

Methodology

This was the first National Audit Office Value for Money study to evaluate DFID's contribution towards Millennium Goals for primary education. Our approach was designed to evaluate bilateral expenditure on education, including projects and programmes, DFID contributions to pooled funding, sector-based budget support and general budget support.

The study did not consider DFID's direct contributions to multilaterals, (such as the World Bank or European Commission), which are active in education. DFID's work with multilaterals was assessed in the 2005 NAO report, "Engaging with Multilaterals".

Besides an overview of DFID's portfolio, we looked in detail at DFID's work in four countries: Ghana; Kenya; India and Ethiopia. The four case study countries were selected to provide a balanced cross-section of countries with "Public Service Agreement" (PSA) status where DFID also has a substantial education programme. They represented 39 per cent of DFID bilateral expenditure on education in 2007-08.

Collectively, the four case studies represent countries illustrating:

- different stages of educational reform;
- variation and similarities in the current levels of enrolment, completion and attainment, and in rates of progress;
- different levels of country commitment to free universal primary education; and
- variety in spending channels, ranging from full budget support, education sector support, multi-donor funded programmes, and DFID projects, technical assistance and programmes.

Our evaluative approach was designed to answer the main question, "Is DFID's expenditure on primary education adequately contributing to the achievement of the relevant Millennium Development Goals?"

A key design decision was to focus on primary education. We did not evaluate DFID's support to secondary or tertiary education because this is not where the majority of DFID's education portfolio has been targeted.

We used the following methods

Selected method	Primary Purpose
1 Literature review We undertook a high-level literature review of academic, donor and NGO publications on approaches to delivery of education. We also reviewed literature on the economic rates of return to education in different contexts, and on wider outcomes. We verified our synthesis of the literature with DFID's education research consortia: EdQual	To assess the extent of consensus about 'what works' in education reform in relation to access, quality and the outcomes of education.

<p>(Implementing Quality Education in Low Income Countries), ReCOUP (Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty) and CREATE (Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity), including attendance at relevance conferences.</p> <p>We also reviewed background literature on the history and context for education reform for our four in-depth case study countries.</p>	
<p>2 Statistical analysis</p> <p>We analysed MDG target data for all DFID PSA countries where DFID has a significant education portfolio.</p> <p>We undertook more detailed analyses of trends in additional educational data available for our four case study countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and India) focusing on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Enrolment data: Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Net enrolment ratio (NER), gender ratio, children out of school (%) (2) Completion data: Completion to grade 5, Drop-out percentage, Repetition, Indicators affecting completion: Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR), Pupil textbook ratios. (3) Attainment data: Attainment. Secondary school enrolment. (4) Criteria set by the Fast Track Initiative 	<p>To determine levels of progress in response to investment.</p>
<p>6 Financial analysis</p> <p>We reviewed DFID's education portfolio to assess major spending trends in all PSA countries receiving significant support to education.</p> <p>For our case study countries, we considered the allocation of DFID aid to education by assessing expenditure trends against in-country budget allocations for education and progress towards MDG progress.</p>	<p>To determine levels of progress in response to investment.</p>
<p>7 Analysis of DFID Education Advisors Country Survey</p> <p>We reviewed the responses to DFID's country survey of Education Advisors completed in December 2007 as part of DFID's Education Portfolio Review. The response rate to this survey was 74 per cent.</p>	<p>To triangulated data on education indicators and the national education system with our statistical analysis of education data, review of country-level data, and with semi-structured interviews.</p>
<p>8 Documentary review</p> <p>Strategy documents: We examined key documents in the development strategies of DFID and the Governments, including the DFID Country Assistance Plans, the Governments' Poverty Reduction Strategy, and other sector specific plans.</p>	<p>To evaluate progress against plans, and identify constraints to progress.</p>

<p>Project documents: For each country we examined project documentation for all projects or programmes exceeding £1 million, initiated since 2004. This amounted to 15 DFID projects in total.</p>	
<p>9 Semi-structured interviews We interviewed members of DFID’s London-based Education and Skills Team to understand DFID’s education strategy and approach to portfolio management.</p> <p>For the four case study countries, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with DFID staff including the Heads of Office, Education Advisers, and Human Development Advisers or Governance Advisers as required.</p> <p>In country, we interviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Representatives from all the main bilateral and multilateral donors active in education including the World Bank, US AID, Finnish, Italian, Dutch, UNICEF and UNDP. ● Key stakeholders in the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, and at local Government level in visited regions. ● Representatives from International Non-Governmental Organisations NGOs and Civil Society Organisations. ● At local level, front line service providers in education, including school management and teachers. <p>During each field visit, we spent several days outside capital cities, visiting schools and local governments across different regions of the countries to gain first hand experience of the effect of projects on service delivery in education. We interviewed local government officials, teachers and school management staff and local community leaders, including many parents. We observed school infrastructure, educational materials, records and teaching where these were linked to specific project interventions.</p>	<p>To gather views of development progress and DFID’s performance.</p>
<p>10 Qualitative research with beneficiaries, district officials and local service providers We commissioned research by specialist development consultants ITAD, who worked in partnership with a Ghanaian-based firm Delink services and a Kenyan-based firm Matrix Development Consultants. This research employed</p>	<p>To capture the views of beneficiaries, district officials and local service providers on progress in education over the past five</p>

qualitative techniques, (semi-structured interviews with officials and service providers, and focus group discussions with parents and teachers). The fieldwork was undertaken in the districts of Dangme West and Nadwoli in Ghana, plus Nairobi slums and Kitui district in Kenya. The districts were agreed with DFID to be representative of the country, and the locations within districts were selected to include remote and less remote communities.

Overall, 20 focus group discussions were conducted, as well as 16 semi-structured interviews with senior district officials and a further 20 semi-structured interviews with local service providers. NAO staff observed some of this research being conducted.

years, including the challenges and constraints to service provision. The study also provided insights into the experiences and perceptions in education of teachers, local officials and community representatives, and so highlighted some of the reality faced on the ground.