also learn when in school?

Improving equity requires a shift towards emphasis on equity of outcomes rather than equality of inputs. To do this, countries need to gather learning data to be able to target unjust inequities. Improving equity also requires setting minimum learning expectations for all children at each stage of the education cycle. To make a difference to learning, these expectations will have to be realistic—as opposed to overly ambitious.

The relevance of curriculum and expectations for learners go hand in hand. Few education systems in 'learning crisis' countries take into account the disadvantage from which most children come to school. If their families are illiterate, there is no culture of formal learning and, therefore, the curriculum may be over-ambitious right from the beginning. The vicious circle of achieving no targets whatsoever starts early.

In many 'learning crisis' countries the curriculum is often a text book which the teacher crams through by rote learning. In such situations, it tends to be the learners with context-specific challenges that are least likely to learn. While recognizing this, the fact remains that equity of outcomes is best addressed by a system-wide reform, with the objective of universal learning. Again, even if more appealing to policymakers and financiers, targeting of a given disadvantage group is just not enough in an education system that generally fails its students.

2.2.2 ...and best for gender

Finland is a long-time advocate for girls' education. But schooling is not necessarily learning. Demographic and health surveys (DHS) collect data across developing countries, among other things, on the ability of women to read a simple sentence, as well as how many years these same women have attended school. Using these data, Pritchett and Sandefur (2017) show that—due to the learning crisis—even if all girls were able to attend school for six years, this would not bring the world anywhere near the goal of universal female literacy.[1]

Specifically, learning profiles are so weak that—across nearly 50 countries—40 percent of women would still be illiterate even if all women had completed grade six. Therefore, a system-wide education reform is also best for gender rather than targeting girls in a system that does not support learning. And it is only through universal quality education that the well-known benefits of female education materialize, such as later marriages or fewer children who are healthier and better educated.

[1] These calculations are based on the empirical relationship between grades completed and ability to read, a kind of descriptive learning profile.

3. What can Finland offer to 'learning crisis' countries?

Finland has one of the most respected national education systems and brands in the world. Thanks to its performance in many international comparisons, especially in the OECD's PISA, there has been an ever-increasing global interest in the Finnish education system and its various aspects.

The basic education system in Finland today is a result of many decades of development and reform. Importantly, education enjoys strong support from the entire society. Parents also see education as the way to economic opportunities and better life for their children. Since the 1960s, school reforms have been based on values of equity and equal opportunity– universality and high-quality education for all. These reforms have achieved their objective: variation between individual students and between schools is smaller than in most other PISA countries (Välijärvi and Sulkunen 2016).[2]

Contrary to the Finnish situation today, many education systems in 'learning crisis' countries suffer from poor governance, weak economy, and a lack of a long-term vision for education. So, given such different circumstances, we need to ask whether the Finnish education system has something useful to offer to help address the learning crisis in low and lower middle-income countries—and if yes, what specifically? In this section we review key characteristics of the Finnish education system and, keeping in mind the needs of 'learning crisis' countries, propose themes that could form the basis of Finland's expanded global engagement in education.

3.1 Characteristics of the Finnish education system

Finland is one of the countries where the four school-level ingredients for learning, identified by the 2018 WDR, are in place (summarized in section 2.1). As highlighted above, the Finnish success story is based on an education policy which has a clear objective of offering all citizens **equal educational opportunities**, regardless of age, domicile, financial situation, gender, or mother tongue, and supporting all learners to achieve at least minimum standards of learning that makes learners capable to continue their education at the next level of the system.

Class sizes in Finland are slightly smaller (20) than the OECD average (23) and much smaller compared to some other high-performing PISA countries, such and Japan and South Korea (32).[3]

Finland's national **core curriculum** system sets values for the entire education system and defines learning objectives for each educational level. While it is the same for everybody, at the same time, local educational authorities, schools and teachers are granted wide **autonomy** in organizing education and implementing the core curriculum—a Finnish specialty of sorts. Indeed, Finland has one of the most devolved education systems in the world. The broad objective of the core curriculum for basic education aims at everybody completing nine years of the comprehensive school. Support systems help ensure that this objective is being met—only less than one percent of the cohort do not complete the comprehensive school and even they are offered various ways of doing so later on.

Teachers have much freedom regarding how they carry out their teaching and support student learning. They are expected to take responsibility for students' learning as well as their holistic well-being. Teachers have to be able to recognize learning difficulties and identify special support 'as soon as the

[2] There has been some widening of this variation recently, and Finland is now closer to the OECD average than before.

[3] In 2014, Finland spent USD13,865 per student in lower secondary school, as compared to the OECD average of USD10,235. Total spending on education represented 5.7 percent of Finland's GDP in 2014, compared to the average across OECD countries of 5.1 percent in 2014.

need arises.' This requires a high degree of pedagogical competence (see Box 1 for Finnish teacher education) and a broad professional role. Assessment and evaluation are also done by teachers, with the objective to improve learning. There are no national tests in the basic education system—nor is there an inspection system for schools, teachers or learning materials.

Finnish teachers play a role that is often described as 'teacher leadership' which means that teachers are goal-oriented; have a clear vision of school development and high-quality teaching; and are able to work collaboratively with other teachers towards those goals.

Pedagogical leadership and the **principa**l's commitment are key elements in the success—most Finnish school principals are teachers by education. In 2007 Finland was chosen by the OECD as an example of a systemic approach to school leadership, because of its particular approach to distributing leadership systematically.

In sum, the key characteristics—and strengths—of the Finnish education system are the following:

- Strong equity policy;
- Teachers are autonomous and reflective academic experts;
- Flexible educational structures and local responsibility for curriculum development;
- Evaluation for improvements, not for ranking;
- No national testing, no inspectorate;
- Research-based teacher education;
- Teachers' high competence in content knowledge and pedagogy; and
- Trust in education and teachers.

The search for the secret behind Finland's strong record of learning with equity has led to a swarm of visiting education policymakers and experts. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) is able to receive a maximum of 80 ministerial-level delegations from across the world annually. This capacity is fully utilized every year. The Finnish National

Box 1: Finnish teacher education

Finnish teacher education is university-based and at Master's degree level. These programs are highly sought-after by high school graduates; only 10 percent of applicants are accepted (given quotas for admission which are based on the estimated need for teachers). In pre-service training, theory and practice are integrated throughout programs. In surveys, student teachers report that they value teaching practice a great deal and see it as the most important part of their professional development. Thanks to their graduate-level education, teachers are able to make use of research-based knowledge and gain a thorough understanding of the teaching and learning processes. This also means that teachers are able to utilize research-based evidence in their work.

In-service training days and courses are being offered to teachers, but currently a more holistic approach in teachers' professional development is applied. Teachers are seen as developers in the school community and in-service training as a resource for achieving joint aims in this community. A cooperative working culture in schools is considered an important element. Given this, part of the in-service training is done at the school level in joint workshops and planning events rather than centrally organized as is the case in many developing countries. Collaboration within the school community and peers as well as with external partners, especially parents, is part of teachers' professional development today.*

* OECD considers knowledge base, autonomy and collaborative culture as key elements of teacher professionalism. According to the OECD, Finland is very strong on the first two, but somewhat less so on the third element.

Agency for Education (EDUFI) received 78 delegations in 2017—it also provides extensive coverage of the Finnish education system on its web site. Another example is the City of Espoo (near Helsinki) that receives around 350 groups visiting its schools yearly—it recently issued a new brochure to facilitate these visits. Similarly, teacher education departments in universities have hundreds of visitors each year, especially in the Helsinki region. Policymakers, education experts and reformers across the world are seeking a dialogue with—and perhaps an inspiration from—their peers in an education system that international comparisons have shown to work.

Low- and lower middle-income countries are less represented on the annual visitor lists to MEC and EDUFI. While this may be because there is less demand from 'learning crisis' countries, it is also possible that these countries receive lower priority, especially if their delegation is not at a high official (ministerial) level. **We recommend, therefore, that, in collaboration with MEC and EDUFI, MFA explores cost-efficient ways of engaging interested low and lower middle-income countries in a dialogue with relevant Finnish education policymakers, officials and experts on key aspects of coherent education systems and their reform.**

Yet, institutions or education systems cannot be exported. As highlighted in the 2018 WDR, the need for coherence in the education system makes it risky to borrow system elements from other countries. As mentioned earlier, Finland's system gives considerable autonomy to municipalities, schools and its well-educated teachers, who can tailor their teaching to the needs of their students. But lower-performing systems that import Finland's teacher autonomy into their own contexts are likely to be disappointed: if teachers are poorly educated, unmotivated, and loosely managed, giving them even more autonomy is likely to make matters worse.

South Africa—one of Finland's partner countries in education in the 2000s—discovered this painfully when it adopted a curriculum approach that set goals but left implementation up to teachers. The approach failed because it proved to be a poor fit for the capacity of teachers and the resources at their disposal. In other words, this reform was not coherent with the rest of the South African education system (World Bank 2018).

In development cooperation, therefore, the local context must always come first and be the determining factor. Programs like the Service Delivery Indicators (sections 2.2 and 4.5) are particularly useful because they provide a concrete reality check from the ground and a stark reminder for external partners—like Finland—of how different education systems can be from one another. This needs to be kept in mind at all times.

3.2 A proposal for themes to focus on

Despite the above cautionary tale from South Africa, there are, nonetheless, important areas where Finland can help by stepping up its global role in education. Specifically, based on the evidence of the learning crisis, **we recommend that education quality and learning is chosen as the overarching theme for all Finnish development activities in the sector**. Moreover, based on various analyses of the Finnish education system (e.g., Niemi et al. 2016; Sahlberg 2015), as well as the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this report, **we recommend that Finland focuses on the following sub-themes**, when intensifying its global engagement in education, in particular when working with struggling education systems within which a considerable share of students is not learning:

1. **Supporting coherence of the entire education system;**
2. **Strengthening school leadership and teachers' professional development;**
3. **Collaborating on teacher education programs;**
4. **Supporting learner-focus in basic education; and**
5. **Sharing Finnish experiences in education reform, including the political context.**

Each of these sub-themes will require further development in terms of articulating the situation in 'learning crisis' countries in each domain ('stylized facts') and the directions to which Finland could take each sub-theme. Peer reviews from partner countries, as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders working in education would be critical for their success.

3.2.1 Coherence of the entire education system

Education systems comprise several sub-systems. Together they are sometimes referred to as 'educational ecosystem,' consisting of complex connections and processes which interact at different levels and with various actors in society. The educational ecosystem extends from childhood to adult education, covers national curricula, teacher education, evaluation systems, and life-long learning to ensure competences throughout one's whole life. As discussed earlier, the problem in many developing countries is that different parts of the educational ecosystem are incoherent or work in isolation. Borrowing one part from another country's system is unlikely to work unless it is coherent with the rest of the existing system.

For example, UNESCO identifies several system-wide aspects needed to make the teaching profession attractive. One is to predict the number of teachers needed at the system level, based on the estimated demand for schooling, the school-age population, gross enrolment rate, and the average pupil-teacher ratio. A shortage, as well as an oversupply, of teachers, are both damaging to the teaching profession. A shortage will lead to the use of unqualified teachers and an oversupply to unemployment, lowering the value of the profession and its ability to attract good applicants. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) focuses its support to the national education plans which are part of the financial assistance package on these types of system-wide issues (see also section 4.4).

A different example is the Finnish support system for learners that is boundary-crossing in the sense that local governments (municipalities) and schools take a larger role in children's wellbeing. This means a safe school environment, that children's safety is ensured to and from school, school lunch, and social and health services. Students with special needs are identified already at the pre-school stage or during the early grades in collaboration between class teachers and specialized teachers. Support is tailored based on the individual needs of the students, either on a temporary or permanent basis—the Finnish approach to inclusive education. Student dropout is prevented through collaboration between the teacher, student counselling services, and the parents.

To be sure, the Finnish model is not transferrable as such but the idea of services facilitating learning could be adapted to different conditions. Such a systemic reform would require multi-sectoral collaboration (which is often difficult in Finland, too) across the boundaries of different ministries—and would necessitate capacity building at all levels and across. And again, one needs to ask: Are these services a priority from the learning perspective in a given system/country and, if affirmative, are they coherent with what else is happening in the system?

The principle of system coherence is important to adopt in all Finnish aid in education. Education sector programs (see section 5.1) are one of the best available platforms to ensure system coherence in foreign aid. But system coherence is also relevant for girls' education, inclusive education, or mother tongue education which have been Finland's priorities. If, for example, there are no teachers able to teach in mother tongue, or no learning materials are available in it, then this priority is unlikely to contribute to learning. In all cases, it is important to ask whether the reform under consideration is coherent with the rest of the education system.

3.2.2 School leadership and teachers' professional development

As demonstrated by the Service Delivery Indicators (SDI), in many developing countries, especially in Africa, teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills are extremely weak (see sections 2.1.1 and 4.5). An obvious conclusion is that the existing cadre of teachers urgently needs in-service training. If the pre-service teacher education has been short or less relevant, teachers require additional training as well as opportunities to learn from their better-performing peers. For the latter to happen, principals need to step in and play an active role. And for this to happen, local and national officials have to see it as a priority as in-service training tends to be centrally organized in many countries—an aspect that would benefit from wider stakeholder participation and input.

Finland could consider a thematic approach to its support for in-service training of teachers and principals. However, to be effective, such a thematic program would require much thought and analytic work to underpin it. Why? Because there have been countless (donor-financed) in-service training programs for teachers which have not delivered as expected—often because they have not been coherent with the rest of the education system.

3.2.3 Teacher education

In many 'learning crisis' countries teacher education requires major reform. To be sure, teachers need theoretical knowledge and understanding. But if teacher education is only theory-based, as often is the case, teachers may not be able to apply their theoretical knowledge to practice. In many countries, rote learning continues to dominate teacher education.

Specifically, Finland could work with its bilateral partner countries and on multilateral forums to help find ways to connect theory and practice in teacher education. Teacher training schools is the Finnish way of implementing this approach. Again, we are not suggesting that this concept can be exported as such but that Finland could help explore ways to transition from theoretical teacher training only to more practice-oriented approach in which theory is integrated and applied.

Another important aspect in teacher education is gaining a good understanding of the curriculum as well as developing skills to apply it to the local context and the needs of learners.

3.2.4 Learner-focus in basic education

What does the learner-focus mean in practice? Let us take an example of curriculum design and reform. In many 'learning crisis' countries curriculum is centrally driven, developed with limited consultation with practitioners. With its bilateral partner countries and at multilateral forums Finland could help generate a shift towards increased teacher participation in curriculum development. Finland could share its own experiences in developing curricula in a broad consultation with society, including parents, students, the private sector, and others. In many low or lower middle-income countries this cannot be done through internet—like it was done in Finland recently—but locally appropriate ways could be found. It is the principle that counts here.

For this sub-theme to work, Finland should support practically oriented analytic work on approaches to curriculum design and reform—preferably to be peer reviewed by developing country practitioners—to help bring more rigor to it.

On a related topic of learning materials, Finland has a long tradition where academic content knowledge experts and teachers work together incorporating didactic and practical knowledge in textbooks and other learning materials. In developing countries teachers are rarely engaged in this work. Finland could promote more teacher engagement in the development of learning materials and teacher manuals. As in the case of curriculum design and reform, this would require analytical work to develop these ideas further and to make available relevant case studies and examples.

Learner-focused approach can also mean that different learners need different support and that difficulties in learning should be identified as early as possible. The approaches of special needs education and personalized learning are ways to ensure that all children achieve at least a minimum standard and that they can complete the primary level and continue to the next level. As discussed earlier, high performance of the Finnish education system is based on teacher competences and support systems that are tailored according to the intensity of support that learners need. While these principles can be shared in bilateral and multilateral contexts, they will require modification if and when applied.

3.2.5 Finnish experiences in education reform

Another area that policymakers and education experts from developing countries find interesting and relevant in the Finnish experience is education reform and the related political context. Given today's success, it is easy to forget that the road traveled in Finland was actually long and sometimes rocky. Success came only after a long period of reform. This is especially pertinent in development cooperation where results are often expected in a (far too) short time.

Perhaps the most important reform is the comprehensive basic school, *peruskoulu* in Finnish, introduced gradually from (remote) Lapland to the southern urban areas during the course of the 1970s. This major reform was preceded by serious political debates after WWII, sometimes quite bitter, several important multi-year education commissions, and even empirical studies. As highlighted by Sahlberg (2015), Finland's old system could barely hold together as parents wanted more and better education for their children in the 1950s and 1960s.

By 1970, the social policy climate had consolidated the values of equity and social justice across the entire society—and education played an important part in

making this happen. An example of non-governmental actors in the reform process was a primary teachers' association, an active supporter of the comprehensive basic school reform. Its reform proposal took five years to prepare and stimulated a national debate.

Therefore, rather than detail its successes today, Finland could usefully produce relevant (and comprehensive) case studies—or narratives—of its important educational reforms, including their political aspects. These should not only be for specialists but for a wider audience. They should be developed primarily with low and middle-income countries in mind. Using the 2018 WDR terminology, the main question in these case studies would be: How was Finland able to align various actors in society to make the entire system work for learning?

3.3 Education in Finnish development policy today

Finland's development policy programs (DPP) tend to be formulated from the scratch by each new government. They differ quite substantially in their overarching themes—policy coherence in 2004, sustainable development in 2007 and human rights in 2012. As the themes are high-level, if not lofty, they do not guide actual activities very well—almost any activity can be justified under the DPPs.

As pointed out by an evaluation of the DPPs (MFA 2015a), despite the different emphases of these policy documents, in practice, sectors, channels and instruments in Finnish aid have remained remarkably stable over time. How has there been such a disconnect between (changing) policy and (stable) practice?

First, the thematic disconnect from one DPP to the next is likely to reflect a situation where the DPP, by and large, is left for the Minister of International Development to handle. As the Minister has come from a different party in consecutive governments, the policy programs reflect his or her party's priorities—and even sometimes the Minister's own personal preferences. Stepping up Finland's global engagement in education, therefore, requires agreement across the political spectrum.

Box 2: Priority areas and corporate indicators in the 2016 development policy

Rights and status of women and girls are strengthened (SDG 5);
- Number (and percentage) of girls among students at first grade of secondary education
- Number of women and girls using sexual and reproductive health services

Economies have generated jobs, livelihood opportunities and well-being (SDGs 8, 9, 12);
- Number of private sector jobs supported
- Number of companies supported

Societies are more democratic and better functioning (SDGs 2, 6, 16, 17)
- Number of countries where support to democratization of parliamentary, party or local political decision-making bodies is provided
- Number of people who have received legal aid and the right to counsel
- Number and enrolment rate (%) of the students entering secondary education

Improved food security, access to water, energy & sustainable natural resource use (SDGs 7, 13, 15)
- Number of smallholder farmers and food producers that are reached by food security and productivity-enhancing measures
- Number of people benefiting from safe and sustainable water supply and sanitation systems
- Number of households with access to climate-resistant energy services
- Area covered by the use and/or protection of sustainable resources.

Source: MFA 2016

Second, the timescale of implementation also creates a disconnect. For most of its four-year tenure, the government implements an aid program that was designed by the previous government(s). Sometimes this can result in MFA staff and partners window-dressing projects and programs into a language more fitting with the current DPP (MFA 2015b).

The 2016 DPP represents perhaps more continuity than its predecessors but brought some change, nonetheless. While there is continued support for gender, democracy and the environment, there is also a new emphasis on the private sector and job creation, including how the Finnish economy stands to benefit from investments in developing countries. The policy defines four priority areas which are linked to 11 of the 17 SDGs (Box 2). It is notable that SDG 4 'achieving inclusive and equitable quality education for all' is not one of them.

DPPs mention the importance of comparative advantage, i.e., Finland's foreign aid should focus on areas where the country has internationally recognized expertise. While the principle of comparative advantage is evident, say, in the choice of forestry and water supply as focus sectors, education is hardly reflected at all in Finland's development policy—despite its global brand and strong reputation. To the outside world, Finland today is, first and foremost, known for its success in education.

As was the case in the previous DPPs, education is also hidden within the broad priority areas in the 2016 development policy. Of the selected 11 corporate results indicators two has to do with education, one under gender and the other under democracy. Interestingly, both of these indicators relate to secondary education (Box 2), perhaps reflecting the expansion that has taken place in access to primary schooling, as well as the importance of retention of students in the education system. Implications of the learning crisis are not yet reflected—not at least explicitly—in Finland's development policy or corporate indicators. Yet, poor learning outcomes have become a serious concern in a large number of developing countries, including Finland's long-term partner countries.

More generally, thematic leadership and management appear to be limited in Finnish aid. Programs and projects are implemented in 'instrument-related silos' as several interviewees put it. As this report argues for a strong thematic strategy and profile for Finland in education—its most important global brand—it would mean breaking these silos in one way or another. Thematic management requires that all education activities are looked at jointly from the perspective of Finland's goals and objectives, irrespective of the instrument or administrative unit.

Finland has not updated its education policy for development cooperation for more than a decade. Instead, it has operated on the basis of the broader DPPs discussed above. The last (unpublished) education policy was prepared in 2006 as an elaboration of the 2004 DPP. It prioritized universal primary education for all and, in particular, the promotion of girls' school attendance, inclusive education—disabilities, ethnic minorities, and mother tongue-based education—and technology. The policy paper also highlighted the importance of quality education. Interestingly, it stated that quality depends primarily on the skills and attitudes of teachers, the content of the curriculum, and the teaching materials available. A great deal of emphasis was placed on activities that support quality of education, especially teacher training and assessment of learning outcomes.

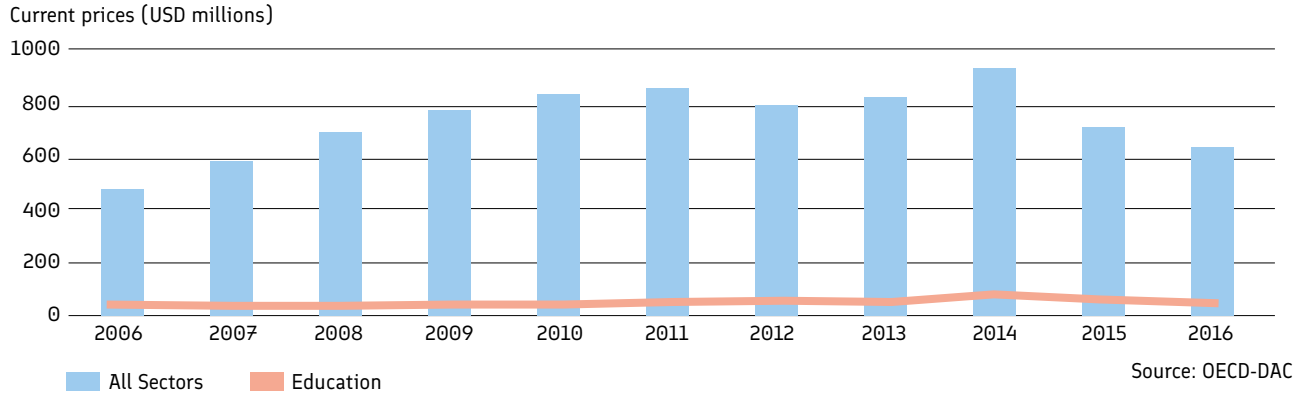
While the policy itself is dated, its education quality-related priorities remain relevant in terms of tackling the learning crisis. But the real test, of course, is how well these priorities have been reflected in the activities and what the results are on the ground. Sections 4, 5 and 6 explore the Finnish track record in this regard. **We recommend that MFA prepares a new education policy for development in consultation with relevant stakeholders and partners**.

3.3.1 Share of education in Finnish ODA

How much of Finnish aid has actually been disbursed for education? Figure 3 shows disbursements of Finnish bilateral official development assistance (ODA), as reported by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), for all sectors as well as those for education in 2006-16 (in current prices, USD millions). As can be seen, disbursements to education represents a small share of total disbursements.

Figure 3

Finnish ODA 2006–16, All Sectors and Education

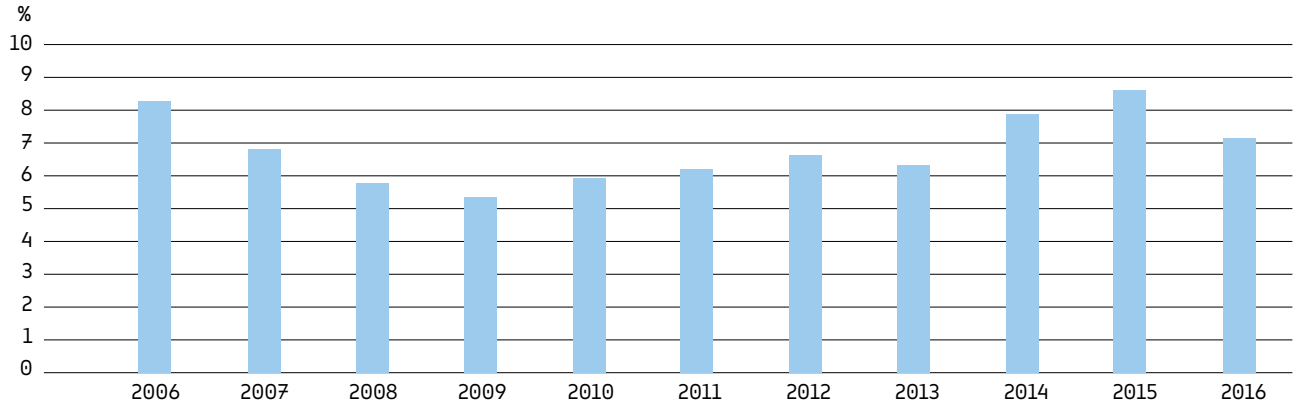


Source: OECD-DAC

Figure 4 depicts the share of education in total bilateral ODA disbursements – this time in percent – during the same period. As we can see, the share of education has, in any given year, stayed lower than 9 percent but higher than 5 percent of total bilateral ODA.

Figure 4

Share of education in total Finnish ODA

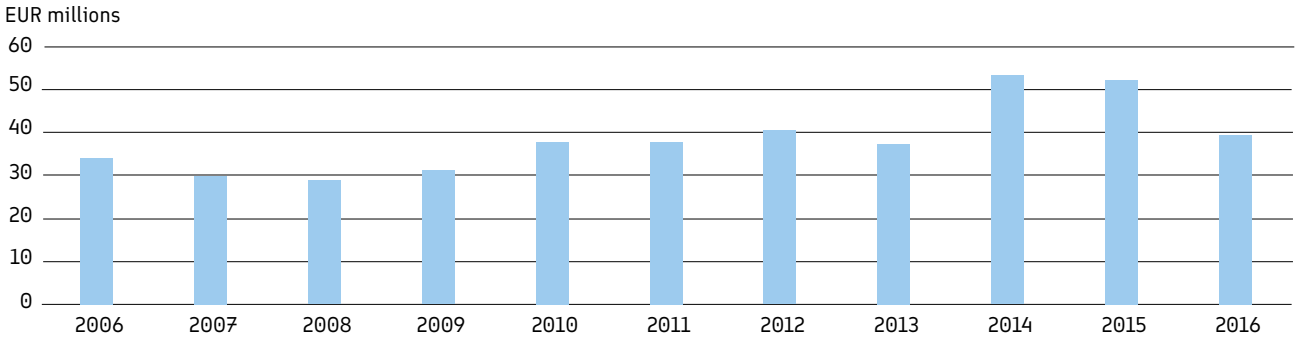


Source: OECD-DAC

Figure 5 depicts the annual disbursements to education in 2006-2016. They range between EUR30 million to EUR55 million per year (in constant 2010 prices).

Figure 5

Finnish ODA disbursement to education, 2006–2016



Source: MFA

As a point of comparison, we looked at Denmark's – another Nordic country of similar size – foreign aid to education in 2012-16. It was EUR112 million per year, on average, ranging between EUR200 million and EUR50 million per year (current prices). During the same period, Finland's average aid to education was EU53 million (current prices).

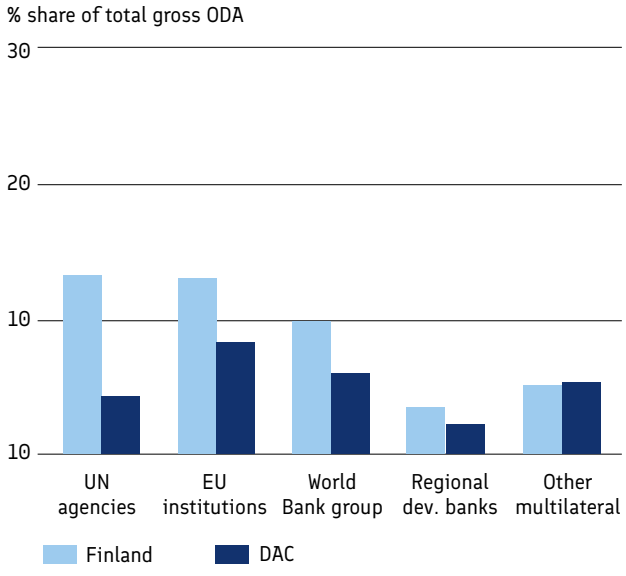
4. Multilateral efforts to address the learning crisis

Many new ideas in international education are discussed in global meetings and then taken 'back home.' Therefore, if Finland wants to put its world-class educational expertise into use to help combat the learning crisis, multilateral platforms are critical. This section reviews key multilateral forums in education and how Finland participates in them—or not. These are UN organizations, the EU, international financial institutions, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and international research programs which generating global public goods in terms of addressing the learning crisis. At the end, we also discuss Finnish humanitarian aid and education.

Figure 6 offers a big picture in terms of Finnish official development assistance (ODA) flows to multilateral agencies as percentage share of the country's total gross ODA in 2015. Multilateral agencies represented 45 percent of total Finnish ODA flows in 2015.

Figure 6

ODA flows to multilaterial agencies



Source: OECD DAC

4.1 UN organizations

Of the United Nations (UN) agencies, Finland works mostly with UNESCO and UNICEF in education.[4] While UNESCO is the principal UN educational organization, it is less operational or active in development cooperation on the ground. UNICEF instead is an action and field-oriented organization.

Finland was elected to the Executive Board of **UNESCO** for the term 2017-21. During the election campaign, Finland's goals as Board member included issues related to the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, peace building, education, cultural heritage, elimination of doping in sports, science cooperation, including climate change, and access to information. In general, the goals were broad and high-level. However, there was no mention about the grim reality of the learning crisis which is affecting a large part of the developing world. It threatens to divide the world into two: those who enjoy excellent education and those who don't learn even the basic skills. **We recommend that Finland takes the learning crisis as a key area of focus as a Board member and works with others to help find solutions to it.**

There are several UNESCO Chairs in Finland,[5] as well as an UNITWIN/UNESCO Network[6] on teacher education, led by the University of Lapland. Finland recently joined the International Teachers Task Force for Education led by UNESCO. Finn Church Aid is also its member.

[4] Currently, cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) does not include education. In the mid-2000s, UNDP implemented a bilingual/multilingual education project in Central America with Finnish funding (see also section 5.2).

[5] However, these are funded by the hosting Finnish universities.

[6] Launched in 1992, the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Program, which involves over 700 institutions in 116 countries, promotes international inter-university cooperation and networking to enhance institutional capacities through knowledge sharing and collaborative work. The program supports the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in key priority areas related to UNESCO's fields of competence, i.e., in education, the natural and social sciences, culture and communication.

Finland provides limited project-based (multi-bi) funding through UNESCO in Afghanistan for literacy and in Myanmar for strengthening of pre-service teacher education (see section 5.1).

UNICEF, which provides multi-sector humanitarian and development assistance to children and mothers across the developing world, is another UN organization that works in education. There has been a sharp shift in UNICEF's work in favor of education programs in conflict-affected countries and emergency situations—humanitarian assistance is 40 percent of its total budget. UNICEF is a temporary host of the *Education Cannot Wait* fund (UNICEF 2017; see also section 4.6). Its priorities include equity and bridging the humanitarian-development divide.

In the area of technology and innovations in education Finland has supported UNICEF's innovation fund designed to finance early stage, open-source technology that can benefit children. In 2015 UNICEF organized a joint program with the annual Slush start-up event in Helsinki. UNICEF has also been implementing a multi-bi project funded by Finland for education and humanitarian response in Palestinian territories and a water and sanitation project in schools in Afghanistan (see section 5.2 for past UNICEF multi-bi projects).

UNICEF relies on contributions from governments and private donors. Its annual budget, worldwide, ranges between USD5 and USD7 billion. Disbursements for education were USD1.2 billion in 2017. Finland's annual contribution to UNICEF fell from USD20 million to USD5.5 million owing to the cuts in Finnish ODA in 2016. **We recommend that Finland restores its support to UNICEF to the previous level or beyond**, as UNICEF's action- and field-oriented education operations—and its other work for mothers and children—are very much in line with Finnish priorities.

4.2 The European Union

The European Union (EU) is a 'superpower' in development cooperation. Its partners include around 160 countries, regions and organizations in various parts of the world. In 2015, the EU and its member states allocated approximately EUR68 billion to development cooperation. This accounts for more than half of all ODA globally, of which over EUR10 billion was channeled through the EU's own agencies.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are responsible for designing the EU's development policy and delivering its aid. The EU has 140 missions and offices in different countries across the globe. They are responsible for managing and monitoring its aid programs in the partner countries.

Development cooperation is one of the shared competencies. This means that the EU and each of its member states practice their own development cooperation and development policies. They are complements and support each other. The member states agree among themselves on the common practices and principles that guide the implementation of development policy in all EU member states. Finland presumably plays a part in this process.

In 2017, the EU and its member states signed a statement on the EU development policy, the European Consensus on Development. Its primary goal is poverty eradication, and it is based on the UN Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). While it reiterates the EU's commitment to education for all as a prerequisite for youth employability and long-lasting development, there is no mention of the learning crisis in this blueprint.

The European Commission directorate-general for humanitarian assistance (ECHO) recently announced that it aims to increase its funding to education from 6 percent in 2017 to 10 percent in 2019 and to help improve delivery of education in emergencies and protracted crises.

According to MFA, Finland plays a role at various levels in the EU's development policy:

- The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development attends the Foreign Affairs Council when it meets to take decisions on development related issues.
- In the preparation of decisions that are adopted in the Council of Ministers Finland participates in working parties' meetings at senior official level. These include the Working Party on Development Cooperation (CODEV) and the ACP Working Party, which concentrates on cooperation with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.
- Finland is involved in the implementation and monitoring of development cooperation projects and programs by working in the committees responsible for the financing instruments.

The Department for Development Policy in MFA has the primary responsibility for the preparation and coordination of Finnish positions related to the EU's development policy and information to Parliament (*Eduskunta*).

In its 2014–20 program, the EU support to education totals EUR4.7 billion in 40 partner countries, at least half of which are fragile. At **country level**, the EU promotes a joint response strategy with member states based on partners' own development strategies. It coordinates regular meetings among member states at the country level. The EU prioritizes a whole sector approach, from early childhood to higher education, including non-formal education and technical and vocational training. According to its policy statements, the EU is shifting the focus from access to quality and equity issues in education.

At **regional level**, the EU finances higher education programs, such as Erasmus+. One key aim of higher education is to take able students to the stage where they can contribute to the national development of their country; this level of education is crucial for building a strong human capital base—training professionals such as teachers, doctors and engineers.

At **global level**, the EU is supporting the Global Partnership for Education (GPE; see section 4.4), 'the only existing global partnership in the sector.' One of the key priorities of the EU-GPE partnership is education in fragile and conflict-affected states, by contributing to building capacity and to capitalizing on the potential role of education in reducing conflict and building stability.

What is remarkable—in the context of this report—is the complete lack of any references to the EU's development cooperation in education either in the documentation we have reviewed or during the over 60 in-depth interviews we carried out. This is despite the fact that almost 15 percent of gross Finnish ODA went to the EU institutions in 2015 (Figure 6). This silence is puzzling. Yet, in financial terms, the EU is one of the largest donors globally—but less so in terms of strategic leadership. It leads us to think that, in education, the EU offers a major forum for Finland to influence and contribute to. **We recommend, therefore, that Finland prioritizes education in its EU engagement in development cooperation, becomes a much more active member state in this regard, and provides substantive and strategic leadership in helping address the learning crisis in the EU context.**

4.3 International financial institutions

International financial institutions (IFIs)[7] provide important global and regional forums for dialogue on education and are the largest external financiers of education in the world.[8] Increasingly, Finland has focused on education in the policy dialogue in the World Bank Board, those of regional development banks, and in the IDA[9] replenishment process. It also engages—through trust funds and secondments—in the operational work on education with IFIs. In a number of cases (e.g., Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal) Finland is co-funding education sector programs, where the World Bank is a key partner, as well as seconding a mid-career level specialist on inclusive education to its headquarters.

An interesting example of Finland's collaboration with the World Bank on education is the 2018 World Development Report (WDR) on learning. MFA provided significant funding for background analyses. Apart from the Board discussions, MEC and MFA provided regular feedback directly to the WDR team. The two Ministries invited the WDR team to Finland to familiarize themselves with the Finnish education system. Mr. Olli-Pekka Heinonen, Director General at the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) was a member of its global advisory panel. To follow up, the World Bank Senior Director for education and his team visited Finland in May 2018 to learn, first-hand, about the Finnish education system and look for opportunities for further collaboration.

Another example of Finland's advocacy on education is the Asian Development Bank. Education is one of the key sectors in the AsDB Strategy 2020, approved in 2008, but these investments were small in the early years of implementation. Finland, therefore, with some other countries, successfully advocated during the mid-term review for the share of education investments to be increased to 6-10 percent of the total portfolio by 2020. As the target remains off-track, this issue continues to be an important item on Finland's agenda in the Bank's annual meetings and the dialogue with its senior management. MFA funded technical assistance for AsDB on innovation and education in 2013-17 and is currently preparing another education secondment.

[7] Also referred to as multilateral development banks (MDBs).
[8] Finnish direct financial support to IFIs was EUR105 million in 2017.
[9] International Development Association, the World Bank Group's highly concessional financing window for the poorest countries.

Regarding the other regional development banks, Finland recently had an education secondment in the Inter-American Development Bank, while planning is underway for a contribution to the African Development Bank's for implementation of its youth employment strategy, including vocational education and skills.

In brief, IFIs offer many opportunities for an expanded and influential role for Finland as an education partner—and Finland has begun to make a good use of these opportunities. However, financial resources and availability of top education specialists with strong international experience put limits to Finland's ability to scale up its influence.

4.4 The Global Partnership for Education

As UNESCO is less of an implementing agency, donor countries and agencies have set up other multilateral vehicles for channeling substantial financial support to education in developing countries. The principal one is the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

GPE leverages the financial support from donors to strengthen education systems in developing countries. It helps governments finance the implementation of comprehensive education sector plans that aim to improve equity and learning. The template of these plans originates from the UNESCO-affiliated International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP). In allocating its major grants, GPE primarily supports poor countries with high numbers of out-of-school children and low school completion rates—around half of GPE's developing country partners are fragile and/or conflict-affected. Disbursements of GPE grants in 2015-17 were USD1.43 billion.

GPE's Board consists of donor countries, recipient country representatives, and representatives of IFIs, foundations, and the private sector. Finland is part of a joint constituency with Norway, Ireland and United Arab Emirates.[10] Currently, the largest GPE donors are the EU and the UK. Based on our interviews, the EU's contribution to technical dialogue appears to be limited, while the UK is very active in shaping the policies of the GPE. Operational agencies, such as the World Bank and UNICEF, monitor implementation of the GPE grants. Around one hundred staff work in the GPE Secretariat in Washington, D.C. Only one of them is a Finn who had previously participated in the EU's young professional program.

Finland was a member of GPE's predecessor Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) but did not participate in its multilateral Catalytic Fund. Instead, Finland supported education directly in its bilateral partner countries, often in collaboration with EFA-FTI at the country level. In the context of the EFA-FTI there used to be working groups and regular education expert meetings under UNESCO and others but these have gradually been phased out. Substantive education dialogue globally now takes place in GPE, increasingly focused on the learning crisis.

In 2014 Finland joined the GPE briefly and provided a small amount of funding (USD7.5 million, or 0.5 percent of the total) for the second round of replenishment (2015-17). However, despite the ad hoc funding, GPE was not seen as part of any MFA-wide strategy, let alone a national effort to influence the education agenda globally. Beyond the MFA education advisers, there was no broader ownership in GPE in Finland.

Against this background, it is not surprising that Finland did not attend GPE's third replenishment event (for 2018-20) held in Senegal in February 2018,[11] especially given the cuts in its aid budget in recent years. Only Finn Church Aid was present in Senegal. Similarly, while Finland could participate in the GPE activities even without making a financial contribution, MFA has chosen not to do so due to limited human and technical resources.

If Finland opts to step up its global role in education, it is important also to step up participation in multilateral education forums. Why? First, because for a small country with a moderate aid budget and limited human resources, multilateral channels make most economic sense. In that way, one avoids incurring the fixed costs of building separate bilateral aid delivery mechanisms. Countries like Denmark, Ireland and Switzerland use this approach. Second, because multilateral forums multiply Finland's voice

[10] Every country in a joint constituency can participate in the Board meetings even if it is not the designated Board member or alternate at the time.

[11] Donors pledged USD2.3 billion for GPE, while the participating developing countries agreed to allocate a total of USD110 billion for education in their national budgets for 2018-2020.

and influence. As we have seen from the countless study tours to Finland, the world is incredibly interested in its experience and voice in education. As many international interviewees for this report commented, Finland stands out as 'a huge success story and role model in education' and its reforms over the past decades are considered to be of great interest to developing countries.

GPE would be an obvious choice for Finland's participation as the priority multilateral education forum, given its pre-eminence in the education dialogue globally and importance as a financing vehicle for low-income and conflict countries in the sector. **We recommend that Finland joins the GPE as a funder and an active member, including sharing its own experience and making use of its international credibility in education**. But given the past experience, Finland's membership in the GPE would need to be owned by MFA. Once this is achieved, it would be important to engage with MEC and EDUFI to build a broader consensus. Other relevant stakeholders are Finnish universities and CSOs. More generally, the learning crisis—and Finnish development cooperation—need to be integrated in Finland's broader international education agenda.

4.5 Global public goods

The 2018 World Development Report on learning is an example of a global public good—a knowledge product in this case—to help the whole world to focus on an important development challenge and discuss solutions to it. As mentioned earlier, Finland participated both in (partially) funding this global public good and offering its own experience and expertise to the report's preparation. In recent years, UNESCO and the Education Commission have produced similar influential reports that are shaping education dialogues and policies globally and at the country level.

A number of international research endeavors are underway to generate global public goods to help address the learning crisis. The largest of them is the Research on Improving Systems of Education or RISE, a multi-country research program that seeks to understand how school systems in the developing world can overcome the learning crisis and deliver better learning for all.

RISE aims to generate research that evaluates large-scale system reforms on the basis of their impact

Box 3: A new lower middle-income country financing facility for education

A new financing facility has recently been proposed by the Education Commission, complementing the efforts of the GPE and the Education Cannot Wait fund (see section 4.6). It is based on an innovation that is expected to generate new and additional financing for education in lower middle-income countries (LMIC). Specifically, it will leverage new financing through guarantees provided by contributing countries. The facility will make its guarantee base available to multilateral development banks (MDBs)–the African, Asian, and Inter-American Development Banks, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the World Bank–only if they use it to leverage and make available new and additional financing for education in eligible countries.

By using grant aid contributed to the facility, the terms of this money can be reduced to very concessional terms, making the new financing attractive for educational investment. To access this funding, countries will need to have a credible education sector plan; ability to take on additional lending through the MDBs; agree to prioritize education within its national budget and increase its domestic education budget if necessary; and adopt results-based approaches.

Source: Education Commission

on student learning and equity in learning. It aims to offer explanations for why reforms succeed or fail, and to build a community of practice of local and international researchers, teachers, policymakers and other education practitioners to ensure they have access to the most relevant, up-to-date research. The study countries are Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Tanzania, and Vietnam. As many other similar global public goods, RISE is mainly funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom.[12] Australia has also joined RISE and the Gates Foundation is considering its participation. RISE's research outputs are freely available to all on its web site.

Another example of a global public good is the Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) mentioned earlier. SDI is a set of education indicators[13] that examine what teachers know and do, as well as the availability of key inputs. These indicators —collected using school surveys, observation and testing of students and teachers—include school absence rates, classroom absence rates, time spent on teaching, teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and school inputs.

SDI has been collected mostly in Africa over the past decade, covering nearly 400 million people through nationally representative surveys. The SDI provides a set of metrics to act as benchmarks for the performance of schools. Its indicators can be used to track progress within and across countries over time. Through monitoring of service delivery the goal is to improve accountability and governance. The partnership supporting SDI includes the World Bank, Hewlett Foundation, DFID, and the African Economic Research Consortium in Nairobi.

Global public goods, including RISE and SDI, aim to generate detailed diagnoses of the learning—and teaching—crisis. RISE also analyzes 'therapeutics,' i.e., reform experiences in its study countries. As said, these results are freely available for all, including Finnish development cooperation. **We recommend that Finland actively participates in these efforts**. If it is not possible to provide funding to them, at minimum, Finnish aid should take full advantage of their findings.

4.6 Humanitarian aid and education

According to UNICEF 75 million children do not receive education as a consequence of crises and emergencies. About half of refugee children do not go to school and the share is much higher for girls. Education, therefore, needs to be an increasingly important part of today's humanitarian response.

Finland's humanitarian assistance is channeled mostly through multilateral (UN) agencies. However, funding for education in humanitarian settings goes mainly through Finnish CSOs.[14] Allocations are based on annual applications and the CSO's particular expertise. Finn Church Aid, which has developed considerable experience in education in emergencies, is the main channel in 2018 (EUR2.9 million allocated for its humanitarian education projects in Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Jordan and Uganda). FCA also extends implementation services for UN agencies and the EU (ECHO) in the field.

Previously, Finland provided humanitarian assistance for education through UNICEF. However, due to recent budget cuts, this is no longer the case.[15] Over the past several years, Finland has funded (EUR12.5 million) the No Lost Generation Initiative in the Middle East and North Africa region through UNICEF in support of children and youth affected by the Syrian and Iraqi humanitarian crises.

We recommend that, as part of the process to formulate a new education policy for Finnish foreign aid, full consideration is given to education in crises, emergencies and humanitarian assistance. In that context, it would be important to consider participation in the *Education Cannot Wait* initiative (Box 4), as well as expanding the role of Finnish professional CSOs in this area.

[12] RISE budget is over GBP40 million for 8 years. Another large international education research program DFID is investing in (GBP20 million in 8 years) is a global multi-disciplinary evidence hub on education technology to answer questions like: What works to spread and scale up education technology interventions to deliver better learning outcomes for the poorest children in developing countries? Which education technology interventions present the greatest value for money? In addition, two new research programs are currently being designed with a focus on developing countries, one on early childhood development and the other on education in conflict.

[13] Health services are also included but not discussed here.

[14] ODA through CSOs is considered bilateral aid in the OECD-DAC aid statistics.

[15] Finland continues to fund the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which in turn provides financing to UNICEF in sudden or underfunded humanitarian emergencies.

Box 4: Education Cannot Wait

Education Cannot Wait was established during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 by international humanitarian and development aid actors, along with public and private donors, to help reposition education as a priority on the humanitarian agenda, usher in a more collaborative approach among actors on the ground and foster additional funding to ensure that crisis-affected children and young people can go to school and learn.

Day-to-day work is managed by a Secretariat that is hosted within UNICEF as the initiative is incubating and scaling up. UNICEF helped mobilize USD170 million for the Education Cannot Wait fund for its first year. A high-level steering group provides overall strategic direction and is comprised of partner organizations, including heads of government and senior ministers from crisis-affected and donor countries, as well as heads of multilateral agencies, NGOs and foundations.

Source: http://www.educationcannotwait.org/; UNICEF 2017

5. What can Finland achieve through its bilateral programs?

The massive expansion in access to basic education in low and lower middle-income countries is also reflected in Finnish aid. Earlier bilateral education projects—such as a practical subjects project in Zambia in the 1980s or a special needs education project in Ethiopia in the 1990s—have given way to participation in joint education sector programs. In these programs donors pool their funds at the national level, often together with the government that typically covers at least 80-90 percent of the total cost.

Sector programs allow a focus on the entire education system, reduce overlap and duplication of donor interventions, and offer a regular platform for dialogue and progress reporting between donors and government. Especially for a relatively small donor like Finland, with limited staff on the ground, it is a great way to keep up, as well as to contribute its own experience.

5.1 Education partner countries today

Finland supports national-level **education sector programs** in six low or lower middle-income countries, including participation in regular joint reviews and working groups.[16] In addition, technical assistance is provided in select areas, typically in inclusive education. Two of the six sector programs are in Africa (Ethiopia and Mozambique), three in fragile states in Asia (Afghanistan, Myanmar and Nepal), and one is in the Middle East (Palestinian territories). Cooperation in one of the countries dates back to the 1980s (Ethiopia), in three countries to the 1990s (Mozambique, Nepal and Palestinian territories), while one is more recent (Myanmar). Ukraine is a brand new education partner country where Finland is about to start a bilateral project.

Ethiopia is one of Finland's long-term development partners. Support to education is provided through a sector program implemented since 2009 (Box 5). The sector program has in many ways been successful. Among other things, it has contributed towards the important gender goal of Finnish aid, i.e., girls reaching (near) gender parity in primary education.[17] A full-time education adviser in the Finnish embassy in Addis Ababa participates in monitoring of the sector program, together with a locally-recruited education specialist. EDUFI has in the past provided technical support, but currently there is no such arrangement in place.

As discussed in Box 5, Finland took the lead in designing the equity component of the third phase of the sector program (GEQIP-E) and will play a key role in its implementation. An additional Finnish technical assistance project (EUR0.8 million) is being finalized to support it. Finland is co-chairing with the Ministry of Education the joint development partner-government coordination group (Education Technical Working Group) and is part of the Equity Task Force.

[16] To be specific, four are government-development partner education sector programs in the full sense of the term (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Palestinian Territories), while two others are programs which are jointly funded by several donors (Afghanistan, Myanmar).

[17] In the second four-year phase the Finnish financial support was close to EUR20 million, while in the third phase it is around EURI7 million.

Box 5: General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) in Ethiopia

Over the past decade, Ethiopia has significantly improved the quality of teaching and learning conditions in 40,000 primary and secondary schools across the country. Education sector programs GEQIP I and II provided nearly 250 million textbooks to schools, helped upgrade the qualifications of 300,000 teachers, provided resources for school-level expenditure on quality improvements, and improved accountability through an inspection system. The program has substantially contributed to increasing school enrollment.

Building on the results achieved under the first two phases, the third phase of the sector program, GEQIP-E, focuses on equity–Finland's long-term priority in Ethiopia. GEQIP-E shifts the focus to attainment of results, by improving teaching practices in the classroom, enhancing the use of textbooks, and ensuring that school grants are used to implement school improvement plans. GEQIP-E, funded by the World Bank, DFID, Finland, and UNICEF (USD440 million for 2018-22), also helps address the high primary school dropout rates, as well as the low and stagnating secondary school enrollment rates.

On the donor side, design of the equity component of GEQIP-E was led by Finland. It puts special emphasis on addressing the needs of female students, pastoralists, and those with special needs or disabilities. Among other things, GEQIP-E empowers girls, helps reduce violence against them in schools and provides them with life skills. Similarly, it addresses the unique needs of pastoralist communities with additional resources and customized approaches. The project promotes the inclusion of children with special needs in education by providing supplementary school grants to transform 687 schools to inclusive education resource centers.

GEQIP-E is being implemented in all public primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia. In total, 27 million students and 520,000 teachers in 35,000 public schools are expected to benefit from the program which is being implemented by the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation, the Regional Education Bureaus, and the participating universities and teacher training institutions across the country.

Source: The World Bank; MFA

As we saw earlier, schooling does not necessarily eliminate female illiteracy. But, according to available evidence, Ethiopia is a low-income country that is able to translate schooling into learning—and financing into results. In Ethiopia, when girls are able to go to school, they actually learn basic skills. If all women were able to complete six years of schooling in Ethiopia, there would be a dramatic reduction in female illiteracy, from 82 percent to 25 percent (Pritchett and Sandefur 2017; see also section 2.3.2).[18]

Finland has supported special needs and inclusive education in Ethiopia through bilateral projects for the past three decades. This has included technical assistance in special needs pedagogy for teacher education colleges, as well as assistance to 21 (out of 113) inclusive education resource centers.[19] Finnish aid has helped train almost all Ethiopian graduate-level specialists in this topic. Finnish participation in the sector program has helped raise awareness of special needs and inclusive education at the national level (Nielsen et al. 2015). As discussed in Box 5, this approach has now been mainstreamed in Ethiopia, including the donor-supported sector program (GEQIP-E).

[18] For comparison, in Nigeria, if all women were able to complete grade six, female illiteracy would decline only from 58 to 53 percent.

[19] Ethiopia has been moving from a model of having separate special schools for children with disabilities to using these schools as resource centers with itinerant teachers who are supposed to help children with special educational needs integrate into regular classrooms.

Mozambique is another long-term development partner. Education funding (EUR8-9 million per year) represents 70 percent of Finland's total bilateral program and is provided through a common sector fund. A full-time education adviser is placed in the embassy in Maputo, and a local education specialist in being recruited.

Domestic and external resources have made it possible for Mozambique to increase primary enrollment, from 1.8 million children in 1998 to 6.8 million in 2016—a big leap forward. However, as shown by the SDI data ((see section 2.1.1), the learning environment remains very poor. After more than three years of compulsory language teaching, four out of five students in Mozambique cannot read simple words in Portuguese. No language teacher possesses a minimum knowledge of Portuguese equivalent to 80 percent of the fourth-grade curriculum. Given high teacher absence rates, the national average of time spent teaching is only 1 hour 43 minutes per day instead of the scheduled 4 hours 21 minutes.

Finland has to prioritized on mother tongue-based education in an effort to improve learning. The Mozambican Ministry of Education made primary education fully multilingual in 2017, with children in the first two years of school being taught in 16 Mozambican languages. While these efforts may have a positive impact on learning, so much more—system-wide—needs to be done to improve education quality and learning for all in Mozambique.

Afghanistan. Finland's support to education (EUR4.3 million in 2015), especially girls' education, is provided through the World Bank-managed joint education program.[20] There has been much progress: enrollment has increased from 1 million students in 2001 to 9 million in 2013—and almost 40 percent are girls. Multi-bi projects are implemented by UNICEF (water and sanitation in schools) and UNESCO (literacy programs) with Finnish funding. Multilateral channels are a cost-efficient way of delivering aid in a conflict country like Afghanistan.

Myanmar is a newcomer as Finland's long-term partner country. Education cooperation (EUR1.5 million in 2017) began with Save the Children Finland's early childhood education project. Finland participates in a local and school-level education program managed by the World Bank and, as mentioned in section 4.1, supports teacher training institutions through UNESCO. Myanmar is preparing its first education sector plan and grant proposal for the GPE which—together with the EU's education sector reform contract—would allow Finland and other development partners to assess the feasibility of a full sector program. An education adviser works in the embassy in Yangon. However, as often is the case, the adviser has many other responsibilities as well. This could make it difficult for Finland to assume more of a leadership role, such as chairing the education sector working group.

Nepal is another long-term partner country where a comprehensive education sector program has received financial support since the late-1990s (EUR43 million allocated for 2009-20). Finland has also provided technical assistance for student assessment for the Ministry of Education, an important element in improving learning (Caldecott et al. 2012). A Finnish education adviser and a local education specialist work in the embassy in Kathmandu. In addition, a bilateral project is underway, managed by Niras Finland, on supporting integration of soft skills in general school system and introduction of counseling in schools (with the total budget of EUR1.7 million in 2016-19).). Integration of soft skills in the basic education curriculum has given an opportunity for close collaboration of Finnish experts with the Nepalese curriculum center.

In **Palestinian territorie**s Finnish support to education (EUR25 million since the late-1990s) also shifted to a sector program in 2010. The long-term collaboration with the Palestinian authorities has helped build trust and a strong relationship. Finland serves as the current chair of the sector working group together with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, as well as the chair of the early childhood education thematic group. Additional Finnish support is channeled through UNICEF and UNRWA. An education adviser works in the Representative Office of Finland in Ramallah as head of cooperation (and thus covers other sectors as well), with a locally-recruited education specialist. Education consultants have also supported the Finnish engagement over the years, while an earlier bilateral project was managed by Finnish Consulting Group (FCG).

Ukraine is a newcomer as a partner country and was active in seeking a partnership with Finland in education. The Finnish support (EUR7 million) will be provided to basic education reforms, including in-service teacher training, teaching materials and

[20] As part of a larger reconstruction trust fund.

communications. An education adviser is about to start in the embassy in Kiev. Finland is also overseeing the mother tongue-based education component in the EU's education program in Ukraine.

It is worth noting that in our interviews in MEC, Ukraine was enthusiastically mentioned as an example of good collaboration between MEC and MFA in the context of development cooperation. Unfortunately, the other bilateral partner countries in education do not benefit from similar collaboration between the two ministries. In fact, there are few links between MEC and the education advisors working in the Finnish embassies abroad. This should be easy—and important—to change.

Based on the experience and strong results on the ground, **we recommend that, in its bilateral partner countries, Finland continues and intensifies its financial and technical support to education sector programs and assumes a leadership role when feasible and appropriate**. In addition, Finland should find ways of increasing opportunities for professional exchanges between Finnish and developing country educators—both in the long-term partner countries and beyond—with a focus on education quality and learning. This would require setting up a flexible mechanism to tap into Finnish expertise in education (often short-term), particularly in the areas outlined in section 3.2.

5.2 Education projects in the past

In **Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru** a bilingual intercultural education project was implemented in 2004–12 by UNICEF as a multi-bi project, working with indigenous groups who live in the most remote and poorest areas in the Amazon. Its evaluation found a significant positive impact of the program on development of learning materials, awareness, and research in each country, but little classroom level impact in terms of improved participation or learning, and deteriorating political support in one of the countries (Ecuador).[21]

In **Namibia**, education collaboration dates back for more than 150 years when Finnish missionaries established the first schools in then-Ovamboland. Before independence a large number of students sent by SWAPO studied in Finnish universities over many years. Many of them have since been in important positions in independent Namibia. Given that Namibia is an upper middle income country, it is no longer a bilateral aid recipient. Recently, an institutional cooperation project focused on basic education (teachers, curriculum, management) and vocational education. Finnish partners were MEC, EDUFI, and the University of Oulu. Namibia has also recently sent a group of teachers for training in Finland on a commercial basis (see section 7 on education exports).

In **Nicaragua** the Finnish education assistance in 2000-04 (EUR2.8 million) was targeted to bilingual/ multilingual intercultural education to improve quality of basic education on the Caribbean coast. Subsequently, the UNDP implemented a similar project in Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras in 2005-08 with Finnish funding (EUR2.4 million).

In the 2000s a program in **South Africa** supported, among other things, teacher education in Northern Cape and Mpumalanga, and promoted ICT in teaching as well as special education, both through pilot schools. Inclusive education was also the focus of collaboration with the National Department of Education, as well as the provincial education departments. The idea of inclusive education was relatively new in South Africa at the time. Several Finnish and locally-recruited education specialists worked on the program together with the Universities of Eastern Finland, Helsinki, Lapland and Oulu, while the project was managed by Helsinki Consulting Group Ltd.

In **Tanzania** education was one of the main sectors of cooperation for a long time, with a focus on fast-expanding primary education since the 1990s. In the 2000s inclusive education projects were added. For more than a decade, Finland was part of the budget support group of donors (considerably benefiting the education sector), as well as basket funding to sub-sector program in primary education. However, education is no longer part of Finland's bilateral program.

Western Balkans. Finland supported several projects in education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, following the ethnic conflict and war in the region in the 1990s. Most of these projects, implemented in 1999-2007, focused on special education or inclusive education, and teacher training in the inclusive education context. Serbia was an exception, with primary focus on teacher education.

[21] This project is one of the case studies in the evaluation of inclusive education in Finland's development cooperation from 2004–2013 (Castro and Pallais 2015).

In **Zambia** Finland supported the education sector from the 1970s until 2007. A decision to become more selective in terms of sectors ended this long-term cooperation in education. Since the early-1990s bilateral projects included school infrastructure, special needs/inclusive education, HIV/AIDS prevention, capacity building and technical assistance. Direct financial support was given to a joint basic education investment program through pool funding. A consortium of Finnish companies and institutions provided support services: the University of Jyväskylä, Plancenter Ltd., and the Niilo Mäki Institute.

5.3 Evidence from evaluations

The last comprehensive education sector evaluation was carried out in 2004.[22] While dated, it is interesting to take a look at it as practices in Finnish aid change relatively slowly. The picture that emerged then was characterized as 'varied, multi-dimensional and not without paradoxes' (Sack et al. 2004). In financial terms, overall, Finland was found to be a small partner. But in substantive terms it had 'well-targeted accomplishments, underexploited potential and delivery practices that have improved continuously.' The evaluation team considered Finland's (then new) PISA success as a major asset which offered real potential for Finland to assume a larger role in international education.[23] But it was underexploited due to lack of education professionals in development cooperation.

Indeed, the evaluation team was struck by the fact that the MFA had only one education professional at the time. This scarcity was seen as severely limiting the extent to which Finland's voice could be heard both internationally and within its partner countries. By voice the team meant speaking up, initiating and taking lead in promoting informed dialogue around selected issues within the group of peers and partners. This would be done with a clear understanding of the pedagogical, social and other processes that, together, characterize an education system, and of the fact that in most partner countries this system would be at a different stage of development. Interestingly, many of these conclusions are still valid today.

At the time of the evaluation, a paradigm shift in the delivery of development assistance was beginning to take place—from the project approach to sector-wide approaches—and Finland was participating in this shift, e.g., in Mozambique, Nepal and Zambia. Therefore, the 2004 evaluation went beyond MFA as an individual player and looked into how it played in this larger concert, and what discrete contributions MFA brought to it. Finland's bilateral aid delivery practices had improved as a result—Zambia was highlighted as an example. Finnish aid was found to be on the top of the list in terms of 'ownership.'

The staffing situation has much improved since then. Today six embassies have assigned (Finnish) advisors who work in education either full-time or as part of their duties. Four of the advisors are education specialists by training. In addition there are four locally-recruited education specialists in key embassies. As discussed in section 5.1, sector programs are now well-established and, for a relatively small donor like Finland, their regular reviews provide a convenient platform for active participation.

Given that almost 15 years has passed from the previous education sector evaluation, **we recommend that MFA includes it in its work program as soon as possible**.

5.3.1 Inclusive education[24]

An evaluation of inclusive education in 2015 found that the Finnish support has had a significant impact in changing the legislation and education policies of partner countries which in every country reviewed—Ethiopia, Kosovo, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru—had moved in the direction of recognizing the right to education of children with special needs (Nielsen et al. 2015). The programs supported by MFA had contributed to changed attitudes on the part of many administrators, teachers, and parents. Finland was

[22] Some country program evaluations include education when it is an important part of the aid program.

[23] Similarly, the team viewed Finland's excellent ranking in Transparency International's corruption index as an asset for its international participation. Especially, as at the time UNESCO's Institute for International Educational Planning (IIEP) had a large research program on corruption in education.

[24] There are several definitions of the term 'inclusive education.' A widely-used proxy is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which states that persons with disabilities should receive the support required within the general education system. Others have defined it as meeting the needs of marginalized or vulnerable groups, irrespective of the particular mode of service delivery (see Nielsen et al. 2015). In its recent policy guide, UNESCO (2017) defines inclusive education as the process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners.

a leading development partner, and sometimes the only partner, strongly advocating for inclusive education. The bilateral programs evaluated led to the training of significant numbers of special needs and bilingual teachers and production of innovative teaching materials.

However, the changes in legislation and in the stated educational policies of partner countries had not yet translated into any significant changes in educational outcomes for children with special needs (Ethiopia and Kosovo) and children from minority groups (Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru). School enrolment and completion rates for children with special educational needs lag far behind those of the general population and fall off sharply in higher grades. Insufficient attention has been given to service delivery issues on the ground. The evaluation recommended that greater focus be placed on the classroom experiences and learning outcomes of children with special educational needs.

The 2015 evaluation considered the Finnish approach in Ethiopia ambitious for a country with a low level of resources and without other major donors engaged in inclusive education (Nielsen et al. 2015). It recommended directing future support more strategically towards system-wide change. Weak government commitment and capacity to manage and finance was seen as the main obstacles to scaling up. As highlighted in section 5.1, there has been a major break-through since then regarding equity and inclusive education in Ethiopia. The third phase of the education sector program focuses squarely on the issues that Finland has been working on for three decades. Inclusive education has indeed been mainstreamed.

The evaluation team also recommended strengthening data and evidence generation (Nielsen et al. 2017). Why was this considered important? For two reasons. First, because the World Health Organization suggests that 10-15 percent of children have some level of disability in Ethiopia, while Government estimates it to be only 1 percent.[25] The discrepancy in basic data is too large and implies that policy is being made and actions taken in the dark.[26] Second, because credible, accurate, and detailed data on disabled and marginalized children can stimulate greater and more effective policy responses by Government and development partners. Therefore, a leading donor agency in inclusive education—Finland— should prioritize this issue.

We recommend that Finland, jointly with other partners, support Ethiopia in generating accurate data and evidence on children with special educational needs, including school participation and learning. As Ethiopia is a RISE study country,[27] and GEQIP-E is the focus of this research, close collaboration with RISE should make this feasible (see section 4.5).

5.4 What can we conclude from government-to-government cooperation?

Over the past two decades Finland has supported education in all developing regions, most actively in Africa and Asia. Finland's long-term commitment has generated strong partnerships. Ethiopia and Palestinian territories are good examples. Over time, the way of operating and delivering foreign aid has shifted from Finland's own bilateral projects to supporting sector programs, jointly with other donors, and led by governments (see section 5.1). In terms of impact, these programs represent a real success story in Finnish development cooperation in education.

This shift is also good news from the viewpoint of the learning crisis, given that sector programs are holistic and focus on the entire systems of education and their coherence. A number of Finnish education specialists have been assigned to key embassies, and local education staff have been recruited in addition. This has considerably increased Finland's capacity for policy dialogue and impact. However, despite the improvements, staffing is not yet at the level that would allow Finland to take a much bigger role.

In the context of sector programs—and earlier in projects—Finland has concentrated its efforts on inclusive education, including mother tongue education. In that regard Ethiopia stands out as a true success story, although not an easy one initially. The work began already in the 1980s, when the country's primary enrollment rates were very low. There was little

[25] According to the Ethiopian EMIS data, only 8 percent of children with disabilities and special educational needs attended school in 2017.

[26] The lack of recent national census aggravates the problem.

[27] The RISE research project in Ethiopia is led by Professor Tassew Woldehanna from the Ethiopian Development Research Institute, and supported by Professor Pauline Rose from the Research in Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre, University of Cambridge, who leads the international team. Other partner institutions include the Institute of Educational Research at Addis Ababa University, the Ethiopian Education Strategy Centre, the University College London Institute of Education, Cornell University and Stockholm University.

government, or donor interest in special needs education at the time. Yet, with the subsequent expansion of primary enrollment in Ethiopia—now over 90 percent—and the goal of reaching 100-percent primary school participation, Government's interest in and commitment to the special needs education has gradually grown. As discussed in section 5.1, the new education sector program focuses on equity. In other words, the issues Finland has been working on for three decades have now been mainstreamed.

While actively participating in education sector programs, one can observe that Finland has often left the 'big agenda items'—which would address the learning crisis head on—to 'bigger players.' Ethiopia is a recent exception to this. When stepping up Finland's global role in education, system-wide issues must become even more important in Finnish aid than they are today.

5.5 Institutional cooperation in higher education

The purpose of the higher education institutions (HEI) institutional cooperation instrument (ICI) program is to strengthen higher education institutions in developing countries by enhancing administrative, field-specific, methodological and pedagogical capacity. This is done through institutional cooperation and networking with Finnish higher education institutions in various academic areas.

An **evaluation**[28] found that the early HEI-ICI projects had contributed to upgrading of the capacity of faculty members, modernizing curricula and pedagogical practices, establishing new programs, and strengthening linkages with industry and the community. But interventions remained small, short-term, spread across the developing world and covered numerous sectors. In fact, there is no strategic priority in terms of sector. As in the case of CSOs, where activities are also widely spread sectorally and geographically, assessing development impact becomes very difficult.

The program was found to have two design flaws. First, by excluding any support for collaborative research, it denied partner universities the opportunity to build their capacity in an area that is a fundamental part of their academic life. This restriction has since been lifted. Second, the exclusion of

[28] MFA commissioned the 2014 evaluation as a follow-up to the 2006 and 2009 independent evaluations and as the 2012 mid-term review of the HEI ICI.

Box 6: HEI-ICI projects in 2013-2020

In 2013-2015, a total of 23 projects received each a grant between 300,000 and 500,000 euros (EUR10 million in total). However, only five projects were related to teacher education and thus to the learning crisis. The Finnish partners were the University of Helsinki in Peru; the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences in Palestinian Territories; the Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences in Nepal and Vietnam; and the University of Jyväskylä in Zambia. For instance, in the Centre for the Promotion of Literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa project, 100 schools in Zambia were trained to use the GraphoGame, developed by researchers at the University of Jyväskylä (see Box 7 for details), a computer-assisted learning environment for developing reading skills.

For years 2016-2020, 20 projects in 16 countries have been approved (EUR12 million in total). Four projects are related to teacher education. A project in Nepal–with a focus on open and distance learning to upgrade secondary teacher qualifications–is the only one that continues from the previous phase. In two new projects the Finnish partner is the University of Jyväskylä working with teacher educators in Eritrea with Finn Church Aid, and with TVET teacher training providers on inclusive education in Ethiopia, the latter jointly with the Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences. The University of Tampere is working in Ethiopia (and two other countries) on HEI leadership training. One of their counterparts, the University of Bahir Dar, is setting up a center of excellence in teacher education, including training on school leadership. There are real synergies between the various Finnish activities in education in Ethiopia.

Source: EDUFI

scholarships prevented HEI-ICI projects from helping strengthen the human resource capacity of partner universities. Given the small allocation for each HEI-ICI grant, scholarships continue to be excluded.

Some interviews indicated that, in education sciences, HEI-ICI projects are often based on individual effort rather than the whole education faculty's commitment, and continuity is a challenge. The application process was considered onerous, and interviewees emphasized the importance of research funding to academics whose performance is measured (partly) by publications in high-ranking academic journals. However, EDUFI, which administers the HEI-ICI program, pointed out that every round of call for proposals has produced a large number of applications, far exceeding the funds available—78 applications during the last round and 55 in the previous—indicating that that there is indeed interest in this program in Finnish universities.

More generally, interviews also indicated that many Finnish universities and departments of education seldom include lower middle-income or low-income countries—where the learning crisis is most acute—as partners in their international strategies. There is, therefore, little incentive for academic work in these countries. In the same vein, Finland's new international higher education and research policy for 2017-2025 is silent on these countries (see section 7.1) but focuses on high and upper middle-income countries for academic collaboration and education exports. This is yet another indication that development cooperation has weak links to other Finnish international activities. Changing this situation would be a win-win.

We recommend that the HEI-ICI program is re-oriented towards a more strategic and prioritized approach sectorally and geographically. Education with focus on the learning crisis, should be a priority sector. Projects should also be longer term, larger and include a research component.

5.6 Global public goods created by Finnish development research in education

Earlier we discussed global public goods generated by research programs that focus on the learning crisis (section 4.5). What have Finnish development researchers produced in terms of public goods (i.e., research results) in education and development and, especially, regarding the learning crisis?

The most obvious contributions are the analyses of Finland's own educational system and its reforms, given the world-wide interest in them. A good example is the work of Pasi Sahlberg, especially his '**Finnish Lessons**' books which are widely read. Another example is the work of Jouni Välijärvi, former director of the Finnish Institute of Educational Research at the University of Jyväskylä, who has published extensively on the Finnish education system in light of the PISA results. Also, many researchers in education faculties in all Finnish universities have made valuable contributions though publications, participating in numerous educational events across the world every year, and receiving hundreds of visiting delegations.

MFA and the Academy of Finland are the principal financiers of development research in Finland—in 2017 their joint call for proposals was for EUR6 million. In 2018 MFA is funding a call for EUR3.5 million, while the next Academy of Finland call is expected in 2021.

Since 2005, only four research projects related to education and development have been funded by MFA and the Academy. All focus on Eastern and Southern Africa; two are IT-related; one is on girls and women, and one on learning basic reading skills. Below is a synopsis of each project, including the principal investigator and his/her university.

- Elina Lehtomäki (University of Jyväskylä; currently University of Oulu), 2006: This research project investigated education as an enabling environment and capability space. Achievements and challenges of educational equality and equity policies, processes and practices in Tanzania were examined through the experiences of girls and women, including girls and women with disabilities, in relation to their educational and social participation. The findings highlight the importance of enabling factors for learning, such as supportive family members and teachers. The girls and women emphasized their own agency, determination to overcome challenges and discrimination and to succeed. They were eager to advocate for the right to education for other girls and women.

- Kai Hakkarainen (University of Helsinki), 2008: This research project explored constraints of technology-mediated learning in Southern Africa. It concluded that challenges in promoting educational transformations through ICT are systematically underestimated. This is because educational use of ICT is not only a technological challenge but requires in-depth transformation of social practices of schools, teachers and students. To overcome the challenges the project introduced school-based 'change laboratories' as a way of generating local-level information during school transformation process.

- Erkki Sutinen (University of Eastern Finland), 2008: This research project in Tanzania had several components, including (i) Identifying contextual factors for IT service management education and developing an appropriate approach to it; (ii) Design of a risk identification tool aimed at assisting IT professionals and organizations to identify sources of challenges in projects that invest in IT and appropriate counter-measures to overcome them; (iii) Factors for designing creative learning environments; and (iv) Digital storytelling in HIV/AIDS education and counseling.

- Heikki Lyytinen (University of Jyväskylä), 2009: This research project prepared a basis for supporting reading acquisition among Zambian children using the mobile learning environment that the researchers had developed. This learning game—GraphoGame in English and Ekapeli in Finnish—was adapted to the Zambian conditions. Results show that a relatively short training time is adequate for learning to read, including children who have dyslexia (Box 7). This project seems to have the closest link to the learning crisis.

Box 7: GraphoLearn – where research meets edtech

The goal of the GraphoLearn Initiative is to help as many children as possible – worldwide – to learn the basic reading skills irrespective of the reason s/he is at risk of failing to learn. In developed countries the reason for learning difficulties is typically dyslexia (which has a genetic origin), while in the developing world it is often insufficient instruction or social support. Unlike in Finland, in Africa children have seen little writing in their surroundings before going to school.

GraphoLearn is a result of more than 20 years of research at the University of Jyväskylä, supported partly by the Academy of Finland. The research team followed 100 children at familial/genetic risk for dyslexia (and a large control group) from birth to puberty to learn about the factors that affect reading acquisition. After learning how to identify children at risk the team worked to find ways to help. The main challenge was to keep the learner interested during the learning process. A solution was a computer game (runs also in inexpensive mobile devices).

The writing system in a language determines how easy the acquisition of basic reading skills is. In languages that are consistent at the letter-sound level – say, Finnish or many African languages – the learning burden is low (less than 50 sounds of the letters). Learning to read means acquiring the connections between letters and the sounds they represent – and figuring out that producing these sounds in the order of the letters means that one can sound out whichever written word.

Spoken English has changed after the writing system was developed so that none of the letters represent the same sound in all contexts of written English. The learning burden is over 1,000 as many written words cannot be pronounced without seeing all the letters first. Therefore, it takes much more time and effort to learn to read in English. But English can also be adapted for a learning game based on the GraphoLearn technology.

A typical Finnish child learns the basic reading skill using the GraphoLearn technology in just a few hours. Children with dyslexia need more time but they also learn quickly compared to other methods. Ekapeli is commonly used in Finnish schools. In African countries, such as Zambia, practically no one learns to read at school before the end of the second grade (Sampa et al. 2018). When using a learning game most learn in a few hours, especially if the teacher also plays (Jere-Folotiya et al. 2014). This is because playing the game is so much more focused and intensive than typical classroom time. The GraphoLearn technology has also been adjusted and shown to be effective in France, Canada (French), Norway, Portugal and the UK. Similar studies have been initiated in more than 20 other countries.

As GraphoLearn is a university-led research initiative, commercialization of this innovation was initiated in 2017 by a Finnish start-up and edtech company, GraphoGame, part of Learning Intelligence Group. The English and French versions will be launched in 2018, while dissemination of the Dutch, Portuguese and Swahili versions is about to start. GraphoGame collaborates with the Universities of Cambridge (the UK), Groningen (the Netherlands) and Aix-Marseille (France) to ensure that the distributed games remain evidence-based.

Sources: Heikki Lyytinen (University of Jyväskylä) ja Jesper Ryynänen (GraphoGame)

6. Civil society organizations' development cooperation in education

A substantial share of Finland's official development assistance (ODA) is channeled through civil society organizations (CSOs)—12 percent of bilateral aid in 2017. MFA has several funding instruments available for Finnish CSOs. The largest, in terms of funds allocated, is so-called program-based support.[29] Another one is a project-based window. MFA also allocates a varying amount of funds to international NGOs promoting development policy goals that align with Finland's priorities. Local co-operation funds, managed by embassies, provide direct support to local CSO projects.

CSOs are free to decide on their recipients and sectors as there are no limits on the geographic or thematic spread. Finland respects the principle of CSOs as independent and autonomous actors (MFA 2017). While this policy stance clearly has many pros, one of its cons is the resulting wide spread of recipient countries—well over one hundred—as well as that of sectors and interventions, making it very difficult to assess development impact.

6.1 CSOs and bilateral programs

At present, information sharing and coordination between civil society organization funded from ODA and Finland's bilateral program remain largely ad hoc. In this regard, the OECD-DAC 2017 peer review of Finland's development cooperation endorsed the point in the new civil society guidelines, issued by MFA in 2017, encouraging a clearer relationship between civil society's development activities and Finland's country strategies. Similarly, a synthesis of recent evaluations of the CSOs receiving program-based support[30] recommends that MFA and the Finnish embassies in countries where Finnish development interventions are concentrated should set up mechanisms to improve complementarity, coordination and coherence with the Finnish CSOs (Stage 2016). The same recommendation pops up in CSOs' own reports. For example, a report by Felm (Sandberg 2017) states that,

> "NGOs and the MFA should engage in more cooperation when implementing mother-tongue based multilingual education programs. NGOs could focus their multilingual work according to the MFA's country strategies, where special attention is paid to inclusive education…"

Why is this important? In general, information sharing, coordination and coherence can bring large benefits—such as synergies and economies of scale—which exceed their costs and result in a higher development impact. To help address the learning crisis such synergies and scale economies are indispensable if countries are to achieve learning for all.

Why is coordination not happening? One reason is—as suggested by interviewees for this report—a desire to guard the civic space and minimize the risk of subjecting civil society's development activities to government control. But much could be gained from better coordination between CSO activities and bilateral programs. Another reason mentioned was the

[29] 22 professional CSOs receive program-based support. These are: Fair Trade (FT), Plan International Finland (Plan Finland), Save the Children Finland (SCF), the Finnish Red Cross (SPR), World Vision Finland (WVF), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), Political Parties of Finland for Democracy (Demo Finland), International Solidarity Foundation (ISF), Operation a Day's Work Finland (Taksvärkki), Disability Partnership (DPF), Finnish Refugee Council (FRC), the Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland (SASK), Felm (formerly Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, FELM), Finn Church Aid (FCA), Fida International (Fida) and Free Church Federation in Finland (FS), foundations that issue grants to applicants in three areas: disability (Abilis Foundation), human rights (KIOS Foundation) and environment (Siemenpuu Foundation); and umbrella organizations (Kepa and Kehys) that work on capacity support and advocacy for Finnish CSOs. Six of the group are also funded by MFA to provide humanitarian assistance (SCF, SPR, FCA, Plan Finland, WVF, and Fida).

[30] Development activities of all CSOs receiving program-based support were evaluated in three phases in 2015-17, except for the Finnish Refugee Council (FRC).

Table 1: Areas of education where Finnish civil society organizations work

Education level	Number of CSOs	CSOs
Early Childhood Education	5	Felm, FIDA, Plan, Save the Children, WVF
Basic Education	3	Felm, FCA, WVF
Vocational Education	3	FCA, FRC, WVF
Non-formal Education	4	Felm, FCA, WVF, FRC
Higher education or teacher training	2	FCA, Felm

centralized financial and decision-making authority in Finland's development co-operation within MFA.[31] Specifically, a central unit in MFA is in charge of CSO cooperation and handles its portfolio directly with the CSO head offices in Helsinki. CSOs in turn implement the programs independently with their in-country counterparts.

But to make a dent to the learning crisis requires MFA and embassies to get out of their comfort zone, or silos, and help create synergies and economies of scale by coordinating among different Finnish actors. These actors, of course, include not only CSOs but also higher education institutions, Finnfund, and others working in education in the same country.

[31] The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development makes all funding decisions for amounts above EUR500 000, as well as all funding decisions for CSOs and institutional co-operation. The Director General of the Department for Development Policy can make funding decisions for amounts below EUR500 000, and the Director for Humanitarian Assistance has the authority to make urgent humanitarian funding decisions. Embassies manage only marginal local co-operation funds and a portion of funds for identifying, planning and programming development co-operation.

Box 8: Mother tongue programs of Felm

Children learn to read most effectively in the language they speak at home—their mother tongue. In Ethiopia, for example, students in schools affected by a reform to implement mother tongue instruction were subsequently more likely to be in the appropriate grade for their age (Seid 2016).

To improve learning, *Felm* has supported mother tongue programs in Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, Laos, Nepal, Palestinian Territories, and Tanzania since 2006*. It has helped develop orthography – a set of conventions for writing a language – for local languages, supported production of school materials, and helped enhance the capacity of teachers, teacher trainers, dictionary specialists, and school inspectors. According to an evaluation, these projects have resulted in a positive attitude throughout the wider language community, and the attitude towards the use of a mother tongue as a medium of instruction has improved (Mäkelä et al. 2016). However, while the advantages at individual and community level were evident, there was little evidence of upstream or policy-level impact.

But in countries with many languages, mother tongue instruction can be overwhelming to implement, and a language "mismatch" can result in learners being left behind in the longer term. Governments will need, therefore, to weigh the gains and the costs associated with mother tongue instruction against those of competing investments in higher-quality education overall (World Bank 2018).

* Sign language is also considered as mother tongue in accordance with the declaration of the World Federation of Deaf and the UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities.

6.2 One in two of large CSOs works in education

According to the recent CSO evaluation reports, education is a priority area for 11 out of the 22 CSOs that receive program-based funding from Finnish ODA.[32] As no consolidated information was available on the share of education in their operations, or the type of education they support, we conducted an e-mail survey among the CSOs to find out. Specifically, we wanted to assess the extent to which the Finnish large CSOs (that receive program-based ODA support) advocate for and support measures to address the learning crisis, i.e., the quality of basic education and the education systems.

Our survey indicated that the share of education in CSOs' total program varies considerably. While the Finnish Refugee Council reported that education counts 70 percent of its program budget, for Save the Children Finland the share is only 5 percent in 2018. FIDA allocates 37, Plan International Finland 25, and World Vision Finland 20 percent to education interventions. The largest CSO actor in education, Finn Church Aid, has 53 education or education-in-emergencies programs in 13 countries, and devotes 60 percent of its resources to education. Most of its education programs are funded by other donor agencies rather than Finnish aid. FCA seems to be the only CSO that has an education policy to guide its operations (currently under revision).

Table 1 summarizes the areas of education where Finnish CSOs work. Again, only those receiving program-based ODA are included. Somewhat surprisingly, early childhood education is the most popular area, followed by non-formal education. In basic education—where the learning crisis is most acutely felt—only three CSOs are active. Box 8 provides one example, i.e., Felm working to improve learning by teaching in students' mother tongue.

Many CSOs employ locally-recruited education professionals. The single strongest CSO in terms of education expertise is FCA; it has six full-time education specialists in its headquarters in Helsinki, and about a dozen in the field. One of FCA's comparative advantages is education in emergencies. Finnish Refugee Council (FRC)—which focuses on adult education—has 14 full-time locally-recruited education specialists in the field. An education adviser works also in the head office of Plan International Finland.

Many Finnish CSOs participate in international efforts in education as well. For example, FCA is a member of the strategic advisory group for the Education Cluster, which is jointly led by UNICEF and Save the Children, and brings together a range of NGOs, UN agencies, academics and other partners globally to work on coordination and standard setting in education in humanitarian crises. FCA has seconded a member to its rapid response team. Similarly, FCA is a board member of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), participates actively in its working groups, and has seconded one technical staff member to its secretariat.

6.3 Evidence from CSO evaluations

The CSO evaluations (Chapman et al. 2016, 2017) concluded that the Finnish CSOs have reached a wide range of grassroots communities and delivered well-targeted support to partners and beneficiaries that would not otherwise receive such assistance. However, little evidence was found on the policy-level work and impact.

For example, Plan International Finland's advocacy work on local governance was considered successful, but much less attention has been given to national-level policy advocacy (van Gerven et al. 2016). Also, while Felm is addressing critical policy issues, such as mother tongue education, there are no reports about a feedback loop back to the upstream policy-making. Similarly, the evaluation noted that, while the Finn Church Aid has succeeded in establishing contacts with UN organizations at global level, more coordination and communications would be needed at the national and local levels (Davis and Venäläinen, 2016). Plan Finland and Save the Children Finland have both policy work as part of their international networks but this is not reflected in the work of their Finnish affiliates.[33]

None of the multiple evaluations indicated that the CSOs participate in education sector working groups at the national level in the partner countries, although they may be more active on national CSO platforms which in turn could be represented in the national level education dialogue.[34] To make a dent to the learning crisis, education policy and system analysis—and advocacy based on it—should become more prominent in CSOs' work.

[32] Plan Finland, SCF, WVF, DPF, FRC, Felm, FCA, Fida, FS, Abilis, and KIOS.

[33] The program in Myanmar is an exception.

[34] Countries vary in terms of including CSOs in education sector program reviews – some countries do and others don't.

The unanimous conclusion of the CSO evaluations is that broader impacts could be achieved through joint efforts among CSOs. The meta evaluation (Chapman 2016) concluded that the limited cooperation and pooling of funds has restricted the potential to increase the scale of delivery, leverage resources, and to create complementarities. The evaluators encourage MFA to incentivize CSOs to develop joint programs to increase scale and impact. This could take place around thematic areas where CSO expertise is strong, including support for education. CSOs that are active in education could each define their comparative advantage and jointly develop a comprehensive strategy which would then guide their work. This would be especially important because projects are implemented in numerous countries and by different partners.

Such incentives would be important, given that many interviewees for this report felt that CSOs perceive each other as competitors rather than collaborators. As the learning crisis requires a systems approach and scale, small and atomistic actors are unlikely to be effective in addressing it.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the 2004 evaluation of development cooperation in education (section 5.3) pretty much contained the same analysis and recommendations regarding CSOs as did the series of evaluations carried out in 2015-17. Little seems to have changed in two decades. This must give MFA and others some pause: Can the underlying incentives that have persisted for a long time really be changed so that, by collaborating, CSOs could become more engaged and systematic in tackling the learning crisis?

7. What have education exports and the private sector got to do with the learning crisis?

The export of education services is one of the major initiatives in Prime Minister Sipilä's government. The aim is to increase internationalization of research and education and remove barriers from education exports. Government's action plan of September 2015 specifies key initiatives and sets as an important objective the strengthening of cooperation between higher education institutions and business for commercialization of innovations. This section discusses the main educational export and private sector 'platforms' or organizations that relate to the learning crisis. These are Education Finland, XEdu in edtech, and Finnfund.

Most Finnish higher education institutes, universities and universities of applied sciences have established commercial companies for exporting education, including teacher education (see footnote 52 below for details). Their activities are targeting mainly at upper middle-income and high-income countries.

7.1 Education Finland

The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) has been commissioned to boost Finnish education export. It hosts a new program, Education Finland, financed by the Ministries of Education and Culture; Economic Affairs and Employment; and the participating members.[35] It supports businesses, edtech companies, higher education institutions and other education and training providers to expand in the international market, often in close co-operation with the Team Finland network. The program gives visibility to the Finnish education know-how, matches the Finnish offering with international demand and increases cooperation between education solutions providers and stakeholders both in Finland and abroad.

In 2014, the turnover of Finnish education exports was about EUR260 million. The target is to increase it to EUR350 million in 2018. However, the potential is considered even more significant as indicated by the Director General of EDUFI.[36]

Digital learning solutions designed by Finnish companies have already gained international success. Finnish excellence in teacher training has been sold to countries such as Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Indonesia, and South Africa. Schools employing Finnish teaching methods and teachers have been established in countries such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Namibia recently bought a three-year Bachelor of Education package from the Faculty of Education of the University of Turku (Rauma Unit) for 25 Namibian students, with the objective to enhance Namibia's own teacher education. Finnish expertise in curriculum development and early childhood education and care have also attracted international interest.

Since the beginning of 2018, the vocational education and training reform in Finland has made it possible to export vocational qualifications. The most interesting educational products for potential buyers are qualifications in entrepreneurship, management, metal work and machinery, the processing industry, social and health care, electrical engineering and automation technology, engineering, and product development (Business Finland/Visit Finland 2018).

The group of countries interested in improving learning through importing know-how or educational packages from Finland are typically high-income—the Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia—and higher middle-income countries—Colombia, Indonesia, South Africa—where international test results indicate serious shortcomings in learning outcomes. As a matter

[35] Education Finland has over 90 members. http://www.eduexport.fi/. Currently there are 2.5 persons (full-time equivalent) working for the program.

[36] https://www.kauppalehti.fi/uutiset/olli-pekka-heinonen-suomen-tavoiteltava-miljardin-euron-koulutusvientia/4whQcJpV

of fact, all these countries face a serious learning crisis, despite their higher income levels. These are also countries that can afford to pay for the services. In Finnish development cooperation most partner countries are low-income, lower middle-income, conflict-affected or post-conflict countries where aid finance is critical for addressing the learning crisis.

7.2 EdTech

The Finnish edtech scene has been on the move in the last couple of years. Previously there was no edtech or innovation ecosystem in place, even though some advanced technical solutions have been developed, for example, GraphoLearn/GraphoGame (Box 7 in section 5.6). In 2015 a few enthusiastic social innovators and business-oriented individuals introduced XEdu.[37] Funding of the operations has come mainly from private corporations having an interest in the cross-section of edtech and startups (such as Telia, Samsung, and Otava). To date more than EUR 10 million of risk capital has been invested by business angels and venture capital companies to approximately 50 companies who have gone through xEdu acceleration program. The average annual growth rate of the startups has been over 50 percent, and so far only three of the accelerated companies have ceased operations.

Forum Virium[38] works closely with local governments in private-public partnership, especially in Helsinki. Teachers are asked what they would need. These needs are then presented as challenges to the companies. As products are developed together with

[37] There are only two other examples of this approach in Europe: Emerge Education London https://emerge.education/; and Learn Space Paris http://www.learnspace.fr/.

[38] www.forumvirium.fi

Box 9: Evidence on edtech in low and lower middle-income countries

In the context of the learning crisis, governments, donors, schools and communities seek to explore the potential of edtech. DFID's edtech topic guide (2014) reviews empirical evidence on the impact of edtech –defined as the use of digital or electronic technologies to support teaching and learning. Interventions included interactive radio instruction; classroom audio or video resources accessed via teachers' mobile phones; student tablets and eReaders; and computer-assisted learning.

Recognizing that technology alone does not enhance learning, it is important to consider how programs are designed and implemented, how teachers are supported, how communities are developed and how outcomes are measured. Effective edtech programs are characterized by:

- a clear and specific curriculum focus
- the use of relevant curriculum materials
- a focus on teacher development and pedagogy
- evaluation mechanisms that go beyond outputs.

There is some evidence that mobile technologies (radios, mobile phones, and tablets) – used for curriculum-specific purposes in a context of appropriate support–can be effective. There is also tentative evidence that such approaches may contribute to addressing issues of equity, in relation to gender and rurality.

But there are many studies that either stopped at the point of identifying the difficulties and challenges experienced, or described what was done, but failed to provide adequate evidence of what difference they made. There are also examples of large-scale investment in edtech – particularly computers for student use – that produced limited educational outcomes.

Source: Power et al. 2014

Box 10: UNTIL Lab Finland

In recent years, several UN organizations have set up innovation programs, and Finland has also supported the developing countries through technology and innovation programs. These have been, among others, TANZICT in Tanzania, the South African Innovation Support Program SAIS, IPP in Vietnam, multilateral support together with the MFA and Tekes' joint BEAM program which supports innovations in the emerging markets.

Most recently the UN Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) has launched its UN Technology and Innovation Lab (UNTIL) concept. In 2017 the Finnish Government signed a letter of intent to fund the establishment of the Lab in Finland. In line with this, MFA has earmarked EUR7.5 million funding to support the first three years of the Lab operation, after which the operation and funding should be self-sustained.

UNTIL, which is now being set up, is part of an international technology laboratory network designed to bring together UN personnel, researchers, educational institutions and businesses to promote the achievement of the SDGs and other UN mandates through emerging technology. The chosen thematic priorities of UNTIL Finland are education, health, circular economy, peace and security. UNTIL Finland lab is in the heart of Aalto University's campus in Otaniemi, Espoo.

In thematic priority *education* UNTIL Finland has the following specific characteristics:

- Strong reputation of the Finnish educational system.
- Vivid start-up ecosystem in edtech.
- Central role of the public sector. As education in Finland is free and provided by the public sector, public sector has a central role also in solutions development.
- Other strengths, in addition to the ability to combine technology with pedagogical aspects, include STEM, teacher education, life-long learning, and vocational education.

Sources: MFA; UNTIL Finland Feasibility Study (4Front 2018)

schools, teachers and students, the start-ups get instant feedback on what is working and what is not.

Experience to date shows that when edtech products are developed in the real learning context, results are better. An interesting question is whether these models could be applied in developing countries to help address the learning crisis. As indicated by the UK's Department for International Development's (DFID) topic guide (Box 9), edtech should not be used because it exists but because it facilitates the learning process.

Another recent development in this arena is the establishment of UN Technology and Innovation Lab (UNTIL) in Finland (Box 10), with education as a priority area. While UNTIL is consistent with the Finnish edtech priority—such as GraphoLearn/Game (Box 7), support to UNICEF's innovation fund (section 4.1), and XEdu—it remains to be seen how UNTIL Finland could be used in education and development.

7.3 Finnfund

Finnfund is a Finnish development finance company that promotes sustainable development by providing long-term risk capital for private projects in developing countries. Investment criteria include profitability, sustainability and positive development impacts in the target country. Finnfund is actively looking into possibilities in the education sector. Its current investments in the sector are through private equity funds but it is also actively seeking to make direct investment in education and has in fact recently approved its first direct investment in the sector. The approved investment is likely to be signed and disbursed before the end of 2018.

Box 11: Private sector contribution to addressing the learning crisis

In most countries, government sets overall education standards, runs the public school system, and organizes standardized examinations. One of the key aims of the public sector is to make education available to the whole population. In many countries, however, private companies are also active in the education sector complementing the public school system – or substituting for its flaws. Private schools play an increasingly important role in education, even for poor people.

Indeed, private schools are no longer catering primarily for the better-off but also for those served by low-quality public schools. In some countries, such as Nigeria, more than half of the primary school students attend private schools. Between 1990 and 2010, the share of students in private schools in developing countries doubled from 11 percent to 22 percent.* Often fee-free public schools end up costing poor households significantly in the form of hidden fees, such as, school uniform, books and tutoring.**

One reason for the rapid increase of private schools in Africa is the learning crisis. Low-income households are willing to pay for the education of their children because the perceived (private) benefit from private schools is higher than that from public schools. Private schools are thought to provide better quality teaching – just the fact that teachers are less likely to be absent is a visible signal to parents about the motivation of teachers.*** But private schools, too, are struggling with the same systemic problems faced by public schools. Close to one third of teachers in private schools are absent from the classroom in Africa, and the pedagogical knowledge of private school teachers is almost as weak as that of their public school counterparts.****

* http://datatopics.worldbank.org/education/

** Akaguri 2013; Williams et al. 2014; Tooley and Longfield 2015.

*** Baum et al. 2014; WDR 2018

****Bold et al. 2017

Finnfund targets deals in the whole education sector. Each project should be financially attractive as well as environmentally and socially sustainable and contribute positively to the education system in the country, e.g., in terms of improved quality. For a development finance institution such as Finnfund, it is crucial that, in addition to the private benefits a private education institute may bring to its students, its investment also yields some public benefits in terms of positive spillovers that may influence the overall quality of education over time. These public benefits could be, e.g., proven high quality education versus the alternatives in the country, providing services to match currently underserved labor demand, spreading innovative teaching methods and materials, or teacher training helping the sector overall.

Facilitating expansion of Finnish know-how to developing markets. As discussed above, a number of Finnish companies and other actors are developing innovative approaches to education, e.g., through software that supports the efforts of students, teachers or school administrators. Finnfund can play a role in facilitating the expansion of these actors operating in the education sector to developing country markets. Finnfund's financing is not tied to exports from Finland, but it is keen to engage with Finnish actors, use its network to support their expansion in the developing countries and provide financing to those projects that fit Finnfund's investment criteria.

8. Strategic leadership and coordination are critical

Education has been part of Finland's development cooperation for a long time, but hardly ever a top or even an explicit priority. To be sure, Finland contributes already today to addressing the learning crisis, especially in the context of education sector programs in its long-term partner countries, as well as by using its voice in international financial institutions. But, as discussed throughout this report, given the gravity of the learning crisis and the expertise and credibility that Finland has in education, much more should be done. This will take strategic leadership and cooperation among stakeholders—the topics of this section.

8.1 The role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for Finland's official development assistance (ODA).[39] As discussed in sections 4, 5 and 6 these funds are used for work done by UN agencies, the EU and international financial institutions; for humanitarian aid and bilateral development cooperation in partner countries;[40] and for work done by Finnish universities and CSOs.

While some funding managed by others is also counted as ODA in aid statistics,[41] it is MFA that needs to take the lead in stepping up Finland's global role in education in the context of development cooperation. Importantly, MFA needs to ensure that foreign aid is not left isolated from other international education activities as tends to be the case today. For Finland to be influential and effective, MFA's leadership must be strategic and it needs to ensure coordination and collaboration domestically.

We recommend, therefore, that MFA sets up a formal Steering Group for education in development, co-chaired with MEC, with the focus on the learning crisis. The first task of this Steering Group should be to oversee preparation of a policy (and a related action plan) for raising Finland's role, participation and visibility in education globally. The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) would be an important governmental partner in this endeavor. Other stakeholders to be invited to participate in the Steering Group would include CSOs, universities and universities of applied sciences active in education and development, as well as other actors, such as Education Finland and Finnfund. While the focus is on development cooperation, it would also be important for the Steering Group to maintain close links to other similar groups, such as the Steering Group on international higher education and research policy under MEC.

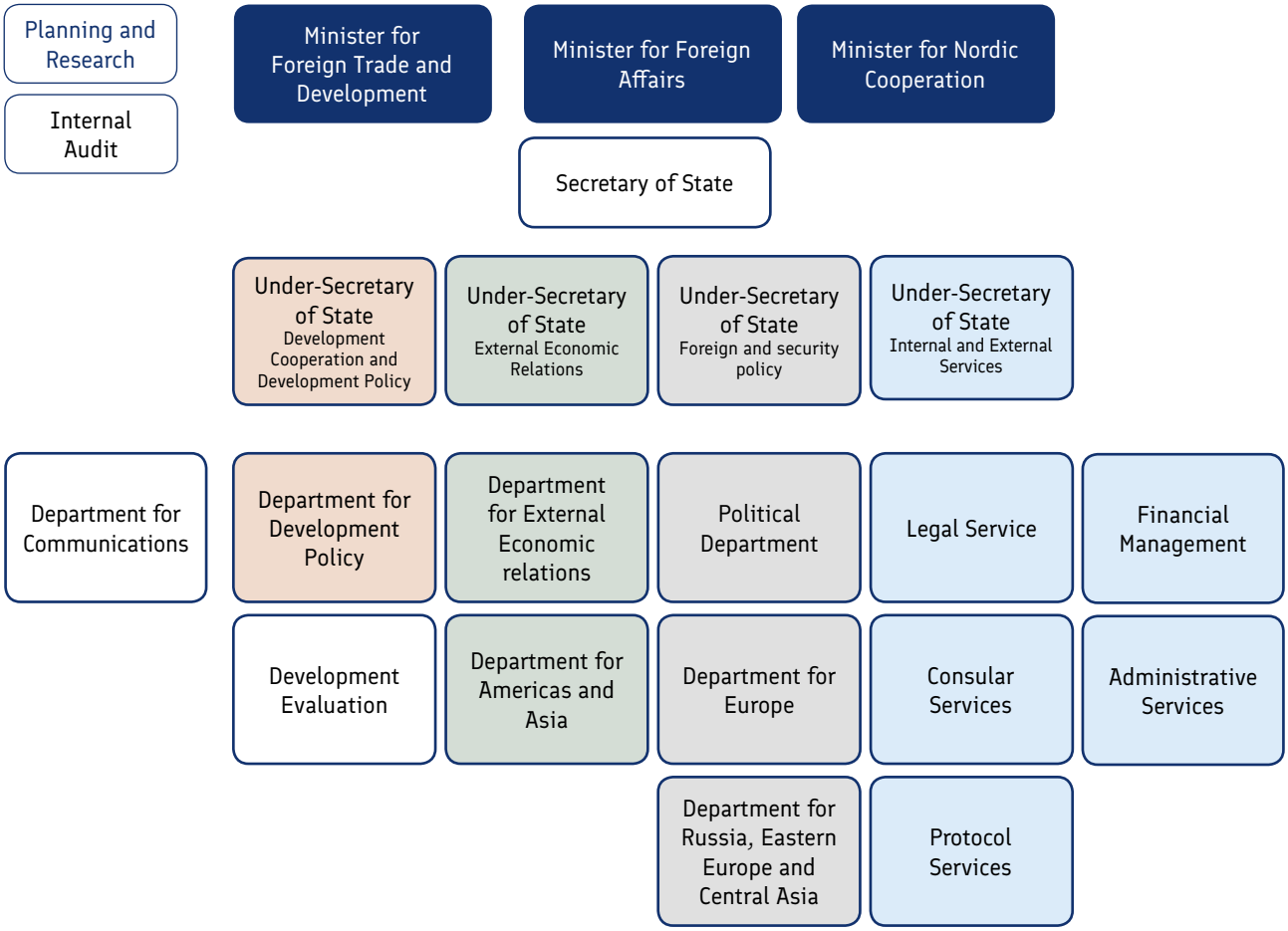
At the technical level, **we recommend that MFA's education advisers establish a thematic peer group (virtually or otherwise) with colleagues in relevant educational institutions in Finland**, including the higher education and research experts currently under recruitment for four embassies (Buenos Aires, Washington D.C., Beijing, and Singapore). Similarly, considerable education expertise in development exists in some CSOs and universities, as well as in a few consultancy companies. MFA needs to consider how best to bring all this technical expertise and experience together to create synergies where the agendas overlap.

[39] The ODA allocation for MFA in the 2018 national budget was EUR544 million.

[40] The twelve biggest partner countries in 2016 were Afghanistan, Nepal, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya, Myanmar, South Sudan, Vietnam, Somalia, Syria and Zambia (in that order).

[41] These covers costs arising from the reception of refugees, Finland's contribution to the European Union's development cooperation budget, and other disbursements falling under development assistance in various administrative sectors. It also includes the investments made by Finnfund which are considered development cooperation activities and some other investments. In 2018, Finland's development cooperation appropriations total EUR886 million and represent 0.38 percent of the gross national income (GNI).

Figure 7



However, it is important to note that there are a number of factors in MFA's organizational structure that hamper thematic leadership and, therefore, stepping up Finland's global role in education. Specifically, while MFA appears to be a matrix organization[42] in the sense that it has both thematic and regional departments (Figure 7). But the thematic departments have broad mandates which do not reach to the sector level in development. As a matter of fact, based on documentation and interviews, it appears that thematic management in Finnish aid is largely missing.

Specifically, thematic advisers in the Department for Development Policy are more or less on call to provide inputs and comment at the request of the regional departments but are not part of the decision-making. This may explain why the education policy, for example, has not been updated since 2006. The education advisers in the embassies do not work as one team, say, led by the adviser in the headquarters. Instead, they report to their ambassadors and to the head of the unit to which advisers from all sectors are assigned. As said, this organizational structure will make it much harder to select a strategic theme—in this case Finland's enhanced global role in education—and align all programs and instruments accordingly. But it is not impossible, of course. It is just important to understand what one is up against.

Consequently, thematic objectives are poorly linked to budget planning, implementation and result-based management in Finnish aid. MFA does not really have any thematic programs that would guide regional units. This has led to an over-decentralized system where various departments and units interpret broad and high-level development policy programs in their own way. A result is that Finland does not have the international visibility warranted by its reputation in education.

[42] A matrix organization is a structure in which the reporting relationships are **set** up as a grid, or matrix, rather than in the traditional hierarchy. In other words, employees have dual reporting relationships to both a thematic manager and a regional manager.

8.2 Institutional resources and key stakeholders

The **Ministry of Education and Culture** (MEC) is responsible for all areas of education and training, as well as research in Finland.[43] There is a separate International Department in the Ministry which, among other things, participates in the work of major international organizations and regional councils;[44] and supports the Education Finland network. As discussed earlier, the Department handles around 80 ministerial and other high-level education delegations visiting Finland annually.

MEC possesses considerable expertise in the area of education administration and legislation—that is, development of the whole education system. At present this expertise is not tapped very much into development cooperation.

Interviews for this report revealed that MFA's education advisers and MEC's education experts do not keep regular contact—except perhaps when there is a ministerial level study tour from a partner country to Finland, or when the Finnish Minister of Education visits a partner country. But for stepping up Finland's global role in education—and in education exports as well—regular contact and collaboration are likely to bring benefits to both parties that exceed their 'costs.'

The **Finnish National Agency for Education** (EDUFI) operates under MEC. It is responsible for developing education and training, early childhood education and care and lifelong learning. EDUFI also promotes internationalization in education and training, working life, culture, and among young people through international cooperation and mobility programs. EDUFI provides information on such opportunities and promotes Finnish education and training abroad.

EDUFI has considerable expertise in the area of education system development and curriculum design. It has, for a long time, coordinated a number of education programs for Finnish aid, especially the HEI-ICI program (see section 5.5). It has also provided technical support to MFA, especially in Finland's partner countries where education sector programs are being implemented (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal), but is less involved today. **We recommend, therefore, that MFA and EDUFI expand the areas of collaboration in education and development and institutionalize it to reduce response time and transaction costs**. Institutionalizing EDUFI's participation in Finnish aid would facilitate systematic availability of Finnish educational expertise for implementation support in bilateral cooperation, as well as for multilateral engagement.

Regarding other stakeholders, section 6 provides a summary of Finnish **civil society organizations**—a dozen or so CSOs are active in education and development. Finn Church Aid is the largest and most active in this area, including education in humanitarian emergencies.

Among **universities** Oulu and Jyväskylä stand out for their interest in and programs for education in development. In the university space, UniPID is a formal network of collaboration in development. However, educational sciences have made little use of it so far, except for the University of Oulu (see section 9.1.3).

The **private sector** in education has been expanding thanks to Education Finland, edtech ventures and Finnfund's emerging interest in education (section 7). Other stakeholders include a number of consultancy companies based in Finland, many of which have provided services to aid programs for a long time. Their role has changed as bilateral aid has transitioned from projects to sector programs.

[43] This includes early childhood education and care. MEC is also responsible for other domains, including arts, culture, sports and youth work; the archival, museum and public library systems; religious communities; student financial aid, and copyright.

[44] Through MEC, Finland participates in the work of the following international organizations, based on intergovernmental agreements: UNESCO, Council of Europe, OECD, ICCROM, WTO, WIPO, and WADA.

9. Strengthening the Finnish human resource base

This section explores ways to strengthen the Finnish human resource base in education for international development, especially in terms of addressing the learning crisis. First, we examine the role of universities, including the faculties of educational sciences and teacher education as well as departments of economics. Second, given the critical importance of knowing the local context, we look at ways to gain field experience in developing countries through secondments and volunteer programs—and propose also a new program. Third, short-term training has played an important role in the past to familiarize Finnish education specialists with the local context—but it has since faded away. We review briefly the track record of short-term training in education and development and suggest ideas for its revival.

9.1 The role of universities

As a follow-up Government's 2015 action plan, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) set up a Steering Group to prepare an international higher education and research policy. The aim is that, by 2025, Finland has a genuinely international higher education community and international appeal based on scientific quality. Its report Policies to Promote Internationalisation in Finnish Higher Education and Research published in 2017. The Steering Group continues to oversee implementation of the policy. MFA is represented by its ambassador for education exports in the Steering Group.

The report proposed seven areas for action:

1. Increasing Finland's international appeal through renewal of science and cutting-edge research; launch a program to strengthen and make visible the leaders of Finnish science and support the impact of research in the economy and society.

2. Reinforcing internationally competitive clusters of competence, including through learning labs of R&D and innovation and practice-oriented development work.

3. Marketing Finnish education services.

4. Simplifying procedures for studying and working in Finland.

5. Strengthening the Finnish voice in international dialogues; launch a national debate on the promotion of higher education and internationality in research;

6. Representing Finnish higher education and research in selected capitals—Buenos Aires (for Latin America), Washington, D.C., Beijing, and Singapore. Hiring for these positions in the Finnish embassies is underway.

7. Inviting Finnish expatriates with advanced degree and alumni of Finnish higher education institutions to join Finnish networks.

The Steering Group also proposed that, by 2020, all Finnish higher education institutions (HEI) will have clear goals for their international activities and selected actions to achieve these goals. It also proposed that, in the future, education exports must be understood as a normal part of HEI and other educational institutions' work and, therefore, administration and monitoring of education exports have to become more flexible and avoid unnecessary administrative restrictions.

In education exports, a large share is expected to come from tuition fees for MSc and BSc degree programs in languages other than Finnish or Swedish which have been targeted to non-European Union/European Economic Area students since 2017. New scholarship schemes will also be made available. Opportunities for education exports are seen as 'limitless.'[45]

International cooperation has been a result indicator for all universities for many years and one of their important strategic objectives, either explicitly or implicitly. The following indicators form part of the basis for public funding of universities:

- Degrees (BA, MA, PhD) awarded by the university;
- Mobility of students and teachers (short term and long term);
- International research cooperation and networking for high-quality research and research funding from external funding agencies; and
- International publications in highly-ranked international scientific journals and books.

Many HEIs have continuing education centers that provide in-service training for a fee and participate in externally-funded international development projects.[46] Some of them have been implemented in low and lower middle-income countries, as part of foreign aid.

It is noteworthy that Government's 2015 action plan, which prioritizes education, does not make any reference to education in development cooperation. This is perhaps reasonable when the focus is on education exports. But even there the Finnish human resource base is shared, given that experience in development cooperation often provides the necessary international experience required for education exports. At some point development cooperation can also transition into education exports (for example, Namibia).

But what is less clear is why the new Finnish international higher education and research policy 2017-25 does not mention developing countries at all. Yet, these countries are increasingly important globally and, therefore, could offer meaningful opportunities for international cooperation in higher education and research. 'Strengthening the Finnish voice in international dialogues' mentioned in the policy should apply equally to the learning crisis. Perhaps one reason is that, for a long time, Finnish development cooperation has included little research. Yet, as highlighted above, in today's world research output is a key results indicator for any academic institution.

9.1.1 Educational sciences

The Finnish higher education system consists of universities and universities of applied sciences. A total of 14 universities and 23 universities of applied sciences operate under MEC. Educational sciences and teacher education are provided by 8 universities, offering Bachelor of Arts (BA), Master of Arts (MA) and doctoral (PhD) programs. Some programs focus on education policy, adult education or specific thematic areas, such as technology or media. However, a majority of the programs in educational sciences are for teacher education: kindergarten and preschool teachers (3-year BA program), primary and secondary school teachers (combination of Bachelor and Master's degrees, 5-year program), and special education teachers (either as a separate 5-year program or a year of additional studies for already qualified teachers). Some universities also offer study counsellor programs for teachers. Most universities have international programs in education, but typically they do not focus on development and receive few students from developing countries.[47]

The University of Oulu stands out as an exception with its English-language teacher education

[45] These include educational consulting services; Content production, such as books and learning materials; Continuing (supplementary) education; Curriculum planning; E-learning; Early childhood education; Educational methods; Education administration; Education technologies, such as modern learning environments, learning games, social media and wireless solutions; Learning facilities, furnishing, equipment and security; Research and evaluation in the field of education; Seminars, conferences and other learning events; Special needs learners; Student catering services; Student health care; and Teacher training.

[46] For example, University of Helsinki Centre for Continuing Education HY+; EduCluster Finland (University of Jyväskylä, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, and Jyväskylä Educational Consortium Gradia); Finland University (University of Eastern Finland, University of Tampere, University of Turku, and Åbo Akademi University), which were interviewed for this report.

[47] For example, the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Helsinki offers program in Pedagogical Studies for Teachers in English.

Box 12: University of Oulu Intercultural Teacher Education

The University of Oulu's has the only English-language teacher education program in Finland that has a focus on development and sustainability. The program, which began in 1994, is oriented towards primary teacher education (up to grade six). Since the beginning professor emerita Rauni Räsänen has played a vital role. The underlying values of the program center on research as its foundation, practical familiarity, active citizenship, ethical and aesthetic sensitivity, and capacity for pedagogical and didactic thinking and action.

To ensure relevance and students' professional development, the program includes a mandatory three-month internship, either in Finland or abroad in a variety of settings, including international agencies, CSOs, and educational institutions.

Today the University has some 500 education sciences alumni from about 70 countries, after having completed a Master's degree either in the five-year 'Intercultural Teacher Education' or the two-year 'Education and Globalization' program. A number of students have also earned a doctoral degree in global education and development. The University hosts a research group Education, Diversity, Globalization and Ethics (EDGE) which provides a basis for its programs.

According to the students' active Facebook community, most alumni work in Finnish or international schools in Finland (including migrant education) and schools abroad; CSOs that implement international development projects; human rights and global education training (e.g., FCA, KEPA, Human Rights Center); and in international organizations (e.g., UNESCO, The World Bank, World Vision).

Sources: www.oulu.fi; stakeholder interviews

program in Finland and emphasis on development (Box 12). Development specialists in education are also trained in the University of Jyväskylä, including internships in CSOs or other organization engaged in development.

Vocational school teachers study their particular subject in any university, but often do the required pedagogical studies in one of the five vocational institutes of higher education (with links to a university of applied sciences). Demand for Finnish vocational teacher education from developing countries has increased in recent years. This is a potential new area for both education exports and development cooperation.

To step up Finland's global role in education would require faculties of educational sciences and teacher education in the eight universities to become much more active in development cooperation. UniPID discussed below (section 9.1.3) could offer an existing forum to initiate such a dialogue.

9.1.2 Economics of education

A number of economists work on education in Finland, often closely linked to labor economics. Several economic research institutes[48] have empirical research programs in education, for example, studying the impacts of secondary education choices on incomes and employment as well as on mental health, and crime. Another example is a study of the effects of the Finnish comprehensive school reform on inter-generational income mobility (Pekkarinen et al. 2009). The University of Jyväskylä has the only professorship in economics of education. It also houses the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, including economics of education.

However, this research concentrates on Finland, and there are no economists working on education in developing countries, not even part time. This seems to apply to the UN University's World Institute for

[48] For example, the Research Institute of the Finnish Economy; VATT Institute for Economic Research; and the Labor Institute for Economic Research.

Development Economics Research (WIDER) located in Helsinki. No university courses in economics of education in development are offered either. This is a real pity as economists are trained to look at systems, incentives and economic behaviors, which would provide a useful perspective to the learning crisis and its solutions. To address this gap, **we recommend that the newly established Helsinki Graduate School of Economics considers establishing a professorship in economics of education, with an international focus**.

9.1.3 Could UniPID be harnessed?

The Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID) is a network of Finnish universities aiming to strengthen universities' global responsibility and response to global challenges. UniPID promotes interdisciplinary research, as well as universities' societal impact and partnerships related to international development.

The Finnish Council of University Rectors founded UniPID in 2002; its membership consists of nine Finnish universities.[49] Its Board includes representatives from each member university, including education sciences (University of Oulu) and development economics (Aalto University). A coordination unit, located at the University of Jyväskylä, helps implement its activities and supports the Board's five working groups—policy and impact, doctoral training, Virtual Studies, projects, and Master's Award.

UniPID engages with policymakers and facilitates researchers' contributions to Finnish development policy, advocating for evidence-based policies and stressing the importance of higher education and research in facing global challenges, including the learning crisis. UniPID can help to identify researchers to participate in project consortia, but also in international development policy forums and events related to development cooperation, offering thematic expert support to MFA.[50]

To facilitate a coordinated response from Finnish universities to the global learning crisis, **we recommend that UniPID be invited to convene a working group, consisting of academics working on education and interested in international issues**. As mentioned earlier, many educators do not know UniPID well. A number of interviewees preferred establishment of a new network of faculties of education instead. Our recommendation is practical in the sense that an existing formal network—with a proven track record in other areas—could make it easier to get going and success more likely. UniPID also offers many university courses on topics related to development via UniPID Virtual Studies programme on Sustainable Development. This platform could be used to offer courses on education, too, with the focus on the learning crisis.

9.2 How to gain practical development experience

9.2.1 Secondment programs[51]



Over many decades MFA has helped strengthen the Finnish human resource base and expertise in development cooperation by seconding Junior Professional Officers (JPO). By 2015, when the program celebrated its 50th anniversary, more than 900 Finnish young professionals had been sent out to UN organizations, international financial institutions and research organizations. Initially, focus was on field assignments but includes now also headquarter positions. MFA used to handle the recruitment. In 2012-16 Center for International Mobility (CIMO), now part of EDUFI, was contracted for that purpose. Today recruitment is done by the receiving organizations themselves, with some support from MFA.[52]

An evaluation in 2011 showed that Finland was an important provider of JPOs, in fact, largest amongst the Nordic countries. While Finland managed a large number of young professionals in a relatively effective and efficient way, the evaluation revealed that the retention rate of Finnish JPOs in the international organizations was significantly less than that of other nationals (White et al. 2011). However, a positive finding was that a great majority of those, who had served as JPOs had found their way to development related jobs.

In education, JPOs worked in relevant UN

[49] Aalto University, University of Eastern Finland, University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä, University of Lapland, University of Oulu, University of Tampere, University of Turku, and Åbo Akademi

[50] UniPID maintains a multidisciplinary stakeholder base, which can be utilized to reach relevant expertise. Experts can be identified, for instance, through UniPID's FinCEAL initiative, including the FinCEAL Infobank, a database of Finnish research and capacity building projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. UniPID DocNet, the Finnish development research doctoral training network, can be used to identify doctoral candidates and their supervisors.

[51] Refers to secondment of both civil servants and specialists outside government.

[52] The EU's Junior Professionals in Delegations (2 positions per year) can sometimes provide an opportunity to gain experience in development.

organizations, such as UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO and UNRWA. However, the numbers are small—education has not been a priority. For example, in the 2000s only 12 out of 273 JPOs were in the education sector, or 4 percent. Currently, 35 JPOs are working in their assignments and only one of them in education.

Moreover, there are mid-career level secondments in education to the World Bank Group and regional development banks (see section 4.3).

As evident, with a few exceptions, education has not been prominent in Finnish secondments. If helping address the learning crisis—and education more generally— becomes a priority in Finland's development cooperation, the secondment programs, especially the JPO program, will need to reflect it and become more strategic and selective.

9.2.2 Finnish volunteer programs

Over the years Finland has had various volunteer programs. For instance, in the 1990s the Service Center for Development Cooperation, KEPA—a platform for Finnish civil society organizations—managed the Finnish Volunteer Service (FVS) which deployed 50–80 professionals annually in various sectors to Zambia, Mozambique and Nicaragua. The program was discontinued in 1998. Many volunteers who began their career in the FVS continue to work in development even today.

In 1995, five NGOs set up a Finnish Volunteer Program *ETVO* in response to increasing demand for voluntary service in developing countries.[53] Subsequently, KEPA took over its administration. KEPA signed official agreements on ETVO collaboration with its Finnish member organizations but it did not have any direct relationship with the Southern NGOs.

During the two decades of operation, ETVO sent out around 660 volunteers to work in NGOs in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The minimum age for a volunteer was 22 years, and the duration of volunteering was from 6 to 12 months. The volunteers worked, for example, in environmental conservation, with street children and with people with disabilities. However, it was not possible to find data on the share of teachers and educators in the program. At least one of the current MFA education advisers started her career in development as an ETVO volunteer.

[53] Originally called *Nuorten kehitysmaavaihto-ohjelma* which was coordinated by *Maailmanvaihto*.

Box 13: Assessments of ETVO

We found two assessments of ETVO, commissioned by KEPA. In the first assessment – which explored whether the program supported 'agency for change' among the Finnish volunteers – ETVO was seen having brought about a change in the participants' attitudes towards global inequities, development cooperation and other cultures (Mäkäräinen 2014). Many of the participants continued to volunteer or work in development either in Finland or abroad thanks to their ETVO experience.

In the second assessment, five different aspects were explored from the receiving NGOs' point of view (Jäntti 2015):

- Volunteer's commitment to the values of the receiving NGOs was typically much higher than what the receiving NGOs were expecting.
- Partnership. The relationship between the receiving and sending NGO typically came stronger and closer thanks to the ETVO volunteers.
- Volunteer's know-how. Many of the receiving NGOs were able to utilize the skills of the volunteer making his/her stay much more effective and impactful.
- Volunteer's adaptation to the local community. Usually he/she became part of the local community and especially of the working environment by bringing a lot of new ideas and ways of working.
- Volunteer as a cultural agent. He/she could tell about the Finnish culture and in that way, make the connection even stronger with the NGO.

Sources: Mäkäräinen 2014, Jäntti 2015

ETVO was fully financed from ODA. When foreign aid was significantly cut in the 2016 government budget, the program was discontinued—to the disappointment of both the receiving and sending NGOs. For Finnish educators it meant one less opportunity to gain field experience in development.

Teachers without Borders (TwB) is a network of Finnish teachers and education professionals that offers opportunities in development both at home and abroad, including volunteering from 3 to 12 months in developing countries. Operational since 2014 and housed in Finn Church Aid, the network, with its 1,800 members, helps enhance (i) the quality of education mostly in fragile countries; and (ii) global education in Finnish schools by developing new tools and materials. The two objectives are linked. For example, volunteer teachers commit themselves to global education activities in Finland for one year after their volunteer period.

Only for one round of recruitment in 2016 Teachers without Borders was open for all CSOs to propose volunteers to work in their projects. Once the ODA funding dried out, Finn Church Aid was left to run it alone. Consequently, volunteers have been deployed mainly to Finn Church Aid's projects.[54] A little over 50 volunteers have been deployed so far; the annual target is 30. Assignments have ranged from support to policy work in a ministry of education (Eritrea) to teacher training, curriculum development for teacher training and career counsellors (Cambodia), and to support to school leadership and management in refugee camps (Greece).[55] As highlighted by Matsinen (2016), more work is still required to iron out practical issues in order to ensure a smooth operation, impact on the ground, and a rewarding experience for the volunteers.

A recent evaluation concluded that the TwB fills the gap of volunteering and field experience among Finnish teachers (Venäläinen 2017). However, compared to the original vision, it has not yet become a national network offering volunteer opportunities to education experts more broadly. The evaluation concluded that volunteer teachers have contributed to the quality of education by enhancing practical, pedagogical and counselling skills of teachers and counsellors in the context of FCA projects. But that the expertise of the volunteer teachers could be better utilized, for instance, in development of student-centered learning and differentiated learning materials, as well as approaches to teaching large classrooms. It also recommended that volunteers' general understanding of the local context and education challenges be enhanced prior to deployment.

Interviews and focus group discussions confirmed that there is a need for a volunteer program like TwB both among recipient organizations and countries (most of which have so far been low-income or conflict countries) and Finnish teachers and education professionals, both junior and senior. Teachers without Borders can become an important element in stepping up Finland's role in education. Today Finn Church Aid is shouldering the program alone, given that implementation fell short of the original national vision—a vision that continues to be valid. It is a good start which can be built upon.

We recommend that MFA, as part of the step-up of Finland's role in education globally, initiate a consultative process to explore ways of realizing the initial vision of a national network, including sustainable funding. The case of ETVO demonstrates that it is risky to be dependent only on one source of finance. The TwB steering group[56] should play a key role in this effort and other relevant stakeholders should be invited to join. Both strong leadership and wide participation are key. However, it is important to keep in mind that, for fundraising and other activities, many CSOs are dependent on their own distinct profile and identity. These incentives need to be taken into account, one way or another, when expanding the network to a national program.

9.2.3 New program ideas

The Norwegian Refugee Council's expert capacity deployment organization for humanitarian purposes, NORCAP, has inspired many Finnish development actors and CSOs. Box 14 provides details on NORCAP's objectives and operations.

[54] Cambodia, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Greece, Haiti, Liberia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Uganda

[55] The network also coordinates other activities, such as the World Teacher Program in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda with the Dutch organization *Edukans*, and a language program for refugees in Finland. In a mobile mentoring project in Uganda, a team of Finnish teachers based in Finland mentors a group of Ugandan teachers using WhatsApp messages (following a curriculum developed for this approach).

[56] The TwB has an extensive steering group with members from EDUFI, MEC, MFA, Education Departments of Universities of Oulu and Helsinki, Trade Union of Education in Finland, and KEPA.

Box 14: Norwegian Refugee Council's NORCAP

The Norwegian Refugee Council is an independent humanitarian organization that is helping people forced to flee. Currently, it works in crises across 31 countries. NORCAP is an expert capacity deployment organization. It aims to improve international and local ability to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises. This is done by bringing actors together and by sending experts to the UN and to national, regional and international organizations and institutions. Sometimes it also includes local ministries in some developing countries, for example, in Somalia.

Since its establishment in 1991, NORCAP has deployed experts to more than 9,000 missions worldwide. The aim is to combine specialized recruitment with years of experience and in that way, match the right person to the right mission at the right time.

In its roster NORCAP has more than 1,000 experienced professionals, selected to meet the changing demands of a wide range of contexts and crises. The NORCAP roster is the largest and one of the most utilized standby rosters worldwide. Over one hundred nationalities are represented in the roster. For example, in 2017, a total of 126 new members were added, half men and half women. The members of the roster are experts in their field, ranging from education, logistics, and refugee camp management to peacebuilding, legal affairs, coordination and leadership.

NORCAP works with different areas of expertise, including crisis response, human rights and democracy, protection, gender mainstreaming, needs assessment, cash transfer programs, resilience and peace building. In 2017 NORCAP supported 40 partners in 77 countries, with 543 expert deployments and contributing 2,755 person-months of work. There are around 50 permanent employees in the NORCAP headquarters in Oslo, Norway. The yearly budget of NORCAP is about NOK350 million.

Education has recently become one of NORCAP´s priority areas; there are about 90 people in the roster with educational background. In 2017 education recorded 86 in person-months, while UNICEF and UNESCO received together 342 in person-months (also other sectors than education). However, NORCAP is finding it hard these days to recruit people with sufficient experience in education, say, in education in emergencies because just being a teacher in Norway is no longer considered as sufficient experience. Therefore, NORCAP plans to organize additional training in 2018.

The Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and NORCAP have been working closely together to strengthen the capacities of humanitarian response. Financial support from the Ministry has included framework partnership agreements since 2009, and usually additional funds in emergency situations. Also, DFID (UK) has supported NORCAP since 2012 as has the European Commission's ECHO and a number of other donors.
Source: NORCAP

Something similar to NORCAP—but smaller and focused on education—is an interesting idea for two reasons. First, it would facilitate access to Finnish education expertise by 'learning crisis' countries. Currently, such professional exchanges tend to be with upper middle-income and high-income countries. Second, it would help build Finnish human resource base in education for development by creating opportunities to gain indispensable field experience. This Finnish organization could start gradually by deploying experts, say, to select UN agencies. Education in emergencies could be one focus area. The other one could be the learning crisis more generally. **We recommend, therefore, that MFA explore opportunities to initiate such an expert capacity deployment window or organization in partnership with other relevant development actors in Finland**.

Moreover, many interviewees and focus group participants expressed their concern regarding lack of opportunities in development for young education professionals. For another new program of gaining field experience we recommend internships in Finnish embassies located in countries where the education sector programs are being implemented. However, the approach to such internships would need to be strategic and systematic.

9.3 Short-term training programs in education

Practically no short-term training courses are offered in education and development in Finland today. MFA organizes a three-day orientation course (KEO/KYT) for personnel working in Finnish funded interventions. The previous similar course (KEVALKU) included education but the current one does not.

A number of CSOs send education specialists to the field but only Teachers without Borders provides a two-day orientation course to their volunteer teachers. However, according to a recent evaluation, the course does not address global development issues or challenges, such as the learning crisis (Venäläinen 2017). KEPA also organizes training on various topics in development but during the past several years it has not covered education.

In the early-2000s, together with the Center of Teacher Education[57] and others, MFA organized two 12-week training courses in development cooperation for education specialists. The purpose was to prepare the participants for work in planning, implementation and evaluation of bilateral and EU projects. The themes included general principles of development cooperation, Finnish development policy, education sector issues, and management of the project cycle. The first course (2001-02) had a practical component within which MFA contracted the participants for small consultancy assignments. The second course (2003-04) included on-the-job training in order to link theory to practice. More than 40 trainees completed these courses—and many of them continue to work in development even today.

When stepping up Finland's global role in education, it would be important to revive some of these training activities—of course, with today's content. The choice of topics should reflect the needs of the learning crisis and could include, say,

- education systems (e.g., policy, finance, budgeting, incentives, information, value for money); and
- pedagogical and other in-depth education issues.

In addition to the existing ones, new partnerships could be sought for this training, such as the Teacher Student Union of Finland. **We recommend that MFA takes the lead to get the ball rolling on new short-term training programs** (even if others would subsequently help design and deliver the program).

[57] Opettajien koulutuskeskus OPEKO

10. Main recommendations

This final section summarizes the main recommendations of the report. While there are many detailed recommendations throughout the report, these are the most important ones. They cover strategic leadership; suggested priority themes; Finland's voice on international forums; bilateral aid; and Finnish human resources in education and development.

Our overarching recommendation—which runs through the whole report—is to **step up Finland's global role in education**. Why? Because the developing world faces a learning crisis. Despite years in school many students leave without basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The learning crisis threatens to divide the world in a new way: half of the young people have the opportunity to learn multiple skills for life-long learning, while the other half is failed by the education system and they don't learn even the basic skills.

Finland has one of the most respected national education systems world-wide. Yet, Finland's global role in education is modest. Its role could be expanded in an influential way to help address the learning crisis. But this requires strategic leadership, cooperation among stakeholders and knowledge of the local context. The following recommendations are meant to deliver on these requirements.

Strategic leadership

- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) to establish a multi-stakeholder Steering Group, co-chaired with the Ministry for Education and Culture (MEC), to oversee preparation of a new education policy for stepping up Finland's global role in education in development cooperation. Important members include the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), civil society organizations, universities, Education Finland, and others.

Priority themes

- We propose **education quality and learning** as the overarching theme for Finland's stronger global role in education and five sub-themes—in addition to current priorities of girls' education and inclusive education:
  - Supporting coherence of the entire educational system
  - Strengthening school leadership and teachers' professional development
  - Collaborating on teacher education programs
  - Supporting learner-focus in basic education, and
  - Sharing Finnish experience in education reform, including the political context.

Finland's voice on international forums

- As part of the stepping up of global engagement in education, Finland to participate in key multilateral education forums, especially the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait initiative, while restoring support to UNICEF to the previous level (and beyond).

- Finland to prioritize education in its EU engagement in development cooperation, becoming a more active member state in this regard, and to provide substantive and strategic leadership in helping address the learning crisis

Bilateral aid

- Continue and intensify the work on education sector programs in long-term partner countries by engaging more systematically with Finnish institutions, including EDUFI, universities, and other stakeholders.

- MFA to explore cost-efficient ways of engaging interested low and lower middle-income countries in a dialogue with relevant Finnish education policymakers, officials and experts on key aspects of coherent education systems and their reform.

Finnish human resources in education and development

- MFA to find ways to encourage Finnish universities to engage in education globally, including offering development-oriented programs and courses in educational sciences and economics of education.

- MFA take lead to make *Teachers without Boarders* a national volunteer program in education to address the learning crisis.

- MFA to initiate exploratory work towards establishing a Finnish expert capacity deployment facility in education, initially, for select UN agencies.

Financing

While recognizing that money is not, by any means, Finland's comparative advantage, the current level (and share) of Finnish aid for education is very small indeed—in the past decade it has varied between 30 and 55 million euros per year.[58] To deliver on the above recommendations—and meaningfully to step up Finland's global role in education—we propose that this level be increased to 100 million euros per year in the next four years.

[58] In 2010 prices.

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Annex I: Terms of Reference

Review of Finnish Expertise and Co-operation in Education Sector – Suggestions for the way forward

1. Background

1.1 The Learning Crisis

The recent expansion of education is impressive by historical standards. In many developing countries over the last few decades, net enrollment in education has greatly outpaced the historic performance of today's industrial countries. For example, it took the United States 40 years to increase girls' enrollments from 57 percent to 88 percent. By contrast, Morocco achieved a similar increase in just 11 years. The number of years of schooling completed by the average adult in the developing world more than tripled from 1950 to 2010. (WDR 2018)

However, while access to education has improved, quality of education has not improved. As Education Commission's report points out, schooling is not same as learning. Education in many countries is not improving and children are instead falling behind. In low- and middle-income countries, only half of primary-school aged children and little more than a quarter of secondary-school aged children are learning basic primary- and secondary-level skills. The Commission projects that if current trends continue, by 2030 just four out of 10 children of school age in low- and middle-income countries will be on track to gain basic secondary-level skills. In low-income countries, only one out of 10 will be on track. Without action, the learning crisis will significantly slow progress toward reaching the most fundamental of all development goals: ending extreme poverty. On current trends, more than one-quarter of the population in low-income countries could still be living in extreme poverty in 2050.

Using an interim approach, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics has estimated that 387 million children of primary school age, or 56%, did not reach the minimum proficiency level in reading; in sub-Saharan Africa 87% of children did not reach this level. According to leading international assessments of literacy and numeracy—Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)—the average student in low-income countries performs worse than 95 percent of the students in high-income countries, meaning that student would be singled out for remedial attention in a class in high-income countries (WDR 2018).

2. Education in Finland and International Cooperation

2.1. Strengths of Finnish Education

Finland has one of the most respected and potentially powerful national education "brands" in the world. As a result of the Finnish performance in many international comparisons (OECD, 2003; 2010; 2014) there has been an increasing number of requests from overseas to collaborate and learn from the success of Finnish education system.

Comparing the features of Finnish education system with for instance of the recent World Development Report (WDR) "Learning to Realize Education's promise" (2018), Finland has specific expertise and experience in the domains which are considered crucial for improving learning. The WDR indicates that struggling education systems lack one or more of four key school-level ingredients for learning:

- *First*, children often arrive in school unprepared to learn—if they arrive at all. Malnutrition, illness, low parental investments, and the harsh environments associated with poverty undermine early childhood learning.
- *Second*, teachers often lack the skills or motivation to be effective. Most education systems do not attract applicants with strong backgrounds

to teacher education. Beyond that, weak teacher education results in teachers lacking subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.
- *Third*, inputs often fail to reach classrooms or to affect learning when they do. Though policies exist, inputs often fail to make it to the front lines.
- *Fourth*, poor management and governance often undermine schooling quality. Although effective school leadership does not raise student learning directly, it does so indirectly by improving teaching quality and ensuring effective use of resources (World Bank 2017).

The World Development Report mentions Finland as one of the countries where most of the key issues have been successfully achieved and challenges solved. According to the report the success story is based on a Finnish education policy which has a clear objective of offering all citizens equal opportunities to receive education, regardless of age, domicile, financial situation, gender, or mother tongue. Finland's national curriculum system provides values for the entire educational system and defines learning objectives for each educational level. Local education authorities and schools are granted wide autonomy in organizing education and implementing the core curriculum. Teachers have much freedom regarding how they carry out teaching and support student learning. At the same time, they are expected to take responsibility for students' learning outcomes as well as students' holistic well-being. They have to be able to recognize learning difficulties and identify special support needs as early as possible. This requires a high degree of pedagogical competence and a wide professional role. In Finland, the purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve learning and education. This principle is applied at both the macro and micro levels of the Finnish educational system.

Finnish teachers play a role that is often described as "teacher leadership". Teacher leadership means that teachers are goal-oriented and they have a clear vision of school development and high-quality teaching, and moreover, they are able to work collaboratively with other teachers towards those goals. Teachers are able to consume research-based knowledge and they have a thorough understanding of the teaching and learning processes. The research-based orientation in pre-service teacher education makes teachers capable of designing school-based projects and also their own development. In teacher pre-service training, theory and practice are integrated throughout teacher education programs. In many surveys, student teachers have stated they value teaching practice and see it as the most important part of their professional development.

In-service training days and courses are being offered to teachers, but currently teachers are seen as developers in the whole school community and a more holistic and integrated approach in Teacher Professional Development is applied. In-service training is seen as a resource for achieving joint aims in the school community. The communicative and cooperative working culture in schools is seen as an important element. Collaboration within the school community as well as with external partners, especially parents, is part of teachers' professional development.

Pedagogical leadership and principals' commitment are keystones for successful school development. Finland was selected by the OECD (2007) as an example of a systemic approach to school leadership, because of its particular approach to distributing leadership systematically. In a decentralised environment, Finnish municipalities are developing different approaches to school leadership distribution and cooperation to respond to pressures brought about by declining school enrolments and resources.

2.2 Finland's participation in international (development) cooperation

Finland's work in education sector development cooperation is guided by our international commitments and country's own development policy, i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals for **Education (SDG 4)** and the **Framework for Action in Education for 2030 and Finland's Development Policy 2016**. These goals are promoted, through different channels i.e. bilateral, multilateral (UN and development banks), non-governmental organizations, higher education institutions and the private sector. In addition to general education, the SDG4 objective related to education covers early childhood education, vocational training and lifelong learning and to promoting gender equality and educational equality. The equality objective applies to easily excluded groups such as disabled children and ethnic minorities.

In **Finland's development policy of 2016**, education is included in the priority area 3: Societies have

become more democratic and better functioning, the **outcome** being:

"Access to quality primary and secondary education has improved, especially for those in most vulnerable positions".

To reach this outcome, the following **outputs** need to be achieved:

1. Inclusiveness of the education system and strengthened (mother-tongue, disability and pre-primary education)

2. Enhanced institutional capacity to improve learning outcomes

3. Teaching and learning practices and educational environments improved

The means and key activities to be performed to reach the outcome are:

- Engage in political dialogue in Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nepal, Palestine, Afghanistan and Myanmar
- Provide technical, financial and political support (bilateral and multi-bi) in partner countries.
- Fund and influence UNESCO, UNICEF and the WB
- Support and cooperate with CSOs
- Influence in sector and other working groups at country level as part of country strategy implementation

Instruments and experience gained

Finland supports education sector through different instruments, the main instrument presently being financing of education sector development programmes jointly with the development banks, UN and bilateral donors in six countries. The financial contribution is supported by technical assistance and advocacy mostly to increase inclusion of children and youth in vulnerable positions because of disability, ethnicity and language (mother tongue education) and gender.

Over the years technical assistance has also been provided for Teacher Education, Curriculum Development and Literacy through **bilateral projects and projects implemented in collaboration with the UN agencies and CSOs**. The work of several Finnish and local CSO's, particularly in special needs -, girls' education, adult education and vocational training, and humanitarian aid complement official aid in many countries. Bilateral project-based cooperation has decreased in formal ODA in education and at the same time NGOs' role and professional capacity has increased including expertise in education. Finnish **universities and higher education institutions** have implemented *North-South-South Programme* (NSS, closed 2016) and the *Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI)* which are capacity development programmes implemented with universities in developing countries. Local (small) cooperation funds, which are managed by the Embassies support e.g. vocational training. Recently created private sector funding instruments have been developed to engage the capacity and innovativeness of the private sector to develop education and leverage additional resources and funding for the sector.

In **multilateral cooperation** Finland was a partner of EFA Fast Track Initiative since 2002 and joined Global Partnership for Education in 2013–2016. UNICEF receives assistance from Finland for "No Lost Generation" education for the Syrian refugee children. UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education (CapED) is one of Finland's partners. In the World Bank, Asian, African and American Development Banks education has often been Finland's priority interest.

Education Finland - growth program promotes and supports Finnish education exporters and matches their offering with international customers. It aims to identify new possibilities for education export in close co-operation with the Team Finland -network. The program gives visibility to the Finnish education know-how, matches the Finnish offering with international demand and increases cooperation between education solutions providers and stakeholders both in Finland and abroad. The official members of the programme represent edtech companies as well as educational institutes and their export companies. The program is coordinated by Finnish National Agency for Education.

Over the years MFA has also supported strengthening Finnish **human resource-base** and expertise in development cooperation by e.g. seconding experts to UN volunteer programme, or through Junior Professional Officer Programme (JPO) which posted experts to international organisations such as UNICEF or UNESCO. In 1995 a Finnish Volunteer programme (ETVO, discontinued) was set up by five NGOs as a response to an increasing number of

enquiries about possibilities for voluntary services in southern countries. Currently, Teachers without Borders (TwB) provides opportunities for Finnish educationalists to get first-hand experience in development work. So far, over 30 education professionals have been deployed mainly in projects implemented by Finn Church Aid (FCA). In early 2000, MFA, together with the Finnish National Agency for Education organised a specialised training programme for Education Experts in Development Cooperation. This programme was discontinued.

3. Purpose and Issues to be addressed

From the previous chapters, a question arises: how has Finland taken advantage of and utilized its capacity and resources for the benefit of the other countries, particularly for those suffering most of the "learning crisis"?

The purpose of the task is to come up with a proposal on how to improve and better organize the work and collaboration of stakeholders **to make the most of the Finnish capacity** and resources to address the global challenges in education. It is envisaged that for a strategic and realistic approach, a limited number of spearhead themes in education need to be identified including an outline of a programmes/ instruments to employ the spearhead themes.

The review is not intended to be an evaluation while it entails certain level of assessment to be able to select/develop the most potential initiatives as key themes (spearheads) for future. While (in next chapters) there is a number of suggested questions to carry out the assignment, the intention is not to cover everything that has been done and accomplished so far but rather select examples of successful and potential initiatives, projects and/or programmes and develop a coherent "story" of the use of Finnish expertise, capacity and resources internationally .

As a first step a comprehensive outline of the strengths of Finnish education (Brand) will be prepared including education in Finland and the "story" of development policy and – cooperation in education. Based on this a few spearhead themes with most potential to address global challenges in education will be identified to maximize the use of capacity and (scarce) resources. The identification of the spearhead themes will consider the availability of Finnish capacity in the areas concerned. The study will then suggest how to organize the work and cooperation among the various stakeholders in an effective way to have a greater impact and visibility of Finland as a development partner in themes where Finland has a strong capacity respond (or where the capacity should be improved e.g. by training). This includes recommendations for concrete mechanisms (means and ways) for cooperation. The study is also expected to give ideas on how best communicate the significance of education in Finland's international - and development cooperation and build a solid justification for funding.

There are important parallel processes going on which may have partly overlapping objectives, such as inauguration of United Nations Technology Innovation Lab (UNTIL) in Finland and a development of a presentation of the Nordic model for developing countries (Pohjoismainen malli ja sen esittely kehitysmaille). Furthermore, some of the Education Network (reference group) organisations are developing new initiatives such as strengthened provision of Finnish expertise for development and – humanitarian aid of the UN and other major organisations. MFA and Ministry of Education / National Agency for Education are exploring more effective and efficient modes of cooperation and administration under the umbrella of SDG4 planning and implementation.

The review will identify and describe:

- Concrete achievements in various areas of education sector expertise, thematic area or subcomponents of education sector development which the Finnish support is addressing
- How Finnish education expertise has been utilised internationally and in development cooperation and with what effect, and present concrete case examples.
- What should be done to make better use of Finnish expertise and experience in different contexts in terms of resourcing, capacities through the existing and new instruments.
- Scenarios on how to engage "a critical mass" of education expertise specialised in global challenges in education and what resources would it require. (A critical mass = sufficient volume and quality to gain a meaningful and credible role in the international setting)

- The review should also result in ideas and recommendations regarding development of content and modes/media of communication on the "Finnish narrative" on education.

Issues to be addressed

The review is expected to respond, for example, to the following questions:

a. What are the highlights and success factors of education in Finland?

b. Have these success factors benefitted Finland's international cooperation? Which of them?

c. Finland's development policy and – cooperation in Education: policy and instruments in multi – and bilateral cooperation and CSO's, focus areas and countries.

d. Who are the key actors in the education sector development cooperation in Finland and what are their core competencies/ expertise. How has this experience been utilised in development cooperation and with what effects? Provide concrete examples.

e. How has Finnish education expertise been utilised in different instruments, including bilateral projects, multilateral organisations/ multilateral projects, CSOs, private sector etc. including humanitarian assistance and with what effect? Provide concrete examples.

f. How the strengths of the Finnish education system have been applied or introduced in development cooperation and with what effect? Provide concrete examples.

g. What are the success factors, critical assumptions and preconditions for the Finnish added value to be successful? What are the lessons learned?

h. What innovations/ innovative elements have been promoted through Finnish support?

i. What has been done to engage and strengthen the human resource-base (education sector expertise) for development cooperation? What expertise is missing / needs to be strengthened? How human resource base could be strengthened?

j. Based on the above, suggest a few spearhead areas for Finnish international cooperation

k. How to organize the work and cooperation among the stakeholders in an effective way to have a greater impact and visibility of Finland as a development partner.

l. What mechanisms (means and ways) for cooperation need to developed/strengthened?

m. How to strengthen Finland's role in the international/multilateral education financing fora? Make concrete recommendations.

a. How to best communicate the significance of education in Finland's international - and development cooperation? (actual communication content and material will be developed later)

4. Scope and organisation of the review

The review is commissioned and led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Education Network (reference group) of development cooperation, education and education export actors from government and non-governmental organisations have been involved in formulating the terms of reference and will meet the review team during the process.

The review should look into the issues from a wide-angle, not excluding any instrument, form of education or development partner. It will cover the strengths of education in Finland that have potential for international delivery and education in Finland's development policy and cooperation.

5. Methodology

During desk study, the team will map out key actors, their main area of education sector expertise and interventions as well as success stories through document review, online surveys and initial stakeholder interviews. Document review will include programme, project and reports, evaluation reports, and other relevant documentation. Online questionnaire and skype/phone interviews will be used to map out the key actors and their competencies in the education sector. A meeting or seminar to gather a wider group of stakeholders can also be organised, tenderers can make a more detailed suggestion on this.

Based on this mapping and stock taking the review team together with the reference group will identify gaps and actors/ interventions to be explored more in detail. This detailed analysis will include stakeholder interviews in Finland and conduct skype/ telephone interviews with selected partners to identify what Finnish interventions have been successful and why and which of them would have potential for future spearhead programmes.

6. Expertise required

The review will consist of 2 members including a Team Leader who will lead the work and will be ultimately responsible for the deliverables. The requirements of the Team are:

- Members have a minimum of Master's Degree in education, social science or economics. PhD is an asset.
- Thorough understanding of the global development issues and trends incl. multilateral cooperation in education and global challenges in education.
- Broad understanding of the education system in Finland and sound experience and expertise in Finnish education sector development cooperation and its instruments.
- Strong analytical and writing skills. Ability to express issues clearly and concisely in written form.

The Team should be able to demonstrate complementary expertise and experience and good communication skills.

7. The Review Process and Time Schedule

The review will be conducted between March and summer 2018. The exact time will be confirmed during the negotiations. The review includes: follows:

- Kick-off meeting with MFA
- Submission of inception report to outline a plan to carry out the review.
- Desk study and initial data gathering, interviews and discussions of relevant stakeholders
- Analysis of initial findings and recommendations on themes for more detailed analysis. The reference group will participate in commenting and will be met as a group for discussions.
- More detailed interviews and data gathering on selected themes and stakeholders.
- Draft final report, presentation of report to MFA
- Finalization of the Review Report based on the comments of MFA.
- Finalized Review Report.

An open seminar/workshop or other type of gathering will be organized during or at the end of the review.

8. Reporting

The consultant shall produce the following deliverables:

- Inception report
- Presentation on the findings of the initial data gathering, interviews etc.
- Draft final report
- Presentation of findings
- Finalized report incorporating the MFA comments

The reporting schedule will be included in the contract.

9. Mandate

The appraisal team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this appraisal with pertinent persons and organizations. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on the behalf of the Government of Finland.

Annex II: People interviewed

Adams, James W., Former Vice-President, The World Bank

Ala-Suutari, Hanna, Education Specialist, The World Bank

Alavuotunki, Kaisa, Senior Development Impact Adviser, FINNFUND

Albright, Alice, CEO, Global Partnership for Education

Antila, Sinikka, Ambassador, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Anttalainen, Kati, Planning Officer, Ministry of Education and Culture

Airas, Maija, Counsellor of Education, Finnish National Agency for Education

Bellinger, Amy, Consultant, Education Commission Secretariat

Berglund, Marko, Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Bridges, David, Senior Donor Relations Officer (Europe), Global Partnership for Education

Caillaud, Fadila, Program Leader, The World Bank

Cantell, Hannele, Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Helsinki

Filmer, Deon, Director, 2018 World Development Report, The World Bank

Haaparanta, Pertti, Professor of Economics, Aalto University

Halinen, Saana, Head, Advisory Services, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Heinonen, Olli-Pekka, Director General, Finnish National Agency for Education

Hemberg, Jouni, Director General, Finn Church Aid

Holmström, Zabrina, Ministerial Adviser, Deputy Director, Ministry of Education and Culture

Hopsu, Inka, Communications Manager, Finn Church Aid

Huusko, Marianne, Ambassador (Education Exports), Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Jansson, Mervi, CEO, Omnia Education Partnerships

Kallioniemi, Arto, Professor, Department of Education, University of Helsinki

Kangasniemi, Jouni, Head of Development, Ministry of Education and Culture

Karakoski, Jussi, Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Kaskinen, Pasi, Executive Vice-President, Finland University

Kokkala, Heikki, Former Education Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Kujala-Garcia, Marianne, Counsellor (Education), Embassy of Finland, Maputo, Mozambique

Lampinen, Johanna, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Oulu

Lappalainen, Timo, Executive Director, KEPA

Lavonen, Jari, Professor, Vice-Dean and Director of the Department of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki

Lehtomäki, Elina, Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Oulu

Lindholm, Niko, Project Manager, Innovation Unit, City of Helsinki

Lyytinen, Heikki, Professor Emeritus, University of Jyväskylä

Mai, Thanh Thi, Senior Education Specialist, The World Bank

Malan, Paula, Senior Specialist, Representative Office of Finland, Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

Mattila, Paula, Counsellor of Education, Finnish National Agency for Education

Mikander, Anna, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture

Palojärvi, Jaana, Director for International Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture

Pehu-Voima, Satu, Education Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Peltola, Minna, Education Thematic Adviser, Finn Church Aid

Pritchett, Lant, Professor, Harvard University and the Center for Global Development

Rajander, Silja, Senior Specialist and Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Finland, Yangon, Myanmar

Rekola, Sanna, Global Education Specialist, KEPA

Ryynänen, Jesper, Director of Partnership, GraphoGame

Räsänen, Rauni, Professor Emerita, Faculty of Education, University of Oulu

Saarivaara, Jyrki, CEO, EduCluster

Saavalainen, Pekka, CEO, Finland University

Santala, Satu, Director General (Development Policy), Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Savage, Laura, Education Adviser, Department for International Development, United Kingdom

Savola, Pauliina, Civil Society Specialist, KEPA

Seppälä, Pekka, Development Policy Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sinerva, Sirpa, Consultant, Former Counsellor in Counsellor for Education, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sundbäck-Lindroos, Annika, Program Manager, Finnish National Agency for Education

Suutarinen, Marjaana, CEO, HY+

Tammi, Anna Maria, Education Specialist, Global Partnership for Education

Tornberg, Aki, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture

Torvinen, Laura, Ambassador, Embassy of Finland, Maputo

Tuomi, Lauri, Program Director, Education Finland, Finnish National Agency for Education

Uusimäki, Niina, Head of Marketing, Finland University

Venäläinen, Raisa, Consultant, Appraisal Consulting RV Ky

Virtanen, Hanna, Researcher, The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (Etla)

von Bonsdorff, Max, Director, Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Annex III: Focus group participants

Satu Pehu-Voima, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Johanna Kivimäki, UniPID (Finnish University Partnership for International Development)

Satu Sundström, University of Helsinki

Lauri Tuomi, EDUFI (Finnish National Agency for Education)

Annika Sundbäck-Lindroos, EDUFI

Mike Jurvelius, Formerly Forestry Training Programme

Marjukka Mähönen, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Eija Laitinen, Häme University of Applied Sciences

Eeva Lehtonen, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences

Maija Hirvonen, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences

Inka Hopsu, Finn Church Aid

Tytti Matsinen, Felm

Anna Peltonen, Kehys ry

Elina Lehtomäki, University of Oulu

Hanna Posti-Ahokas, University of Jyväskylä

Johanna Lampinen, University of Oulu

Johanna Ursin-Escobar – National Union of University Students in Finland

Tuija Lauren, FCG

Marja Laine, FCG

Outi Perähuhta, Finnish Refugee Council

Pauliina Savola, KEPA

Sirpa Sinervä, Consultant (Formerly Ministry for Foreign Affairs)

Raisa Venäläinen, AppRaisal Consulting Ky

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all interviewees, attendees in the focus group meetings, as well as those who provided comments on earlier drafts. Special thanks to James W. Adams and Raisa Venäläinen for their insightful feedback and comments, and to Satu Pehu-Voima for her unfailing support to this work.

Annex IV: Key terms used in the report

Basic Education refers to primary and lower secondary levels of the education system.

Bilateral aid represents flows from official (government) sources directly to official sources in the recipient country.

Civil society organizations. Non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the state and the market. CSOs can represent a wide range of interests. They include community-based organizations and NGOs.

Education – depending on the context it may refer to the whole education system from early childhood education to adult and higher education or a specific level of the system.

Education Commission, or the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, was set up to reinvigorate the case for investing in education and to chart a pathway for increased investment in order to develop the potential of all of the world's young people. The members include current and former heads of state and government, government ministers, and leaders in the fields of education, business, economics, development, health, and security.

Educational Ecosystem covers macro, meso and micro levels of the education system

Inclusive education is defined as a process of addressing barriers to learning, thus involving and including all groups of learners who face intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning.

Multilateral aid represents core contributions from official (government) sources to multilateral agencies where it is then used to fund the multilateral agencies' own programs.

Multi-bi aid. In some cases, a donor can contract with a multilateral agency to deliver a program or project on its behalf in a recipient country. Such cases are typically counted as bilateral flows.

Multilateral agencies, such as the many agencies of the United Nations, are governed, by representatives of governments. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), on the other hand, do not have government representatives directly involved in their governance, which consists of individuals acting in their private capacity.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the term used by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members to refer to what most people would call aid. To be counted as ODA, public money must be given outright or loaned on concessional (non-commercial) terms, and be used to support the welfare or development of developing countries. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) maintains a List of ODA-eligible countries which is updated every three years.

Special needs refer to any needs be they social, physical, psychological, environmental, educational, etc. Special educational needs refer to educational needs that usually require adaptations, modifications, alternative methods, etc.

Special education refers to educational provision based on identified educational needs and provided by special educators. It often refers to pull-out or segregated services, but could also be provided within mainstream setting.

Teacher education consists of pre-service education and in-service phases in higher education institutions.

Teacher training refers to practice-oriented programs or courses to teachers.

Annex V: Acronyms and abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
CIMO	Center for International Mobility (now part of EDUFI)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CERF	United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund
CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
Finnfund	Finnish Fund for Industrial Cooperation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DG DEVCO	The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DPF	Disability Partnership Finland
DPP	Development Policy Program
ECHO	European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EDUFI	Finnish National Agency for Education
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFA-FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FCA	Finn Church Aid
Felm	formerly Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
FRC	Finnish Refugee Council
FS	Free Church Federation in Finland
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Program
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HE	Higher Education
HEI-ICI	Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
IDA	International Development Association
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IIEP	International Institute for Education Planning
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
ISF	International Solidarity Foundation
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
K-12	Education from kindergarten to 12th grade (primary and secondary levels)
LMIC	Lower Middle-Income Countries
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NORCAP	Norwegian Refugee Council's Expert Capacity Deployment Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
R&D	Research and Development
RISE	Research on Improving Systems of Education
SCF	Save the Children Finland
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDI	Service Delivery Indicators
SPR	Finnish Red Cross (Suomen Punainen Risti)
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TwB	Teachers without Borders
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UniPID	Finnish University Partnership for International Development
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNTIL	United Nations Technology and Innovation Lab
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency
WIDER	World Institute for Development Economics Research
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WDR	World Development Report
WTO	World Trade Organization
WVF	World Vision Finland
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

The developing world faces a learning crisis. Despite years in school many students leave without basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Finland represents the opposite end of the spectrum: it has one of the most respected national education systems world-wide. Yet, Finland's global role in education is modest. Its role could be expanded in an influential way to help address the learning crisis. But this requires strategic leadership, cooperation among stakeholders and knowledge of the local context

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