

EVALUATION



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

RIGHT TO EDUCATION, RIGHT TO LEARN –
FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Volume 1 • Main Report



Evaluation of Finland's Development Policy and Co-operation

2023:7



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EVALUATION

RIGHT TO EDUCATION, RIGHT TO LEARN – Finland's Development Cooperation in the Education Sector

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFD	French Development Agency (Agence française de développement)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALI	Department for Africa and the Middle East
ASA	Department for the Americas and Asia
AU	African Union
BEAM	Business with Impact Programme
BI	Bilateral
BRAVE	Building Resilience and Addressing Violence from Early years through Adolescence (Palestine)
CapED	Capacity Development for Education Programme
COACH	World Bank's global initiative focused on helping countries improve in-service teacher professional development programmes and systems to accelerate learning
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CwD	Children with Disabilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DG DEVCO	The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (renamed as DG International Partnerships (INTPA) in 2021)
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EDC	Education-focused development cooperation
EdTech	Education Technologies
EDUFI	Finnish National Agency for Education
EETP	Ethiopia Education Transformation Programme
EIE	Education in Emergencies
EiEPC	Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
EU	European Union
EVA-11	Development Evaluation Unit
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Felm	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FinCEED	Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development
FTVET	Federal Technical and Vocational Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Programme (Ethiopia)
GEQIP-E	General Education Quality Improvement Programme for Equity (Ethiopia)
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GINTL	Global Innovation Network for Teaching and Learning



GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GNI	Gross National Income
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding (Triple Nexus)
HEI ICI	Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HELDA	Helda Digital Repository (Helsinki University Library)
HQ	Headquarters
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ICHR	Independent Commission for Human Rights
ICI	Institutional Cooperation Instrument
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IDA	International Development Association
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEQE	Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education
IERC	Inclusive Education Resource Centre
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFFED	International Finance Facility for Education
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
ITÄ	Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
JAMK	Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences
JFA	Joint Financing Agreement
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
KEO	Department for Development Policy
KEO-20	Department for Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy
KEO-30	Department for Development Policy, Unit for Civil Society
KEO-50	Department for Development Policy, Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation
KEO-70	Department for Development Policy, Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPO-50	Team Finland Export Promotion Unit
KVS	Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kansanvalistusseura sr.)
LDC	Least-Developed Country
LMIC	Lower-Middle-Income Country
MEUR	Million euros
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Finland)
MoE	Ministry of Education
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture (Finland)
MYRP	Multi-Year Resilience Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAMK	Oulu University of Applied Sciences
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEP	Omnia Education Partnerships
PA	Palestinian Authority
PIF	Public Sector Investment Facility
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment



POL-50	Unit for UN and General Global Affairs, Political Department
PP	Policy Priority
PSI	Private Sector Instrument
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDG 4	Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)
SEN	Special Education Needs
SESP	School Education Sector Plan (Nepal)
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan (Nepal)
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TA	Technical Assistance
TEI	Team Europe Initiative
TFK	Team Finland Knowledge Network
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UFF	U-landshjälp från Folk till Folk i Finland
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UniPID	Finnish University Partnership for International Development
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNU-WIDER	The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US dollar
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WDR	World Development Report
WFP	World Food Programme
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum



Yhteenvedo

Ulkoministeriön kehitysevaluoinnin yksikkö (EVA-11) tilasi strategisen evaluoinnin selvittääkseen, kuinka kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön eri toimijat ovat onnistuneet tehostamaan Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyötoimia. Tällä ulkoisella riippumattomalla arvioinnilla pyrittiin tuottamaan tietoa Suomen toimien laadun ja vaikuttavuuden parantamiseksi sekä tekemään ne yhä tarkoituksenmukaisemmiksi, yhtenäisemmiksi ja tehokkaammiksi. Evaluointi arvioi toimintaa niin taaksepäin vuoteen 2019 asti kuin tulevaisuuteen katsoen.

Evaluoinnilla oli kolme päätavoitetta. Ensimmäinen tavoite oli arvioida eri toimijoiden toteuttamia toimenpiteitä maailmanlaajuisen oppimiskriisin ratkaisemiseksi ja opetuksen laadun parantamiseksi mukaan lukien koulutusvienti ja yksityissektorin toimet. Toisena tavoitteena oli tarkastella näiden toimenpiteiden tehokkuutta ja niillä saavutettuja tuloksia sekä arvioida, kuinka hyvin ne ovat edistäneet Suomen toimijuuden vahvistamista ja monitoimijamallien kehittymistä. Kolmantena tavoitteena oli tunnistaa vaihtoehtoisia lähestymistapoja ja antaa suosituksia siitä, kuinka muuttuvasta toimintaympäristöstä ja epävarmuustekijöistä huolimatta Suomen rooli opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä voisi kehittyä entistä tarkoituksenmukaisemmaksi, yhtenäisemmäksi, tehokkaammaksi ja vaikuttavammaksi.

Evaluointi perustuu teoriaperusteiseen vaikutusanalyysiin, joka kattaa sekä makro- että mikrotason muutosteoriat. Makrotason analyysissä tarkasteltiin kausaalisia muutospolkuja Suomen kehitysyhteistyössä laadukkaan ja osallistavan koulutuksen edistämiseksi yleisesti. Näkökulma pohjautuu ulkoministeriön vuonna 2020 julkaisemaan muutosteoriaan tulostavoitteineen sekä marraskuussa 2022 päivitettyyn koulutussektorin kehitysyhteistyön tuloskehikkoon. Mikrotason muutosteoriat puolestaan keskittyvät niihin tekijöihin, jotka edistävät kehitystä Suomen kumppanimaissa ja jotka on tunnistettu Suomen maaohjelmissa. Nämä tekijät on evaluoinnissa sisällytetty laajempaan makrotason viitekehikseen.

Asiakirjatiedon tarkastelun lisäksi evaluointitiimi haastatteli yhteensä 101 avainhenkilöä (52 ulkoministeriön ja sen kumppaniorganisaatioiden edustajaa liittyen Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön yleisesti ja 49 henkilöä maakohtaisiin tapaustutkimuksiin liittyen). Evaluoinnin osana toteutettiin kolme maakohtaista tapaustutkimusta Etiopiassa, Nepalissa ja Palestiinassa. Lisäksi kahta teemaa, opettajankoulutusta Mosambikissa ja ammatillista koulutusta Ukrainassa, tarkasteltiin asiakirjapohjaisesti. Tulevaisuuden näkymiä ja suuntauksia evaluoinnissa tutkittiin käyttäen Delfoi-menetelmää.

Ulkoministeriön vuonna 2018 tilaama selvitys opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöstä tuotti suosituksia Suomen roolin vahvistamiseksi. Nyt käsillä olevassa raportissa esitelty evaluointi puolestaan tarkasteli vuoden 2018 raportin, vuonna 2019 perustetun työryhmän ja vuonna 2022 laaditun kansallisen tiekartan osoittamien toimenpiteiden toimeenpanoa ja niiden edistymistä. Näissä kolmessa annettiin lukuisia suosituksia, joita Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyötä tekevät toimijat ovat pyrkineet toteuttamaan. Evaluointitiimi tiivistä niissä kaikissa tavalla tai toisella käsiteltyä suositusta seitsemäksi suositukseksi, joita käytettiin evaluoinnissa:

- Eri hallinnonalojen välisen yhteistyön vahvistaminen;
- Monenvälisen osallistumisen vahvistaminen;



- Kahdenvälisen tuen tehostaminen;
- Suomen ammatillisen koulutuksen profiilin vahvistaminen kehitysyhteistyössä;
- Kumppanimaiden tutkimuskapasiteetin parantaminen;
- Strategiset sijoitukset uusiin kumppanuuksiin, ja
- Opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön asiantuntijapoolin kehittäminen.

Evaluointikysymys 1: VASTE - Kuinka asianmukaisesti Suomi on vastannut vuoden 2018 raportin suosituksiin ja sittemmin sovittuihin jatkotoimenpiteisiin vahvistaakseen rooliansa maailmanlaajuisen oppimisen kriisin ja koulutuksen laadun parantamisessa?

Kokoava vastaus: Suomi on edistynyt merkittävästi opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä. Edistystä on tapahtunut erityisesti opetusalan roolin vahvistamisessa osana kehityspolitiikkaa, kahdenvälisen tuen laajentamisessa ja monenkeskisen yhteistyön vahvistamisessa. Toiminta on yleisesti linjassa Suomen Afrikka-strategian, Agenda 2030 neljännen tavoitteen kanssa (taata kaikille avoin, tasa-arvoinen ja laadukas koulutus sekä elinikäiset oppimismahdollisuudet) ja yllämainitun vuoden 2018 raportin antamien suositusten kanssa. On kuitenkin tärkeää tunnistaa tarve, että koulutuksen roolia humanitaarisessa avussa tulisi korostaa. Lisäksi olisi tärkeää edistää ammatillisen koulutuksen roolia opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä sekä edelleen selkeyttää monitoimijayhteistyötä sekä käsitteenä, että toimintana. Opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön saralla tehdyt sitoumukset ovat lisääntyneet, ja Suomi tekee aktiivisesti yhteistyötä Euroopan Unionin (EU) ja monenvälisen kumppanimaiden kanssa. Vaikka koulutus on tärkeässä asemassa Suomen kehitysyhteistyössä, operatiiviset haasteet ja rajalliset koordinoituvälitteet vaikeuttavat tietoon perustuvaa päätöksentekoa. Koulutus kehittyvissä maissa-koordinaatioryhmän toiminta ja Opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön osaamiskeskusten (FinCEED) perustaminen on parantanut koordinaatiota ja toimien yhdenmukaisuutta, mutta haasteita on edelleen. Erityisen selkeinä erottuvat julkisen ja yksityisen sektorin välisen yhteistyön haasteet. Mahdollisuuksia opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön yhtenäisyyden ja rahoituksen vahvistamiselle nähdään erityisesti kansalaisjärjestöjen yhteistyön ja EU:n aloitteiden piirissä. FinCEED:in perustamisesta lähtien on tehty huomattavia toimia Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön asiantuntijapoolin vahvistamiseksi.

Evaluointikysymys 2: TULOKSET - Millainen eri toimijoiden kehitysyhteistyössä toteuttamien toimenpiteiden suhteellinen ja kokonaisvaikuttavuus on ollut?

Kokoava vastaus: Suomi on edistänyt perus- ja toisen asteen koulutukseen pääsyä, mutta heikot oppimistulokset ovat edelleen ongelma, mikä osoittaa, että oppimiskriisi jatkuu kumppanimaissa. Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyö on tehokkaasti edistänyt inklusiivista perus- ja toisen asteen koulutusta, vaikuttaen kumppanimaiden kansallisella ja globaalilla tasolla politiikkoihin ja parantaen opetuskäytäntöjä. Työ ei kuitenkaan ole vielä riittävästi edistänyt etenkin naisten ja vammaisten tyttöjen mahdollisuuksia ammatilliseen koulutukseen.

Maatasolla onnistunut opetusalan kehitysyhteistyö perustuu strategiseen ja hyvin kohdennettuun kahdenväliseen ja monenväliseen rahoitukseen, asiantuntemuksen edistämiseen Suomen maatiimeissä, poliittisen tason vuorovaikutukseen sekä positiivisiin tuloksiin, kuten tyttöjen osallistumisen lisääntymiseen. Haasteita on kuitenkin edelleen, ja erityisesti köyhyys, korkea keskeyttämisaste ja rajalliset ammatilliset mahdollisuudet haastavat Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön tuloksia. Tehokkaimmat kehitysyhteistyön välineet ovat kahdenvälinen ja monenvälinen yhteistyö. Myös FinCEED:in toiminta näyttyy lupaavana, vaikka osaamiskeskus on vielä uudehko toimija. Kumppanimaatasolla tehokkaita synergioita julkisen ja yksityisten toimijoiden välillä on rajoitetusti, mikä johtuu osittain epäselvästä monitoimijayhteistyöstä, joka rajoittaa perus- ja toisen asteen opetuksen



ja oppimisen laadun parantamiseen tähtäävien yhteisten toimien toteuttamista. Kansalaisjärjestöt ja korkeakoulut ovat keskeisiä toimijoita ja kumppaneita opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä. Kansalaisjärjestöt saavuttavat merkittäviä tuloksia, mutta niiden potentiaalia ei ole vielä täysin hyödynnetty. Yksityissektorin tuottamat tulokset ovat rajallisia opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä, ja sen rooli vaatii jatkuvaa tarkastelua.

Koulutus kehittyvissä maissa-koordinaatioryhmällä on rajallinen toimivalta. Sillä ei ole operatiivista suunnitelmaa ohjaamaan toimintaa eikä sillä ja sen toimijoilla ole selkeästi määriteltyjä rooleja, mikä hankaloittaa sen kykyä toimia ja vaikuttaa peruskoulutuskumppanuuksiin. Yhdistyneiden Kansakuntien lastenrahasto (UNICEF) ja Maailmanpankin hallinnoiman, maailman suurimman yksinomaan opetukseen keskittyvän rahaston, Global Education Partnershipin (GPE) tekemät innovatiiviset aloitteet pyrkivät tuomaan uudenlaisia ratkaisuja oppimiskriisiin, mutta niiden vaikutuksista ei kuitenkaan ole vielä riittävästi näyttöä.

Evaluointikysymys 3: TULEVAISUUS - Miten parhaiten säilytetään Suomen asema opetusalan kehitysyhteistyötoimijana, ottaen huomioon Suomen erityisosaaminen? Miten vastataan maailmanlaajuiseen oppimiskriisiin ja koulutuksen laadun haasteisiin erilaisissa toimintaympäristöissä? Kuinka luoda realistiset ja kestävät rahoitusjärjestelyt samalla säilyttäen Suomen uskottavuus globaalissa oppimiskriisin ratkaisijana? Tarkastelun alla on seuraavien kahdeksan vuoden mittainen ajanjakso.

Kokoava vastaus: Kumppanimaiden lisääntyvä hauraus huomioiden Suomen on vahvistettava pitkäaikaista sitoutumistaan opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön. On ensisijaisen tärkeää säilyttää tai jopa kasvattaa rahoituksen tasoa, erityisesti kohdistamalla tukea koulutusjärjestelmien resilienssin eli kriisinkestävyiden ja muutosturvallisuuden vahvistamiseen.

Suomi erottuu sitoutumisessaan kumppanimaiden omiin opetusalan uudistusprosesseihin, erityisesti opettajankoulutuksessa, inklusiivisessa koulutuksessa, varhaiskasvatuksessa, hyvinvointia lisäävissä palveluissa ja oppimisen arvioinnissa. Vaikka ammatillinen koulutus ei ole ollut Suomen vahvuus opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä, sitä on mahdollista vahvistaa, erityisesti yhteistyössä korkeakoulutoimijoiden kanssa. Suomalaisen opetusalan asiantuntijoiden määrän kasvattaminen voi lisätä Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön vaikuttavuutta. Koulutusteknologiat (EdTech) ja digitaaliset oppimiskäytännöt, jotka ovat osa esimerkiksi UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub:in tavoitteita, voivat parantaa opettajankoulutusta, mutta niitä on testattava kumppanimaissa ennen laajaa käyttöönottoa.

Säilyäkseen merkittävänä toimijana Suomen on päivitettävä ja vahvistettava opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön toimijuuttaan, korostaen koulutuksen keskeistä roolia eri kestävän kehityksen sektoreiden osana, mukaan lukien monialainen yhteistyö. Evaluoinnissa mukana olleet asiantuntijat painottavat innovatiivisia strategioita ja yhteistyötä humanitaarisen avun, kehitysyhteistyön ja rauhanrakentamisen kesken (kolmoisneksus).

Ulkoministeriön tulisi olla strategisempi päätöksissään siitä, miten rajalliset kehitysyhteistyövarat käytetään. Keskittyminen kahdenväliseen yhteistyöhön kumppanimaissa, monenväliseen yhteistyöhön ja FinCEED:in kehittämiseen ovat tämän evaluoinnin tulosten pohjalta tärkeitä osa-alueita. Kehitysyhteistyövarojen niukkuudesta huolimatta ulkoministeriön on taattava opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön rahoituksen jatkuminen ja samalla luotava joustavia rahoitusmekanismeja monimuotoisille kumppanuuksille lyhyellä ja keskipitkällä aikavälillä.

Seuraavan sivun taulukossa esitetään evaluoinnin 15 yksityiskohtaista löydöstä, yhdeksän löydöksiin perustuvaa johtopäätöstä ja 11 suositusta.



Keskeiset löydökset, johtopäätökset ja suositukset

Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suosituksukset
Vaste eli kuinka asianmukaisesti suomi on vastannut vuoden 2018 raportin suosituksiin?		
Toteutus: Vuoden 2018 suositusten ja niistä johdettujen toimenpiteiden toimeenpano	1: Laadukkaan ja inklusiivisen koulutuksen asettaminen Suomen kehityspoliittikan päätavoitealueeksi sekä kattavan muutosteorian luominen ovat merkittävästi lisänneet opetussektorin merkitystä Suomen kehitysyhteistyössä. Tämä luo vankan perustan Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyölle ja sen roolille maailmanlaajuisen oppimisen kriisin ratkaisemisessa, niin lähitulevaisuudessa kuin myös pidemmällä aikavälillä.	1: Laadi selkä poliittinen lausunto, joka tuo julki Suomen sitoumuksen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön, korostaen vähiten kehittyneiden maiden huomioimisen merkitystä, mahdollisten kauppaintressien korostumisesta huolimatta ja ne mukaan nivoen. 2: Luo monitoimijayhteistyötä käsitteenä selkeyttävä ja käytännön toimintaa ohjaava ohjeistus. 3: Aseta monitoimijayhteistyön koordinointi FinCEED:in tehtäväksi. 4: Vahvista ulkoministeriön tekemän opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön strategisuutta laatimalla toimialakohtainen suunnitelma joka ohjaa poliittisen sitoumuksen (Ks. suositus 1) ja käytännön tason monitoimijaohjeistuksen (Ks. suositus 2) toimeenpanoa ulkoministeriön osalta. 5: Vahvista oppimiskriisiin vastaamista humanitaarisissa kriiseissä ja haurassa toimintaympäristöissä, erityisesti toimeenpanemalla ulkoministeriön ohje ”kolmoisneksus ja yhteistyö hauraiden valtioiden ja alueiden kanssa” (2022) opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä.
Tarkoituksenmukaisuus	2: Suomen tekemät toimet maailmanlaajuiseen oppimiskriisiin vastaamiseksi ovat olleet ajankohtaisia. Pysyäkseen ajankohtaisena, Suomen tulevaa kehitysyhteistyötä voisi hyödyttää painotukset oppimiskriisin lieventämiseksi sekä globaalilla että kumppanimaa tasolla. Painopiste oppimiskriisin lieventämisessä perustuu kestävän kehityksen tavoitteeseen 4 (SDG 4) edistyksen peruspilarina, joka mahdollistaa edistyksen myös muissa siihen yhteydessä olevissa kestävän kehityksen tavoitteissa. Tähän sisältyy innovatiivisten kumppanuuksien edistäminen ilmasto- ja koulutustavoitteiden samanaikaiseen tukemisessa, sekä koulutuksen roolin kehittäminen ja edistäminen kehitysyhteistyön, humanitaarisen avun ja rauhankäytännön toimenpiteiden (kolmoisneksus) sisällä.	
1: Opetusalan rooli on vahvistunut osana Suomen kehityspoliittikkaa huomattavasti, samoin yhteistyö ministeriöiden ja toimintayksiköiden, kuten ulkoministeriö, opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö (OKM) sekä Opetushallitus (OPH), välillä. Ulkoministeriö on ollut aktiivinen ja ottanut strategisen johtajuuden vuoden 2018 suositusten täytäntöönpanossa. Monenkeskisessä osallistumisessa on pyritty varmistamaan rahoitus valituille Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien (YK) kumppaneille, GPE:lle ja Education Cannot Wait (ECW) -rahastolle sekä vahvistamaan yhteistyötä kehityspankkin ja EU:n Global Gateway -investointipaketin kanssa. Kahdenvälistä tukea on tehostettu laajentamalla opetusalan kehitysyhteistyökumppanuuksia uusiin maihin. FinCEED:in perustaminen on edistänyt Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön asiantuntijapoolin vahvistamista. Vähiten edistystä on tapahtunut ammatillisen koulutuksen sektorilla ja uusien kumppanuuksien saralla. Kansalaisjärjestöjen rooli vuoden 2018 suositusten toimeenpanossa näyttäytyy kokonaiskuvassa rajallisena.		
2: Kehityspoliittikan tasolla on otettu merkittäviä askelia Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön vahvistamiseksi, ja nämä ovat yhdenmukaisia YK:n kestävän kehityksen tavoitteen 4 (hyvä koulutus) kanssa. Koulutus on huomioitu ensisijaisena asiana myös Suomen Afrikka-strategiassa, ja erityisesti kriisialueilla ja haurassa valtioissa. Lisää painotusta koulutukselle kaivataan humanitaarisen avun sektorilla. Vaikka ammatillinen koulutus ja korkeakoulutus ovat kehityspoliittisia painopisteitä, niiden kehittämistä hankaloittavat heikko koordinaatio, toimijoiden yhteistyön vähäisyys ja Suomen ammatillisen koulutuksen asiantuntemuksen vähäinen kansainvälinen tuntemus. Suomi vastaa yleisesti hyvin kumppanimaiden tarpeisiin, ja tässä kansalaisjärjestöillä on merkittävä rooli. Myös läpileikkaavat tavoitteet kuten sukupuolten tasa-arvo, vammaisten osallistaminen, ilmastokestävyys ja kehitysyhteistyön, humanitaarisen ja rauhantuntemuksen yhdistävä kolmoisneksus, ovat hyvin linjassa niiden haasteiden kanssa, joihin opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöllä pyritään vastaamaan. Suomen maine koulutuksen huipposaaajana tunnustetaan kansainvälisesti. Digitaalisen teknologian rooli koulutuksessa kasvaa, mutta sen siirto ja soveltuvuus hauraisiin ympäristöihin saattaa olla hankalaa.		



Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suosituks
Resurssit		
3: Vaikka Suomi saavutti tavoitteensa kanavoita 100 miljoonaa euroa vuodessa opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön vuonna 2021, on tärkeää huomata, että kyseessä oli poikkeusvuosi. Kansainvälisellä tasolla opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön rahoitustrendi on ollut yleisesti nouseva ja rahoittajajoukko kasvava. Vuorovaikutus EU:n ja monenvälisten kumppaneiden kanssa sekä rahoituksen kanavoiminen näille toimijoille tarjoaa Suomelle mahdollisuuksia vaikuttamiseen.	3: Näyttöön perustuva päätöksenteko on haastavaa, ellei opetusalan kehitysyhteistyölle ole laadittu selkeää toimialakohtaista suunnitelmaa ja osoitettu erillistä budjettia, sekä näiden järjestelmällistä seuranta. Tästä huolimatta Suomi on johdonmukaisesti onnistunut lisäämään sitoutumistaan ja kohdentamaan rahoitusta opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön.	9: Aseta perusopetuksen tukeminen ensisijaiseksi prioriteetiksi, erityisesti oikeusperustaisen osallisuuden varmistamiseksi vallitsevan monialaisen oppimiseen vaikuttavan kriisin ympäristössä. Rajoita ammatillisen koulutuksen kehitysyhteistyö toistaiseksi jo käynnistettyihin toimenpiteisiin ja panosta huolelliseen pidemmän aikavälin suunnitteluun. Laadi seurantakatsaus ammatillisen koulutuksen roolista kehitysyhteistyössä.
Tehokkuus		
4: Koulutus on vakiintunut Suomen kehitysyhteistyön ja -politiikan prioriteetiksi ja on keskeinen osa sekä EU-yhteistyötä että Afrikka-strategiaa. Kuitenkin yhteisen vision ja erityisesti monitoimijuuteen liittyvän käsitteellisen selkeyden puuttuminen hankaloittaa toiminnan tehokkuutta. Haasteina näyttävät myös yksityissektorin roolin määrittäminen, erityisesti sen soveltuvuus opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön hauraissa valtioissa, sekä koulutusvienti. Vaikka politiikkatoimenpiteet ja toimijat, kuten FinCEED, ovat ajankohtaisia, yhteisymmärryksen rakentaminen tavoitteista ja toiminnasta on edelleen kesken. Toiminnalliset haasteet liittyvät yhteistyövälineiden, sektorikohtaisten suunnitelmien ja järjestelmällisen seurannan puuttumiseen, mikä haittaa tulosperustaista päätöksentekoa. Lisäksi COVID-19-pandemiaan vastaaminen toi esiin olemassa olleita haasteita.	11: Sijoita rajallisten henkilöresurssien osaanamiseen ja organisaation kapasiteetin jatkuvaan kehittämiseen. Hanki tai lainaa voimavaroja muista ministeriöistä ja ulkoisista soveltuvia tehtäviä. Säilytä suurlähetystöissä työskentelevät erityisasiantuntijat maatasolla, mutta sijoita enemmän myös paikalta palkattuun henkilöstöön.	
Johdonmukaisuus		
5: Koulutus kehittyvissä maissa -koordinaatioryhmän ja FinCEED:in perustaminen ovat parantaneet yhteistyötä, mutta yhteistyövisio on edelleen osin puutteellinen. Monitoimijuuteen liittyvä käsitteellinen epäselvyys ja julkisen sekä yksityissektorin yhteistyö tuovat mukanaan haasteita. Kumppanit arvostavat yhteisesti suunniteltuja ja seurattuja kehitysyhteistyöohjelmia, mikä myös parantaa niiden merkityksellisyttä ja yhtenäisyyttä. Monikeskisen strategian yhtenäisyyden varmistaminen edellyttää Suomelta institutionaalisten painopisteiden yhteensovittamista. Kansalaisjärjestöjen tekemä, yhdessä hyödynsaajien kanssa suunniteltu opetusalan kehitysyhteistyö saa tunnustusta sen reagoitavuudesta ja heikommassa asemassa olevia ryhmiä huomioivan luonteensa ansiosta. EU:n Team Europe -aloitteiden (TEI) odotetaan lisäävän koulutushankkeiden rahoitusta suomalaisille yrityksille ja kansalaisjärjestöille, mikä tarjoaa myös mahdollisuuden parantaa opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön johdonmukaisuutta.	4: Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöltä puuttuu selkeä ja yhtenäinen poliittinen visio. Koulutuksen laajentuneen roolin ja inklusiivisuuden tärkeiden ohella tämän vision tulisi määritellä selkeästi yksityissektorin osallistumisen ja koulutusviennin merkitys osana kokonaisuutta. 5: Monitoimijuuden operatiivinen toimeenpano on edelleen puutteellista. Ohjeituksen ja välineiden puute julkisen ja yksityisten toimijoiden yhteistyön edistämiseksi ei tue tehokasta monitoimijalähestymistapaa eikä mahdollista vuoden 2018 raportin suositusten kokonaisvaltaista toteutusta.	



Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suosituks
TULOKSET eli Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön tulokset		
Edistys odotettujen tulosten saavuttamiseksi, mukaan lukien maataso tulokset	6: Opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön tulokset vaihtelevat huomattavasti aihealueittain ja sektoreittain, vaihdellen hyvästä epätydyttävään. Yleisissä koulutuspolitiikkavoitteissa ja erityisesti toisen asteen koulutuksessa on saavutettu kiitettävää edistystä. Suomi on ollut erityisen tehokas tukemaan ihmisoikeusperustaista inklusiivista koulutusta, opetuskäytänteiden ja kouluympäristöjen kehittämistä sekä vaikuttamaan koulutuspolitiikan tasolla niin kumppanimaissa kuin maailmanlaajuisesti. Ammatillisen koulutuksen sektorilla tulokset ovat epätydyttäviä.	7: Aseta kumppanimaiden kanssa tehtävä kahdenvälinen yhteistyö etusijalle, mukaan lukien sektoriuudistusohjelmien yhteisrahoitus, monen-kahdenvälinen (multi-bi) apu, tekninen tuki ja politiikkavuoropuhelu maatasolla.
6: Laadukkaan perus- ja erityisesti toisen asteen koulutuksen saatavuuden parantamisessa on edistytty. Silti jatkuva oppimistulosten heikentyminen korostaa oppimiskriisin jatkuvan kumppanimaisessa. Suomen opetuslalla tehty kehitysyhteistyö on ollut erityisen tehokasta oikeuksia korostavan inklusiivisen perus- ja toisen asteen koulutuksen edistämässä, opetus- ja oppimiskäytäntöjen parantamisessa sekä politiikkatasolla tapahtuvassa vaikuttamisessa niin kumppanimaiden kuin globaalilla tasolla. Ammatillisen koulutuksen saavutettavuuden lisäämisessä ei ole vielä saavutettu riittäviä tuloksia vammaisten naisten ja tyttöjen osalta. 7: Maatasolla tarkasteltuna opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön tehokkuus saavutetaan strategisella rahoituksella, joka yhdistää sekä kahdenvälisen että monenkeskisen yhteistyön, samalla vahvistaen asiantuntemusta Suomen maatiimeissä. Muita myönteisiä vaikuttavuustekijöitä ovat vuoropuhelu politiikkatasolla, kohdennettu rahoitus, tekninen tuki, koulutuspolitiikan parannukset sekä tyttöjen ja vammaisten lasten osallistumisen lisääminen. Kumppanimaan omistajuus, politiikkatasolla käytävä vuoropuhelu, sektorikohtainen asiantuntemus ja mukautuva johtaminen ovat myös keskeisiä. Kriisialueilla koulutuksen saavutettavuutta tukeva näyttö on puutteellista. Haasteisiin kuuluvat myös koulun korkea keskeyttämisaste, vähäiset ammatilliset mahdollisuudet, erityisesti tytöille, sekä yksilölliset maakohtaiset tekijät. Jotkin evaluoinnin muutosteorioihin liittyvät oletukset sisältävät riskejä.	8: Kahdenvälisen yhteistyön lisäksi, priorisoi yhteistyötä opetussektorilla toimivien monenkeskisten järjestöjen kanssa kumppanimaissa kuin maailmanlaajuisesti. Ammatillisen koulutuksen sektorilla tulokset ovat epätydyttäviä. 7: Kolme vaikuttavinta opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön kanavaa ovat kahdenvälinen yhteistyö (Suomen työn ydin), monenkeskinen yhteistyö ja FinCEED. Kansalaisjärjestöt ja korkeakoulut ovat olennaisen tärkeitä opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön kumppaneita, mutta niiden täysi potentiaali on jäänyt hyödyntämättä, ja niiden suhde yksityissektoriin on vielä kehittymätön. Yksityissektorin välineillä on ollut rajallinen vaikutus kehitysyhteistyöhön tulosten kannalta.	8: Kahdenvälisen yhteistyön lisäksi, priorisoi yhteistyötä opetussektorilla toimivien monenkeskisten järjestöjen kanssa kumppanimaissa kuin maailmanlaajuisesti. Ammatillisen koulutuksen sektorilla tulokset ovat epätydyttäviä. 10: Keskipitkällä ja pitkällä aikavälillä kehittä innovatiivisia strategioita, mukaan lukien opusteknologia, laadukkaan koulutuksen parantamiseksi keskittyen opetusmenetelmien, koulujen ja koulutusjärjestelmien kehittämiseen kumppanimaissa.
Tukimuotojen tehokkuus		Katso myös suosituks 2 ja 4.
8: Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön perustana toimiva kahdenvälinen yhteistyö on osoittautunut tehokkaaksi. Lisäksi monenvälinen yhteistyö on vaikuttavaa. FinCEED on myös potentiaalinen toimija, mutta sen roolia on vielä selkiytettävä. Vaikka humanitaarisen avun tarve opetuslalla kasvaa jatkuvasti Suomen kumppanimaissa, maailmanlaajuisesti näyttää siltä, että humanitaarisen avun merkitystä koulutuksessa arvioidaan uudelleen. 9: Kansalaisjärjestöt ja korkeakoulut ovat arvokkaita kumppaneita opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä. Niiden täyttä potentiaalia ei kuitenkaan ole vielä täysin hyödynnetty. Samoin niiden vuorovaikutus yksityisen sektorin kanssa vaikuttaa rajalliselta. Yksityisen sektorin osallistuminen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön on toistaiseksi osoittanut vain rajallista lisäarvoa, ja evaluoinnin sidosryhmät suosittelevat, että ulkoministeriö kumppaneineen jatkaa yksityisen sektorin osallistumisen mahdollisuuksien ja esteiden pohtimista.		



Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suositukset
<p>10: Vertaillessa opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön välineitä toisiinsa, ja ottaen huomioon FinCEED:in roolin selkeyttämisen tarpeen, kahdenvälinen yhteistyö täydennettynä monenkeskisellä yhteistyöllä on osoittautunut tehokkaimmaksi toimintamalliksi. Kansalaisjärjestöt, korkeakoulut ja yksityissektori ovat kaikki keskeisiä kumppaneita, mutta niiden roolit vaativat edelleen selventämistä.</p> <p>11: Ilman toimeenpanovaltuutta, selkeää toimintasuunnitelmaa ja tarkasti määriteltyjä vastuita, Koulutus kehittyvissä maissa -koordinaatioryhmä ei kykene merkittävästi edistämään kumppanuuksien kehittämistä kansallisella tasolla. Vaikka opetusalan innovatiiviset aloitteet voivat tuoda uudenlaisia ratkaisuja oppimiskriisiin, niiden vaikutuksesta ei ole vielä riittävästi näyttöä. Kumppanuusmaiden tasolla tehokkaan julkisen sektorin ja ei-valtiollisten toimijoiden yhteistyöstä on vähän viitteitä, mikä voi johtua osaltaan riittämättömästä tiedosta Suomen julkisen kehitysavun eri muodoista sekä selkeän monitoimijamallin ja ohjeistuksen puuttumisesta.</p>		
TULEVAISUUS eli miten parhaiten säilytetään Suomen asema opetusalan kehitysyhteistyötoimijana?		
<p>Suomen tuen merkityksen ylläpito yhä hauraimissa toimintaympäristöissä</p> <p>12: Ottaen huomioon, että monet kumppanimaat ovat yhä hauraampia, evaluoinnin sidosryhmät korostavat tarvetta jatkaa ja vahvistaa Suomen pitkäaikaista kehitysyhteistyötä opetusallalla. Työn jatkamiseksi on välttämätöntä säilyttää vähintään nykyinen rahoitustaso ja strategisesti keskittyä koulutusjärjestelmien kestävyuden vahvistamiseen.</p> <p>13: Suomen merkittävänä arvona opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä korostuu sen vahva sitoutuminen kumppanimaiden omiin koulutussektorin uudistusprosesseihin. Tämä sitoutuminen ulottuu monille keskeisille osa-alueille, kuten opettajankoulutukseen, inklusiiviseen opetukseen, varhaiskasvatukseen, hyvinvointipalveluihin ja oppimisen arviointiin. Vaikka ammatillisen koulutuksen vahvuudet eivät vielä ole selvästi esillä Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyössä, nähdään merkittävää potentiaalia sen integroimisessa korkeakoulujärjestelmiin. Suomen asiantuntijareservin kasvattaminen vahvistaa sen globaalia asemaa. EdTech-alan aloitteet ja laadukkaiden digitaalisten oppimiskurssien edistäminen voivat parantaa opettajankoulutusta, mutta niiden käyttöönottoa on aina ensin testattava kumppanimaaissa ennen laajempaa käyttöönottamista.</p> <p>14: Kansallisesti Suomen koulutusjärjestelmän tulokset ovat heikentyneet. Säilyttääkseen asemansa merkittävänä toimijana maailmanlaajuisesti, Suomen rooli edellyttää päivitystä. Yksi keino tähän on nähdä koulutuksen merkittävä rooli useissa kestävä kehityksen eri sektoreissa. Delfoi-asiantuntijaneeli korostaa uuden ja innovatiivisen strategisen lähestymistavan tarvetta, joka ottaa huomioon kehitysyhteistyön, humanitaarisen ja rauhantien kolmoisneksuksen, sekä pitkäaikaisen rahoituksen vahvistamista opetusalan kehitysyhteistyölle.</p>	<p>8: Opetusalan kehitysyhteistyö on kehittynyt hyvään suuntaan, mutta koulutushaasteet jatkuvat niin globaalisti kuin paikallistasollakin. Tämä korostaa Suomen sitoutumisen merkitystä opetusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön. Erytystä huomiota tulisi kiinnittää hauraiden valtioiden koulutusjärjestelmien vahvistamiseen, muutosteorian oletusten täyttämiseen ja koulutussektorin laajamittaisiin uudistuksiin, erityisesti inklusiivisen koulutuksen ja opettajankoulutuksen osalta. Suomi on hyvin asemoitunut kehittämään yhä tarkoituksenmukaisempia ja tehokkaampia opetusteknologioita.</p>	<p>Katso suositukset 1, 4, 10, ja 11.</p>



Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suosituks
Suomen opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön rahoituksen jatkuvuuden varmistaminen	9: Suomen asema koulutuksen investointien lisäämisen puolestapuhujana tunnustetaan kansainvälisesti, mutta sen maine koulutuksen huipposaaajana ja luotettavana ongelmanratkaisijana saattaa kärsiä mahdollisista julkisen kehitysavun leikkauksista. Rahoituksen jakamiseen yhteistyömuotojen ja hankkeiden välillä, ml. näiden määrä, tulee kiinnittää erityistä huomiota rajallisten resurssien vallitessa.	6: Säilytä opetusalan kehitysyhteistyön rahoitus kehitysavun leikkauksista huolimatta vähintään nykyisellä tasolla. Lyhyellä ja keskipitkällä aikavälillä kokeile innovatiivisia rahoitusmekanismeja (esimerkiksi vaikuttavuussijoitukset) ja pitkällä aikavälillä tavoittele koulutukseen kohdistuvan kehitysyhteistyörahoituksen järjestelmällistä lisäämistä.



Sammanfattning

Utrikesministeriets (UM) enhet för utvärdering av utvecklingssamarbetet har beställt en strategisk utvärdering för att öka UM:s kunskap om hur de olika aktörerna inom utvecklingspolitiken och utvecklingssamarbetet har konsoliderat Finlands globala insatser inom utbildningssektorn. **Syftet** med utvärderingen är även att bidra med förslag på hur relevansen, koherensen, effektiviteten och måluppfyllelsen kan maximeras i framtiden. Utvärderingen är både summativ och framåtblickande.

Utvärderingen hade tre **huvudsakliga mål**: För det första att analysera relevansen, koherensen och effektiviteten i Finlands och olika samarbetspartners respons på den globala nedgången i lärande och utbildningskvalitet; för det andra att analysera måluppfyllelsen och de resultat som uppnåtts inom utvecklingssamarbetet när det gäller att stärka Finlands globala roll inom stödet till utbildningssektorn i utvecklingsländerna, i linje med Finlands utvecklingspolitiska mål och mervärdet av strategin för multiaktörsamverkan; för det tredje att utforska och dokumentera alternativa framtida tillvägagångssätt (för perioden 2023-2030) som Finland i sin globala roll och respons på detta område skulle kunna nyttja sig av för att stärka relevansen, koherensen, effektiviteten och måluppfyllelsen, i den föränderliga operativa kontexten och osäkerhet som råder under kommande år. Baserat på tidigare erfarenheter var utvärderingen tänkt att ge välmotiverade och evidensbaserade rekommendationer om hur UM, tillsammans med relevanta intressenter, skulle kunna förändra sitt agerande för att ge en mer relevant, koherent och effektiv respons på problematiken på detta område, och hur multiaktörssamverkan kan vidareutvecklas. Detta inkluderar förslag och alternativ på praktiska åtgärder som kan vidtas av de olika aktörerna, och genom de olika samarbetsinstrumenten.

Utvärderingens övergripande metod bestod av en **teoribaserad bidragsanalys (Contribution Analysis) med utgångspunkt från en inkapslad förändringsteori (på både macro- och micro-nivå)**. På *makronivå* innebar detta en kartläggning av kausalitet och förändringsvägar för Finlands *globala* utvecklingssamarbete med fokus på att utbildningskvalité och inkludering, baserad på de kortsiktiga och långsiktiga resultat som identifieras i den förändringsteori som UM tog fram 2020, samt resultatramverket för utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn (UM, uppdaterad november 2022). Förändringsteorin på *mikronivå* beskriver de förändringsfaktorer som identifierats i Finlands landprogram, och som är "kapslade" – eller inbäddade – i makroramverket.

Utvärderingsteamet använde en blandning av olika metoder för datainsamling och analys för att svara på utvärderingsfrågorna. Metoderna bestod av skrivbordsgranskning, intervjuer (52 på global nivå med UM och dess partnerorganisationer, och 49 på landnivå), tre fallstudier med fokus på specifika länder (Etiopien, Nepal och Palestina), två skrivbordsbaserade tematiska studier (om lärarutbildning på grundskolenivå i Moçambique, och yrkesutbildning och livsfärdighetsutbildning i Ukraina). Delphi-metoden (onlineundersökning och intervjuer) användes för att analysera framtida scenarier.

UM beställde 2018 en översyn av Finlands globala roll i utbildningssektorn (Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education), som gav rekommendationer i linje med sin titel. Utvärderingsteamet har konsoliderat och bedömt vilka framsteg som gjorts inom ramen för dessa rekommendationer, de uppföljningsåtgärder (2019) som lades fram av den särskilda arbetsgruppen, samt de strategier som identifieras i den nationella handlingsplanen för utbildningssektorn som antogs 2022. På basis



av denna konsolidering identifierade utvärderingssteamet sju ”upptrappningsåtgärder” på temat ”utbildnings-orienterad utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete”. De sju ”upptrappningsåtgärderna” som bedöms i denna utvärdering är följande:

1. Stärka samverkan mellan olika statliga sektorer;
2. Stärka det multilaterala engagemanget;
3. Intensifiera det bilaterala stödet;
4. Stärka Finlands yrkesutbildningsprofil;
5. Förbättra forskningskapaciteten i samarbetsländerna;
6. Strategiska investeringar i nya partnerskap, och;
7. Bygga upp expertpoolen.

Sammanfattande svar på utvärderingsfrågorna (UF):

UF1 (med fokus på responsen) - I vilken utsträckning har responsen på rekommendationerna i rapporten från 2018 och de uppföljningsåtgärder som man har kommit överens om varit lämpliga för att stärka Finlands globala roll när det gäller att hantera lärandekrisen och förbättra utbildningskvalitet?

Sammanfattande svar: Finland har gjort betydande framsteg i utvecklingssamarbetet inom utbildningssektorn. Anmärkningsvärda framsteg har uppnåtts i fråga om policyförbättringar, expansion av det bilaterala stödet och multilaterala engagemanget, i linje med Finlands Afrikastrategi och det globala målet om utbildningskvalitet (SDG 4), samt vad gäller genomförandet av förbättringsåtgärderna sedan 2018. Det finns dock ett behov av att lägga större tonvikt på utbildningens roll i finansieringen av humanitärt bistånd och yrkesutbildning, samt att göra något åt de begreppsmässiga ottydligheter som återfinns i multiaktörsstrategin. Åtaganden inom ramen för utvecklingssamarbetet på utbildningsområdet har ökat och Finland samarbetar aktivt med EU och multilaterala partners. Trots att utbildning prioriteras finns det operativa utmaningar och begränsade verktyg för samordning, vilka påverkar graden av evidensbaserat beslutsfattande. Formaliseringen av samordningen genom att inrätta en samordningsgrupp och Finlands expertcentrum för utbildning och utveckling (FinCEED) har förbättrat koherensen, men utmaningar kvarstår, särskilt inom samarbetet mellan staten och den privata sektorn. Stödet till civilsamhällesorganisationer och EU:s initiativ ger hopp om förstärkt koherens och finansiering inom sektorn. Sedan lanseringen av FinCEED har samlade ansträngningar gjorts för att bygga upp Finlands expertis på utbildningsområdet inom utvecklingssamarbetet.

UF2 (med fokus på resultat) - Vad har varit den relativa och övergripande måluppfyllelsen hos de åtgärder som har vidtagits av de olika aktörerna i utvecklingssamarbetet?

Sammanfattande svar: Finland har bidragit till att förbättra tillgången på grundskole- och gymnasieutbildning, men problematiken med svaga inlärningsresultat kvarstår, vilket visar på en fortsatt lärandekris i samarbetsländerna. Finlands utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn har också effektivt främjat inkluderande grundskole- och gymnasieutbildning, påverkat utbildningspolitiken på nationell och global nivå och förbättrat undervisningsmetoderna. Begränsade framsteg har dock gjorts i fråga om att öka tillgången på yrkesutbildning för kvinnor och flickor med funktionshinder.



Framgångsfaktorer på landnivå inkluderar långsiktig finansiering av bilateralt och multilateralt utvecklingssamarbete, stärkandet av landteamens expertis, drivkrafter som policy-dialog och riktad finansiering, samt positiva resultat, såsom en ökande grad av flickors deltagande. Utmaningar kvarstår, inklusive till exempel vad gäller utbildningsfattigdom, hög avhoppningsfrekvens och begränsade yrkesmöjligheter. De mest effektiva instrumenten är bilateralt och multilateralt samarbete. FinCEED visar också en lovande potential. På landnivå är dock synergier mellan statliga och icke-statliga aktörer begränsade, delvis på grund av bristen på ett tydligt tillvägagångssätt för att främja multiaktörsamverkan och riktlinjer för partnerskapsutveckling för att förbättra undervisnings- och inlärningskvaliteten inom grundskolan och på gymnasienivå. Civilsamhällesorganisationer och högre utbildningsinstitutioner (HEI) är viktiga partners, men även om civilsamhällesorganisationer har bidragit till betydande resultat på utbildningsområdet, är deras potential fortfarande underutnyttjad. Den privata sektorns engagemang tillför ett begränsat mervärde, vilket föranleder en omprövning av dess roll.

Finlands nationella samordningsgrupp saknar mandat, en tydlig plan och väldefinierade roller, vilket begränsar dess påverkan på partnerskapen inom grundskoleutbildningen. Slutligen, medan UNICEF och det globala partnerskapet för utbildning (GPE) har bedrivit mer innovativa insatser för att reformera stödet till utbildningssektorn, är det tveklöst om dessa initiativ kommer att få en omvandlande effekt.

UF3 (med fokus på framtiden): Under de kommande åtta åren, vilken typ av multiaktörs-baserade strategi(er) och upplägg skulle ge de bästa resultaten vad gäller att bibehålla och stärka Finlands roll inom de specifika områdena där Finland kan bidra med expertis och mervärde, garantera en relevant respons på den globala lärandekrisen och kvalitetsbristerna inom utbildning i olika kontexter, och tillförsäkra att storleken på och upplägget för finansiering av utvecklingssamarbetet är realistiskt och på en hållbara nivå, samtidigt som Finland upprätthåller sin trovärdighet som en ledande aktör vad gäller att bidra till en lösning av den globala lärandekrisen?

Sammanfattande svar: Med tanke på den allt mer instabila kontexten i samarbetsländer är Finlands ansträngningar för att stärka det långsiktiga engagemang för utbildning av avgörande betydelse, jämte ett bibehållande eller ökning av stödets storlek, med särskilt fokus på att stärka resiliens inom utbildningssystem.

Finlands tydliga mervärde på området ligger i dess engagemang för att bistå reformprocesser i samarbetsländerna. Detta engagemang sträcker sig till viktiga områden som lärarutbildning, inkluderande utbildning, förskoleverksamhet, sociala välfärdssatsningar och lärandebedömning. Även om yrkesutbildning inte är en stark profilfråga, finns det potential att integrera detta område med högre utbildning. Utvidgningen av Finlands expertpool skulle kunna förstärka globala effekter. Initiativ som utbildningsteknologier (EdTech) och Global Learning Innovation Hub kan förbättra lärarutbildningen men måste testas i samarbetsländer av lokala experter innan de genomförs i större omfattning.

För att förbli relevant måste Finland uppdatera sin globala roll inom utvecklingssamarbetet på utbildningsområdet, och betona vikten av att integrera utbildning inom olika utvecklingssektorer, ett tillvägagångssätt som kallas "multi-sector nexus thinking". Experter rekommenderar innovativa strategier inom ramen för trippelnexus, med stöd av långsiktig finansiering som spänner över humanitära och utvecklingssektorer.



UM skulle kunna anta ett mer strategiskt tillvägagångssätt för att fördela begränsade medel för utvecklingssamarbete. Att prioritera partnerskap med prioriterade länder, multilaterala organisationer och FinCEED är viktigt. Trots budgetrestriktioner måste UM säkerställa fortsatt finansiering av utbildning och samtidigt skapa flexibla finansieringsmekanismer för olika partnerskap på kort till medellång sikt.

En detaljerade beskrivning av utvärderingens 15 resultat, 9 slutsatser och 11 rekommendationer återfinns i tabellen nedan.



Resultat, slutsatser and rekommendationer

Resultat (R)	Slutsatser (S)	Rekommendationer (R)
UF1 Responsen		
Genomförda aktiviteter som svar på rekommendationerna från 2018		
<p>R1. Anmärkningsvärda förbättringar har gjorts av policys för utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn, liksom vad gäller ansträngningarna att institutionaliserande samarbetet mellan berörda ministerier och deras operativa grenar, UM, undervisnings- och kulturministeriet och skolverket. UM har varit aktivt och tagit en strategisk ledarroll i genomförandet av rekommendationerna. När det gäller multilateralt engagemang har ansträngningar gjorts för att säkerställa finansiering av utvalda FN-organisationer, GPE och Education Cannot Wait (ECW), samt för att stärka samarbetet med utvecklingsbankerna och med investeringsfonden EU-Africa Global Gateway. Det bilaterala stödet har utökats till ytterligare samarbetsländer. Samordnade ansträngningar har gjorts för att bygga upp Finlands expertpool på området sedan lanseringen av FinCEED. Betydligt blygsammare framsteg har gjorts inom yrkesutbildning och investeringar i nya partnerskap. Civilsamhällesorganisationernas roll har varit begränsad.</p>	<p>S1. Genom att utbildning har fått tydlig politisk prioritet inom Finlands utvecklingssamarbete och utformningen av en övergripande förändringsteori har utbildningens betydelse i Finlands utvecklingssamarbete ökat avsevärt. Detta lägger en solid grund för Finlands stöd till utbildningssektorn, både på lång och kort sikt, för att hantera den globala lärandekrisen.</p>	<p>R1. Ta fram en kort policyförklaring som understryker stödet för en förnyad gemensam vision för Finlands utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn, och som betonar satsningen på de minst utvecklade länderna (LDC), även om handelsintressen får en framträdande plats, och bibehåller ett balanserat fokus på handelsintressen och lokalt ägarskap.</p> <p>R2. Ta fram riktlinjer för multiaktörsstrategin för att förtydliga konceptet och visa hur det kan operationaliseras.</p>
Relevans		
<p>R2. Betydande framsteg har gjorts när det gäller att genomföra policy-åtgärder för att stärka Finlands utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn, i linje med SDG 4. Utbildning är en prioritet i Finlands Afrikastrategi, och utbildningen ses ha en viktig betydelse i kris- och katastrofsituationer. Det finns dock ett behov av att ytterligare fokus på på humanitärt bistånd och nexus. Yrkesutbildning och högre utbildning är prioriterat, men framsteg på dessa områden är begränsade på grund av svag samordning, bristande synergier och begränsad internationell kunskap om Finlands expertis inom yrkesutbildning. Finlands stöd svarar mot partners behov, och stödet till civilsamhällesorganisationer är mycket uppskattat. Övergripande mål, inklusive jämställdhet, inkludering av funktionshinder, klimatresiliens och triple nexus-programmering, är väl anpassade till nuvarande utmaningar. Finlands är känt för sin höga utbildningsstandard, men det finns ett växande intresse för digitalisering, vilket väcker tvivel om dess lämplighet i bräckliga miljöer.</p>	<p>S2. Finlands respons på lärandekrisen är fortfarande mycket relevant. För att tillförsäkra relevans och måluppfyllelse i en föränderligt global kontext skulle Finlands framtida utvecklingssamarbete gynnas av en fokusering på att begränsa lärandekriser på både global och nationell nivå. Detta åtagande skulle utgå från SDG 4 men skapa kopplingar till andra globala mål. Detta inkluderar att främja innovativa partnerskap men samtidigt stödja klimat och utbildningsmål och aktiviteter, samtidigt som sambandet mellan utveckling, humanitärt bistånd och fredsskapande åtgärder (triple nexus) stärks inom utbildningsområdet.</p>	<p>R3. Formalisera FinCEED:s roll som ett verkställande organ för att underlätta och samordna Finlands multiaktörssamarbetet på utbildningsområdet.</p> <p>R4. Stärk UM:s långsiktiga planering inom utbildningssektorn genom att ta fram en handlingsplan för att operationalisera den fastlagda policyn samt riktlinjerna för multiaktörssamarbetet inom UM.</p>



Resultat (R)	Slutsatser (S)	Rekommendationer (R)
Resursfördelning kontra prioriteringar		
R3. Finland uppnådde 2021 målsättningen att betala ut 100 miljoner euro per år till utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn, men tillgängliga data visar att 2021 var ett undantag. De finansiella åtagandena på området har stadigt ökat bland alla givare, och med bidrag, dock mer begränsade, av nya aktörer. Finland är inget undantag från denna trend. Med tanke på hur medel fördelas och vilka dialogplattformar som finns det påverkansmöjligheter genom EU och multilaterala partners.	S3. Evidensbaserat beslutsfattande är svårt att tillförsäkra utan en sektorsspecifik plan med budget, och motsvarande systematisk uppföljning av UM:s utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn. Det bör dock betonas att Finland har konsekvent anslått och utbetalat mer medel till denna sektor.	R5. Stärka responsen på global och nationell nivå genom att prioritera utbildning i kris- och katastrofsituationer, inklusive genom att följa UM:s vägledning "The Triple Nexus and Cooperation with Fragile States and Regions", samt genom att betona klimatresiliens (grön utbildning) i utvecklingssamarbetet och finansieringen. R9. Prioritera stöd till utbildning på grundskolenivå, med ett omedelbart fokus på rättighetsbaserad inkluderande tillgång, inklusive i multi-krisituationer. Begränsa det kortsiktiga engagemanget i yrkesutbildning till redan pågående insatser samtidigt som det långsiktiga engagemanget stärks. Gör en uppföljning av yrkesutbildningen inom utvecklingssamarbetet på utbildningsområdet. R11. Åtgärda personalbrister genom att bygga upp kompetens och kapacitet genom kontinuerligt lärande, köpa eller låna ytterligare kompetens från andra ministerier och outsourcing för att frigöra personal för andra uppgifter. De ambassadbaserade utbildningsrådgivarna (erityisasiantuntija) bör fortsatt finnas kvar, och ytterligare satsningar på lokal personal göras.
Effektivitet		
R4. Utbildning är en tydligt prioritering i Finlands utvecklingspolitik- och samarbete, inklusive samarbetet med EU och Afrikastrategin. Bristen på en gemensam vision och begreppsmässig tydlighet, särskilt när det gäller multiaktörsstrategin, förhindrar dock ett effektivt genomförande. Det har varit en utmaning att definiera den privata sektorns roll i bräckliga kontexter, och att exportera den finska utbildningsmodellen. Även om politiska åtgärder och institutioner som FinCEED har varit lägliga, pågår fortfarande ansträngningarna att skapa konsensus. Utmaningar på genomförandenivå inkluderar brist på verktyg för samarbete, sektorsspecifika planer och budgetar, och systematisk uppföljning, vilka tillsammans försvårar evidensbaserat beslutsfattande. Responses på covid-19 visade också på brister på systemnivå.		
Koherens		
R5. Formaliseringen av samordningsgruppen för utbildning i utvecklingsländer och inrättandet av FinCEED förbättrar samordningen, men den framtida koherensen är osäker på grund av den föränderliga samarbetsvisionen. Det finns utmaningar vad gäller begreppsmässig tvetydighet i multiaktörsstrategin och samarbete mellan statlig och privat sektor. Regeringar i samarbetsländer värdesätter ett utvecklingssamarbete som utformas och följs upp gemensamt, vilket ökar relevansen och koherensen. För att säkerställa koherens i det multilaterala stödet krävs att UM:s och de multilaterala institutionernas prioriteringar sammanfaller. Stöd till civilsamhällesorganisationer, som utformas med bidragsmottagare, rönner uppskattning i fråga om relevans och fokuset på marginaliserade grupper, vilket stärker koherensen. EU Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) förväntas öka finansieringen för finländska företag och civilsamhällesorganisationer i utbildningsprojekt, vilket också skapar möjligheter för koherens.	S4. Det saknas för närvarande en tydlig och enhetlig politisk vision för Finlands utvecklingssamarbete på utbildningsområdet. En sådan vision bör vara i överensstämmelse med den ökade roll som ges utvecklingssamarbete på utbildningsområdet, och tydligt definiera den privata sektorns roll och exporten av den finska modellen. S5. Strategin för multiaktörssamverkan genomförs inte på ett effektivt sätt. Bristen på riktlinjer och instrument för samverkan mellan statliga och icke-statliga aktörer försvårar genomförandet av multiaktörsstrategier och andra förbättringsåtgärder.	



Resultat (R)	Slutsatser (S)	Rekommendationer (R)
UF2 Resultaten av Finlands utvecklingssamarbete på utbildningsområdet		
<p>Framsteg mot förväntade resultat, inklusive resultat på landsnivå</p> <p>R6. Framsteg har gjorts när det gäller att förbättra tillgången på kvalitativ grundskole- och gymnasieutbildning, särskilt på gymnasienivå. Ändå visar de fortsatt dåliga inlärningsresultaten att lärandekrisen i samarbetsländerna är påtaglig. Finlands utvecklingssamarbete på utbildningsområdet har uppvisat bäst resultat när det gäller att främja rättighetsbaserad, inkluderande grundskole- och gymnasieutbildning, förbättra undervisnings- och lärandepraxis och påverka policys på både nationell och global nivå för att förbättra institutionell kapacitet. Begränsade ansträngningar har dock gjorts för att öka tillgången på yrkesutbildning för kvinnor och flickor med funktionsnedsättning.</p> <p>R7. Måluppfyllelse på landnivå förklaras av långsiktig finansiering av bilateralt och multilateralt utvecklingssamarbete och stärkandet av landteamens expertis. Andra drivkrafter inkluderar policy-dialog och riktad finansiering, tekniskt bistånd, policy-förbättringar, flickors ökande deltagande, och vissa framsteg när det gäller att minska hindren för barn med funktionshinder (CwD). Partnerländernas ägande, politisk dialog, sektoriell expertis och adaptiv förvaltning spelar också roll. Det finns dock begränsad evidens som visar att tillgången på utbildning i kris- och katastrofsituationer har förbättrats. Andra utmaningar kvarstår också, som t.ex. vad gäller hög avhoppningsfrekvens och begränsade yrkesmöjligheter, särstil för flickor, specifika landkontexter, och politiska faktorer.</p>	<p>S6. När det gäller specifika tematiska områden och delsektorer varierar resultaten från "bra" till "otillfredsställande" beroende på vilket område eller delsektor som stöds. Goda framsteg har gjorts mot de övergripande politiska målen, särskilt på gymnasienivå. Stödet har varit mest effektivt inom det tematiska området rättighetsbaserad, inkluderande utbildning, såväl som inom förbättrade undervisningsmetoder och skolmiljöer, åtföljt av policypåverkan på land- och global nivå. Resultaten inom yrkesutbildning har varit otillfredsställande.</p> <p>S7. De tre mest effektiva metoderna/instrumenten på utbildningsområdet är bilateralt samarbete (kärnan i Finlands verksamhet), multilateralt samarbete och FinCEED. Civilsamhällesorganisationer och högre utbildningsinstitutioner är mycket viktiga partners på området, men deras potential har inte utnyttjats till fullo, och det saknas förutsättningar för att utveckla deras relation med den privata sektorn. Privatsektorinstrument tillför litet mervärde i utvecklingssamarbetet från ett resultatperspektiv.</p>	<p>R7. Prioritera bilateralt utvecklingssamarbete på landnivå, inklusive gemensam finansiering av sektorsreformprogram, multilateralt bistånd, tekniskt bistånd och policy-dialog på landnivå.</p> <p>R8. Utöver bilateralt samarbete, prioritera samarbete med multilaterala organisationer inom utbildningssektorn, inklusive EU, Världsbanken, UNICEF, GPE och ECW, och skapa synergier mellan bilaterala och multilaterala program.</p> <p>R10. På medellång till lång sikt, utarbeta innovativa strategier inklusive för EdTech för att förbättra utbildningskvalitet, med fokus på omvandlingen av undervisningsmetoder, skolor och utbildningssystem i samarbetsländer.</p> <p>Se även R2 och R4.</p>
<p>Biståndsformernas effektivitet</p> <p>R8. De tre mest effektiva instrumenten inom utvecklingssamarbetet på utbildningsområdet är bilateralt samarbete (kärnan i Finlands verksamhet), jämte multilateralt samarbete och FinCEED, även om den senares roll kan förtydligas. Humanitärt bistånd blir allt viktigare i Finlands samarbetsländer, men det pågår en omprövning av detta instrument globalt.</p> <p>R9. Civilsamhällesorganisationer och högre utbildningsinstitutioner är mycket viktiga partners inom utvecklingssamarbetet på utbildningsområdet, men deras potential har inte utnyttjats till fullo, och det saknas förutsättningar för att utveckla deras relation med den privata sektorn. Privatsektorinstrument verkar tillföra begränsat mervärde inom utbildningssektorn. Intressenter antyder att UM och dess partners bör reflektera över för- och nackdelarna med att involvera den privata sektorn på utbildningsområdet.</p>		



Resultat (R)	Slutsatser (S)	Rekommendationer (R)
<p>R10. I förhållande till andra instrument på området och mot bakgrund av behovet att förtydliga FinCEED:s roll, har bilateralt samarbete med understöd av det multilaterala samarbetet varit de mest effektiva instrumenten. Civilsamhällesorganisationer, högre utbildningsinstitutioner och privata sektorn är viktiga partners, men deras roller behöver förtydligas.</p> <p>R11. Samordningsgruppen, som saknar verkställande befogenheter, en verksamhetsplan och tydligt ansvar för samordning skyler de resultat som i praktiken har realiserats i fråga om tillgången på grundskole-utbildning av hög kvalitet. Medan UNICEF:s Global Learning Innovation Hub och GPE:s nya partnerskapsöverenskommelse syftar till att sätta stopp för business-as-usual inom sektorn, återstår det att se om UNICEF:s Global Learning Innovation Hub och GPE:s partnerskapsavtal har en omvandlande effekt på utbildningssystemen och kan ta itu med den globala lärandekrisen. Inom Finlands utvecklingsarbete på landnivå har synergier mellan statliga och icke-statliga aktörer varit begränsade, eventuellt på grund av otillräcklig kunskap om Finlands biståndsinstrument och avsaknaden på en tydlig strategi för multiaktörsamverkan och riktlinjer för partnerskapsutveckling för att förbättra undervisning och lärande-kvalitet på grundskole- och gymnasienivå.</p>		
UF3 Framtiden		
Bibehåll relevansen hos Finlands respons, även i allt bräckligare kontexter	S8. Även om framsteg har gjorts inom utvecklingsarbetet på utbildningsområdet kvarstår många globala och lokala utmaningar. Detta understryker vikten av Finlands fortsatta engagemang på området. Prioritet på läggs på att bygga utbildningssystemens resiliens i bräckliga kontexter, förverkliga förändringsteorier och stödja sektorsövergripande reformer, särskilt inom inkluderande utbildning och lärarutbildning. Finland är in en bra sits för att utveckla EdTech, särskilt för lärarutbildning, och förverkliga denna modalitets potential trots nuvarande brister.	Se rekommendationerna 1, 4, 10 och 11.
<p>R12. Med tanke på den allt bräckligare kontexten i samarbetländerna menar intressenterna att Finland måste fortsätta att stärka sitt långsiktiga engagement inom utbildningssektorn, och (åtminstone) upprätthålla nuvarande nivå på finansieringen, med ett strategiskt fokus på att bygga resiliens inom utbildningssystem.</p> <p>R13. Finlands främsta mervärde ligger i dess stöd till reformprocesser i samarbetsländer, särskilt inom lärarutbildning, inkluderande utbildning, förskoleverksamhet, sociala välfärdstjänster och lärandebedömning. Även om Finland inte har särskilt hög kompetens vad gäller yrkesutbildning inom utbildningssektorn finns det en potential att koppla ihop yrkesutbildning med institutioner för högre utbildning. Finlands globala roll kan stärkas genom en utökad expertpool. Initiativ som EdTech och t.ex. Global Learning Innovation Hub kan förbättra lärarutbildningsinsatserna, men dessa innovationer måste testas av lokala expert i samarbetsländer innan de kan implementeras i större skala.</p>		



Resultat (R)	Slutsatser (S)	Rekommendationer (R)
R14. Mot bakgrund av den nedåtgående utbildningskvaliteten i Finland måste Finland se över sin globala roll på utbildningsområdet för att förbli relevant. Detta skulle kunna göras genom att lyfta fram utbildning som en integrerad del av flera sektorer (vad UM:s partners kallar "mångsektoriellt nexustänkande"). Experter som deltog i utvärderingens Delphi-panel efterlyser nya och omvandlande strategier i ett triple-nexus-sammanhang, med långsiktig finansiering av olika sektorer inom humanitärt bistånd och utvecklingssamarbete.		
Bibehåll den nuvarande nivån på Finlands finansiering av utvecklingssamarbete på utbildningsområdet	S9. Finlands globala ledarskap när det gäller att förespråka ökade utbildningsinvesteringar är uppskattat, men bilden av Finland som en förebild på området och trovärdig problemlösare kan påverkas av framtida nedskärningar i biståndet. Det är ännu inte fastlagt hur begränsade resurser ska fördelas på olika biståndsinsrument och insatser inom dessa instrument.	R6. Ta ett politiskt beslut, på kort och medellång sikt, att säkerställa åtminstone den nuvarande finansieringsnivån för stöd till utbildningssektorn, även om framtida nedskärningar i utvecklingssamarbetet kan inträffa. Testa innovativa finansieringsmekanismer på kort och medellång sikt (t.ex. investeringar i sociala effekter), och på längre sikt, prioritera en gradvis ökning av stödet till utbildningssektorn.



Summary

The Unit for Development Evaluation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland commissioned a strategic evaluation to inform the Ministry on how the various development policy and cooperation actors have succeeded in stepping up Finland's global efforts in the education sector. Furthermore, the **purpose** of this evaluation is to provide information for the further development of Finland's efforts to maximise their relevance, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness in the future. The evaluation is both summative and forward-looking.

The **main objectives** of the evaluation were three-fold: First, to analyse the relevance, coherence, and efficiency of Finland's response to the global learning crisis and quality of education by the various development cooperation actors involved, including education export and the private sector. Second, to analyse the effectiveness and results achieved in the area of development cooperation in stepping up Finland's global role in education sector development in developing countries in line with its development policy objectives and the value of the multi-actor approach therein. Third, to explore and document alternative future approaches for 2023-2030 in which Finland's global role and response to the learning crisis and quality education could be the most relevant, coherent, efficient, and effective in the changing operational context and uncertainties in the coming years. Based on past experience, the evaluation was to provide well-justified and evidence-informed recommendations on how the MFA, together with relevant stakeholders, could further improve their actions for a more relevant, coherent, efficient, and effective response and how to further develop the multi-actor coordination. This includes suggestions and options for practical measures to be taken by the different actors and through the different cooperation instruments.

The evaluation's overarching **analysis framework is theory-based contribution analysis, a nested (macro-micro level) theory of change**. At the *macro-level*, this means a causal mapping of pathways of change for Finland's *global* development cooperation for quality and inclusive education, based on the outputs and outcomes presented in the MFA's Theory of Change (ToC) published in 2020 as well as the education sector's current results framework for education development cooperation (MFA, updated November 2022). The *micro-level* Theories of Change chart out drivers of change identified in Finland's Country Programmes and 'nested' – or embedded – within the macro framework.

The evaluation team used a mix of data collection and analysis methods to answer the evaluation questions. The methods comprised of desk review, key informant interviews (52 at the global level with MFA and its partner organisations and 49 at the country level), three Country Case Studies (Ethiopia, Nepal, and Palestine), two desk-based Thematic studies (on basic education teacher training in Mozambique, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) and life skills training in Ukraine) and especially focusing on the future, the Delphi method of forecasting was used (on-line survey and interviews).

In 2018, the MFA commissioned a review of Finland's global role in the education sector. It yielded recommendations, the key being its title: Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education. To assess Finland's response to the learning crisis, the evaluation team consolidated the recommendations of the review, the follow-up measures identified by the dedicated Task Force (2019), and strategies in the National Roadmap for Education Development approved in 2022 and assessed



the progress made against these measures. As a result of the consolidation, the evaluation team identified 7 'Stepping Up Measures' under an 'umbrella' of the overarching measure of 'Education-focused development policy and cooperation'. The 7 'Stepping Up Measures' assessed in this evaluation are as follows:

1. Strengthening collaboration between different government sectors;
2. Strengthening multilateral engagement;
3. Intensifying bilateral support;
4. Strengthening Finland's VET profile;
5. Improving research capacities in partner countries;
6. Strategic investment in new partnerships and
7. Building the pool of expertise.

Summary answers to evaluation questions (EQ):

EQ1 (Focusing on the RESPONSE) - To what extent has the response to recommendations of the 2018 report and follow-up measures agreed thereof been appropriate for stepping up Finland's global role in addressing the learning crisis and improving the quality of education?

Summary Answer: Finland has made significant progress in its education-focused development cooperation (EDC). Progress has been notable in policy improvement, bilateral support expansion, and multilateral engagement enhancement, aligning with its Africa Strategy and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on Quality Education (SDG 4) and implementing the stepping-up measures since 2018. However, it is important to recognise the need to place greater emphasis on the role of education in humanitarian aid funding and VET, as well as address the lack of conceptual clarity in the multi-actor approach. EDC commitments have risen, and Finland actively engages with the European Union (EU) and multilateral partners. Despite education's priority status, operational challenges and limited coordination tools hinder evidence-based decision-making. Formalising coordination by establishing the Coordination Group and the Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development (FinCEED) has enhanced coherence, but challenges remain, especially in state-private sector collaboration. Civil Society Organisation (CSO) support and the EU initiatives hold promise for reinforcing coherence and funding in EDC. Since the launch of FinCEED, concerted efforts have been made to build Finland's pool of EDC expertise.

EQ2 (Focusing on the RESULTS) - What has been the relative and overall effectiveness of the various measures taken by the different actors in development cooperation?

Summary Answer: Finland has contributed to improving access to primary and secondary education, but poor learning outcomes persist, highlighting a continuing learning crisis in partner countries. Finland's EDC has also effectively promoted inclusive basic and secondary education, influencing policies at national and global levels and enhancing teaching practices. However, increases in access to vocational training for women and girls with disabilities remain limited.

Successful EDC at the country level relies on strategic financing through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, fostering expertise in Country Teams, drivers like policy dialogue and targeted



financing, as well as positive results such as increased girls' participation. Challenges remain, including, for example, learning poverty, high dropout rates and limited vocational opportunities. The most effective EDC instruments are bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Also, FinCEED shows promising potential. However, at the country level, effective synergies between state and non-state actors are limited, partly due to the absence of a clear multi-actor approach and partnership-building guidance to enhance teaching and learning quality at primary and secondary levels. CSOs and higher education institutions (HEI) are critical partners, but while CSOs show important EDC results, their potential remains underutilised. Private sector involvement in EDC adds limited value, prompting a reconsideration of its role.

Finland's domestic Coordination Group lacks authority, a clear plan, and defined roles, hindering its impact on basic education partnerships. Finally, while the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Global Partnership for Education (GPE) led innovative initiatives aim at disrupting traditional education development, doubts about the transformational impact of these persist.

EQ3 (Focusing on the FUTURE) - In the next eight years, what kind of multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups would yield the best results in order to maintain and strengthen Finland's role in the specific areas of expertise and added value unique to Finland, allow the response to the global learning crisis and quality education to stay relevant in different contextual settings, establish size and set-up that is realistic for sustained level of development cooperation funding yet securing Finland as a credible actor in resolving the global learning crisis?

Summary Answer: Considering the increasingly fragile contexts in partner countries, Finland's reinforcement of its long-term commitment to EDC, accompanied by the maintenance or increase in funding, is crucial, with a specific focus on strengthening the resilience of education systems.

Finland's distinct value in EDC lies in its dedication to assisting partner countries in their reform processes. This commitment extends to critical areas like teacher education, inclusive education, early childhood development, well-being services, and learning assessment. While VET is not a strong suit, there is potential in integrating it with higher education. The expansion of Finland's pool of experts could amplify its global impact. Initiatives like education technologies (EdTech) and the Global Learning Innovation Hub can improve teacher education but must undergo testing solutions locally in the partner countries by local experts before widespread implementation.

To stay relevant, Finland needs to update its global role in EDC, emphasising education's integral role across various sustainable development sectors, an approach known as 'multi-sector nexus thinking.' Experts recommend innovative strategies within the triple nexus context, supported by long-term financing spanning humanitarian and development sectors.

MFA could adopt a more strategic approach to allocate limited Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds. Prioritising partnerships with specific target countries, multilateral organisations, and FinCEED is essential. Despite budget constraints, MFA must ensure the continued funding of education while also establishing flexible financing mechanisms for diverse partnerships in the short to medium term.

The 15 detailed findings, 9 conclusions based on the findings and 11 recommendations made are presented in the table below.



Table of Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings (F)	Conclusions (C)	Recommendations (R)
EQ1 The Response		
<p>Performance: Implementation of follow-up activities as a response to the 2018 recommendations</p> <p>F1. Notable improvements have been achieved in the education-focused development cooperation policy framework, as well as in institutionalising forms of collaboration between relevant ministries and their operational arms (MFA, Ministry of Education and Culture - MEC, and Finnish National Agency for Education - EDUFI). The MFA has been active and taken a strategic leadership role in the implementation of the recommendations. Regarding multilateral engagement, efforts have been made to ensure funding for selected United Nations (UN) partners, GPE and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), and to strengthen engagement with the Development Banks as well as with the EU-Africa Global Gateway. Bilateral support has been intensified by expanding support to additional partner countries. Concerted efforts have been made to build Finland's pool of expertise in EDC since the launch of FinCEED. The least progress has been made in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and investment in new partnerships. The role of CSOs has been limited.</p>	<p>C1. The establishment of education as a distinct policy priority within Finland's development cooperation and the formulation of a comprehensive theory of change have considerably enhanced the significance of education in Finland's development cooperation. This progress lays a solid foundation for Finland's support to the education sector, both in the near and distant future, in addressing the global education crisis.</p>	<p>R1. Deliver a brief policy statement reiterating the commitment to a renewed joint vision for Finland's education development cooperation, emphasising the importance of Least Developed Countries (LDC) even if trade interests gain prominence and maintaining a balanced focus on both trade interests and country-led approaches.</p> <p>R2. Issue a Guidance Note on the Multi-actor Approach to clarify the concept and guide its operationalisation.</p> <p>R3. Establish FinCEED as an executive body to facilitate and coordinate Finland's Multi-actor Approach in EDC.</p>
<p>Relevance</p> <p>F2. Significant progress has been made in implementing policy-level measures to enhance Finland's education-focused development cooperation, aligning with SDG 4. Education is a priority in Finland's Africa Strategy, and its importance in emergencies is recognised. However, there is a need for more emphasis on humanitarian aid and nexus approaches. VET and higher education are policy priorities, but their development is hindered by weak coordination, neglected linkages, and limited international awareness of Finland's expertise in VET. Finland's cooperation responds to partner needs, and CSO support is strongly appreciated. Cross-cutting objectives, including gender equality, disability inclusion, climate resilience, and triple nexus programming, align well with current challenges. Finland's reputation for education excellence is recognised, but there is a growing interest in digitalisation, raising concerns about its suitability in fragile settings.</p>	<p>C2. Finland's response to the learning crisis remains highly relevant. To maintain relevance and effectiveness in a dynamic global education landscape, Finland's future development cooperation would benefit from a focus on learning crisis mitigation at both global and country levels. Focus on learning crisis mitigation would utilise SDG 4 as a foundational pillar for advancing progress in other interconnected SDGs. This includes fostering innovative partnerships to simultaneously support climate and education goals and activities while also proactively addressing the intricate interplay between development, humanitarian assistance, and peace-building efforts (triple nexus), within the educational context.</p>	<p>R4. Strengthen MFA's strategic planning in the education sector by developing an education sector-specific implementation plan to operationalise the Policy Brief and the Guidance Note for the Multi-Actor Approach for the MFA's part.</p>



Findings (F)	Conclusions (C)	Recommendations (R)
Resourcing in relation to commitment		
<p>F3. Finland successfully reached its goal of disbursing EUR 100 million per year for EDC in 2021, but the financial data confirms that 2021 was an exception. EDC commitments have shown a consistent upward trajectory across all donors, with new entrants making contributions, albeit on a smaller scale. Finland is no exception to this trend. Viewed through the lens of where funds are directed and where platforms for dialogue exist, engaging with the EU and multilateral partners provides opportunities for influencing.</p>	<p>C3. Evidence-based decision-making is challenging without sector-specific plan with budget and corresponding systematic monitoring regarding MFA's education sector development cooperation. However, it should be acknowledged that Finland has consistently succeeded in committing and disbursing increased funds to EDC.</p>	<p>R5. Strengthen the response to the global and country-level learning crisis by emphasising education in emergencies, including by adhering to the MFA's Guidance Note "The Triple Nexus and Cooperation with Fragile States and Regions" as relevant for education and by emphasising climate resilience (green education) in Finland's EDC and its funding.</p>
Efficiency		
<p>F4. Education is a well-established priority in Finland's development policy and cooperation, including its cooperation with the EU and the Africa strategy. However, the lack of a shared vision and conceptual clarity, especially regarding the multi-actor approach, hinders efficient implementation. Challenges include defining the role of private sector engagement in fragile contexts and addressing education export. While policy measures and institutions like FinCEED have been timely, consensus-building remains a work in progress. Operational challenges include a lack of collaboration tools, budgeted sector-specific plans, and systematic monitoring, all of which hinder evidence-based decision-making. Further, the COVID-19 response revealed systemic challenges.</p>		<p>R9. Prioritise supporting basic and primary education, with an immediate focus on rights-based inclusive access, including in multi-crisis settings. Limit the short-term engagement in the VET sub-sector to already-initiated interventions while planning for substantive development of Finland's VET sub-sector in the longer term. Conduct a follow-up review of VET in education sector development cooperation.</p>
Coherence		
<p>F5. Formalising the Education in Developing Countries Coordination Group and establishing FinCEED improves coordination, but future coherence is uncertain due to the evolving collaborative vision. Challenges include conceptual ambiguity in the multi-actor approach and state-private sector collaboration. Partner governments value jointly designed and monitored development cooperation programmes, enhancing relevance and coherence. Ensuring coherence in multilateral support requires aligning priorities between them and the MFA. CSO support, designed with beneficiaries, is appreciated for its responsiveness and focus on marginalised groups, reinforcing coherence. EU Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) are expected to boost funding for Finnish companies and CSOs in education projects, which also constitutes an opportunity for improved coherence.</p>	<p>C4. Finland's EDC currently lacks a clear and unified policy vision. This vision should harmonise the expanded role of EDC, and clearly define the role of private sector involvement and education export while also emphasising inclusivity.</p> <p>C5. The operational efficiency of implementing a multi-actor approach is weak. The lack of guidance on the multi-actor approach and instruments for collaboration between state and non-state actors does not encourage or enable efficient implementation of multi-actor approaches and, overall, full implementation of the stepping up measures.</p>	<p>R11. Address staff shortages by building skills and capacities through continuous learning, buying or borrowing additional skills from other ministries, and outsourcing to free up staff for other tasks. The embassy-based education advisers (erityisasiantuntija) should be retained at the country level, and more should be invested in locally recruited staff.</p>



Findings (F)	Conclusions (C)	Recommendations (R)
EQ2 The Results of Finland's Education development cooperation		
<p>Progress towards expected results, including results at the country level</p> <p>F6. Progress has been made in improving access to quality primary and secondary education, especially at the secondary level. Yet, persistent poor learning outcomes highlight the ongoing learning crisis in partner countries. Finland's EDC has been most effective in advancing rights-based inclusive basic and secondary education, enhancing teaching and learning practices, and influencing policies at both national and global levels to improve institutional capacity. However, limited efforts have been directed towards increasing access to vocational training for women and girls with disabilities.</p> <p>F7. Effectiveness in EDC at the country level stems from a strategic financing mix, combining bilateral and multilateral cooperation and fostering expertise in Country Teams. Other positive drivers of change include policy dialogue, targeted financing, technical assistance, policy enhancements, increased girls' participation, and some progress in reducing barriers for children with disabilities (CwD). Partner country ownership, policy dialogue, sectoral expertise, and adaptive management also play a role. However, the evidence supporting enhanced access to education in emergencies is limited. Challenges also include high dropout and repetition rates and limited vocational opportunities, particularly for girls, unique country contexts and political factors.</p>	<p>C6. Regarding the thematic areas and sub-sectors of EDC, the results vary from 'good' to 'unsatisfactory' depending on the supported area or sub-sector. Good progress has been made towards the overall policy goals, particularly at the secondary education level. The support has been most effective in the thematic areas of rights-based inclusive education, as well as improved teaching practices and school environments, accompanied by policy influencing at country and global levels. The results in VET have been unsatisfactory.</p> <p>C7. The three most effective EDC modalities/instruments are bilateral cooperation (the core of Finland's work), multilateral cooperation and FinCEED. CSOs and higher education institutions are critically important partners in EDC, yet their potential has not been exploited to the full, and their relationship with the private sector lacks enablers and remains uncertain. Private sector instruments add little value to development cooperation from the results perspective.</p>	<p>R7. Prioritise bilateral cooperation with partner countries, including joint financing of sector reform programmes, multi-bilateral assistance, technical assistance and policy dialogue at the country level.</p> <p>R8. In addition to bilateral cooperation, prioritise cooperation with multilateral organisations in the education sector, including with the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE and ECW, and create value-adding linkages between the bilateral and multilateral programming.</p> <p>R10. In the medium to long term, devise innovative strategies including related to EdTech to enhance education quality, focusing on the transformation of teaching methods, schools, and education systems in partner countries.</p> <p>See also R2 and R4.</p>
<p>Effectiveness of aid modalities</p> <p>F8. The three most effective EDC instruments are bilateral cooperation (the core of Finland's work), hand-in-hand with multilateral cooperation and FinCEED, though its present role could be fine-tuned. Humanitarian assistance is becoming increasingly important in Finland's partner countries, but evidence suggests a rethinking of this modality is ongoing globally.</p> <p>F9. CSOs and higher education institutions are critically important partners in EDC, yet their potential has not been exploited to the full, and their relationship with private companies lacks enablers and remains uncertain. Private sector instruments appear to add little value in the education sector, and stakeholders suggest MFA and its partners reflect on the pros and cons of private sector involvement in EDC.</p>		



Findings (F)	Conclusions (C)	Recommendations (R)
<p>F10. Relative to other EDC instruments and with FinCEED in need of a sharpened role, bilateral cooperation complemented by multilateral cooperation have been the most effective modalities. CSOs, HEIs, and private sectors are vital partners, but their roles need clarification.</p> <p>F11. The Coordination Group, lacking executive authority, a clear operational plan, and defined responsibility for collaborative efforts, obscures the practical impact of domestic partnerships on improving access to quality basic education. While the UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub and GPE's new partnership compacts aim to disrupt business-as-usual education development, it remains to be seen if they prove to have transformational impact to education systems and addressing the global learning crisis. In Finland's engagement at the country level, effective synergies between state and non-state actors have been limited, potentially due to insufficient information on Finnish ODA modalities and the absence of a clear multi-actor approach and partnership-building guidance to enhance teaching and learning quality at primary and secondary levels.</p>		
<p>EQ3 The Future</p>		
<p>Maintaining the relevance of Finland's response, including in increasingly fragile contexts</p>	<p>C8. Progress in EDC has been made, but global and local education challenges persist.</p>	<p>See Recommendations 1, 4, 10, and 11</p>
<p>F12. Given the increasingly fragile contexts of partner countries, stakeholders assert that Finland needs to continue and strengthen its long-term work in EDC, matched by a need to (at least) maintain the current level of financing, with a strategic focus on building education system resilience.</p> <p>F13. Finland's main value lies in its commitment to partner countries' reform processes, particularly in teacher education, inclusive education, early childhood development, well-being services, and learning assessment. While its EDC VET expertise is not particularly strong, connecting VET with higher education institutions shows potential. Expanding Finland's expert pool will bolster its global role. EdTech and initiatives like the Global Learning Innovation Hub can enhance teacher education efforts but testing of the innovations in the partner countries by local experts is essential before broader implementation.</p> <p>F14. The decline in domestic education system performance suggests that to remain relevant, Finland updates the premise of its global role in EDC. This could be done by spotlighting education as integral across multiple sectors of sustainable development (what MFA's partners call 'multi-sector nexus thinking'). Experts who participated in the Delphi panel of this evaluation call for new and transformative strategies for EDC in the context of the triple nexus, with long-term financing across humanitarian and development sectors.</p>	<p>This underscores the importance of Finland's continued commitment to EDC. Emphasis is needed on building education system resilience in fragile settings, fulfilling theory of change assumptions, and supporting sector-wide reforms, particularly in inclusive education and teacher development. Finland is well positioned in the development of more relevant and effective EdTech, particularly for teacher education, so that in spite of the EdTech's current limitations, its potential could be fulfilled.</p>	



Findings (F)	Conclusions (C)	Recommendations (R)
<p>Sustaining Finland's education cooperation financing</p> <p>F15. Instead of dispersing scarce ODA funds across all EDC modalities and/or several interventions, the adoption of a strategic approach by the MFA is required. At overall policy/strategic level of Finland's engagement, this involves prioritising three crucial partnerships and enhancing the synergy among them: bilateral partner governments in specific target countries, multilateral organisations, and FinCEED. In the short/medium term, there is a recognised need for MFA to sustain education funding despite potential cuts to ODA and establish flexible financing tools for diverse partnerships.</p>	<p>C9. Finland's global leadership in advocating increased education investment is recognised, but its image as an education excellence model and credible problem solver may suffer due to potential cuts to education ODA. Considering the budget constraints, the optimal distribution of limited ODA funds across different aid modalities and interventions in each modality, is yet to be determined.</p>	<p>R6. As a policy decision, in the short-/medium term, ensure at least the current funding level for the education sector, even given the possible development cooperation funding cuts. In the short- and medium-term, test innovative funding mechanisms (e.g., social impact outcome investment), and in the longer term, as a policy priority, aim at systematically increasing education sector funding.</p>



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose, Rationale and Main users of the evaluation

The **purpose** of this strategic and complex evaluation is to inform the MFA of Finland on how the various development policy and cooperation actors have succeeded in stepping up Finland's global efforts in the education sector and to provide information for the further development of Finland's efforts for maximising their relevance, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in the future (Terms of Reference – ToR **Annex 1**).

The **rationale** for the evaluation derives from the ongoing evolution of Finland's education development cooperation. In 2016, Finland's Development Policy, *One World, Common Future – Towards Sustainable Development*, set out four policy priority areas. Education was included under policy priority area III: 'Societies have become more democratic and better functioning, underlining the role of education as 'vital for progress in all other development goals' (MFA, 2016a).¹ In 2018, however, MFA commissioned a review of Finland's global role in the education sector, *Stepping up Finland's Global Role in Education*. The review argued that, given the ongoing global learning crisis, basic education should be a major thematic area in Finnish development cooperation, optimising Finland's 'strong brand and reputation in basic education' (MFA/HELDA, 2018). Between October 2018 and February 2019, an interim Task Force set up by the MFA in collaboration with the MEC revisited the recommendations presented in the review report; the recommended measures were subsequently further refined in 2020 by a Coordination Group established by the two ministries (see **Box 1**).

¹ Finland's 2019 Government Programme, *Inclusive and Competent Finland – a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable society*, includes two separate strategic goals: one for a 'globally influential Finland' (with a strong focus on Finland's role in Europe) and another for a 'Finland that promotes competence, education, culture and innovation' (MFA, 2019a).



Box 1. Recommendations of the Stepping up Finland's Global Role in Education Report

The review of the education sector offered the following recommendations as drivers of the overarching recommendation that Finland 'step up' its global role in education.

At *institutional/policy* level:

- Education quality and learning should be set up as the overarching theme for educational development policy and cooperation, including five sub-themes: strengthening school leadership and teachers' professional development; collaborating on teacher education programmes; supporting learner-focus in basic education; supporting coherence of the entire educational system; and sharing Finnish experience in education reform, including the political context; and
- The MFA should establish strategic leadership of education development policy and cooperation through a multi-stakeholder Coordination Group, co-chaired by MFA and MEC.

In terms of *education development cooperation*, the MFA and their partners should:

- Raise Finland's voice in international forums by participating in key multilateral education forums;
- Prioritise education in development cooperation with the European Union;
- Continue and intensify financial and technical support to education sector programmes and assume a leadership role when feasible and appropriate; and
- Identify cost-effective ways of engaging interested low-/middle-income countries (LMIC) in dialogue on key aspects of coherent education systems and reform.

In terms of *resources for education development cooperation*, the MFA and their partners should:

- Enhance Finnish human resources in education and development by encouraging Finnish universities to offer development-oriented programmes and engage in education globally;
- Initiate the establishment of a Finnish expert capacity deployment facility in education for selected UN agencies;
- Make 'Teachers without Borders' a national volunteer programme in education to address the learning crisis;
- Increase the level of Finland's aid for education to 100 million Euros (MEUR) per year in the next four years.
- These recommended measures were revisited and refined in two stages. First, by an interim Task Force of experts and presented in the 'Education Development Collaboration and Policy: A top goal' report (*koulutus kehitysyhteistyön ja politiikan tavoitteeksi työryhmän raportti*). Second, the MFA-MEC Coordination Group, which began its work in 2020 by mapping group members' views and positions on the recommended measures (see *yhteinen matriisi toimenpiteistä*).

Source: MFA/HELDA, 2018; MFA, 2019a; MFA, 2020c



In May 2021, a Government Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms, prepared by all parliamentary parties, set out Finland's long-term development policy priorities that would be continued across parliamentary terms. In this report, education emerged as a **standalone policy priority** (MFA, 2021b). However, with the parliamentary elections of 2023 and the subsequent government programme emerging, it was necessary to take stock of the developments and achievements that have taken place. Finland's education development policy and cooperation are likely to reform and continue to unfold under the new government programme.

The evaluation team assessed Finland's response to the recommendations of the Stepping up Finland's Global Role in Education report, the results achieved, and potential future directions for Finland's education development cooperation. The focus was on activities that are funded through Finland's ODA and Finland's policy influencing related to education in partner countries and organisations it supports, and that directly through their implementation, feed into the development policy priority area of education sector development in partner countries, regionally and globally. However, linkages and coordination with other relevant actors have been looked at to a limited extent in order to respond to questions on relevance, coherence, and coordination (EQ1) and the implications of the multi-actor approach on the overall effectiveness of ODA-funded interventions (EQ2).

In order to assess the implementation of activities to follow up the 2018 recommendations, the evaluation team identified 7 'Stepping Up Measures'. These measures consolidate² the recommendations made in the 2018 Stepping Up Report and the strategies identified by an expert task force in 2019 (which revisited the earlier recommendations)³, as well as strategies in the National Roadmap for Education Development, approved in 2022. In addition, the evaluation team assessed the overarching measure of 'Education-focused development cooperation policy' as an 'umbrella' for the 7 'Stepping Up Measures'.

The 7 'Stepping Up Measures' are as follows:

1. Strengthening collaboration between different government sectors;
2. Strengthening multilateral engagement;
3. Intensifying bilateral support;
4. Strengthening Finland's VET profile;
5. Improving research capacities in partner countries;
6. Strategic investment in new partnerships, and
7. Building the pool of expertise.

Note: While strengthening VET was not an explicit recommendation, the 2018 Stepping Up report notes that as 'the demand for Finnish vocational teacher education from developing countries has increased in recent years, [t]his is a potential new area for both education exports and development cooperation' (MFA/HELDA, 2018). This measure of Finland's response to the global education

2 The consolidation is based on a mapping of the respective recommendations and strategies, found in **Annex 6**. Annex 6 also present the results of the Evaluation Team's assessment of progress made in implementing the measures.

3 The strategies were: '*pilot innovative solutions for VET and continuous learning to deliver maximum impact in an engaging, motivating and work-life-oriented manner; as part of Finland's country photography work, VET issues are actively raised in international organizations and international forums; and a follow-up review focused on VET will be completed to compliment the Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education report*' (MFA, 2019).



crisis subsequently emerged as a priority area in 2019 and was included as an outcome area in 2022 and is thus included in the evaluation team's 7 'Stepping Up Measures'.

The **main users** of the evaluation are the Ministry's leadership, departments, and representatives in charge of the design and implementation of development policy and cooperation. The information is used to inform overall and sector policies and management of instruments, funding allocations, etc., by the Ministry. The secondary users are stakeholders at various levels, including the Development Policy Committee. **Figure 1** maps key stakeholder groups involved in Finland's education development cooperation, organised in a honeycomb formation to emphasise the importance of synergies (and a potential 'hive mind') in multi-actor approaches.⁴

A list of evaluation stakeholders consulted during the evaluation is found in **Annex 2**.

Figure 1. Stakeholder Groups in Finland's education development cooperation



Source: Evaluation Team

4 The stakeholders highlighted in blue, including multilateral partners, are those involved in planning and strategising of Finland's education development cooperation policies strategies and instruments, including engagement of multilateral partners (indicated by their logos); development banks include also the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The stakeholders highlighted in green are those that have been involved in the implementation of the strategies and interventions financed through diverse ODA and non-ODA cooperation instruments. The remaining cells contain photographic images of rights-holders of Finland's education development cooperation, with a particular focus on girls, women, and children with disabilities in relation to the SDG 4 targets for equitable access to quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all. These are indicative of stakeholders in the 'sphere of interest' in Finland's education development cooperation.



1.2 Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation assessed Finland's *response* to the global learning crisis and the results of Finland's EDC, as well as considered the future of the country's EDC. In terms of the activities that have taken place in *response* to the 2018 report, the evaluation assessed activities by both development cooperation, ODA-funded and other actors relevant to the implementation, including the private sector. In assessing the results, the evaluation focused on the ODA-funded actors only. Future considerations were made for ODA-funded actors and in the contexts of ODA-eligible countries and contexts, as part of the broader coordination set-up.

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Analyse the relevance, coherence and efficiency of the response to the global learning crisis and the quality of education by the various development cooperation actors involved, including education export and the private sector.
- Analyse the effectiveness and results achieved in the area of development cooperation in stepping up Finland's global role in education sector development in developing countries in line with its development policy objectives and the value of the multi-actor approach therein.
- Explore and document alternative future approaches for 2023-2030 in which Finland's global role and response to the learning crisis and quality education could be the most relevant, coherent, efficient and effective.
- Provide well-justified and evidence-based recommendations on how the MFA, together with relevant stakeholders, could further improve their actions for a more relevant, coherent, efficient and effective response, including suggestions and options for practical measures to be taken by the different actors and through the different cooperation instruments.

1.3 Scope of the evaluation

The main focus of this evaluation is to examine activities that are funded through Finland's ODA in the development policy priority area of education, as well as Finland's policy influencing related to education in partner countries and in the multilateral organisations which Finland supports; a list of interventions is found in **Annex 3**. However, linkages and coordination with other relevant actors are explored, to a limited extent, in order to respond to questions on relevance, coherence, coordination and the implications of the multi-actor approach on the overall effectiveness of ODA-funded interventions. The evaluation examines education development cooperation at all levels, ranging from country level to global level interventions and policy influencing.

The evaluation assesses the following cooperation channels and instruments:

- Country Programmes (including sector support programmes, multi-bi projects and bilateral projects);
- Multilateral support (core funding and/or specific support to UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), EU, GPE, ECW and the World Food Programme (WFP) collaboration on school meals);



- Support to civil society (programme and project-based instruments to Finnish CSOs⁵);
- FinCEED;
- Higher Education Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI);
- Private sector instruments (PSI) and development policy investments (Finnpartnership, Finnfund); and
- Humanitarian funding where relevant.

The period under evaluation is 2019–2022. Due to the limited timeframe, the extent of evaluating long-term results on, for example, learning outcomes is limited. The evaluation nevertheless seeks to identify any broader societal effects and medium-term outcomes to the extent possible, as well as Finland’s contribution to them.

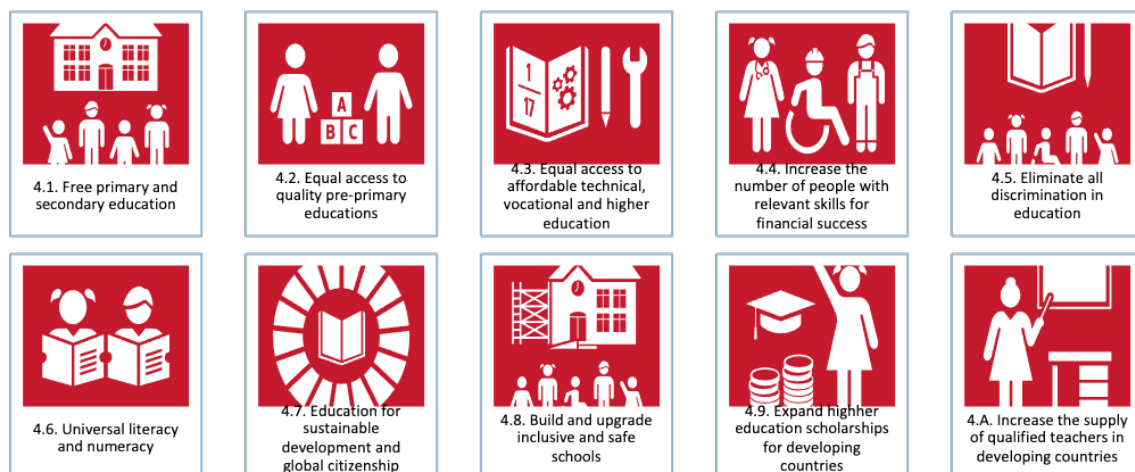
The evaluation does not include:

- Interventions in development communication and global education;
- Funds for Local Cooperation;
- Development research and other collaboration with HEIs other than the ones directly relevant to implementing the development policy priority area of education sector development in a partner country.

1.3.1 Definition of concepts

Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education (SDG 4). SDG 4 aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. The goal consists of ten targets (see **Figure 2**) to guide countries along a transformative path to a sustainable education agenda.

Figure 2. SDG 4 targets



Source: *The Global Goals, 2023*

5 MFA works with various International Non-Governmental Organisations, however, their focus is not in the education sector. Thus, they are not included in this evaluation.



Finland's EDC refers to inclusive and equitable quality education, which is the substance of SDG 4, as a policy priority. The concept is closely aligned with the following SDG 4 targets 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.8 and 4.A, which in more detail are:

4.1. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes;

4.2. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education;

4.5. By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations;

4.8. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all, and

4A. By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

UNESCO defines **Inclusive Education** as a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve Education for All. As an overall principle, it should guide all education policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society (UNESCO-IBE, 2023).

Right to education. The right to education stands as a fundamental human right. It extends to every individual, regardless of factors such as race, gender, nationality, ethnic or social background, religion, political affiliation, age, or disability. This essential right, rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights since 1948, finds recognition in various international agreements, national constitutions, and development agendas. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights not only upholds the right to access education but also underscores the importance of the quality of education. It emphasises that education should contribute to the holistic development of the individual, foster respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promote mutual understanding, tolerance, and goodwill among diverse racial and religious groups (Article 26) (UN, 2023).

Basic Concepts in EDC. Generally, an **Education Sector Plan (ESP)** is a national policy instrument, elaborated under the responsibility of the government, which provides a long-term vision for the education system in the country and outlines a coherent set of practicable strategies to reach its objectives and overcome difficulties (IIEP-UNESCO, 2015).

With this strategic document in place, a **Sector Programme** operationalises the strategies identified in the ESP in line with policy priorities (set as overarching goals) and the expected results (outcomes/outputs) are measured through indicators against targets that are set, which are summed up in the results framework.

Bilateral Cooperation is the legal agreement between two nations on mutually accepted terms and conditions that facilitate the development of the nations involved in the agreement; bilateral projects/programmes are multi-annual, country-level planning of bilateral development cooperation



(MFA, 2018c). Finland's bilateral cooperation with its partner countries is guided by the Country Programmes for Development Cooperation. The Country Programme for Development Cooperation defines the results that Finland aims at within its development cooperation programme and related political and policy dialogue.

An **Education Sector Working Group (ESWG)** in a given country is a collaborative forum for interactive dialogue between key education stakeholders, including the country's ministries responsible for education, local and international civil society and development partners, among others, often serving as a platform for coordination of a sector programme implementation within an overall framework of education development cooperation (IIEP-UNESCO, 2015).

Education system. According to the World Bank's definition, an 'education system' typically refers to the public schools, universities, and training programmes that provide education services. In this strategy, "the education system" includes the full range of learning opportunities available in a country, whether they are provided or financed by the public or private sector (including religious, non-profit, and for-profit organisations). It includes formal and nonformal programs, plus the full range of beneficiaries of and stakeholders in these programs—teachers, trainers, administrators, employees, students and their families, and employers. It also includes the rules, policies, and accountability mechanisms that bind an education system together, as well as the resources and financing mechanisms that sustain it (World Bank, 2020).

Education technologies (EdTech). EdTech may be described as technologies (including hardware, software, and digital content) that are either designed or appropriated for educational purposes. In this report, we use a broad definition of EdTech, which includes any use of information and communications technologies at any point within the education system — in ministries, schools, communities, and homes, including between individuals and for self-study. Considering the use of EdTech by the most marginalised learners, for example, those in remote rural areas who typically only have access to low-tech devices like non-digital radio and television, we distinguish between digital learning solutions and distance learning/remote learning.

In the broad definition used by Finland's MEC, **education export** includes "any business based on education, an education system, or the transfer of skills, for which a foreign entity pays for the product or service designed" (MEC, 2016).



2 Approach, methodology and limitations

The evaluation methodology and framework, including a discussion on the ToC, the EQs and the evaluation matrix, are provided in **Annex 4**. The Delphi methodology, process and results are provided in **Annex 10**. Key elements of the evaluation methodology are outlined below.

2.1 Approach

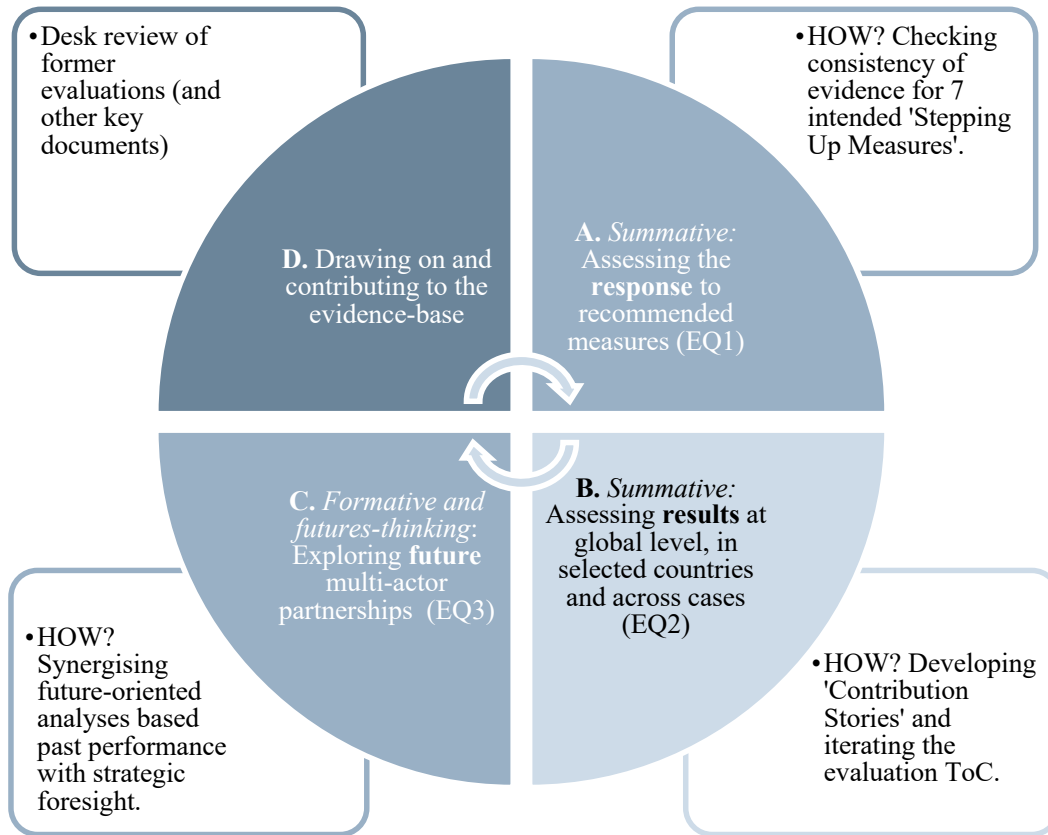
Our approach is **theory-based contribution analysis, with a specific focus on a ‘contribution story’ which explores the role of Country Programmes in progress towards MFA’s higher-level expected outcomes. The analysis draws on multiple streams of evidence:** a comprehensive desk review, interviews with key informants from a wide range of stakeholders in Finland and in multilateral partner organisations and bilateral partner countries, as well as thematic studies and country case studies. The evaluation’s overall approach has two key features, illustrated in **Figure 2** below.

First, although the evaluation questions constitute three distinct elements (quadrants A, B and C), and each has its own summative or formative analytical focus, **each of these three elements is part of a whole**. Our approach combines *summative* (i.e., analysis of past performance) and *formative* (i.e., forward-looking analysis based on past performance) assessment of Finland’s education development cooperation sector, as well as integrating ‘futures thinking’ (i.e., forward-looking analysis based on strategic foresight) through the Delphi method (see **Figure 3**).

Second, our approach encourages a **learn-and-adapt** approach in Finland’s education development cooperation policy and practice. Indeed, as illustrated below in **Figure 3** (see quadrant A), the present evaluation is informed by the recommendations of previous evaluations as well as the 2018 review. To this extent, the evaluation potentially initiates a systematic learning cycle which may continue beyond this evaluation’s recommendations, aimed at incrementally increasing the evidence base on Finland’s role as a credible actor on the global stage.



Figure 3. A dynamic-futures oriented learning cycle



Source: Evaluation Team

2.2 Methods of data collection and analysis

The evaluation team used a mix of data collection methods, listed below, in order to answer the evaluation questions. Further details are found in **Annex 4**.

Desk review. A list of documents reviewed is found in **Annex 5**. A list of sample interventions assessed is in **Annex 3**.

Key informant interviews (KII). 52 interviews were conducted at the global level with the staff of MFA and its partner organisations, and a total of 49 interviews were conducted in Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine.

Country case studies (Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine) with a focus on 'Contribution Stories' to inform our answers to EQ1 and, particularly, EQ2.

Desk-based **thematic studies** (on basic education teacher training in Mozambique and VET and life skills training in Ukraine) to complement the Country Case Studies. The Thematic Studies are found alongside the Country Case studies in **Volume 2** of this report.

Delphi interviews and an online survey focused on EQ3. Details of the Delphi method, including the timeline, are found in **Annex 10**.



2.2.1 Analysis methods

To answer EQ1 sub-questions (**EQ 1.1 to 1.7**), the evaluation team analysed the performance, relevance, efficiency and coherence of efforts to boost Finland's role in addressing the global learning crisis and improving the quality of education. Using the 7 'Stepping Up Measures' and the 'Overarching Measure' as a framework for analysis, we triangulated various streams of evidence (including documents produced over time and interviews with a wide range of key informants in Finland and in partner countries), checking the consistency of evidence across data sources. The 7 Stepping Up Measures are strategic interventions which emanate from the recommendations of the 'Stepping Up' report (MFA/HELDA, 2018), outlined in section 1.1. These were reviewed and refined, first by a Task Force in 2019 (MFA, 2019) and subsequently in a recently developed Roadmap (MFA, 2022a) and are currently promoted by the Coordination Group to be taken up by education stakeholders going forward. The Stepping Up Measures serve as the intermediate outcomes – the institutional/organisational changes in behaviour or practices of education development cooperation stakeholders – in this evaluation's theory of change (see Figure 2 in Annex 4).

A broad mapping of the 7 Stepping Up Measures is found in **Annex 6**. With traffic lights colouring, Annex 6 also summarises the results of the Evaluation Team's assessment of progress made in implementing the measures.

To answer **EQ2**, we assessed the results of Finland's education development cooperation to improve inclusive quality education, as well as the relative effectiveness of these measures. Our analysis drew on findings from key informant interviews substantiated by documented evidence, country case studies and thematic studies. We began by assessing the achievement of overall results at global and country levels (by cooperation instrument and across instruments) against Finland's policy objectives during the period under review (**EQ2.1**).⁶ We went on to identify the 'cumulative, synergistic effects, if any, of a fit-for-purpose multi-actor approach' (**EQ 2.2**), considering the *relative* effectiveness of various cooperation instruments at global and country levels.

To answer **EQ 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3**, we explored future alternative multi-stakeholder approaches and set-ups for Finnish education development cooperation in two ways. First, we analysed futures-related insights based on Finland's past performance (i.e., formative analysis of findings under EQ1 and EQ2)⁷. Second, based on strategic foresight techniques (i.e., futures thinking), we analysed the views of Delphi expert panellists on priority measures to enhance Finland's role as an actor in the global education development cooperation stage⁸.

Summary analysis for main evaluation questions: In a three-day Synthesis/Sense-making Workshop, the (i) evaluation team synergised formative analysis and futures-thinking and (ii) derived conclusions and recommendations on Finland's strategic longer-term vision from findings from the different evidence streams for EQ1, EQ2 and EQ3. This was underpinned by reflections on

6 To do this we referred to (i) the aggregate indicators set out in Finland's 2020 ToC and the SDG4 target indicators included in the 2022 results framework; and (ii) qualitative benchmarks formulated by the evaluation team based on the above 2020 and 2022 documents (see Measures of Effectiveness, **Annex 4**).

7 This was done through internal sense-making sessions conducted periodically throughout the implementation phase, during which the evaluation team reflected on the assumptions behind progress towards expected outcomes in the evaluation's ToC. Additionally, in a final session with the evaluation Reference Group and MFA's Community of Practice, we explored the evaluation's central hypothesis: Finnish ODA contributes to achieving SDG 4 *in the most effective way*, taking account of the contextual factors which enable or constrain change.

8 Data from the Delphi interviews were reviewed and coded using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA (to inform design of the online survey) and survey responses were descriptively analysed with the software package SPSS/STATA as well as qualitative content analysis.



results-based management (RBM) and adaptive programming for education development cooperation. The Synthesis Workshop was followed immediately by a Findings-Conclusions-Recommendations Workshop with evaluation users to receive feedback on findings, conclusions and tentative areas of recommendation.

2.3 Limitations

This was a policy-level, strategic, centralised evaluation. As stated in the evaluation's ToR, it analysed overall and by cooperation instrument/channel the relative and overall effectiveness of the various measures taken by the different actors in Finland's EDC. Yet, in the context of this evaluation, a detailed comparison of results achieved under different *modalities* within an instrument (such as different modalities under multilateral cooperation or CSO cooperation) could not be made because it would have required a full evaluation of the various interventions funded by the different modalities and this is not within the realm of a strategic centralised policy-level evaluation.

The risk that the 'vested interests' of Delphi panellists would bias the evaluation results was mitigated by the selection of a balanced selection of both Finnish and international experts. These were drawn from four categories (10 in each category) to allow for equal representation of different stakeholder groups. The categories were former/directors and staff of governmental bodies, experts from multilateral agencies, academics from Finland and abroad, and practitioners (i.e., consultancy groups delivering Finnish ODA, private sector actors and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), as well as their associations).

The risk that high-level international experts may not be available or interested in participating in the Delphi interviews was mitigated by our engagement with the evaluation's stakeholders to identify, contact and engage further informants to fill gaps in the panel. The risk that some Delphi panellists would not be interested in round 3 of the Delphi survey materialised, leading to the decision that a third round was not feasible or, indeed, necessary as answers to the items that would have been raised at the 3rd round were received on the 2nd.

A potential challenge of theory-based contribution analysis is that it requires a relatively clear ToC and should be done in an iterative manner. Relatedly, contribution analysis is ideally done in a participatory way. Given the evaluation budget and fixed timeframe, the gradual refinement of the ToC makes repeated iterations difficult. To address this challenge, three internal (i.e., evaluation team) sense-making sessions, during which the ToC was revisited, were included in the work plan.

Another limitation identified in the evaluation process was the absence of comprehensive monitoring and detailed statistical data pertaining to Finland's EDC, highlighting the challenge posed by sector-specific plans with allocated budgets and corresponding systematic monitoring.



3 Context Analysis

3.1 A Global education crisis – persistent challenges

A confluence of crises. The current global education crisis takes place against a backdrop of ‘cascading and interlinked global crises’. While the post-pandemic economic recovery has been fragile and patchy, exacerbated by a global food and fuel crisis caused by the war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, climate change has acted as a ‘crisis multiplier’, with heatwaves, droughts, wildfires and floods affecting billions worldwide; and in 2022, the world endured the highest number of conflicts since the creation of the United Nations in 1946 (UN, 2022). In addition, the global COVID-19 pandemic had a lasting impact on education service delivery during much of the period under review.

Education is a universal human right, but multiple crises have sharpened a growing sense of injustice around the globe. Education as a human right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and is reflected in policymakers’ endorsement of the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (2015). However, by 2030, some 63 per cent of the world’s children will be living in LDCs and in LMICs. Income poverty remains a pervasive barrier to school attendance and learning, particularly for girls and minority groups, limiting their ability ‘to make informed decisions, be better parents, sustain a livelihood, adopt new technologies, cope with shocks, and be responsible citizens and effective stewards of the natural environment’ (World Bank, 2011). Indeed, the education challenges experienced by LDCs and LMICs have spotlighted ‘deep and persistent inequalities, sharpening a growing sense of injustice among people around the globe’ (UN, 2022).

Education is a universal human right but equitable and inclusive access faces challenges.

Policymakers view education as ‘the bridge between the world as it is and the world we want it to be’ (GPE, 2022). However, several persistent challenges obstruct the route across that bridge.

Challenges in equitable and inclusive access. In 2019, at least 175 million pre-primary school-age children and 262 million primary and secondary school-age children – one in five –were still excluded from education. The children at greatest risk live in the poorest households, in rural areas and in countries affected by fragility and conflict. In 2018, only 29% of LDCs and 63 % of LMICs had achieved gender parity in primary enrolment, and the situation in the lower secondary was even less encouraging (UNESCO, 2018). Beyond gender parity, girls and boys face specific gendered barriers that stand in the way of progress toward gender equality in and through education, as gender norms, values, attitudes, and practices remain entrenched. Children with disabilities are less likely to start school, with access often limited by a lack of understanding about their needs, and those who do get to school face too few trained teachers and insufficient classroom support, learning resources and facilities (GPE, 2022). Educational inequalities widen in schools with violent and unsafe environments and where children are at risk just getting to and from school; in 2019, around one in three students had been physically attacked in the past year (GPE, 2022).



Education in emergencies and in fragile contexts. Significant numbers of countries are facing intense and extended humanitarian crises and disasters, with a marked increase in the number of deaths due to climate change. By 2030, more than 80% of the world's poor will live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (UNICEF, 2019). Out of the 224 million crisis-affected children and adolescents of school age (an increase of 25 million over a single year), about 72 million (32%) are out of school. Of these 72 million out-of-school children, 53% are girls, 17% have functional difficulties, and 21% (about 15 million) have been forcibly displaced; an estimated 127 million school-aged children, accounting for 47% of those affected by crises and 84% of those in school, are estimated to have proficiency levels below the minimum requirements set by SDG 4 (ECW, 2023). The development and provision of education in emergencies are challenged by the diversity and volatility of such fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Persistent challenges in quality education: a learning crisis is also a teaching crisis. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was falling well short of delivering quality learning to all children (World Bank, 2022). In 2011, the World Bank observed that despite the increase in access to schooling, the results of 'substantial resources spent on education' have been 'disappointing in terms of learning outcomes'; regional and international student assessments (e.g., Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, Programme for International Student Assessment, and Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality) evidenced the gulf in international test scores of students from different income levels, both between and within countries (World Bank, 2011). By 2019, some 387 million primary school-age children and 230 million lower-secondary school-age adolescents were not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics; 53% of all children in school LMICs could not read and understand a simple story by age 10 (UNICEF, 2019; World Bank, 2019). Following the global pandemic, simulation results for 2022 based on available data and evidence indicate that the pandemic has likely caused a sharp increase in global learning poverty (i.e., being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10) to an estimated 70% (World Bank, 2022b).

Given estimates that one billion young people will enter the workforce in the next decade, the development of **foundational skills (such as basic literacy and numeracy) and transferable skills (such as problem-solving, negotiation and critical thinking) must start in the early years.** Yet almost 24.4 million more primary teachers and 44.4 million for secondary education are needed to achieve the targets set out by SDG 4 by 2030 (GPE, 2022). Apart from shortages in numbers, efforts to improve the quality of teaching are often piecemeal, failing to address the entire teaching 'life cycle' (i.e., sound teacher preparation, recruitment and deployment; teacher management, retention remuneration and incentives; career development and working conditions).

Transitioning from a 'learning crisis' to an 'education crisis'

Progress in global education is at risk. The COVID-19 pandemic deepened the global 'learning crisis'. At its peak, the pandemic affected more than 800 million students in lower-income countries, laying bare vast inequities in and between education systems across the world that threaten

Lower-income countries have moved from a learning crisis to an education crisis.

to undermine decades of progress (UNESCO, 2020). A recent analysis of studies covering 104 countries shows that school closures have led to huge learning losses, equivalent on average to one-half years' worth of learning (UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, 2021b). At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated inequalities, as many countries with poor learning outcomes prior to the pandemic also tended to have longer school closures



(World Bank et al., 2022a). An estimated 3.6 billion people in the world do not have access to the Internet (World Bank, 2022).

As countries look to build back from the devastating impacts of the pandemic, the pace of recovery between high- and lower-income economies is expected to be uneven (GPE, 2022). The World Bank currently estimates that there will be US\$10 trillion in lost earnings for the current cohort of young people if learning loss is not addressed (World Bank, 2022). To avoid a ‘generational catastrophe’, global education partners are advocating a mix of **strategies for adaptive learning recovery**, for example, the ‘RAPID’ framework (World Bank et al., 2022a).⁹ A key feature of such learning recovery globally is the role played by education technologies (EdTech).

An intensified focus on education system reforms. A deepening ‘learning crisis’ has led education experts worldwide to think in terms of a ‘global education crisis’ (MFA, 2022a). This entails a sharpened focus on systemic reforms. Three **systemic factors** that contribute to learning losses are (i) data systems, requiring extensive strengthening in most countries (where the evidence base is weak, policy dialogue is hamstrung and the capacity of decision-makers to prioritise and implement reforms remains weak); (ii) the disconnect between what education systems are teaching and the needs of rapidly changing economies; and (iii) education financing gaps, which are growing¹⁰ (GPE, 2022; UN, 2022; World Bank et al., 2022a).

The call is for more investment, and this is opening the door to more and better education development cooperation with non-state actors, whose role currently extends beyond the provision of schooling (e.g., textbooks, school meals, school safety, tuition, etc.) to interventions at various education levels. However, in terms of education governance systems, the relationships between actors – particularly between state and non-state actors - must be clear, consistent with functions, measured and monitored, including a feedback cycle between financing and results. This entails **reforming relationships of accountability** among the various actors and participants in an education system.

3.2 Global education development efforts

This section offers a concise overview of global education development endeavours, briefly introducing the key actors and key education donors¹¹. **Annex 8** of this report extends this exploration by providing comprehensive details regarding multilateral organisations engaged in the EDC and Finland’s contributions within the broader context of a collaborative effort. Finland’s partnering with the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE and ECW is discussed in the evaluation findings chapter 5.3.2. of this report.

The GPE, established in 2002, is a multi-stakeholder partnership widely recognised as a pivotal global platform for advancing education development. It is the world’s largest education-only fund, with a mission revolving around improving access to quality education, with a particular focus on

⁹ The ‘RAPID Framework’ which brings together five policy actions: Reaching every child; Assessing learning levels regularly; Prioritizing foundational skills; Increasing the efficiency of instruction; and Providing psychosocial support. (World Bank et al., 2022a).

¹⁰ Between 2019 and 2020, the share of ODA allocated to education globally fell from 8.8% to 5.5%; UNESCO estimated a staggering pre-COVID funding gap of 148 billion USD annually to achieve SDG 4, and this is likely to increase by up to a third as the impact of the pandemic further strains domestic and international resources (GPE, 2022).

¹¹ Noting that there are additional actors and donors actively involved in global education development efforts.



countries facing significant educational challenges. GPE operates under, but independently from, the World Bank and funding at the country level is managed by so-called Grant Agents (such as the World Bank, UNICEF, SIDA and Save the Children), and implementation is supported by Coordinating Agents (including, e.g., Finland in Mozambique). Founded on the fundamental belief that quality education is a cornerstone of human progress, GPE has committed itself to the primary mission of fortifying and enhancing education systems in developing countries. It is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to quality education for all children, with a particular focus on those dwelling in the most disadvantaged and marginalised communities. GPE operates on a holistic approach to transform education systems, leveraging a profound understanding of each country's unique context and evidence-based insights. A cornerstone of GPE's approach is the promotion of policy dialogues to pinpoint pivotal education priorities capable of triggering system-wide transformations. This entails aligning external support with these priorities and fostering collaborative efforts in monitoring, learning, and adaptable implementation to accumulate evidence and facilitate necessary course corrections. As a partnership, GPE brings together donors, multilateral institutions, civil society, teacher representatives, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector to support the education plans of partner countries. (GPE, 2023; GPE, 2023a; GPE, 2022; GPE, 2021; World Bank, 2022e).

The World Bank, established in 1944 as a global international financial institution, comprises two integral arms—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association (IDA). With an overarching mission to combat global poverty and foster sustainable development, the World Bank recognises that education is a cornerstone of progress. As such, it actively engages in education sector projects and initiatives in low- and middle-income countries. The World Bank employs innovative approaches to education financing and reform, working closely with partner countries to design and implement effective education programs that address local needs while aligning with international development goals. Its commitment extends beyond basic education, encompassing higher education, vocational training, and lifelong learning, as it acknowledges the necessity of a comprehensive educational continuum. The World Bank's global education strategy is focused on halving learning poverty by 2030, a goal aimed at ensuring that all children can read and understand a simple text by age 10. The institution's portfolio in education spans a wide range of interventions, with significant investments in early childhood education, foundational skills like literacy and numeracy, and support for the most vulnerable and marginalised populations. Moreover, the World Bank emphasises the importance of equity and inclusion, targeting education access and quality for girls and women, students with disabilities, and those in fragile and conflict-affected areas. With a global presence and a profound dedication to education, the World Bank plays a significant role in advancing the global education agenda, contributing substantially to improving educational access, equity, and quality in numerous countries. The World Bank's investments in education extend beyond immediate challenges, with a strategic focus on building resilient and effective education systems that can withstand future shocks and ensure opportunities for all, especially in fragile, conflict, and violent contexts where education remains crucial. The institution collaborates with countries to re-enrol and retain students in school, measure learning losses, and implement evidence-based pedagogical approaches for accelerating learning (World Bank, 2023; World Bank, 2022e).

Since 1966, **the ADB** stands as an international financial institution dedicated to fostering social and economic development throughout Asia. With a core mission of poverty alleviation and enhancing living standards across the region, ADB plays a substantial role in various development sectors, prominently in education. Recognising the pivotal role of education in achieving socio-economic progress, ADB commits itself to advancing educational systems, improving learning outcomes, and expanding access to quality education. ADB's educational initiatives span a wide



spectrum, covering early childhood education, vocational training, higher education, and more, all with a strong emphasis on enhancing education quality and ensuring inclusivity. Its commitment to reducing educational inequalities, improving learning outcomes, and fostering sustainable growth underscores its vital role in advancing education in the region, making it an essential actor in the pursuit of social and economic progress across Asia (ADB, 2022).

UNESCO serves as a long-standing actor in global education, culture, and communication. Established in 1945 as a specialised agency within the United Nations system, UNESCO's overarching mission transcends borders, focusing on fostering global peace, eradicating poverty, and nurturing sustainable development. At its core, UNESCO is a staunch advocate for education as a fundamental human right and a global public good, firmly believing that education is the cornerstone of positive societal change. UNESCO's commitment extends to ensuring that every child, youth, and adult, regardless of their background, has access to quality education throughout their lives. This mission places particular emphasis on addressing educational disparities in Africa and promoting gender equality within the realm of education. UNESCO plays a pivotal role in advancing the ambitious Education 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, aligned with SDG 4. The organisation's efforts are focused on mobilising stakeholders globally, regionally, and nationally to implement, coordinate, finance, and assess progress regarding this comprehensive education agenda. One of UNESCO's key strengths lies in its influential convening capacity, which it uses to host transformative events like the Transforming Education Summit (TES). During such gatherings, ministers, policymakers, and participants from around the world come together to pioneer innovative educational approaches and collectively address the complex challenges posed by SDG 4. The COVID-19 pandemic, a historic disruption to education, has highlighted UNESCO's role as a global leader. It exposed stark learning inequalities and prompted UNESCO to spearhead the Transforming Education Summit in 2022. UNESCO's multifaceted efforts span several critical domains, including initiatives like the Futures of Education report, which aims to reshape learning for the benefit of humanity and the planet. UNESCO collaborates with countries to develop effective education policies and practices based on data and dialogue. It also creates legal frameworks and norms to uphold the right to education, including conventions against discrimination and qualifications recognition. Furthermore, the organisation offers technical advice and support to enhance countries' institutional and human capacity in various education domains, such as curriculum design and data collection (UNESCO, 2022a; UNESCO, 2023a).

Founded in 1946, **UNICEF** stands as a UN agency with a dual mandate encompassing development cooperation and humanitarian aid, dedicated to delivering humanitarian assistance and fostering developmental support for children and mothers in dire circumstances worldwide. Being present in over 190 countries over the world, UNICEF employs a multifaceted approach across vital domains such as education, health, child protection, and nutrition, united by the shared goal of providing children with every opportunity to thrive. In the sphere of education, UNICEF plays a pivotal role in nurturing access to quality learning, advocating for equitable learning environments, and championing children's rights to grow up in a world free from harm and filled with promise. UNICEF's commitment to equitable access ensures that quality education and skills development opportunities are available to all children and adolescents, particularly marginalised groups based on gender, disability, poverty, ethnicity, and language. Quality learning is a focal point for UNICEF, emphasising the importance of learning outcomes. The organisation works to bridge the gap between what students are learning and what they need to thrive, emphasising quality learning environments, qualified teachers, and instruction in languages students understand. UNICEF's dedication to education extends to children affected by emergencies, such as conflict, natural disasters, and displacement. It also drives or contributes to various education initiatives, such as the Learning Passport, Generation Unlimited, Giga, Education Cannot Wait, EdTech Hub, GPE, Global Education Cluster, United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, and All in School (UNICEF, 2023a).



Established in 2016, **the ECW** is a UN global billion-dollar fund dedicated to education in emergencies. This global fund undertakes an important mission to ensure that young learners in the most challenging circumstances gain access to quality education. ECW firmly believes in the transformative power of education, even in the harshest environments, and tirelessly strives to provide educational support to those affected by crises. ECW adopts a comprehensive approach that goes beyond mere access to education. It places equal importance on the quality of education, safety, and the overall well-being of children and youth living in crisis-affected areas. Operating as a multilateral fund, ECW mobilises resources from various stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, foundations, and other donors. These funds are then directed toward supporting education programmes in regions facing emergencies. One crucial aspect of ECW's approach is its promotion of multi-year programming. It recognises the necessity for both immediate relief and long-term educational interventions. Through robust partnerships with governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and civil society organisations, ECW orchestrates a comprehensive and efficient response to education in emergencies, effectively bridging the traditional gap between humanitarian and development aid. Moreover, ECW is an advocate for increased political, operational, and financial commitment to education during crises, emphasising its importance within the realm of humanitarian response. The organisation's mission extends beyond short-term relief; it aims to establish sustainable education systems in crisis-affected areas, allowing children and youth to continue their education and build a brighter future. Although hosted by UNICEF, ECW operates independently through its own governance structure, employing three investment modalities: the Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP), the First Emergency Response, and the Acceleration Facility (ECW, 2023a; UNICEF, 2019; UNICEF, 2023b & UNICEF, 2023c).

Overall, the EDC architecture is a dynamic landscape comprising diverse actors committed to advancing global education development. It also encompasses a wide range of donors, each playing a unique role in funding, coordinating, and implementing education initiatives worldwide. As an example of new initiatives, the **International Finance Facility for Education (IFFED)**, launched in September 2022¹² at the Transforming Education Summit, is a ground-breaking initiative established to address the global education financing gap. This forward-looking financing mechanism is dedicated to mobilising additional resources for education and enhancing access to quality education for children and youth in low- and middle-income countries. IFFED plays a crucial role in bridging the funding gap in education by leveraging donor contributions and attracting private-sector investments. IFFED's primary objective is to expand the availability of funds for education projects and initiatives, aligning with SDG 4 on quality education. To achieve this, IFFED employs innovative financial solutions, notably issuing bonds in the capital markets backed by donor guarantees. This unique approach enables IFFED to generate funds for education projects, providing timely and sustainable financing for education on a global scale. The impact of IFFED's efforts reaches children and youth in countries facing education challenges worldwide. It unlocks new resources, improves funding mechanisms, and ensures inclusive and equitable education opportunities. This initiative emerged as a powerful financing engine for global education, with a particular focus on the LMICs, which are home to 80% of the world's children, including 1 in 5 children who are out of school. IFFED responds directly to education budget cuts and the need to maximise resources amid compounding crises. In recent years, 43 donors reduced bilateral aid to education, and 40% of low- and lower-middle-income countries decreased their education budgets. IFFED complements existing grant instruments like the GPE and ECW by filling a critical gap in the international financing architecture for education. In a resource-constrained environment, IFFED multiplies donor dollars sevenfold, effectively providing 7 USD for every 1 USD of traditional aid. It commits to delivering an initial 2 billion USD in additional affordable funding for education programs starting in 2023, with the potential to unlock an extra 10 billion USD of additional financing for education

¹² Please note that the IFFED will fund its first projects in 2024 and hence is outside the scope of this evaluation.



and skills by 2030. Initially, IFFED will focus on the Asia and Africa regions, collaborating with the ADB and the African Development Bank (AfDB) before expanding its global reach. Importantly, IFFED relies on existing institutions and forges new partnerships to secure and enhance funding, requiring no new actors at the country level (UN, 2023; IFFED, 2023).

In terms of traditional donors in the EDC, **the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC)** is a key player in coordinating international development efforts and monitoring aid flows. It comprises member countries committed to promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty in low- and middle-income countries. The DAC plays a central role in setting international standards for the reporting of development aid and ensuring that aid is aligned with development goals, including education. It provides guidelines and criteria for what constitutes ODA, which includes financial and technical support for education projects. DAC members report their aid contributions to education through the DAC's Creditor Reporting System, which allows for transparency and accountability in tracking aid flows to education initiatives. **Non-traditional donors**, referring to emerging economies and philanthropy organisations have become increasingly involved in global education development. These donors include countries like China, India, and Brazil, which have rapidly growing economies. Emerging economies often provide development assistance, including funding for education, as part of their efforts to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties with other countries. They may offer grants, concessional loans, or technical expertise to support education projects. Philanthropic organisations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Mastercard Foundation, have played a significant role in funding global education initiatives. They often focus on specific education challenges, such as improving access to quality education, addressing learning disparities, and enhancing educational technology. Furthermore, **the private sector, including corporations and businesses**, has increasingly engaged in supporting education initiatives worldwide. This engagement goes beyond financial contributions and often involves partnerships with governments and NGOs to enhance education infrastructure, technology, and skills development. Foundations associated with private companies, as well as independent philanthropic foundations, have made substantial investments in education. They fund research, innovation, and programmes aimed at improving educational outcomes. Corporate social responsibility programmes of private companies may allocate resources to educational projects and scholarships. Some companies also collaborate with educational institutions to develop curricula and provide training opportunities. (GPE, 2022a; UNDTAD, 2019; UN DESA, 2018; Udvar, 2014).

OECD DAC coordinates international development efforts and monitors aid flows.

3.3 Finland's development policy context

Grounded in the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Finland's **development policy** aims to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and contribute to the realisation of fundamental rights. The objectives of policy implementation are to strengthen developing countries' capacity to sustain their own well-being in the long-term, help to mitigate global threats mentioned above, and play an active role in international cooperation. (MFA 2023d) Finland's commitment to long-term development policy includes the following *cross-cutting objectives*: gender equality, non-discrimination, climate resilience and low-emission development, as well as protection of the environment, with an emphasis on safeguarding biodiversity (MFA, 2021b).



For Finland, effective **development cooperation** is based on broad and inclusive ownership by the partner country (see **Box 2**).

Box 2. Five key principles guiding Finland towards sustainable results

1. As a key principle of Finland's development policy, **its human rights-based approach** (HRBA) is implemented by 'strengthening people's ability to identify, demand and fulfil their rights and enhancing the ability of authorities to respect, promote and protect human rights'.
2. 'Effective and responsible development cooperation requires that both donors and recipients share information openly', with **transparency** ensuring that citizens and the media in both developing countries and donor countries know where and how public funds are spent, reducing the possibility of misuse of funds.
3. Finland promotes **policy coherence** across development cooperation and other sectors, such as food security, trade, migration, taxation and security, ensuring closer cooperation and better coordination of EU affairs.
4. Finland is committed to improving the **quality** of development cooperation, including 'cooperation between donors, strengthening partner countries' expertise in local matters, harmonising practices, and transparency and mutual accountability', with a focus on achieving **sustainable results** in terms of improved health, education, employment, human rights and security, which driven by results-oriented planning, management, monitoring and evaluation, as well as an emphasis on learning from results.
5. At the core of Finland's development cooperation is the conviction that **partner countries are responsible for their own development**; sustainable results are grounded in country-defined needs and partner countries' own development plans; 'the responsibility for change rests with Finland's partner countries'.

Source: MFA, 2023d

Along with conflict prevention and peace mediation, climate and environmental policy, and commercial and economic cooperation, development cooperation is viewed as an integral part of Finland's human rights-based foreign and security policy. As 'wellbeing, safety and security are in many ways interlinked with international sustainable development, it pays for Finland to be part of international cooperation, [making] use of our own competencies and resources to solve global issues'; 'success on this front will make Finland stronger, too' (MFA, 2021b).

In terms of humanitarian assistance, Finland's development policy is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding (HDP) triple nexus approach, which is aimed at the coherence, complementarity and effectiveness of development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace processes. Joint strategic situational risk assessments and partner coordination are viewed as critical, and all activities are required to be conflict-sensitive (i.e., based on an understanding of the operating environment and its conflicts in order to adapt activities to suit the context).

The HRBA is a basis for Finland's development policy and cooperation (MFA, 2015a). Similarly, the RBM is applied in all interventions funded by Finland (MFA, 2015b).



As noted above, Finland's education development emerged as a standalone policy priority, with the Government *Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms* stating that '[a]s the Finnish education system is highly regarded globally, Finland has *the opportunity and responsibility to participate in solving the global learning crisis over the long term*' (MFA, 2021b). The policy focuses on support for basic education but includes higher education and VET.

Prime Minister Sanna Marin's government programme aimed at a globally influential Finland, providing solutions to global development challenges based on Finland's strengths and values (see **Box 3**).

Box 3. Education is perceived as one of Finland's five areas of strength

The effectiveness of Finland's development cooperation depends on taking a long-term perspective and building on its strengths in five priority areas:

- **Strengthening the status and rights of women and girls**, with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- **Education, especially the quality of education, participation of persons with disabilities, and gender equality.**
- **Sustainable economy and decent work**, especially innovations, the role of women in the economy and female entrepreneurship.
- **Peaceful and democratic societies**, especially the development of tax systems in developing countries, and support for democracy and the rule of law.
- **Climate change and natural resources**, with an emphasis on strengthening adaptation alongside mitigation of climate change; food security and water; meteorology and disaster risk prevention; forests and safeguarding biodiversity.

Source: MFA, 2023d

Finland's development policy in the education sector centres on the concept of '**quality inclusive education**' for all, reflecting Finland's commitment to the global SDG 4. As set out in MFA's recently developed theory of change and included as thematic areas in the evaluation ToR, the policy priorities for quality inclusive education (MFA, 2023e) are as follows.

Strengthen the capacities of teachers, schools and education providers to improve learning and learning outcomes through structural reforms of education systems (e.g., mother tongue education, teaching methods, curricula and quality learning materials) and the strengthening of teachers' pedagogical competence and professional status, including a focus on digital pedagogy and innovative and inclusive teaching and learning solutions, targeting vulnerable learners. Finland also promotes safe and inclusive learning environments and the provision of school meals.

Education is one of Finland's five development policy priorities.

Support the right to quality inclusive education for girls, children and young persons with disabilities and those in the most vulnerable positions by supporting the capacity of education



providers and structural reforms with a focus on reducing barriers to learning, increasing girls' participation in secondary education and increasing the participation of CwDs in basic and secondary education. Finland also supports the continuity of education during crises, particularly for refugees, young people and adults who have been excluded from educational opportunities.

Improving youth skills for jobs and life and by supporting the quality of VET and higher education to better meet the changing needs of the labour market by supporting cooperation between higher education institutions and VET reforms, with a focus on opportunities for women, girls and persons with disabilities as well as life skills education and education for sustainable development.

Finland's policy influencing aims to strengthen the commitment of partner countries and multilateral actors to quality inclusive education. In concrete terms, Finland's objective is that the partner countries allocate more funds to education, especially for basic education. Finland also advocates for increased multilateral funding for education with a focus on equity and the poorest countries. Finland aims to ensure that education policies promote equity, gender equality and inclusive

Finland's development policy centres on 'quality inclusive education' for all, reflecting Finland's commitment to the global SDG 4.

education, improve the status of teachers and the quality and relevance of education. Finland strives to ensure that the duty bearers' responsibility to promote the right to education and the protection of education in crises is realised.

A recent evaluation of the Finnish development policy influencing the European Union (MFA, 2022m) concluded that the MFA had achieved most of its EU policy-influencing objectives on

education, and education is an area where its leadership is recognised and respected. The MFA developed a set of influencing objectives on education relatively recently, partly capitalising on the opportunity provided by Commissioner Urpilainen's prioritisation of the topic. The evaluation found that Finland was particularly strong in joint management of programmes and donor coordination as well as in building coalitions with the EU and EU MS. They had also played a strong role in debates on the rights of women and girls and on education and, to a lesser extent, on discussions on the sustainable use of natural resources. Evidence from the evaluation's country case studies indicated that Finland's demonstrated lead expertise in the education sector, coupled with its long-standing partnership with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, was, in the eyes of the MFA, key in getting the EU on board. The MFA also influenced the EU's response to Commissioner Urpilainen's personal pledge to increase the share of education in EU development cooperation, with the European Commission notably committing to an increase in its contribution to the GPE in 2021. With this increase in the EU's commitment to the GPE, Finland has largely met its main objective under education, which is to strengthen the EU's global role in education development policy (MFA, 2022m). Finland's country programmes (2016-2020) in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Myanmar, Palestine and Ukraine have included major result areas focused on education. Further, education is supported through the regional programme in support of the Syrian crisis. Education has recently been introduced as a major results area in the Kenya and Somalia Country Programmes and the Regional Programme for Central Asia (Uzbekistan) for 2021-2024, in addition to previous partner countries, where, apart from Afghanistan, education continues as a priority area, strongly suggesting that the pace of efforts to step up Finland's role in education is increasing. Indeed, the education sector is increasingly important for Finland's diverse economic, political and social relations and cooperation on the African continent, as reflected in Finland's Africa Strategy (see **Box 4**).



Box 4. The importance of education in Finland's Africa Strategy

The main purpose of Finland's Africa strategy is to **strengthen the political and economic partnership with African countries and African actors**. It is based on the concept of reciprocity and mutual interests – as set out in the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 'The Africa We Want'. The Africa Strategy aims at increased Finnish **cooperation on peace and security with African countries, the African Union and regional organisations**, promoting conflict prevention and resolution by supporting the development of peaceful and democratic societies and the strengthening of crisis resilience.

The strategy recognises that youth play a key role in the development of the continent; improved access to quality education and creating decent jobs for the young and growing population of Africa are key challenges facing the continent. At the same time, learning and education involve significant business opportunities for Finnish companies.

With regard to the education sector, Finland's aim is to **intensify cooperation with African countries in the field of research and innovation**, contributing actively to the resolution of the global learning crisis. In addition, the education sector is key in **promoting sustainable economic growth and structural change** and boosting trade and investments. Among the planned measures are to *'better utilise the networks of business operators and higher education institutions in export promotion'* and to increase cooperation *'especially in the field of vocational education and training'*, combining Finnish expertise with the promotion of job-creating green growth and sustainable transition in African countries.

Finland **actively contributes to the formulation of the European Union's policy on Africa** and promotes the values and interests of the EU in Africa, supporting a strengthened role of the EU in Africa, as well as *promoting the participation of Finnish actors in the implementation of the EU-AU partnership*.

Source: MFA, 2021d

3.4 Financing framework and institutional arrangements

Finland's ODA is provided as grant-based aid as well as in the form of loans and investments. However, the policy emphasises the strategic use of resources for development cooperation, including platforms for public-private financial partnerships such as Finnfund. Humanitarian assistance is provided separately, primarily through un-earmarked multi-year funding to UN organisations. According to the latest statistics, the share of the education sector in Finland's ODA is 7,3% and of actual development cooperation is 12,5% (excluding core funding, as stated in the ToR).

In 2020, a decision was made by the parliament to appropriate 29 MEUR additional funding from the 2021 government budget for stepping up Finland's global role in education as part of the budgetary negotiations (*kertaluontoiset tulevaisuusinvestoinnit*). This included a decision to fund the GPE with 25 MEUR for its current strategy period 2021-2025 and the establishment of a centre for expertise for education and development in 2021. In 2020, Finland pledged EUR 8 million in additional contributions to ECW and GPE to support the education sector in responding to the



In 2020, Finland approved an allocation of 29 million euros from the 2021 government budget for bolstering Finland's global engagement in education.

challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For further information on Finland's financial EDC figures, see Section 4.3.

A list of education development cooperation interventions financed by MFA is found in **Annex 3**. In 2021, education was the third largest sector covered by funding decisions, witnessing an upward growth trajectory since 2018.

During the period under review, the estimated number of interventions in the education sector based on funding decisions by year were 27 in 2019, 36 in 2020, and 37 in 2021. Of the latter (2021), one was marked as a disability project, two others had a disability component in them, and ten were categorised as taking accessibility into account. It is worth noting that several of these funding decisions entailed multi-year interventions, indicating a sustained commitment to educational improvement.

3.5 Institutional arrangements for education development cooperation within the MFA

Several departments and units in the MFA, ranging from the regional to the political departments, implement a wide range of ODA-funded interventions. However, as indicated in the ToR, there is a limited number of staff within the Ministry who are responsible for duties specifically in education sector development policy and cooperation.

- The Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20) under the Department for Development Policy (KEO) is responsible for preparing and applying sectoral and thematic policies and strategies, providing expert services and advice to departments and units in charge of development cooperation issues, monitoring the quality of development cooperation, and upgrading development cooperation instruments accordingly. The education thematic advisor is housed in KEO-20.
- The ambassador for education is situated in the Team Finland Export Promotion Unit (KPO-50) under the Department for International Trade and has responsibilities related to development policy, country branding and trade promotion.
- A desk officer for education cooperation is housed in the Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50).
- The regional departments cover a multitude of development issues relevant to their region and the country strategies and programmes. Desk officers in regional departments (ALI, ASA, ITÄ), the political department (POL-50), and the development policy department (KEO-50, KEO-40, KEO-30) manage education projects.
- An advisor for higher education cooperation who manages the higher education and research portfolio is in KEO-02.



- Team Finland Knowledge (TFK) Network experts. TFK experts do not directly participate in development cooperation funded by MFA. Instead, their primary function is to foster research and cooperation partnerships on a broader scale. These experts are stationed in specific embassies, including some located in developing countries.
- Education Advisors positioned in Finland’s Embassies. While almost all of the Finnish embassies in Finland’s long-term partner countries have staff with dedicated education advisory roles, they also carry out other duties. It is worth distinguishing between two distinct roles within this context: seconded counsellors for development cooperation (*erityisasiantuntija*) and locally employed education advisors. The counsellor positions with responsibilities related to education sector development cooperation and policy have been established in the embassies of Addis Ababa, Maputo, Nairobi (Kenya team), Nairobi (Somalia team), Kyiv, Beirut, Ramallah, Kathmandu, and Yangon. On the other hand, locally employed education advisors are present in four embassies, including Addis Ababa, Maputo, Ramallah, and Kathmandu.
- The diplomatic career position responsible for UNICEF and other UN agencies placed in the Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN in New York.
- Senior Specialist (education and science) and a locally employed Advisor (in the UNESCO office) at the Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OECD in Paris.

In addition to the MFA, other significant Finnish actors in education development cooperation include MEC, EDUFI (including FinCEED as its specialised unit and Education Finland programme), Finnish consultancy companies implementing MFA-funded education sector projects, higher education and VET institutions, CSO actors, Education Development Coordination Group, education export companies, as well as some of the PSIs, such as Finnfund and Finnpartnership. Some of these actors receive and manage ODA funding and some non-ODA funding.



4 Findings: The Response – relevance, efficiency and coherence

EQ1: To what extent has the response to recommendations of the 2018 report¹³, and follow-up measures agreed thereof, been appropriate for stepping up Finland’s global role in responding to the learning crisis and improving the quality of education?

Summary answer: Finland has made significant progress in its EDC. Progress has been notable in policy improvement, bilateral support expansion, and multilateral engagement enhancement, aligning with its Africa Strategy and SDG 4 on Quality Education and implementing the stepping-up measures since 2018. However, it is important to recognise the need to place greater emphasis on the role of education in humanitarian aid funding and VET, as well as address the lack of conceptual clarity in the multi-actor approach. EDC commitments have risen, and Finland actively engages with the EU and multilateral partners. Despite education’s priority status, operational challenges and limited coordination tools hinder evidence-based decision-making. Formalising coordination by establishing the Coordination Group and FinCEED has enhanced coherence, but challenges remain, especially in state-private sector collaboration. CSO support and EU initiatives hold promise for reinforcing coherence and funding in EDC. Since the launch of FinCEED, concerted efforts have been made to build Finland’s pool of EDC expertise.

4.1 Performance: Implementation of follow-up activities as a response to the 2018 recommendations

This Chapter includes an assessment of the extent to which the response to recommendations of the 2018 ‘Stepping Up Report’ and follow-up measures have been implemented (performance) by diverse actors and at different levels (global, regional, and national). The follow-up measures include the measures identified by the dedicated Task Force (2019) and actions planned in the ‘Roadmap’ developed by the Coordination Group (2022). **The evaluation team mapped the implemented follow-up measures against the recommendations and reviewed their status.** See also matrix ‘Overarching Measure’ and 7 ‘Stepping Up Measures’ in Annex 6.

¹³ Stepping Up Finland’s Global Role in Education (MFA/HELDA, 2018)



Finding 1. Notable improvements have been achieved in the education-focused development cooperation policy framework, as well as in institutionalising forms of collaboration between relevant ministries and their operational arms (MFA, MEC, EDUFI). The MFA has been active and taken a strategic leadership role in the implementation of the recommendations. Regarding multilateral engagement, efforts have been made to ensure funding for selected UN partners, GPE and ECW and strengthen engagement with the Development Banks as well as with the EU-Africa Global Gateway. Bilateral support has been intensified by expanding support to additional partner countries. Concerted efforts have been made to build Finland's pool of expertise in EDC since the launch of FinCEED. The least progress has been made in VET and investment in new partnerships. The role of CSOs has been limited.

The assessment in the sections below follows the mapping of the recommendations and measures. In section 4.1.1, we assess the 'Overarching Measure 'Education-focused development cooperation policy. This will be followed by the 7 'Stepping Up Measures': in 4.1.2 'Collaboration between different government sectors' (Measure 1); in sections 4.1.3 and 4.1.4. we focus on 'Strengthened multilateral engagement (Measure 2) and 'Intensified bilateral support' (Measure 3), respectively; we explore a 'Strengthened VET profile' (Measure 4) in 4.1.5, as well as 'Improved research capacities in partner countries' (Measure 5) in 4.1.6. In section 4.1.7, we briefly review 'Strategic investment in new partnerships' (Measure 6), followed by efforts to 'build the pool of expertise' (Measure 7) in 4.1.8. The evaluation team has marked with 'traffic lights' the progress of implementation of the measures. See chapters 4.1.1 – 4.1.8 and Annex 6 for the 'scoring' of each aspect.

Finland's successes include policy enhancements, increased bilateral support, and improved engagement with multilateral partners.

4.1.1 Education-focused development cooperation policy (Overarching measure)

The 2018 Stepping Up report's principal recommendation was that education quality and learning be chosen as the overarching theme for all Finnish development activities in the sector. Significant progress has been made to this effect at the policy level. The below extract (**Table 1**) from the 'Overarching Measure' and 7 'Stepping Up Measures' -matrix (**Annex 6**) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team's assessment of progress made in implementing the overarching measure.



Table 1. Progress made in implementing the overarching measure

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Overarching measure: Education-focused development cooperation policy		
Education quality and learning are chosen as the overarching theme for all Finnish development activities in the sector, with priority thematic areas.	Education is set as a clear development cooperation and policy priority.	Shared Messages Develop a shared message: a systematic approach to comprehensive training development and the principle of multi-actor collaboration.
Financing: Increase funding for development cooperation to an annual level of 100 MEUR.	More funds are allocated to development cooperation in the sector.	
	Ensure adequate funding for UNESCO and UNICEF, the GPE fund and the ECW initiative.	
	Strengthen the education sector in ADB; consolidate an education expert to promote the bank's engagement in this sector.	
General follow-up measure: Enhance the statistics, monitoring and evaluation of impact in development cooperation in the field of education in order to achieve these objectives.		

Legend key:

Fast progress
 Average progress
 Slow progress
 No progress
 Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team

Finland's education sector development cooperation emerged as a standalone policy priority, with the Government Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms stating that '[a]s the Finnish education system is highly regarded globally, Finland has the opportunity and responsibility to participate in solving the global learning crisis over the long term' (MFA, 2021b).

The Education in Developing Countries Coordination Group is a pivotal platform fostering collaboration among Finnish stakeholders.

This is reflected in Finland's development cooperation, and education has emerged as a policy priority area of its own with defined priority thematic areas. **The most recent policy priority areas for Finland's development cooperation and the related results frameworks have been outlined in the *Theories of Change and Aggregate Indicators for Finland's Development Policy* (MFA, 2020c), updated in November 2022 (MFA, 2022d).** The impact, outcomes, outputs and assumptions of the 2020 ToC and the updated version (2022) are the foundation of the present evaluation's ToC.

Less progress has been made in raising and sustaining the funding levels to the recommended annual level of 100 MEUR, as described in Chapter 4.3. The same applies also to improving, especially the statistics, where marking interventions as 'education' is not systematic. Several markings as 'unspecified' form the main portion of the 'education-related interventions. Stepping-up recommendations related to multilaterals are further assessed in sub-chapter 4.1.3.



The 2022 'Roadmap' included developing a shared message: a systematic approach to comprehensive training development and the principle of multi-actor collaboration. This has not yet taken place.

4.1.2 Collaboration between government sectors (Measure 1)

The 2018 Stepping Up report's principal recommendations included MFA's leadership role, the establishment of a formal Steering Group, and expanding inter-ministerial collaboration in education and development, especially between MFA and EDUFI, and its institutionalisation to reduce response time and transaction cost.

The below extract (**Table 2**) from the 'Overarching Measure' and 7 'Stepping Up Measures' -matrix (Annex 6) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team's assessment of progress made in implementing Measure 1.

Table 2. Progress made in implementing the Measure 1

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
1. Strengthening collaboration between different government sectors		
<p>MFA provides Strategic Leadership.</p> <p>MFA sets up a formal Steering Group for education in development, co-chaired with MEC.</p> <p>MFA and EDUFI expand the areas of collaboration in education and development and institutionalise it to reduce response time and transaction costs.</p>	1.1. Establish a steering group of ministries and other educational actors to strengthen cooperation and to implement and monitor proposed actions; create a national long-term roadmap for education development cooperation in partner countries.	<p>Information exchange and coordination. Develop coordination and exchange of information among Finnish education actors about their cooperation with developing countries.</p>
	1.2. Increase collaboration, strategic planning and communication between Delegations, MFA, MEC and EDUFI.	
	1.3. Leverage the Team Finland network and the related tools, including in partner countries, with particular attention to local cooperation with EU delegations.	
	1.4. Confirm the Team Finland network, including Business Finland's ability to monitor and inform the training project tenders in preparation.	
	1.5. Strengthen connections between specialists in Finland and the Team Finland Knowledge network; provide them with up-to-date information on the Finnish Education Policy; increase interaction between the network, the private sector, and the NGO field.	
	1.6. MEC organises an orientation course for leavers (using the TFK orientation course), including as part of the coaching of the leavers for development co-operation tasks.	

Legend key:

- Fast progress
- Average progress
- Slow progress
- No progress
- Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team



Education in Developing Countries Coordination Group has been established to promote the collaboration between the ministries (MFA, MEC and EDUFI) and other actors in the education sector development cooperation. A key development is the establishment of the 'Education in Developing Countries' Coordination Group in 2020, which is co-chaired by MFA and MEC. Stakeholders identify the Coordination Group as a clear sign of mutual interests, with CSOs and higher education institutions also represented. In 2020, member organisations comprised MFA and MEC (co-chairs), EDUFI, non-governmental organisations, universities, vocational colleges, education export representatives and individual experts. The Coordination Group is mandated to perform a set of specific tasks: to strengthen strategic collaboration and influence, to build and strengthen the network of Finnish education actors, enable information sharing, and to develop a national long-term roadmap for education sector cooperation.

As a follow-up measure, in 2022, the group developed the 'Roadmap to Strengthen Cooperation with Developing Countries in the Field of Education' (*koulutus kehittyvissä maissa koordinaatio-ryhmän tiekartta*). The 'Roadmap' presents a shared vision of the key steps and actions by which Finland will become a more significant player in the resolution of the global learning crisis. This roadmap outlines a series of intermediate-term milestones to be achieved by 2024 and long-term objectives set for 2027, which provide a clear direction for the coordination group's efforts. The four long-term objectives of the roadmap are as follows:

1. Finland's expertise has been effectively scaled to address the global learning crisis, promoting the goals of the Agenda 2030 and human rights in the 'right forums,' with measurable and research-based outcomes.
2. Multi-actor cooperation has strengthened and further solidified, including increased flexibility in financing and better utilisation of international funding.
3. A culture of mutual trust and collaborative action among stakeholders has strengthened.
4. As a result of multi-actor cooperation, Finland is seen as a stronger and more impactful actor on the international stage.

Triangular collaboration between the MFA, the MEC and EDUFI has been strengthened, with EDUFI functioning as the operational arm (i.e., through FinCEED).

Collaboration between ministries was further enhanced by the recent establishment of the FinCEED. FinCEED was born out of a recommendation of the 2018 'Stepping up' review team to establish a platform to allow Finnish education experts to be made available to developing countries and international organisations. FinCEED is financed by MFA and housed by EDUFI. MFA showed strategic leadership in FinCEED's operations and raised the need for flexible support in the areas of teacher training for quality basic and early education (teaching plans, pedagogical, educational materials, quality assurance); assessment of learning outcomes, digital learning and teaching technology, inclusive teaching, education in emergencies and VET; and thematic areas in teaching (e.g., bilingual teaching and learner-centred teaching) (MFA/HELDA, 2018; MFA, 2020d; MFA, 2021b; MFA 2022e; KIIs: MFA, MEC, EDUFI).

The establishment of FinCEED has further strengthened collaboration among ministries and enhanced Finland's efforts in the education sector.

FinCEED has three main functions. It strengthens the competence and capacity of actors in the education sector in Finland's partner countries (e.g., ministries of education, national authorities, and teacher training actors) through both bilateral and



multilateral development. To do this, FinCEED strengthens the competencies of Finnish development partners in the field of education and training through actions to support multi-actor collaboration. This, in the long run, is to improve the capacities of Finnish actors to act as project implementers and experts in the education sector on a larger scale than the activities funded by the MFA (MFA, 2022e; EDUFI/FinCEED, 2023). **Box 5** below describes FinCEED's results logic.

Box 5. FinCEED results logic

FinCEED's results logic is as follows: IF the EU's prerequisites for quality programming and increasing impact in the education sector have been strengthened; AND IF strategic partnerships with key multilateral players in the Finnish Education sector development policy have strengthened; AND IF expert support has contributed to the development of school systems and the achievement of MFA's country strategies in long-term partner countries; AND IF the expert pool and competences and career paths for development cooperation in the field of education and training in Finland have been strengthened; and IF the FinCEED operations are well established and strengthened. THEN, **the international influence of Finland on the development of the education sector has been strengthened following the SDG objectives.**

Source: MFA, 2022e; EDUFI/FinCEED, 2023

There is significant progress in the implementation of the 2018 Stepping Up Report recommendations, but the evaluation team found less progress in the implementation of some of the 2019 follow-up measures. These follow-up measures included monitoring proposed actions; creating a national roadmap for EDC in partner countries; increasing collaboration and strategic planning and communication between delegations, MFA, MEC and EDUFI; leveraging Team Finland network and related tools, including in partner countries and increased cooperation with EU; confirming Team Finland network, including Business Finland's ability to monitor and inform the training project tenders in preparation; strengthen connections between specialists in Finland and Team the TFK network; organise development policy training; increasing interaction with CSOs and private sector; and coaching by MEC.

There is only limited progress in implementing the 'Roadmap' recommendations, as they are relatively recent (2022). In addition, there is no evidence of sharing good operational practices and of practical multi-actor approaches (in writing), mapping actors by theme and destination country (e.g., digitalisation, school meals, teacher training, vocational training), or promoting research on multi-actor collaboration.

MFA has been active in taking steps forward in EDC and has taken strategic leadership of Finland's EDC, as evidenced by the decision to set 'inclusive quality education as a clear development cooperation and policy priority', a priority that has emerged over time, provision of initial funding for the CG, funding of the FinCEED, advising on its operations and institutionalising the role of the Ambassador for Education Development within the MFA.

4.1.3 Strengthened multilateral engagement (Measure 2)

The 2018 Stepping Up report recommended that Finland take the learning crisis as a key area of focus as a UNESCO Executive Board member, restore funding to UNICEF to its former level, and join the GPE as a funder and an active member. Full consideration was recommended to be given



to education in crises, emergencies, and humanitarian assistance. In addition, Finland should prioritise education in its EU engagement in development cooperation and provide substantive and strategic leadership in helping address the learning crisis in the EU context.

The below extract (**Table 3**) from the 'Overarching Measure' and 7 'Stepping Up Measures' -matrix (Annex 6) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team's assessment of progress made in implementing Measure 2.

Table 3. Progress made in implementing the Measure 2

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Measure 2. Strengthen multilateral engagement (including EU-influencing in the education sector)		
<p>Finland takes the learning crisis as a key area of focus as a UNESCO Executive Board member, restores funding to UNICEF to its former level, and joins the GPE as a funder and an active member.</p> <p>As part of formulating a new education policy for Finnish foreign aid, full consideration is given to education in crises, emergencies and humanitarian assistance.</p>	<p>2.1. Increase impact with additional strategic investment in the industry's most significant public sector actors.</p>	
	<p>2.2. Participate in strategic discussions in UN agencies and development banks and in the development of their country programmes and country strategies.</p>	
	<p>2.3. Promote opportunities for Finnish actors, including educational export companies, to participate in projects carried out by UN actors, development funding institutions and the EU Commission as part of Team Finland.</p>	
<p>Finland prioritises 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.</p>	<p>2.4. Take account of links between Finland's education sector investment with other actors (e.g., WFP, ILO and UN Women).</p>	
	<p>2.5. Strengthen national EU coordination between government sectors; Strengthen impact on EU institutions, especially the Commission's developmental cooperation department at DEVCO; Consider inter-governmental cooperation by providing a national education expert to the Commission</p>	
	<p>2.6. Improve the opportunities for Finnish organisations and companies and other actors to participate in the Commission's tenders by increasing the communication of timely information about them and by actively encouraging the participation of Finnish actors in EU projects; Support education and training actors in the preparation of proposals for EU projects, as applicable.</p>	

Legend key:

Fast progress
 Average progress
 Slow progress
 No progress
 Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team



Recommendations of the Task Force further emphasised increasing impact with additional strategic investments; participation in strategic discussions in UN agencies and International Financial Institutions (IFI) and development of their country programs and strategies; promotion of opportunities for Finnish actors, including EdTech within UN, IFIs and EU as part of Team Finland. In addition, the Task Force recommended taking account of links between Finland's education sector investments with other actors; strengthening EU coordination and impact, especially at the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)¹⁴; providing a national education expert to the Commission, as well as improving opportunities to participate in the Commission's tenders. The 'Roadmap' did not have any specific actions to this effect.

Efforts have been made to ensure funding for selected UN partners, GPE and ECW and strengthen engagement with the Development Banks as well as with the EU-Africa Global Gateway investment package. Although core funding to UNICEF was not restored to its former level (20 MEUR/year as recommended in 2018) and remained at 7 MEUR/year, funding for UNICEF education programs at the country level has substantially increased, even while UN cooperation is managed by different units and departments. In addition, Finland has made a political decision to support UNICEF's Learning and Finance Hubs in Helsinki, allocating 95 MEUR over ten years 95 MEUR.

Finland has been a dedicated and long-standing supporter of UNESCO. Finland collaborates with UNESCO in many ways, including in most of its partner countries, if not financially. Much of what is done in sector coordination and policy discussions is done in cooperation with UNESCO. The Finnish commitment to UNESCO extends across various domains, education being among the core areas. One of the central pillars of Finland's collaboration with UNESCO is the promotion of education, especially for girls and women. Finland also places a strong emphasis on the development of VET. Finnish funding to UNESCO's education initiatives is channelled through the Capacity Development for Education (CapED) programme, which plays a pivotal role in translating global advocacy for education into tangible actions, particularly in the LDCs and fragile nations dealing with emergencies, conflicts, or post-disaster recovery, facing significant challenges in achieving educational goals. (MFA, 2023h; UNESCO, 2019). Finland has also financed UNESCO's Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) programme in Myanmar. (CON-INSTITUTE GmbH & Co. KG Consulting Gruppe, 2020; MFA, 2017a; UNESCO, 2020a.)

Finland is a strong supporter of multilateralism and partners with the UN agencies, GPE, ECW and Development Banks in education development cooperation.

While no new targeted financial contributions to UNESCO have been considered beyond the CapEd programme (1 MEUR per year), MFA's partners have also collaborated with UNESCO, including, e.g. the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission's (Felm) advocacy work to incorporate native teaching into national curricula (done in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF and local universities). In Ethiopia, ground-breaking work has resulted in sign language teaching being part of national teaching design and teacher training, supporting Finland's contribution to the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP-E), and Unifi produced a report on Teacher Education for Inclusion as part of the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2020. (MFA, 2020d; UNESCO, 2020b),

Cooperation with development banks has been active, particularly with the ADB (including the recommended deployment of a Finnish education expert as well as ADB's interest in supporting Finn Church Aid's (FCA) Mobile Mentoring innovation in 2020). Active collaboration has been

¹⁴ Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG-INTPA) since January 2021



established with the ADB and Education Finland. Finnish companies, including the University of Helsinki-owned company HY+ and Finnish Consulting Group (FCG), have successfully secured tenders with the ADB, showcasing Finland's engagement in education initiatives. Additionally, it is worth highlighting that ADB's investments in the education sector have experienced significant growth. This aligns with Finland's policy dialogue objective of fostering increased investment in education by international partners. A total of 25 MEUR was allocated to GPE for the five-year strategy period, in line with the recommendations. Between 2020 and 2022, Finland allocated

The EU-Africa Global Gateway investment package is important for Finland and FinCEED plays a key role in it.

a total of EUR 6 MEUR of core support funding to the ECW. Additionally, 4 million euros were committed to a Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) in Ethiopia, specifically targeting the regions of Tigray and Amhara.

In terms of prioritising education in its EU engagement, Finland has a strategic opportunity to make a difference in Team Europe through the EU-Africa Global Gateway investment package, which is implemented through TEIs (see **Box 6**). The Pillar Assessment of EDUFI, aligned

with MFA's policy priorities, offers an opportunity for Finland to play a stronger role in strategic planning and implementation of the EU's development cooperation. (MFA, 2021b; MFA, 2021e; EU, 2022b online survey; KIIs: MFA, EDUFI, MEC).

FinCEED has also participated actively in the preparation of two regional Global Gateway Flagship Initiatives (Box 6) focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa as part of consortia of EU member states that will start implementing these projects in 2023 and 2024; separate webinars were organised (June 2022) to provide information on both projects for Finnish actors, including education export companies, as well as promoting Finnish actors' engagement in the project.

Box 6. EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package

Flagship Programmes in which Finland has been involved include the following:

Regional Teachers' Initiative for Africa. Well-trained and motivated teachers are central to quality education and improved learning outcomes. The flagship Regional Teacher Programme for Africa aims to **identify common challenges that affect teachers** in participating countries. It will foster **innovative solutions** to enhance their management and skills, **including digital literacy and skills**.

Opportunity Driven Skills and VET in Sub-Saharan Africa. An urgent regional priority is the need to equip young persons with the skills they will need in the world of work and to respond to global challenges; **VET is a cooperation priority for 75% of African countries**. Orienting VET programmes to **job opportunities created by EU-Africa trade and value chain development** will help to deliver in terms of increasing the availability of skills needed for business. It will also offer good and realistic chances for decent employment for skilled workers. The TEI on opportunity-driven VET builds on regional on-demand **Technical Assistance facility** that identifies job opportunities and translates this into recommendations for VET reform and **Country Programmes** in VET to support implementing this reform, as discussed in the Case Study on Palestine (see Volume 2), there may be opportunities for Finland's involvement in the Country Programme in Palestine.

Source: European Commission, 2021



Finland has become more active and strengthened its impact through policy dialogue both with the UN/IFIs and EU related to education. Two recently carried out evaluations found that Finland has taken an increasingly active role in policy dialogue related to education. The Evaluation of Finnish Development Policy Influencing Activities in Multilateral Organisations (MFA, 2020/3a) stated that Finland was very influential in the production and content of the World Development Report (WDR), which presented the Finnish education system/model and opened the door to Finland to further exert influence in the education sector. The potential of the Finnish education model, and in particular the Finnish approach to teacher training, to address the learning crisis was recognised as a result. Finland has contributed to the World Bank's trust fund Foundational Learning Compact, through which programmes such as COACH¹⁵ support teacher development in different countries (see the Thematic Case Study – Mozambique for more details on the local COACH pilot, Aprender+). Apart from financing the trust fund, Finland has engaged in policy dialogue with the World Bank on teacher issues and provided expertise on this topic (Donor Funded Staffing Programme secondment and Finnish professor as an independent technical advisory panel member for the initiative).

Evaluation of the Finnish Development Policy Influencing in the European Union (MFA, 2022m) found that Finland's influencing the EU development cooperation on education had remained a secondary objective until Commissioner Urpilainen announced that education would be one of her key priorities (took her position in 2019). The evaluation stated that valuable results related to education have been achieved since then; however, education should be further prioritised in EU policy influencing.

The potential of CSO networks is not fully utilised in policy dialogue with multilateral organisations. Evaluation of the CSOs receiving programme-based support and support for humanitarian assistance found that governments and UN agencies see the Finnish CSOs as valued partners. Most of them are members of significant international networks, and their contributions are appreciated by the other members of their alliance, particularly because of their willingness to endorse and even promote network policies and provide solid technical content, including education (for FCA), or the private sector partnerships (MFA, 2021b; MFA, 2021e; EU, 2022b online survey; KII: MFA, EDUFI, MEC).

We discuss Finland's engagement with multilateral partners in further detail in section 5.3.2.

4.1.4 Intensified bilateral support (Measure 3)

The 2018 Stepping Up report recommended intensifying the work on education sector programs in long-term partner countries by engaging more systematically with Finnish Institutions (e.g., EDUFI and universities). In addition, MFA aims to explore cost-efficient ways of engaging in dialogue interested low and lower-middle-income countries with relevant Finnish education policymakers, officials and experts on education systems and reforms. The 'Roadmap' emphasised identifying and contextualising partner countries' needs and, e.g., leveraging the potential of digital transformation.

The below extract (**Table 4**) from the 'Overarching Measure' and 7 'Stepping Up Measures' -matrix (Annex 6) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team's assessment of progress made in implementing Measure 3.

¹⁵ The World Bank's global initiative focused on helping countries improve in-service teacher professional development (TPD) programs and systems to accelerate learning.



Table 4. Progress made in implementing the Measure 3

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
3. Intensify bilateral support		
Continue and intensify the work on education sector programmes in long-term partner countries ---	Intensified bilateral support is reflected in many of the follow-up measures under the other six headings, in particular: 1.2, 1.3 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 4.1 5.1., 5.3, 5.4 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6	Identifying and contextualising partner countries' needs Strengthen dialogue with Partner Countries and local actors --- --- including leveraging the potential of digital transformation; Provide orientation on international actors (e.g., World Bank, UN System, GPE) in developing countries and their related needs.
--- by engaging more systematically with Finnish Institutions (e.g., EDUFI, universities).		Make better use of existing research produced in partner countries and international organisations;
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.		Strengthen understanding of the local context (e.g. draw on the Finnish delegation network, Team Finland and the expertise of HEI in the field).

Legend key:

Fast progress
 Average progress
 Slow progress
 No progress
 Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team

Finland's bilateral assistance in the education sector intensified by expanding support to additional partner countries. During the period under review, Finland's EDC expanded to include Kenya, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The focus of Finland's EDC is on fragile countries to which a significant part of the funding is also allocated. Relatedly, Objective 2 of MEC's Action Plan to implement Finland's Africa Strategy is to intensify cooperation with African countries on regional and global issues.

Finland allocates a significant part of the education sector funding to fragile countries.

Efforts have been made for more systematic cooperation with other partners at the country level. Ways to find systematic ways of engagement and cooperation



to further intensify bilateral assistance are still in the making.

Diverse modalities and instruments are available and utilised for EDC at the country level. Bilateral assistance is defined as in-country programmes which include mainly sector-wide support approach (SWAp) and bilateral and multi-bilateral interventions. They also include a description of, e.g., CSO support and some other instruments that are currently more holistic and consider synergies between instruments. Recommendations of the ‘Stepping Up Report’, and especially the ‘Roadmap’ emphasise a multi-actor approach which is not operationalised yet. Furthermore, MFA and MEC have been actively engaged in organising policy dialogues, study visits, events, and high-level visits as part of their efforts to facilitate dialogue among countries with expressed interest in education collaboration and Finnish education policymakers, officials, and experts.

FinCEED offers expert support.

As a complement to bilateral support, FinCEED offers expert support, which is an indication of strengthened cooperation and intensified bilateral support. FinCEED offers expert support in the field of education development and humanitarian assistance, deploying short-term (maximum six months) experts to different countries and contexts. For example, while falling outside the scope of this evaluation, in 2023, an expert for UNESCO based in Lebanon has been deployed to work on the education of refugees from Syria. Interventions implemented by CSOs also complement bilateral cooperation. (MFA, 2022e; MEC, 2022; online survey). FinCEED also offers longer-term expert deployments. For example, currently there are 3 seconded national experts in EU delegations/commission.

We discuss Finland’s bilateral support in more detail in our Country Case Studies as well as in sections 5.2.1, 5.2.2, and 5.2.3 in the main report.

4.1.5 Strengthened VET profile (Measure 4)

As emphasised in the previous chapter, although strengthening VET was not an explicit recommendation, the 2018 Stepping Up report drew attention to the potential importance of this education sub-sector, which was picked up by the dedicated Task Force in 2019 and subsequently included as an outcome area in 2022. The Task Force recommended strengthening Finland’s role in VET and piloting innovative solutions to this effect. In addition, it recommended conducting a follow-up report focusing on VET. A strengthened VET profile is thus included in the evaluation team’s 7 ‘Stepping Up Measures’.

The below extract (**Table 5**) from the ‘Overarching Measure’ and 7 ‘Stepping Up Measures’ -matrix (Annex 6) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team’s assessment of progress made in implementing Measure 4.



Table 5. Progress made in implementing the Measure 4

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
4. Strengthen Finland's VET profile		
The report has no specific recommendations for VET, but '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 (HELDA, 2018, p.11); the suggestion was taken up in 2019.	4.1. Strengthen the profile of Finland as a developer of vocational training, especially in developing countries with a rapidly growing young population, bearing in mind the need for continuous learning in the adult population. Pilot innovative solutions for VET and continuous learning to have as much impact as possible in a work-life-oriented manner.	
	4.2. Conduct a follow-up review focused on VET to complement Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education report.	

Legend key:

Fast progress
 Average progress
 Slow progress
 No progress
 Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team

Efforts to strengthen Finland's VET profile are fragmented. Finland's domestic VET system demonstrated resilience during the global COVID-19 pandemic (see **Box 8**). Yet, we found little evidence of concerted efforts to strengthen the profile of Finnish VET in the global arena. As for EDC in general, coordinating VET interventions across ODA and 'non-ODA' actors, as well as across sectors, appears to have been a challenge.

A snapshot of actions during the review period highlights the piecemeal nature of efforts to strengthen Finland's VET profile:

- The E4skills project in Ukraine illustrates Finnish involvement and substantial contributions made during the implementation phase. Finland played a central role in key areas, such as the Development of Qualifications, Curriculum Development, Teacher Training, and School Management Training, shaping the VET reform in Ukraine;
- FinCEED has raised VET issues in international organisations and international forums in its role as consortia-member for the TEIs on 'Opportunity-driven VET and Skills in Sub-Saharan Africa';
- VET is one of two focus areas in the new country programme in Kenya. A new VET project, implemented by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), was approved in 2022 and has started in 2023¹⁶. FinCEED is involved in the project's steering committee and has provided technical expertise to its implementation;

¹⁶ Please note that the implementation period falls outside the scope of this evaluation.



- CSOs have provided community-based VET opportunities for young people (e.g., Felm in Ethiopia, Bolivia, and Senegal; and FCA in Nepal, Myanmar, Jordan, Uganda, Eritrea, and South Sudan);
- Omnia Education Partnership (OEP), together with FCA, MEC, MFA, EDUFI, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has organised ‘impact events’, e.g. a two-day event on small and medium enterprise development);
- FCA’s ‘Linking Learning to Earning’ model offers accredited TVET education, career guidance counselling, internships/on-the-job training, and curriculum development support for education sectors in fragile contexts, and OEP and FCA have collaborated to provide flexible vocational secondary education in developing countries.
- Refugee Assistance worked in conflict-affected areas to provide short-term vocational training to young people, particularly women and participated in the development and piloting of the Financial Literacy course for refugees participating in a cash-based grant in Uganda at the request of the WFP;
- Several HEI ICI projects have involved the collaboration of Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences in partner countries as well as in Finland, with some “*bringing in the perspective of private companies and skills for employability and start-up technologies*” and others introducing digital training for teacher education.

Fragmentation of the effort hinders advancement of Finland's cooperation in vocational education and training.

4.1.6 Improved research capacities in partner countries (Measure 5)

The ‘Stepping Up Report’ recommended 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. The Task Force further recommended increased research by HEIs in education in developing countries and the Finnish Academy to launch a research programme on learning crises.

The below extract (**Table 6**) from the ‘Overarching Measure’ and 7 ‘Stepping Up Measures’ -matrix (Annex 6) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team’s assessment of progress made in implementing Measure 5.



Table 6. Progress made in implementing the Measure 5

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
5. Improve HEI ICI and research collaboration with partner countries		
Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID) initiates a consultative process to explore ways of realising the initial vision of a national network , including sustainable funding.	5.1. Strengthen the status and cooperation of education and training development research with partner countries.	
	5.2. Encourage higher education institutions to conduct research in the field of education in cooperation with partners in developing countries.	
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.	5.3. Under the leadership of the Academy of Finland, launch a research program focused on solutions to the learning crisis. The aim of the research programme is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries through research joint ventures and academic mobility.	
	5.4. Support the collection, analysis and transmission of research data on learning, teaching and training to development partners.	

Legend key:

Fast progress
 Average progress
 Slow progress
 No progress
 Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team

The Higher Education Institutions' research capacities in partner countries have been built with a strong focus on digital solutions. The HEI ICI programme supports cooperation projects between higher education institutions in Finland and developing countries. During 2017-2020, the programme supported 20 projects. In its subsequent phase, 10 HEI ICI projects are being implemented from 2020 to 2024 in 3 thematic areas: solutions to address the global education crisis, innovations, and climate action (see **Figure 4**). The projects that target the global education crisis (including those in our case study countries) all have a strong focus on building teachers' pedagogical capacity to engage with digital and blended learning in partner countries. While EDUFI administrates the programme, MFA finances it (MEUR 11.8, with 20% self-financing from the participating HEIs, amounting to MEUR 14.75) (MFA/EDUFI, 2021b).

There are several HEI ICI projects with Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences from partner countries and Finland, and many focus on digital solutions.

Several HEI ICI projects have involved the collaboration of Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences in partner countries as well as in Finland, with some bringing in the perspective of private companies and skills for employability and start-up technologies and others



introducing digital training for teacher education (EDUFI, 2021b; KIIs: MEC, HEI; Country Case Studies).

While not done under the planned leadership, in 2020, the Global Innovation Network for Teaching and Learning (GINTL) was created within the internationalisation programme of MEC. Offering a gateway to research-based education cooperation, the network brings together dedicated researchers and practitioners from Finland and partners from China, India and the African continent (GINTL, 2023).

Our Country Case Studies include a review of progress made by the projects in Nepal, Ethiopia and Palestine, which launched in 2021/2022. For example, the Capacity Building for Modernising TVET Pedagogy in Ethiopia (Capacity Building for Modernising TVET Pedagogy in Ethiopia – MOPEDE) is a partnership between Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK), Centria University of Applied Sciences, and the Federal Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institute (FTVET) in Ethiopia. Progress has been made towards meeting the project's overall goal to improve the accessibility and quality of VET teacher education, modernising VET across regions in Ethiopia. In addition, with the technical capacity that had been built, trained instructors were able to leverage infrastructure worth USD 400,000. (KII: MOPEDE) Finland also endorsed a visit of FTVET instructors to Germany to build linkages with GIZ. The digital platform has increased access to TVET materials. According to the interviewee: *“While students in Addis Ababa are relatively more privileged because the university is better equipped, furnished, and staffed, our students are in 15 Federal TVET institutions in the regions”* (KII: MOPEDE). Nevertheless, *“gender balance is a major challenge in the university”*, with only 33% of female students currently enrolled; disability inclusion, too, was not specifically mainstreamed into the project (KII: MOPEDE).

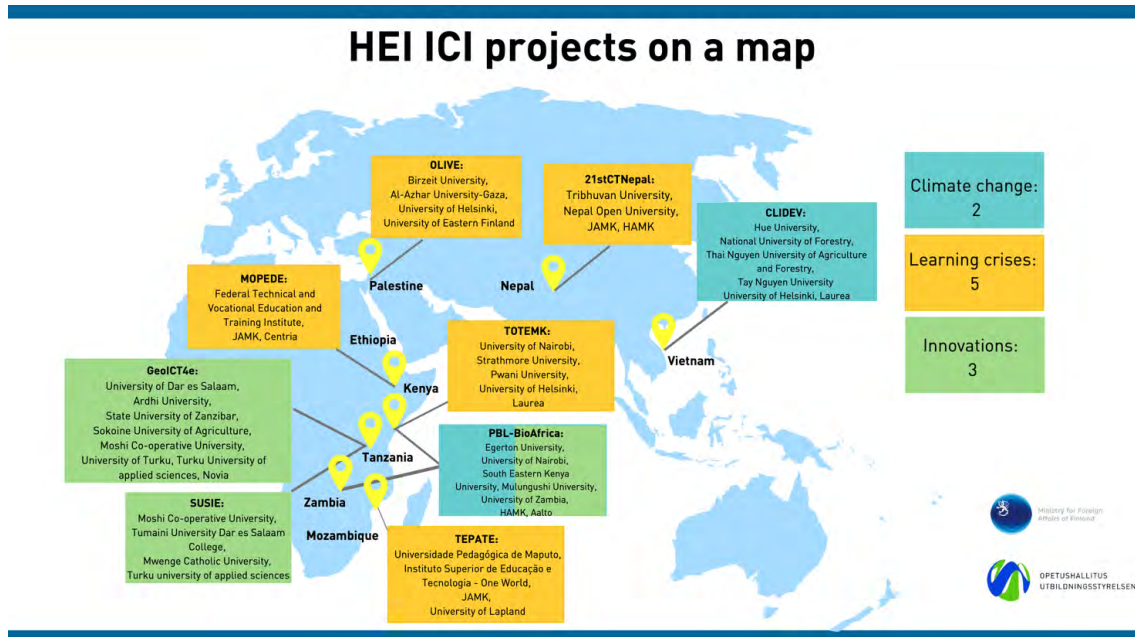
Teacher Education without Walls – New Models for STEM¹⁷ and Teacher Education in the Digital Age' project (OLIVE), based in Palestine, was developed and implemented in collaboration with the University of Helsinki, the University of Eastern Finland, Birzeit University, and Al-Azhar University in Gaza. This project, in partnership with the FCA-led 'Teachers Without Borders,' aimed to enhance teachers' qualifications, skills, and teaching methods to elevate the overall quality of education. The project's focus on creating online learning environments and pedagogy and the use of distance education for teacher training has been highly relevant, given the recent experience of the global pandemic. Exchange visits helped *“Finnish university professors get a better overview of the Palestinian context, as well as helping Palestinian professors to build a better understanding of the Finnish education system”* (KII: Birzeit). The main challenge encountered during implementation was the teachers' strike in the West Bank, which led to teacher training being postponed to May 2023 and delays in the training of student mentors. Disability inclusion was part of the project's focus, and the project team is striving to involve specialists in inclusive education as part of project activities.

In Nepal, three HEI ICI projects were supported by MFA/EDUFI: the Developing Pedagogy for 21st Century Skills, implemented by JAMK; the Bucsbin project implemented by the Oulu University of Applied Sciences (OAMK); and the Teacher Preparation Programme through [Open and Distance Learning] ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education contributes to the improvement of quality and relevance of education in Nepal by improving access to teacher qualification upgrading programmes.

17 STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics



Figure 4. HEI ICI projects in Asia and Africa



Source: EDUFI, 2021b

Due to their diverse funding sources, including non-ODA funding (which falls beyond the control of the MFA), higher education research instruments were excluded from the scope of this evaluation. Our analysis, based on the information gathered during the evaluation process, reveals a fragmented landscape beyond the HEI ICI programme. Despite the presence of networks such as UniPID (coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä), the Global Education Research in Finland Network, and the Academic Network of Global Education and Learning (ANGEL), a comprehensive assessment of their performance against planned measures identified in 2019 is challenging. It is noteworthy that reporting on higher education-related activities by universities and CSOs appears sporadic. For instance, Aalto University School of Economics has intensified its efforts in developmental economics teaching and research guidance. Felm’s language experts have collaborated with local researchers and universities to develop mother-tongue teaching and learning materials for ethnic minority languages in Asia and Africa. TYNordic has introduced student mentoring in its various country interventions. Additionally, a Professorship of Practice in Development Economics was established at the Helsinki Graduate School of Economics, partially financed through Finland’s development cooperation funds. Moreover, UniPID plays a key role in fostering cooperation between the Finnish research community and the MFA by managing commissioned studies related to development policy. These initiatives collectively contribute to the advancement of knowledge and expertise in the development field (MFA, 2019d; MFA, 2020c; UniPID, 2023; Country Case Studies; KIIs).

4.1.7 Strategic investment in supporting new partnerships (Measure 6)

The ‘Stepping Up Report’ recommended the integration of education-related development cooperation with other international educational activities. In 2019, the expert Task Force envisaged a range of specific measures for investment in education export, such as ‘the promotion of education



export through the TFK network¹⁸, also embedded in MEC's Action plan to implement the Africa Strategy. In the 'Roadmap' (2022), proposed actions focused on further developing the financial instruments for multi-actor cooperation and developing proposals for international funding.

The below extract (**Table 7**) from the 'Overarching Measure' and 7 'Stepping Up Measures' -matrix (Annex 6) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team's assessment of progress made in implementing Measure 6.

Table 7. Progress made in implementing the Measure 6

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
6. Strategic investment, new partnerships, multi-actor cooperation		
Development cooperation becomes more closely integrated into Finland's other international educational activities, such as its 2017-25 international higher education and research policy, education exports, and ed-tech start-up activities.	6.1. Increase effectiveness by combining instruments and pathways used by different actors; Develop financial instruments motivating multi-actor cooperation; Facilitate non-governmental organisations, higher education institutions and private sector joint ventures, e.g. by developing an Institutional Cooperation instrument or by opening thematic searches for joint ventures of actors; Develop a light-structured financing model for implementing pilot projects involving Finnish educational actors.	Financial Instruments Assess financial instruments and domestic and international funding sources for multi-actor collaboration; Map existing financial instruments for multi-actor collaboration; Engage in dialogue with developing countries and financiers to develop project proposals for international funding.
	6.2. Enable higher investment of education and training companies in development cooperation, respecting local ownership, competence and need; Try new partnerships and funding models to enable collaboration between public and private actors; Develop the recognition, functionality and synergies of the Public Sector Investment Facility PIF (e.g., Business with Impact (BEAM)); Develop procedures so that multi-actor joint projects are possible through the above-mentioned instruments.	
	6.3. Increase small-scale seed funding, e.g. by returning funding for pilot projects within Finnpartnership.	
	6.4. Explore the opportunities to use the concept of social impact bonds in development cooperation environments.	
	6.5. Through Finnish digital and technology solutions, aim for greater impact on development cooperation and permanently better learning outcomes in the target countries.	
	6.6. Use pilot projects to develop and test the cost-effectiveness and functionality of applications in developing countries, including in the event of humanitarian crises. Commit to internationally agreed digital principles.	

Legend key:

- Fast progress
 Average progress
 Slow progress
 No progress
 Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team

¹⁸ The TFK network has been set up and is financed by MEC, with TFK experts stationed in eight countries, working at Finnish embassies and mandated to promote Finland's global reputation as a country of high-quality education and science.



TFK experts have been positioned, but no new instruments for collaboration between state and non-state actors have been developed. In 2019, the expert Task Force envisaged a range of specific measures for investment in education export, such as ‘the promotion of education export through the TFK network’, also embedded in MEC’s Action plan to implement the Africa Strategy. Taking this up, TFK experts have been positioned to internationalise higher education and research, promoting exports of Finnish knowledge, expertise, and educational innovation. Although such experts’ brief does not explicitly address the learning crisis, and they do not receive direct ODA support for their work, their mandate has been extended to cover basic education, particularly

Limitations in funding instruments hinder collaboration between state and non-state actors in education development cooperation.

early childhood learning. However, there are no formal mechanisms for information flows regarding education export between Embassies, EU delegations and the Ministries (MFA, 2019a; MFA 2020c; MFA, 2021g; MEC 2022; online survey; KIIs).

Piloting of technology and solutions or proof of concept projects, also when incorporated in the activities of international ODA-funded organisations, is eligible for support within Finnpartnership. However, we did not find evidence of recommended actions to ‘test the

cost-effectiveness and functionality of Finnish digital and technology solutions in a variety of conditions in developing countries, including in the humanitarian crisis contexts or actions to increase small-scale seed funding, e.g., by returning funding for pilot projects’ within Finnpartnership. Similarly, we did not find evidence of ‘opportunities to use the concept of social impact bonds in development cooperation environments’ (MFA, 2019a; MFA, 2020c; MFA, 2020d; MFA, 2022e; EDUFI 2021a; UNICEF, 2022b; KIIs: MFA, MEC, EDUFI, 2021a, TFK, FinCEED, CSOs).

4.1.8 Building the pool of expertise (Measure 7)

The ‘Stepping Up Report’ recommended initiating an expert capacity deployment window or organisation in partnership with other development actors and incentivising CSOs for joint programming in the areas where they have strong expertise. The Task Force identified detailed actions to this effect. The ‘Roadmap’ further emphasised capacity development on solutions to the learning crisis to provide direction for multi-actor collaboration and promote access to Finnish education experts.

The below extract (**Table 8**) from the ‘Overarching Measure’ and 7 ‘Stepping Up Measures’ -matrix (Annex 6) summarises, using traffic lights, the results of the Evaluation Team’s assessment of progress made in implementing Measure 7.



Table 8. Progress made in implementing the Measure 7

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
7. Building the Finnish expert pool, including CSO coordination		
MFA explore opportunities to initiate an expert capacity deployment window or organisation in partnership with other relevant development actors in Finland.	7.1. Promote the recruitment of Finns for professional education expert positions in key organisations.	Strengthening capacity in the field Develop an educational package of solutions to the learning crisis, utilising Finland's strengths, to provide direction for multi-actor collaboration.
	7.2. Establish an arrangement to allocate human resources to UN organisations and developmental funding institutions in a targeted manner.	
	7.3. Establish a programme providing expert support in the field of education for development and humanitarian assistance, including coaching and training Finnish experts to work in developing country contexts. Resource higher education institutions, including collaboration between Unipd and EDUFI, NGOs and private actors, to provide in-service training on development cooperation in the education sector.	
	7.4. Strengthen the competencies of persons already working in development cooperation and community organisations; ensure messages are consistent and up to date.	
MFA is encouraged to incentivise CSOs to develop joint programs around thematic areas where CSO expertise is strong, including support to education; encourage a closer relationship between CSOs' development activities and Finland's country strategies.	7.5. Increase traineeships in higher education and vocational training for students in developing countries, which can be implemented through a traineeship programme coordinated by EDUFI.	Promote opportunities to Finnish education experts.
	7.6. Target the deployment of experts, UN Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and UNV volunteers. Continue to focus on education and training in recruitment for development finance institutions.	
	7.7. Increase traineeships and volunteering positions (including Teachers without Borders) and funding for development activities and projects in the field of education and training.	
	7.8. Include development cooperation and development issues in the field of education in teacher training and in-service teacher training as part of global education will be investigated with higher education institutions, organisations and private actors. Support sustainable development competencies through project and global education funding from NGOs. Increase funding to promote opportunities for organisations to promote content and pedagogic competencies in the promotion of sustainability objectives (e.g. Transformer 2030 funded and coordinated by EDUFI and Fingo).	

Legend key:

Fast progress
 Average progress
 Slow progress
 No progress
 Not applicable

Source: Evaluation Team



Concerted efforts have been made to build Finland's pool of expertise in EDC since the launch of FinCEED. To promote the recruitment of Finns for professional education expert positions in key organisations, FinCEED has facilitated the deployment of, amongst others, one Finnish Seconded National Expert to the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships' Youth, Education and Culture unit (DG INTPA G3) and two Finnish experts to EU Delegations.¹⁹ Similarly, to establish an arrangement to allocate human resources to UN organisations and developmental funding institutions in a targeted manner, education remained a single focus of the World Bank's Donor Funded Staffing Programme, and JPOs and UNVs have been regularly posted to education-related positions. While there is currently only one secondment in the World

Since the launch of FinCEED, there have been focused initiatives to expand Finland's expertise in education development cooperation.

Bank's education global practice, between 2018-2022, a total of ten JPOs were assigned to UNICEF, UNHCR, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNESCO, and another ten UNVs to UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR. Six-month secondments to GPE and UNESCO have taken place, and there is a continuing secondment so the ADB. In addition, a Finnish expert has recently joined the UNICEF Learning Innovations Hub (EDUFI/FinCEED, 2023; MFA, 2020c; MFA, 2023j; KILs).

Teachers Without Borders programme, coordinated by FCA, sent 92 Finnish teachers to countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Myanmar, Palestine, Somalia, and Uganda between 2019 and 2021. These volunteers played a crucial role in mentoring their colleagues in these regions. Additionally, they introduced a mobile mentoring program in Uganda in 2019. When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted in-country volunteering in 2020, the programme adapted by developing distance volunteering opportunities. Throughout 2021, the network continued its remote support for education programmes in multiple countries, with a primary focus on teacher training, curricula design, and mentoring. Furthermore, a total of 476 educational professionals participated in distance training and mentoring sessions (MFA, 2022b; FCA, 2019; FCA, 2020; FCA, 2021 & FCA, 2022).

However, before the launch of FinCEED, the efforts made by MFA and its partners to strengthen the human resource base and expertise for EDC have been somewhat haphazard. For example, to provide expert support in the field of education for development and humanitarian assistance, including coaching and training Finnish experts to work in developing country contexts, the Omnia Education Partnerships (OEP) ran two faculty trainings focused on the challenges of the international operating environment in graduate-targeted training. The University of Jyväskylä introduced a two-year master's programme in Development, Education and International Cooperation, combining expertise in development and education, and during the 10th anniversary of EDUFI's vocational training and development and volunteering network, 240 students and 80 teachers volunteered in Nepal, Uganda, Tanzania and Namibia, while 130 students engaged in EDUFI's 'professional mobility to ODA countries). More recently, FinCEED organised an advanced professional training for education and development experts that was held in February-March 2023 ('How to respond to the challenge of transforming education?'). The training is organised again in Autumn 2023.

Although piloted in 2023 and hence outside the scope of this evaluation, a training programme has been developed and implemented. The first pilot took place in the spring 2023, and the next course will be organised in the autumn of 2023 (in more detail discussed in section 5.3.3.)

¹⁹ In addition, FinCEED has deployed 1 expert to UNICEF's Learning Innovations Hub, 1 expert to GPE, and 1 short-term (6 month) expert has been positioned in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).



4.2 Relevance

This sub-chapter includes an assessment of the extent to which implemented measures respond to global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities and continue to do so if circumstances change. The evaluation team also assessed the possible differences and trade-offs between different priorities and needs, as well as Finland's added value in education development cooperation.

Finding 2. Significant progress has been made in implementing policy-level measures to enhance Finland's education-focused development cooperation, aligning with SDG 4. Education is a priority in Finland's Africa Strategy, and its importance in emergencies is recognised. However, there is a need for more emphasis on humanitarian aid and nexus approaches. VET and higher education are policy priorities, but their development is hindered by weak coordination, neglected linkages, and limited international awareness of Finland's expertise in VET. Finland's cooperation responds to partner needs, and CSO support is strongly appreciated. Cross-cutting objectives, including gender equality, disability inclusion, climate resilience, and triple nexus programming, align well with current challenges. Finland's reputation for education excellence is recognised, but there is a growing interest in digitalisation, raising concerns about its suitability in fragile settings.

4.2.1 Policy and strategy measures

Significant progress has been made in implementing the policy-level measures that have increased the relevance of education as part of Finland's development cooperation. The 2018 Stepping Up report's principal recommendation was that education quality and learning be chosen as the overarching theme for all Finnish development activities in the sector. Finland's education development emerged as a standalone policy priority, with the *Government Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms* stating that '[a]s the Finnish education system is highly regarded globally, Finland has the opportunity and responsibility to participate in solving the global learning crisis over the long term' (MFA, 2021b).

Finland's Africa Strategy sets education as a priority. The education sector is increasingly important for Finnish development cooperation on the African continent, as reflected in Finland's Africa Strategy (MFA, 2021d). Development of the Africa Strategy follows as a coherent measure to set education as a priority, as recommended in the 2018 Stepping Up Report. According to the strategy, Finland is to increase broad-based cooperation to improve educational opportunities, especially in the field of vocational education and training, which is to provide knowledge and skills that are needed by the young people in the labour market, as well as primary education. The strategy emphasises cooperation, especially in the field of technology and innovation, boosting trade and investments and close linkages with the EU. The means are all in line with the Stepping Up Report recommendations. The capacities of higher education institutions and research institutes are to be supported to promote knowledge, innovations, and sustainable development. Finnish expertise in the development of quality education, including teacher training, is expected to be used in this cooperation. In addition, all funding channels and instruments are expected to be strengthened, including private sector financing instruments.

Policy level priority is reflected in Finland's development cooperation, and education has emerged as a stand-alone policy priority area with defined priority thematic areas. In the



MFA's ToCs and Aggregate Indicators for Finland's Development Policy, the most recent policy priority areas for Finland's development cooperation and the related results frameworks have been outlined (MFA, 2020c). This was updated in November (MFA, 2022d), although the new priority focus has not yet been reflected on the Open Aid platform, for example. The impact, outcomes, outputs and assumptions of the 2020 ToC and the updated version (2022) are the foundation of the present evaluation's ToC. Operationalisation of the education sector development cooperation further with the development of the robust theory of change also increased the relevance of education sector development cooperation as a follow-up of the recommended overarching measure.

The current results framework (2022) has evolved from a previous ToC, which was published in 2020. The 2022 framework elaborates on the previous outcome and outputs in significantly more detail, thus clarifying Finland's desired outcome: Quality inclusive education (see **Box 7**).

Box 7. MFA ToC from 2020 to 2022

Narrative Theory of Change (2020) IF the inclusiveness of the education system is strengthened (mother-tongue, disability, gender and pre-primary education); AND IF institutional capacity to improve learning outcomes is enhanced; AND IF teaching and learning practices and educational environments are improved; and IF women and girls with disabilities have access to vocational training. THEN, *access to quality primary and secondary education has improved, especially for girls and for those in the most vulnerable positions*. AND THEN progress is made towards the goal of education and peaceful democratic societies (concerning Finland's development policy goals for 'Rights of Girls and Women', 'Sustainable Economies and Decent Jobs', 'Climate Resilience' and 'Lives and Dignity in Crises') and Finland contributes towards the SDG 2030 Agenda.

Narrative Theory of Change (2022) IF pedagogical practice (teachers pre-/in service training); capacity of teacher training institutions; and teacher status are improved; and IF sector capacity is built to improve curriculum and learning materials, accompanied by support for learning innovations and digital learning solutions; and If access to mother tongue learning is improved and capacities are built to deliver foundational learning and learning assessment; and IF educational environments support learners wellbeing and learning (school meals, school improvement plans, etc. THEN *teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes*.

AND IF system capacity for inclusive education (duty bearers enact legislative reforms and policies and mainstream disability in laws and policies) is improved; and IF girls' participation in secondary education and gender equality in education is improved; and IF measures to reduce barriers for CwD and CwD enrolment in primary and secondary education is increased; and IF access to education in emergencies (including for CwD) is improved. THEN, *the right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions is better realised*.

AND IF the quality and labour market relevance of VET and HE is improved through technical assistance, institutional and private sector partnerships; and IF opportunities for vocational and entrepreneurial education, especially for girls and women and persons with disabilities, are improved; and IF youth have improved life skills and knowledge to advance sustainable development. THEN, *youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life*.



AND IF financing for education in LDCs and more equitable financing within the education sector is increased; and IF education sector plans and policies promote equity, inclusive and gender transformative education for all; and focus on education quality and relevance; and IF duty bearers guarantee, protect and advance the right to education including education in conflict and crises. THEN *Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education* AND THEN Finland makes progress towards the goal of Inclusive Quality Education for All and contributes towards the achievement of SDG 4.

Source: MFA 2020b; MFA 2022c

Evidence suggests that MFA and its stakeholders have benefitted from this development, and the 2022 framework is an opportunity to bring coherence to Finland's EDC. Three outcomes are intended to guide both multilateral and bilateral cooperation, as well as provide directions for CSO interventions, HEI ICI projects, and private sector investments; the establishment of FinCEED enables the pool of human resources and expertise to be expanded (MFA 2020b; MFA 2022c).

Finland's development policy principles are linked to the implementation of the SDGs, and the education sector development cooperation supports SDG 4 on education, which increases the relevance of the policy measures vis-à-vis the global response to the education crises.

As described in Chapter 3.2, Finland's development policy in the education sector focuses on 'quality inclusive education' for all, reflecting Finland's commitment to the global SDG 4. The thematic areas defined in MFA's recently developed theory of change respond to the learning crisis by emphasising strengthening the capacities of teachers, schools, and education providers to improve learning and learning outcomes, the importance of structural reforms of education systems, and the strengthening of teachers' pedagogical competence and professional status. This also includes a focus on digital pedagogy and innovative and inclusive teaching and learning solutions, especially targeting vulnerable learners. Finland also promotes safe and inclusive learning environments and the provision of school meals. In addition, the policy focus is on addressing the injustice by focusing on equitable and inclusive access to education by the most vulnerable (girls; disability), especially in the LDCs and MICs, which is also in line with the global response.

Finland is closely aligned with the SDG 4 on quality education, which bolsters the significance of policy measures in addressing global education challenges.

At the policy level, the importance of education in emergencies is recognised and is an emergent area. However, it still needs to get more weight in the implementation of humanitarian assistance, as only a few examples of education-related support exist. This also applies to the implementation of double and triple nexus. When poly-crisis situations are increasing globally, the relevance of support for education in emergencies becomes more and more important. Finland supports the continuity of education during crises, particularly for refugees, young people and adults who have been excluded from educational opportunities. Education in humanitarian settings appears in a separate 2020 ToC for humanitarian assistance (not under education). MFA's more recent results framework includes Output 2.4, '*continuity of education in*

The importance of education in emergency situations is acknowledged in policy but its practical implementation in humanitarian aid and double and triple nexus approaches is limited.



emergencies is better protected'. Although, at the policy level, the importance of education in emergencies is recognised, it still needs to get more weight in implementation. This also applies to the implementation of the development-humanitarian-peace (triple) nexus, where guidance, joint planning, and implementation between humanitarian and forms of development assistance are still lacking. Education in emergencies is an emergent thematic area which has not yet been addressed as a priority.

Steps have been taken to guide and implement the triple nexus approach. In February 2019, to ensure the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace efforts, the OECD DAC approved a recommendation known as the triple nexus. As a follow-up measure, the MFA issued a Guidance Note 'Triple Nexus and Cooperation with Fragile States and Regions' in 2022 (Guidance Note, October 2022). This guidance note has been prepared as a practical tool, particularly for use by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, diplomatic missions, and stakeholders. It covers bilateral and multilateral cooperation as well as cooperation with civil society and other actors, including public administration actors, universities, and the private sector. The practical measures include Country-level cooperation between triple nexus actors, coordination within the MFA and Finnish actors, joint analysis by triple nexus actors, planning and implementation of intervention, and flexible funding and monitoring.

The DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus has been applied in the preparation of country strategies and programmes even before the issuance of the Guidance Note in 2022. The strategies adopted in spring 2021 and the country programmes supporting their implementation have already striven to consider the principles of the recommendation.

Several stakeholders in MFA raised the importance of triple nexus programming in education sector development cooperation, especially in some highly fragile country contexts. Triple nexus-based programming strengthens the coherence, complementarity and effectiveness of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding. Equally important are the linkages between Finland's other policy objectives, particularly links between non-discrimination and triple nexus programming, as underlined in the Guidance Note. Strategies for inclusion and HRBA should not be compromised, even where there is limited in-country capacity, the view shared also with MFA experts. Yet mainstreaming cross-cutting policy objectives is a major challenge in such contexts where there is continuous volatility (MEC, 2022; MFA, 2022e; MFA, 2022i; MFA-OPT, 2022; KIIs: MFA; EDUFI; TFK; EU-DGINTPA; Country Case Studies).

Vocational education and training and higher education feature as part of Finland's education policy priority pillar. However, weak coordination, lack of joint planning, and neglected linkages between VET at secondary education and post-secondary levels have limited developing strategies for strengthening Finland's VET profile, thus responding to the high need in partner countries. Vocational education is highly relevant to young people in partner countries given the demographic bulge coupled with high unemployment rates in Africa region and elsewhere. Strengthening VET is increasingly a priority both in Finland's partner countries as well as for the two Ministries and the broader spectrum of EDC stakeholders. The 2019 Task Force report identified a need to strengthen the profile of Finland as a developer of vocational training, highlighting the need to pilot innovative solutions for VET and continuous learning. A key value addition of Finland's VET is the linkages between VET at the Secondary Education level and HEI.²⁰ Yet, this has not been fully exploited, coordinated, or steered in Finland's EDC.

20 Finland's international cooperation in VET at the Secondary level has traditionally focused on EU-funded programs (e.g., Leonardo, LLP 2007-2013, Erasmus 2014-2020, Erasmus+ 2021-2027) The EU 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life, supporting priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda



There are several reasons for the neglect of VET at the Secondary Education level. Firstly, the VET domain is not clearly defined. In Finland, VET is traditionally regarded as secondary-level education. 'Traditional' Universities see the Universities of Applied Sciences as responsible for offering vocational education, while the latter see their organisations as offering Higher Education (EDUFI, 2022). Secondly, vocational institutions at the secondary level do not have the capacity to create projects, while the Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences are better resourced. Thirdly, secondary-level VET institutions are public organisations and have not been allowed to engage in profit-making interventions until recently (in January 2022) introduced legislation. Previously, institutions have been obliged to request permission from EDUFI to export VET qualifications (EDUFI, 2021c).

There is a missed opportunity to address the high demand for vocational education and training, particularly among young people in partner countries with high unemployment rates.

In addition, while Finland has strong expertise in the field of secondary-level VET, a doctorate is usually required from experts. In this regard, Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences have an advantage in proposing and implementing EDC projects (MFA, 2020c; UNESCO, 2021; online survey; KIIs: MFA; HEIs; CSOs).

Notably, while a clear assessment of the results of VET programming is lacking, the follow-up review of VET in EDC recommended as a complement to the Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education review was not done. A further challenge is that while VET may be of high importance for rights-holders in partner countries (young women and girls as well as young men), Finland's resources are limited (KIIs across stakeholders) (MFA, 2019a; MEC, 2022; KIIs; Country Case Studies; Thematic Case Study).

Finland's development cooperation is grounded in responding to the country needs. At the core of Finland's development policy is the conviction that partner countries are responsible for their development, sustainable results are grounded in country-defined needs and partner countries' development plans, and that the responsibility for change rests with Finland's partner countries (MFA, 2023d).

Finland's development cooperation is firmly rooted in a responsive approach, aligning with the needs of partner countries.

However, an equally strong consideration is the extent to which EDC delivery mechanisms – including funding channels – are the right ones. Education sector support especially is highly appreciated by the partner country governments, and the bilateral and multi-bilateral support are jointly designed with the government, which enhances the relevance in the country context.

There is a strong sense within MFA that EDC as well is fundamentally grounded in country-level needs, and the partner's needs are the starting point for support. However, an equally strong consideration is the extent to which EDC delivery mechanisms – including funding channels – are the right ones. Senior decision-makers in MFA underline the need for Finland: *"It's not a given that we can deliver: we need to ask ourselves 'what can we bring to answer these needs?' [and] shape ourselves"* (KIIs).

CSO support is highly appreciated by its beneficiaries as the programmes are jointly designed with the beneficiaries and respond to their needs. CSOs have a clear role in supporting non-formal education, which is relevant and complementary at many – even if not all - levels of education. Projects implemented by CSOs 'fill gaps' left by others and live up to inclusion at



ground level by, e.g., involving people in remote areas, being present when or where others are not, driving family learning agenda addressing girls' access/attendance to education, equipping individuals with life skills, etc. The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic is a practical example of a situation where the CSO's role (as notably more flexible and adaptable actors than many others) was crucial in ensuring learning continuity.

4.2.2 Integration of cross-cutting objectives into the measures

The extent to which implemented measures have taken account of gender equality, non-discrimination, and climate resilience, making linkages between SDG 4 and other SDGs (mainstreaming, targeted action, and policy dialogue).

Finland's EDC exceeds the DAC policy marker target for gender equality as a 'significant objective', and non-discrimination, with a specific focus on disability inclusion, is embedded in Country Strategies and programming as well as CSO support and HEI ICI projects. MFA recently reported that 88% of education ODA focuses on interventions where gender equality is a 'significant objective',²¹ exceeding the DAC target of 85% (OECD, 2023a). Globally, Finland played a significant role in the area of gender equality during the period under review, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, regardless of the increasingly challenging political climate (particularly in Afghanistan and Ukraine), as well as supporting UN Women and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in performing their mandates and implementing the Gender Action Plan III for all EU external relations.

Partners acknowledge Finland's policy influence in terms of promoting gender equality and the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, in the case of the GPE, Finland contributed (with the active participation of Finnish CSOs such as FCA) to the revitalisation of the strategy, specifically GPE's new operating model. In addition, alongside other Nordic donors, Finland contributed by commenting on the GPE's performance framework in spring 2021, raising the issue in speeches, encouraging the Global Action on Disability Network's (GLAD) Inclusive Education Working Group to contribute to the implementation of inclusive education in the new strategy period of the GPE, and ensuring that gender equality will be hardwired throughout the strategy and its implementation.

Gender and disability inclusion have been well mainstreamed into Country Strategies and Country Programmes, as evidenced by the evaluation case studies. This is particularly the case for Ethiopia, where Finland's significant contribution to inclusion in the sector support programme can be seen in the revised programme title from General Education Quality Improvement Program for Equity (GEQIP) I, II and III to GEQIP-E, 'E' being for 'equity'. In Palestine, Finland's Development policy principles of the human rights-based approach and 'Leave No One Behind' are deeply embedded in the country programme, 'with special focus on the population living under occupation in Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza'. Though particular attention has been given to gender equality in both specific measures and through gender mainstreaming, in line with the EU Joint Strategy for Palestine, the gender gap is mostly in favour of girls (except in the VET sub-sector, where the curriculum is not gender-sensitive), with boys lagging for most education indicators, mostly due to socio-economic and political factors beyond the education sector.

21 Gender equality as a significant objective is Gender Policy Marker 1 (the contribution partly aims at advancing gender equality; however it would have been implemented even without the gender equality policy objective); Policy Marker 2 for gender equality as a principal objective is 'the contribution directly aims at advancing gender equality; it would not have been implemented without the gender equality policy objective'



The HEI ICI-funded projects have, to various degrees, adopted and applied the principles of the HRBA (universality, participation and inclusion, transparency and accountability and equality and non-discrimination). The analysis reports for the 2017-2020 period concluded that the projects met the minimum criteria for being considered human rights sensitive, and in the final application phase for HEI ICI 2020-2024, all projects were asked to describe the strategic choices made to address HRBA and other cross-cutting objectives as part of their project document. In the 2020 annual report, all nine HEI ICI projects reported various activities demonstrating how human rights principles (most commonly, the principles of inclusion, transparency, and accountability) have been applied in the project (MFA, 2022e; MFA, 2022g; EDUFI, 2021b; EDUFI, 2022a; GPE, 2022; MFA-OPT, 2021a; Country Case Studies; KIIs: MFA; GPE; CSOs).

Given current global crises and increasingly fragile partner countries, as well as Finland's expertise and its multilateral partners' strategic concerns, two cross-cutting objectives are particularly relevant to Finnish EDC policy: climate resilience, 'green education' and triple nexus programming. MFA's education-related progress reporting shows that education-related interventions have not been documented for climate sustainability. This is surprising, given Finland's "Global Gateway" way of working and the importance of linking trade, geopolitics/security, and education to increase Finland's capacities and resources. Some interviewees stated that it is important for education to remain a standalone sector, but it could/should be mainstreamed into all other sectors as well. Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter 5, 'green education' is of growing interest to Finland's multilateral partners, including the EU (DG-INTPA), the World Bank, and UNICEF (see **Annex 8**).

We note with interest that climate resilience as a cross-cutting objective of Finnish development policy has been included as a key objective (number 4) in MEC's Africa Action Plan: 'Measures are taken to combine Finnish expertise with the promotion of job-creating green growth and sustainable transition in African countries'. Both domestic and development cooperation policy, in line with EU priorities, is outspoken on research that is SDG compliant. TFK experts can and do ensure that research promotes Finnish values on global transitioning to a green economy, renewable energies like green hydrogen, and so on – this is going to be more and more important in the future. Yet, while climate mitigation and adaptation are a key cross-cutting focus in the EU Joint Strategy, Finland's policy objective is not reflected in education cooperation in Palestine. This is the case for Finland's EDC in general.

4.3 Partner expectations and views on Finland's added value

Our analysis of stakeholders' perceptions of Finland's strengths and added value cuts across the global level (experts in MFA and MEC and multilateral partners) and country level (the Embassies and partners in evaluation case countries). In addition, we include the views of a cross-section of EDC stakeholders within Finland). It is complemented by the analysis based on the Delphi method in Chapter 6: The Future.

There is a strong complementarity between Finland's policy and geographical focus and multilateral partners' strategic objectives, with expectations matched, and Finland's convening power, role as coordinator and expertise in policy dialogue at the country level is particularly well appreciated. We found a clear alignment between Finland's policy focus on 'Inclusive Quality Education' and the goals, priorities, and strategic objectives of its multilateral



Finland's continuous policy dialogue and collaborative strategic planning with multilateral organisations underscores that Finland is bigger than its financial contributions.

partners²² (see **Table 9**). Given good relations with the Finnish EU Commissioner for Development Partnerships and her special advisor, the GPE Secretariat asserts that, in terms of geopolitical leveraging, Finland has helped GPE maximise the Team Europe brand during the 2021 GPE replenishment, making sure that education is not forgotten. Finland has also supported the Secretariat's engagement with European parli-

amentarians, helping to convene political partners for Ukraine (KIIs). Similarly, like its strategic multilateral partners, Finland partners with middle and low-income countries, but its focus is on children and youth in fragile and conflict settings. Given this, it is not surprising that Finland's engagement with multilateral organisations, particularly at the country level, resonates with its partners and has matched their expectations. Notable examples are the World Bank in Ethiopia and Mozambique, UNICEF in Nepal and Palestine, and UNESCO in Myanmar.

Although Finland's volume of ODA is relatively small, continuous policy dialogue and collaborative strategic planning between the multilateral organisations and the embassies bring credibility to Finland as a development cooperation partner. Finland's strength is being able to give concrete evidence from the country level, which enhances credibility in headquarters discussions with the multilaterals. At the country level, in particular, Finland's convening power in sector dialogue and role as coordinator is valued. A further benefit of collaboration with Finland is in getting a genuine reflection partner, with Finnish education experts injecting realism and introducing context-specific solutions into policy dialogue at the partner country level. With its reputation as an 'honest broker', Finland has been a strong partner in Palestine, for example, playing a role in facilitating dialogue between donors. Finland is expected to continue to play this strong coordinating role in the future (MEC, 2022; Country Case Studies; KIIs: MFA; multilateral partners at global and country levels).

Table 9. Summary of multilateral priority areas and strategic objectives

GOALS	PRIORITIES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
UNICEF Education Strategy 2019-2030: Every Child Learns (2019-2023)		
Every Child Learns: Improved learning and skills development for boys and girls from early childhood to adolescence, in particular for the most marginalised.	(1) Equitable access to learning opportunities; (2) Improved learning and skills development for all; and (3) Improved learning and protection for children in emergency and fragile contexts	Children's rights Equity and inclusion Intersectoral approaches Contextualisation Results-based management
GPE 2025 Strategic Plan 2021-2025		
Accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century.	(1) Access; Early learning; Equity, efficiency and volume of domestic financing; (2) Gender equality; (3) Inclusion; (4) Learning; (5) Quality teaching; (6) Strong organisational capacity.	Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for system-wide impact. Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change. Strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale.

²² While the evaluation team engaged with UN partners, the World Bank, EU delegations and multilateral programmes such as the World Food Programme and Education Cannot Wait, at country level, key informants from multilateral organizations at the head-quarter-level did not respond to our repeated requests for interview. Notable exceptions were staff in the EU (deployed Finnish experts) and 6 members of global GPE Secretariat and Country Team Leaders.



GOALS	PRIORITIES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
ECW Strategic Plan (2023-2026)		
Children and adolescents affected by crises realise their right to safe, gender-equitable, and inclusive quality education and achieve holistic learning outcomes.	<p>(1) Prioritising holistic learning outcomes. ECW defines 'holistic learning' as a comprehensive approach that addresses the academic, emotional, ethical, intellectual, physical, and social needs of learners.</p> <p>(2) Improving financing data.</p> <p>(3) Responding to climate change.</p> <p>(4) Placing localisation and community participation at the core of our work.</p> <p>(5) Advancing our commitment to gender, disability, and displacement.</p>	<p>Country level:</p> <p>Objective 1: Increased and better funding for The Global Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises (EiEPC).</p> <p>Objective 2: Stronger EiEPC capacities and systems:</p> <p>Global level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase prioritisation of funding to EiEPC, especially for forgotten crises • Increased rapid funding to sudden onset crises • More funds were mobilized for the ECW trust fund²³
World Bank Group Education Strategy: Learning for all 2020 (2020-2023)		
The goal and framework of the new education strategy is Learning for All .	<p>(1) Strengthen education systems: Strengthen the capacity of education systems to achieve learning goals.</p> <p>(2) Building a High-Quality Knowledge Base to Underpin Education Reforms.</p>	<p>Global level:</p> <p>Building a high-quality knowledge base for education reforms at the global level.</p> <p>Country level:</p> <p>Reforming education systems at the country level.</p>
ADB Strategy 2020: Education Sector Directional Guide (2020-2023)		
Achieve a quality assured, inclusive education system that ensures learning for all."	<p>(1) Foundational learning, which includes early childhood education and improved school facilities for health, hygiene, water and sanitation, nutrition, and digital learning to ensure equity informed by lessons from the pandemic and other disasters.</p> <p>(2) Workforce development, including formal, nonformal, and informal reskilling and upskilling as working lives lengthen and occupations and skills in demand rapidly shift.</p> <p>(3) Interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches to support sustainable development with justice, as education is its biggest enabler.</p>	
UNESCO Capacity Development for Education (2016-2021 and 2022-2025)		
Strengthen systems and assist countries to achieve national priorities in the context of SDG 4.	<p>(1) Reinforcing education sector-wide policies and planning and reforms;</p> <p>(2) Developing skills for life and work;</p> <p>(3) Improving quality through teachers and teaching.</p>	

Source: UNICEF, 2019; GPE, 2022; ECW, 2022a; World Bank, 2011; ADB, 2022; UNESCO, 2022.

²³ ECW will maintain its three existing investment windows – the First Emergency Response (FER) for sudden onset emergencies or escalating crises, Multi-year Resilience Programme (MYRP) for protracted crises, and Development and uptake of global public goods in EiEPC (AF) – as all three have demonstrated that they remain relevant and fit for purpose. All three windows are systematically integrating the agreed actions arising from their respective evaluations.



While Finland ‘rides’ on its reputation for education excellence, the perceived added value of Finland’s EDC is evolving. There is a mismatch between development partners’ respect for Finland’s rights-based, pro-poor values of ‘leaving no one behind’, and a growing interest at home in the potential of digitalisation, with a general concern for the suitability of digital solutions in fragile settings. Stakeholders at various levels in organisational hierarchies recognise that despite being a relatively small country with one of the most sparsely populated (5.5 million) territories in Europe, Finland has an established reputation for education excellence.

Finnish stakeholders are increasingly interested in digitalisation, but there is a general concern for the suitability of digital solutions in fragile settings.

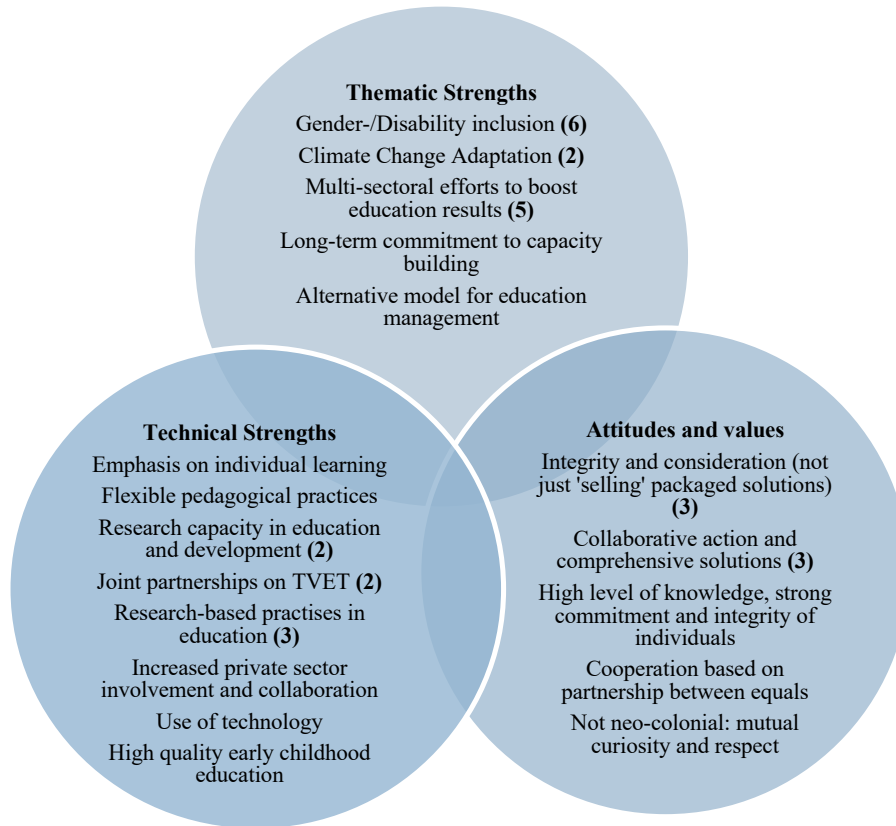
However, in recent years, this has been called into question with, for example, a 2023 Bildung review reporting a steady decline in learning outcomes since the 1990s *“sooner or later our reputation will suffer when people see our quality of education is going down”* (MEC, 2023a).

Yet perceptions of Finland’s unique added value for its EDC partners are evolving. First, as MFA staff point out, Finland is different from other donors because their education system is grounded in public schooling

as a common good, with an emphasis on social cohesion rather than individualistic school performance. This is confirmed by country-level bilateral donors who value Finland’s pro-poor values with an emphasis on the right to education for children and the core value of ‘leave no one behind’. Generally, Finland is internationally recognised for its achievement in public governance reform, being known for high respect for the rule of law, high levels of administrative ethics and high trust in government and education governance, specifically a transfer of knowledge and experience in decentralised education systems, which is a valued strength.

Second, we found a consensus across EDC sectors that development themes, which are founded on Finland’s values and strengths, are important. Digitalisation diversifies and expands the opportunities for exchanging expertise, and it is viewed as essential for Finnish actors to participate innovatively. Finland is considered to have expertise related to innovative education solutions, including digital pedagogies and learning technologies, which should be utilised to solve the global learning crises. This view is confirmed by senior experts in MFA: *“The world is in the midst of a green and digital transformation, whether we want it or not; we need to make sure it is equitable, make sure no one is left behind; we need to ask ourselves, ‘what can the digital world offer in responding to the global learning crises’; what are the solutions that would have the most impact?”*. In this context, the EU’s Global Gateway Africa – Europe Investment Package offers three areas in which Finnish expertise is relevant: accelerating the green transition, accelerating the digital transition, and improving education and training. Finland should continue to harness its expertise.

Figure 5. FinCEED Forum participants' views on Finland's strengths, values, and attitudes



Source: Author's notes, FinCEED Forum (November 2022)

Third, the views expressed by a wide-ranging group of participants in a FinCEED forum, in many instances, anticipated²⁴ many of the positive aspects of Finland's EDC, which were identified by Finland's immediate partners (views echoed by evaluation findings are shown in **Figure 5**). However, reflecting on the question "What are Finland's strengths and areas of added value in EDC?" forum participants suggested that MFA and its partners should carefully consider the extent to which Finnish models can be replicable in countries in the Global South. (OECD, 2022b; MEC, 2022; Kils: MFA, MEC; TFK; Country Case Studies; authors' notes from the FinCEED Forum).

Finland has added value and expertise in VET, but it is not well-known.

Finland's contributions and expertise in VET may not yet be as widely recognised as in basic education programmes. EU member states generally appreciate partnering with Finland when it comes to co-financing basic education initiatives. This interest is particularly notable in countries where Finland has maintained a long-standing presence, such as Mozambique, and has established a strong reputation. However,

in the realm of VET, Finland's unique strengths and VET competencies (see **Box 8**) may not be as well-known in Finland's EDC or acknowledged by potential EDC partners. A key value addition of

Vocational education and training is strong in its domestic context but Finland's added value and expertise in it is not well-known in the development cooperation context.

²⁴ FinCEED convened this in November 2022, which coincided with the scoping phase of the evaluation.



Finland's VET is the linkages between VET at the Secondary Education level and HEI.²⁵ Yet this has not been fully exploited, coordinated or steered in MFA's EDC.

A recent UNESCO report (UNESCO, 2021) states that lessons can be learned from Finland's national TVET system - in which 'quality, inclusion and resilience go hand-in-hand' – for country partners, with the caveat that Finnish experts and partners remain critical about which if any, digital solutions work best in fragile contexts.

Box 8. The strengths of Finnish VET in its domestic context

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Finland demonstrated the resilience of its TVET system.²⁶ Several factors - underpinned by the legislative reforms introduced in 2018 - contributed to a sector that was able to withstand the systemic shocks brought by the pandemic.

1. A high degree of flexibility in education governance enabled TVET providers at local levels to make necessary adjustments and work closely with the companies in their area to tailor actions based on the level of disruption;
2. A modular structure of studies for reskilling and upskilling, including modular-based TVET qualifications – accompanied by continuous assessment of personal competency development plans and no standardised examinations – promoted flexible and personalised learning;
3. A mixture of school-based, work-based, and online-based learning is institutionalised, with many TVET providers having existing e-learning courses;
4. Investment in the professional development of TVET teachers, including advanced pre-service qualifications and in-service training, which include digital skills as a focus area;
5. Notably, the Finnish TVET system is also an important channel for upskilling and reskilling adults, building bridges into new careers for those who lost their jobs or were laid off during the pandemic.

Source: UNESCO, 2021

4.4 Resourcing in relation to commitment - financial analysis

This sub-chapter includes an assessment of Finland's commitments and disbursements in EDC, primarily relying on OECD figures. Additionally, we contextualise Finland's financial allocations within the framework of commitments made by other donors and donor groups over time, noting that, in the case of most datasets, only commitment data was available for analysis. We discuss

25 Finland's international cooperation in VET at the Secondary level has traditionally focused on EU-funded programs (e.g., Leonardo, LLP 2007-2013, Erasmus 2014-2020, Erasmus+ 2021-2027) The EU 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life, supporting priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda.

26 The Economist. Finland leads for the second year globally in providing future-skills education for youth, according to the 2019 Worldwide Educating for the Future Index (WEFFI). (14 January 2020), <https://eiuperspectives.economist.com/talent-education/finland-leads-second-year-globally-providing-future-skills-education-youth-according-2019-worldwide>.



human resourcing under the sections related to 'Building the Expert Pool', as well as the section on FinCEED.

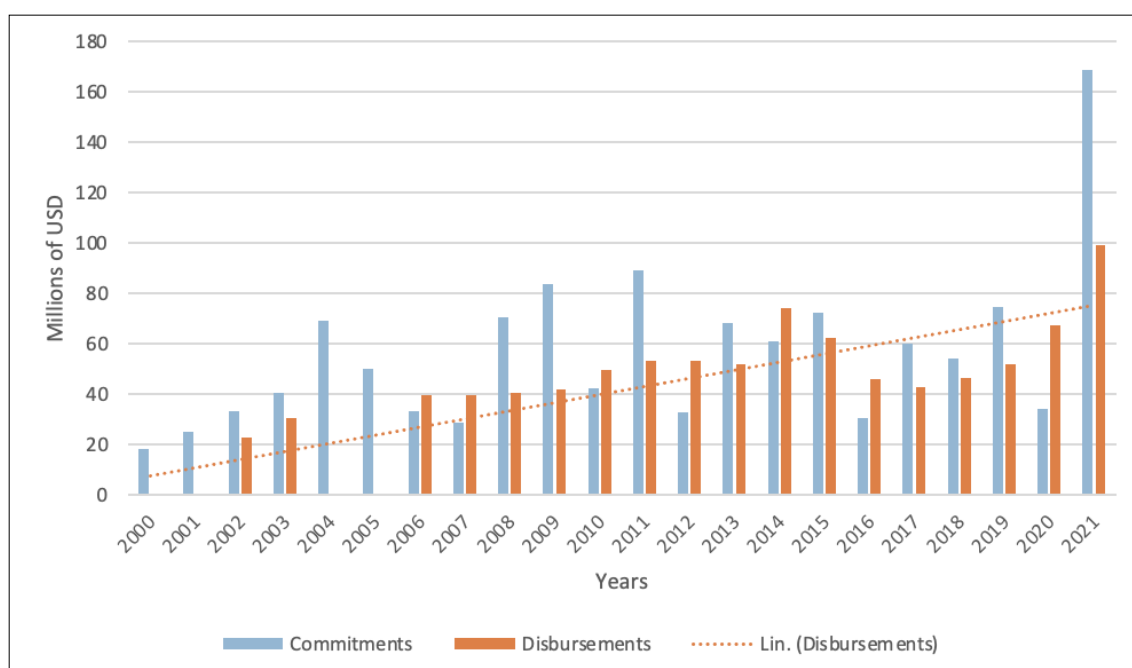
This analysis presents funding earmarked for the education sector and thus excludes Finland's core funding to multilateral organisations which spend a significant amount of their budgets on education (UNICEF, World Bank, ADB, Finland's share of EU's development cooperation, humanitarian core support United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), UNHCR and WFP).

Finding 3. Finland successfully reached its goal of disbursing 100 MEUR per year for EDC in 2021, but the financial data confirms that 2021 was an exception. EDC commitments have shown a consistent upward trajectory across all donors, with new entrants making contributions, albeit on a smaller scale. Finland is no exception to this trend. Viewed through the lens of where funds are directed and where platforms for dialogue exist, engaging with the EU and multilateral partners provides opportunities for influencing.

According to the figures included in the evaluation ToR, the share of the education sector in Finland's ODA is 7.3% and of actual development cooperation 12.5% (excluding core funding).

Finland's contributions and disbursements to the EDC have displayed fluctuations, typically ranging between 40 million and 60 million USD each year, showcasing an upward trend over the last two decades. Broadly, commitments have consistently surpassed disbursements, albeit with a decreasing margin. Notably, 2021 stands out for a substantial rise in commitments and a parallel increase in disbursements, with commitments notably exceeding disbursements. However, due to the unavailability of 2022 figures in this dataset, it remains uncertain whether the trend of increased commitments resulted in a corresponding rise in disbursements during 2022 and 2023 (see **Figure 6**).

Figure 6. Finland's commitments and disbursements to EDC 2010-2021



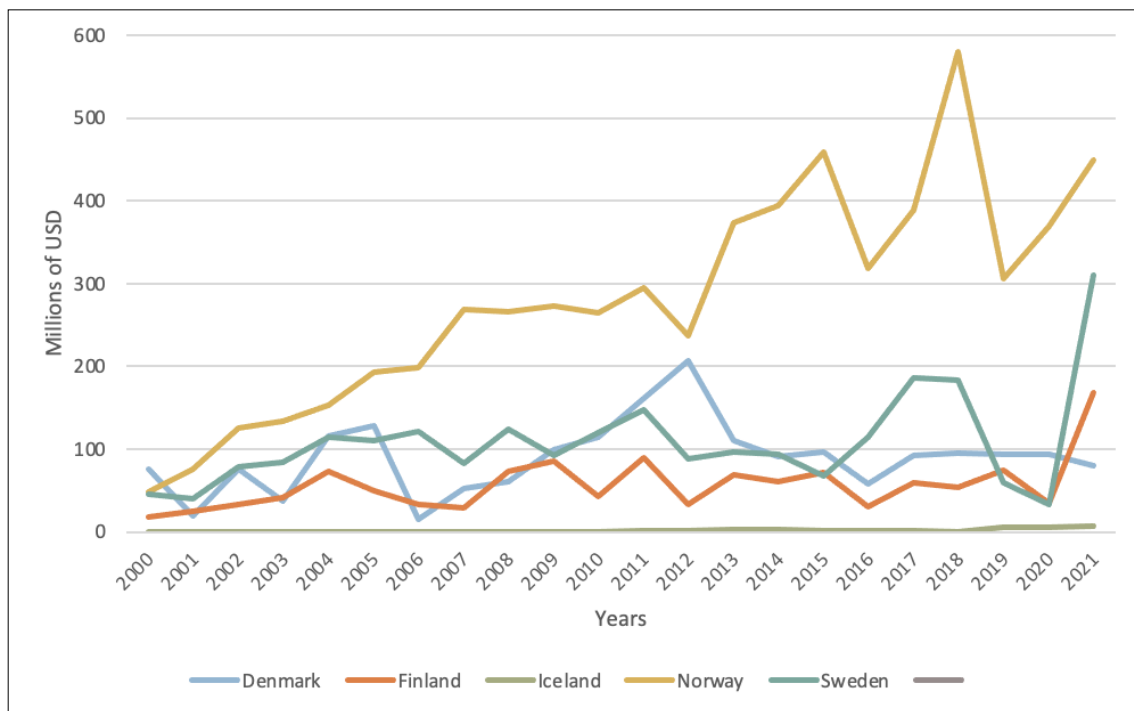
Source: OECD, 2023



In 2020, a decision was made by the Parliament to appropriate 29 MEUR additional funding from the 2021 government budget for stepping up Finland's global role in education as part of the budgetary negotiations (*kertaluontoiset tulevaisuusinvestoinnit*). This included a decision to fund the GPE with 25 MEUR for its current strategy period 2021-2025 and the establishment of FinCEED in 2021. In 2020, Finland pledged 8 MEUR in additional contributions to the ECW and the GPE to support the education sector in responding to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (evaluation ToR).

When considering commitments to the EDC among Nordic countries, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden have maintained a consistent pattern of pledging similar amounts over the past two decades. Iceland, on the other hand, began its commitments in 2011, amounting to a few million USD per year. Denmark and Sweden have commonly pledged around 100 million USD annually, while Finland's figures have consistently been close to half of that amount. Norway stands out among the Nordic nations, showcasing a trend of higher commitments, reaching the threshold of 400 million USD for the first time in 2015 (see **Figure 7**).

Figure 7. Commitments to EDC by Nordic countries in 2000-2021



Source: OECD, 2023

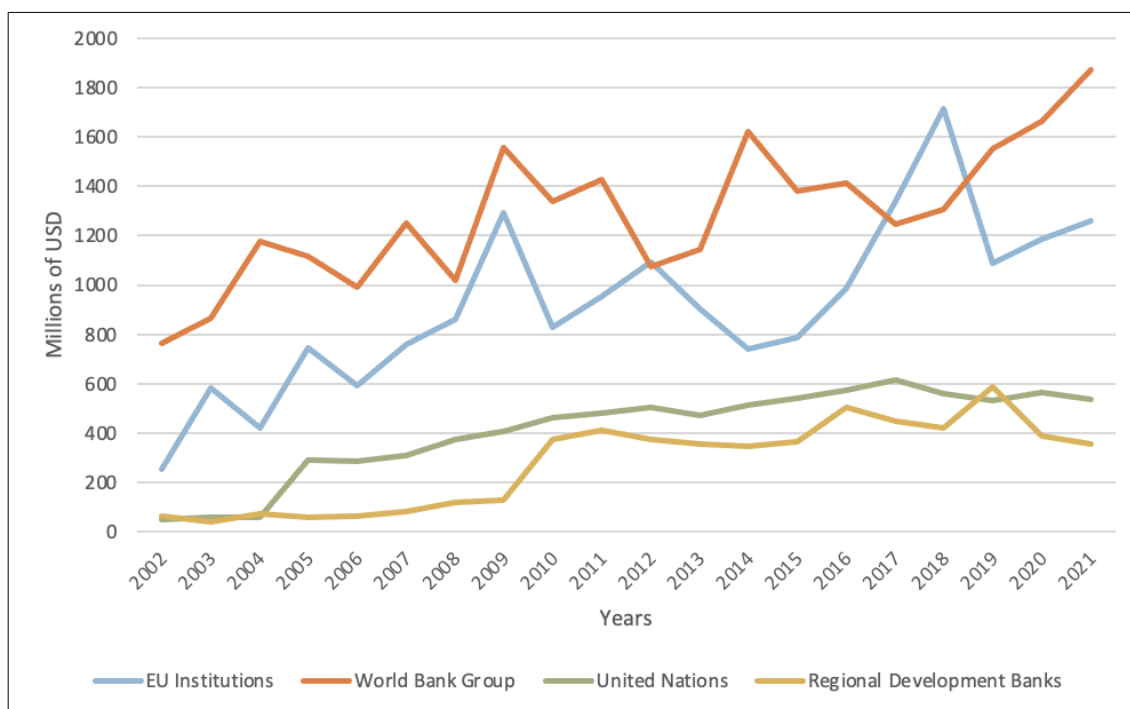
The Nordic countries and the EU institutions are part of the DAC Countries Donor Group in the OECD statistics. This group is the biggest donor to EDC, with 8-10 billion USD in annual commitments since 2007, reaching 11.4 billion USD in 2021 (OECD, 2023c).

Looking at the four major multilateral agency groups (EU Institutions, UN, Regional Development Banks, and the World Bank Group), all four have also demonstrated a rising pattern in EDC commitments since the early 2000s. Notably, the EU and the World Bank Group stand out as the largest contributors, reaching commitment records of 1.72 billion USD in 2018 and 2.88 billion USD in 2021, respectively. An interesting observation is that regional development banks have increased



their pledges since 2010, at least doubling the recorded figures, albeit remaining the smallest donor group for EDC among the multilaterals (see **Figure 8**).

Figure 8. Commitments to EDC by the most significant multilateral groups



Source: OECD, 2023

The multilaterals group includes 68 organisations in the OECD database, of which 31 have committed funds for EDC.

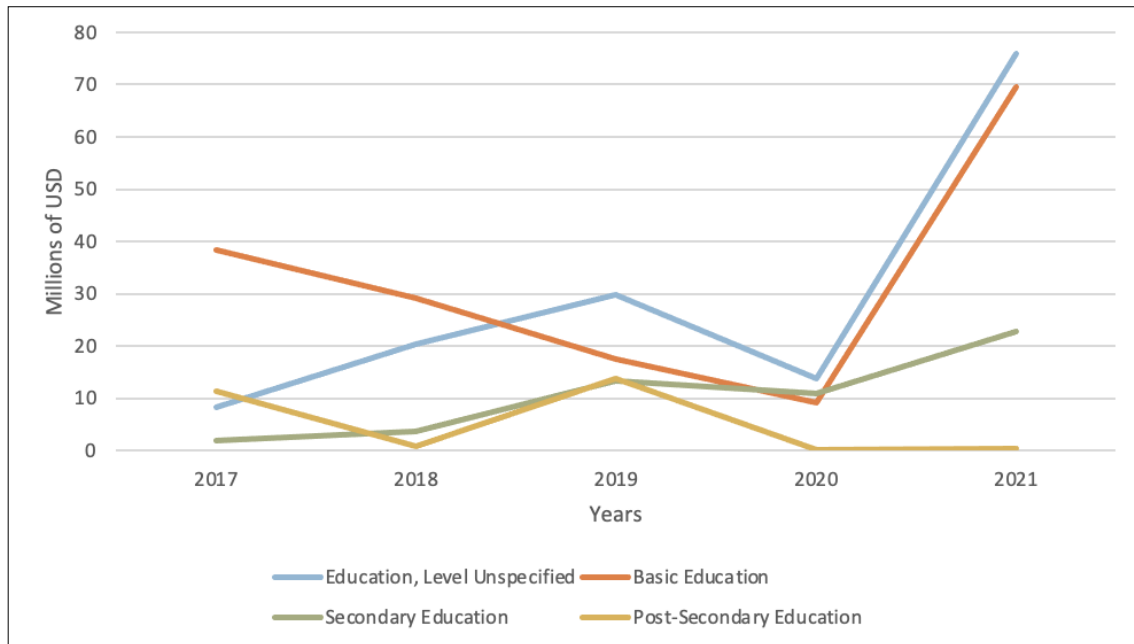
Further, relatively new donors in EDC include non-DAC countries and private donors. The non-DAC countries group has pledged funds since 2001, but a tenfold increase can be observed from 7.6 million USD in 2001 to 760 million USD in 2021. The private donors entered the sector in 2009 and have increased the commitments from 16 million to 860 million USD in 2021 (OECD, 2023).

Breaking down Finland's EDC commitments by education sub-sector, 'Basic Education' and 'Education, Level Unspecified' peaked in 2021, each amounting to approximately 70 million USD in commitments. Meanwhile, 'Secondary Education' and 'Post-Secondary Education' consistently maintained lower levels of commitment (see **Figure 9**).²⁷

²⁷ Open aid allows you to explore the subsectors more in detail, see e.g. Primary education: <https://openaid.fi/en?sector.code=11220>; Teacher training: <https://openaid.fi/en?sector.code=11130>; and School feeding: <https://openaid.fi/en?sector.code=11250>.



Figure 9. Finland’s commitments to EDC by education sub-sectors in 2017-2021



Source: OECD, 2023

The ‘Education, Level Unspecified’ category encompasses various allocations, the main ones including 10.3 million USD for the GPE, 7.7 million USD for Nepal’s School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) Covid-19 response, 3 million USD for funds in Afghanistan, 2.4 million USD for education sector support in Mozambique, and 1.8 million USD for UNICEF’s Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, and Education Programmes (OECD, 2023).

The aid modalities through which Finland channels its EDC typically include (1) bilateral and regional cooperation, (2) support to civil society organisations, (3) multilateral cooperation, (4) non-country-specific development cooperation, and (5) planning, support functions, and communications. So far, the primary category, bilateral and regional cooperation, has accounted for the most substantial portion of disbursements. However, in 2021, there was a notable shift as disbursements surged, particularly in supporting civil society organisations and contributing to multilateral cooperation efforts (MFA, 2023c). When examining another source, OpenAid Finland, it is clear that the surge in 2021 is mainly due to large, once disbursements like 25 MEUR to GPE²⁸ (MFA, 2023c).

From a geographical perspective, the MFA directs its funds to different regions, prioritised in the following descending order of disbursed funds: South of Sahara, Regional cooperation and unspecified countries, South and Central Asia, and the Middle East (MFA, 2023).

28 For more details, see <https://openaid.fi/en/>



4.5 Efficiency

This sub-chapter includes an assessment of the extent to which the implemented measures deliver, or are likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way, considering influencing factors in the operating environment. The evaluation team assessed the extent to which the implemented measures have been adequate in terms of commitments and the allocation of staff and expertise (ODA; non-ODA, e.g., Education Export).

Finding 4. Education is a well-established priority in Finland's development policy and cooperation, including its cooperation with the EU and the Africa strategy. However, the lack of a shared vision and conceptual clarity, especially regarding the multi-actor approach, hinders efficient implementation. Challenges include defining the role of private sector engagement in fragile contexts and addressing education export. While policy measures and institutions like FinCEED have been timely, consensus-building remains a work in progress. Operational challenges include a lack of collaboration tools, budgeted sector-specific plans, and systematic monitoring, all of which hinder evidence-based decision-making. Further, the COVID-19 response revealed systemic challenges.

4.5.1 Approach and strategy

Education as a clear development cooperation policy priority is well-established (and featured also in Finland's cooperation with the EU and the Africa strategy). However, the lack of shared vision for EDC, as well as conceptual unclarity, especially related to the multi-actor approach itself, hamper efficient implementation of the approach. Policy-level steps have been taken to enhance the multi-actor approach, but there is conceptual unclarity of what the multi-actor approach is. This unclarity decreases the efficiency of implementing the approach, as due to unclarity, its operationalisation is challenging. The concept of a multi-actor approach in its current form is a catch-all, understood by some stakeholders as new domestic partnerships to engage non-state actors in EDC (as suggested by the 2018 Stepping Up Report) and viewed by others as more 'traditional' forms of partnership in international cooperation. In both cases, the concept is underpinned by a recognition that the financial value of Finland's ODA is limited.

Challenges arise from the absence of a shared vision, especially for the multi-actor approach.

A premise of Finland's EDC is that the best results can often be achieved through cooperation between multiple actors. The Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms emphasises the importance of the broad and cross-sectoral participation of Finnish society in sustainable development.²⁹ (MFA, 2020c) It is envisaged that "*different actors have their own unique strengths, and we should aim at complementing each other*" (KII). Thus, underlying the drive for multi-actor approaches is Finland's limited financial and

²⁹ We also note an emphasis on multi-actor approaches across other MFA development policy areas, such as policy priority 1 and policy priority 4, which underlines the cross-sectoral nature of MFA development policy overall.



human resources, and there is a need to leverage the private sector's flow of funds. As pointed out in a recent OECD-DAC mid-term review (OECD, 2021), cooperation with different partners is the best way for Finland, as a small country with limited human resources, to act effectively.

A lack of joint understanding and guidance has led to some conceptual confusion regarding the multi-actor approach. On the one hand, such approaches can be understood as new domestic partnerships, e.g., partnerships within Finland, where the emphasis is on engaging Finnish civil society, particularly the private sector, in EDC. From this angle, Finland's EDC may be seen as a platform to combine trade and development goals. On the other, multi-actor approaches can also be understood as State and non-state actor partnerships in the context of more established forms of cooperation at the global and country levels. Examples of multi-actor approaches in Finnish EDC are limited, if any.

Multi-actor partnership as a concept which in many contexts is equalled to education export and participation of the private sector, and the appropriateness of private sector engagement in fragile contexts and/or how education can be “exported” are still hindering efficient implementation.

The concept of education export seems to have morphed into multi-actor partnerships between CSOs, HEIs and the private sector, with little evidence of strategic investment beyond the efforts of the TFK experts. In 2019, the expert Task Force envisaged a range of specific measures for investment in education export, such as the promotion of education export through the TFK network³⁰, also embedded in MEC's Action plan to implement the Africa Strategy. Taking this up, TFK experts have been positioned to internationalise higher education and research, promoting exports of Finnish knowledge, expertise, and educational innovation. Although TFK experts' brief does not explicitly address the learning crisis, and they do not receive direct ODA support for their work, their mandate has been extended to cover basic education, particularly early childhood learning, “so we contribute to solutions to the crisis”. However, there are no formal mechanisms for information flows regarding education export between Embassies, EU delegations and the Ministries. (MFA, 2019a; MFA 2020c; MFA, 2021g; MEC 2022; online survey; KIIs).

Multi-actor partnerships when intertwined with education export and private sector involvement continue to raise questions about their suitability, particularly in fragile contexts.

Many stakeholders assert that what is needed is the establishment of a long-term vision, not project-based thinking. Ideally, the Finnish approach would be one of “*contributing to sustainable, long-term results by transferring knowledge rather than exporting a product without any more context around it*”. FinCEED may serve, in time, as the recommended ‘institutional cooperation mechanism as a means of facilitating joint ventures between CSOs, HEIs and the private sector’ to improve in the long run the capacities of Finnish actors to act as project implementers on a larger scale than the activities funded by the MFA. However, it is unclear how such new partnerships or joint ventures can be financed in the absence of flexible financial instruments for multi-actor education development.

The main challenge is a matter of principles: the battle between utilising local resources and importing solutions; why involve Finnish solutions (such as EdTech) if the same could be delivered

30 The TFK network has been set up and is financed by MEC, with TFK experts stationed in eight countries, working at Finnish embassies and mandated to promote Finland's global reputation as a country of high-quality education and science.

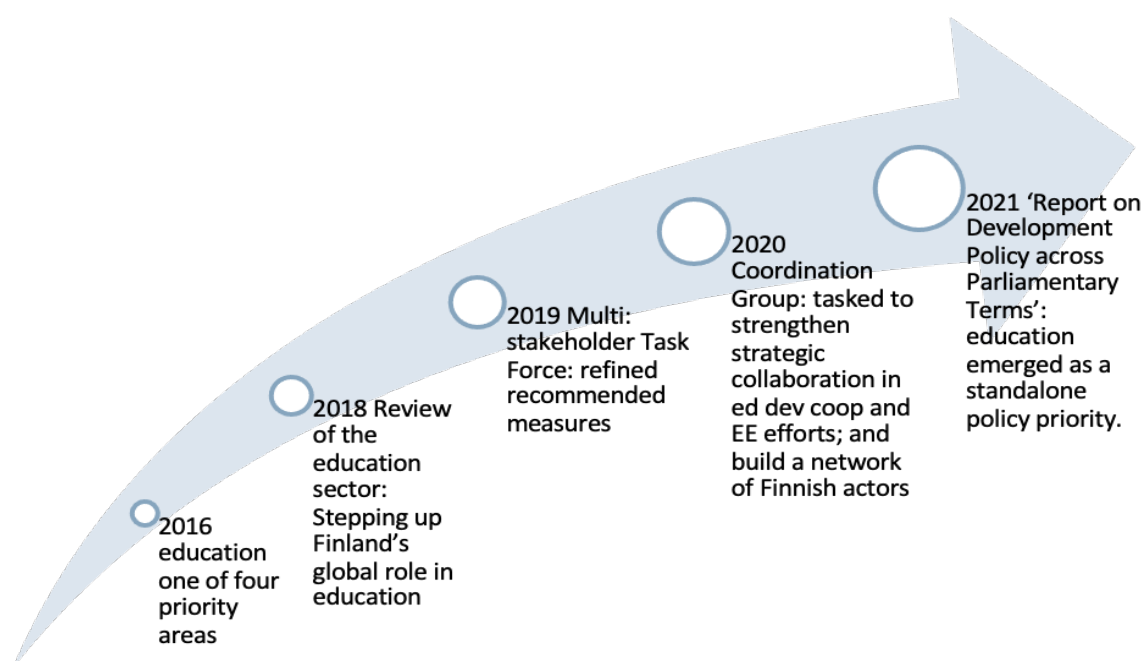
locally? Although HEI ICI partnerships are potential examples of multi-actor cooperation, the HEI ICI funding goes only to HEIs, and the private sector is not funded.

CSOs struggle with their contribution/self-funding, while private sector actors are not gaining the profit margin they would require to be on board.

4.5.2 Timeliness of follow-up measures

Implementation of policy measures, consecutive plans, and establishment of institutions (FinCEED) have been timely, although consensus building has been time-consuming and is still ongoing. Following approval of the Stepping Up Report (2018) recommendations and the work of the Task Force (2019) in suggesting strategies based on these recommendations, the Co-ordination Group was set up to strengthen multi-actor collaboration (2020). With the introduction of education as a standalone development policy priority area (2021), the Coordination Group developed a national ‘Roadmap’ as well as a Theory of Change for EDC. As illustrated by **Figure 10**, this sequence of events generally suggests a relatively timely and coherent response across EDC sectors and non-state actors. However, it has taken five years between the ‘Stepping Up Report’ (2018) and a more operational Roadmap (2023). The Coordination Group minutes suggest that in these early stages of a response to the global education crisis, much time and effort was dedicated to consensus building on common interests across multiple actors, which is still ongoing. All in all, progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the ‘Stepping Up Report’ has been satisfactory, which resonates with the importance of education as a policy priority.

Figure 10. A timely and coherent sequence of institutional events following 2018 recommendations



Source: Evaluation Team

The FinCEED was recently established, financed by MFA, and housed by EDUFI. FinCEED was born out of a recommendation of the 2018 ‘Stepping Up’ review team to establish a platform to allow Finnish education experts to be made available to developing countries and international organisations.



New instruments for collaboration between state and non-state actors have not been developed yet, and implementation of actions related to digital and technology solutions, small-scale seed funding, or the use of social impact bonds are still pending. The 'Roadmap' prepared by the Task Force in 2022 was planned to assess financial instruments and domestic and international funding sources for multi-actor collaboration and map existing financial instruments for multi-actor collaboration. This is to encourage new partnerships and financing models to enable collaboration between public and private actors. However, the evaluation team did not find progress to this effect in developing flexible financial instruments for multi-actor education development. As this was recommended only in 2022, it is understandable that there is no evidence of progress yet, although the need for solving the issue would be high to boost the multi-actor approach further.

Implementation of various, although very relevant, recommendations are still pending. These include, e.g., testing the cost-effectiveness and functionality of Finnish digital and technology solutions in different conditions in developing countries, including in the humanitarian crisis contexts and actions to increase small-scale seed funding. Social impact bonds in development cooperation have also not been used yet. (MFA, 2019a; MFA, 2020c; MFA, 2020d; MFA, 2022e; EDUFI 2021a; UNICEF, 2022b; KIIs: MFA, MEC, EDUFI, TFK, FinCEED; CSOs).

4.5.3 Planning and monitoring

There is no single, consolidated operational plan, timeline and budget across EDC ministries and departments (including the allocation of specific responsibilities to designated actors), so the timeliness of implemented measures is difficult to assess. The Coordination Group's 'Roadmap' is not an operational plan with an annual timeline. Similarly, MFA's RBM framework is also a strategy document and not an operational plan. Importantly, EDC actors have not been allocated specific responsibilities for specific 'Stepping Up Measures' for them to be held accountable for various follow-up interventions. Therefore, an assessment of, e.g., timeliness of specific 'Stepping Up measures' is problematic. We note, however, the minutes of Coordination Group meetings, which mention that while 'it is *not necessary to be responsible for each action to be taken by an operator/actor group* [...] actors are encouraged to consider and record whether they can take responsibility for certain actions; and responsible parties should be marked where applicable, as far as relevant, and possible (MFA, 2019a; MFA, 2022h; KIIs: MFA, EDUFI, FinCEED, CSOs).

MFA's financial and results planning and reporting do not provide an overall view of activities and results in one sector, in this case, education. MFA's planning is based on the financial and operational plan (*talous- ja toimintasuunnitelma*) budget planning process and takes place within the overall budget envelopes for development policy and cooperation at the MFA. It is based on the unit-level plans and the budgets in previous years. Unit budgets are then aggregated at the department and corporate levels. The evaluation of "How do we Learn, Manage and Make Decisions in Finland's Development Policy and Cooperation: Management of Results Information and Knowledge at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (found that financial and results reporting essentially follow the same logic, and reflect the organisational structure of the MFA rather than, for example, development policy priorities. Lack of an integrated approach to planning and reporting had resulted in a lack of aggregated results information, for example, for entire sectors – in this case, education - policy priorities and cross-cutting objectives, and it was difficult to obtain an overall view of activities and results in one sector or one country – across policy channels and instruments. Joint planning and decision-making across departments are also one of MFA's challenges. (MFA, 2019e). Since 2019, the Open Aid platform has been instituted, and priority area-specific analysis and planning have been annually carried out through the evidence-based planning cycle (*tiedolla johtamisen prosessi, tulospäivät, TTS*).



Evidence-based decision-making related to EDC is challenging without improved statistics, sector-specific plans with budgets, and corresponding systematic monitoring.

In addition to the education sector cooperation policy development, one of the overarching measures was to enhance the statistics, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of EDC. The limitations of statistics were also obvious in this evaluation and have been more in detail described in sub-chapter 4.1. However, the introduction of the OpenAid system has marked a significant leap forward in the realm of available statistics and analysis. Also, noteworthy progress has been made in refining the categorisation of interventions related to education. Since 2021, the MFA information management system (AHA) has integrated education as a distinct priority classification for interventions. This development represents a crucial step towards more precise tracking and assessment of education-related initiatives. While there remains a need for further updates within the OpenAid platform to align with this classification fully, it is already possible to extract education-specific data through sector classification.

Evidence-based decision-making is challenging without sector-specific plans and corresponding systematic monitoring.

The MFA not having sector-specific plans and budgets affects monitoring of the implementation of the measures and using evidence as the basis of making decisions. Full implementation and operationalisation of the education policy priority would benefit from taking increasingly informed and balanced decisions with regard to the education thematic priorities, use of instruments and modalities, and allocation of funding. For this to happen, both planning and monitoring for learning should be strengthened, and monitoring is only meaningful if there is a sectoral plan against which it can be done.

The findings of the Evaluation of Finnish Humanitarian Assistance 2016–2022 (MFA, 2022q) are worrying. The report states that only little data is available to report on humanitarian results in education. While the Humanitarian Policy contains strategies for intended results measurement, these do not deliver robust results reporting. In cooperation with multilateral organisations, MFA trusts its partners to provide evidence of results, but the shortcomings of this have been widely documented in several evaluations. However, in the Guidance Note ‘Triple Nexus and Cooperation with Fragile States and Regions’ in 2022 (Guidance Note, October 2022) measures for improving both planning and monitoring systems are foreseen.

4.5.4 Adaptive management

Adaptive management measures were taken by the MFA as part of the EDC to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, at the country level, the global COVID-19 pandemic tends to camouflage delays that result from systemic challenges that are particularly difficult to resolve. Assessment of the Response of Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation to the COVID-19 Pandemic: From Reactivity to Resilience (MFA, 2022r) found out that, in general, during the pandemic, MFA aimed at protecting the ongoing work and reacted flexibly to the rapidly changing situation. Instead of ceasing development cooperation activities, MFA adjusted them to remain relevant under pandemic conditions. The assessment further found out that the process management adaptations were timely, both in terms of interventions as well as policy dialogue and influencing activities vis-à-vis its multilateral partners. Finland largely supported

Finland's support to the sector succeeded in being adaptive in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



them in planning and executing their responses and focused on ensuring that Finnish values and development policy priorities were properly reflected. This is confirmed also by the findings of this evaluation. Decisions to continue the implementation of education sector interventions and adjust them in Ethiopia and Nepal were timely and took place in the first couple of months of the pandemic, as evidenced during the country missions (see Volume 2 for the Country Case Studies). Rapid action took place, although it put an additional burden on the management and staff. Decisions could be made quickly as the decision-making at the portfolio level can be made by the units.

Stakeholders at both global and country levels inevitably reference the long-lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on planned interventions; ‘effects of the corona pandemic will be unprecedented and long-lasting’. Finland granted additional funding as a response to the pandemic; for example, 2.5 MEUR was released for the education sector adaptation program in Nepal, 200,000 euros in Colombia for the early childhood education project for Venezuelan refugee children, and 2 MEUR for humanitarian aid given to UNRWA in Palestine, about half of which went to education. However, we found that the COVID-19 pandemic tends to camouflage delays, which result from systemic challenges related to specific country contexts and which are particularly difficult to resolve; the pandemic exacerbated more fundamental constraints resulting from in-country crises, coupled with weaknesses in the institutional context.

The Building Resilience and Addressing Violence from Early Years through Adolescence (BRAVE) project, implemented by UNICEF and financed by Finland in Palestine, is a case in point. We found that the implementation of this 18-month project had been delayed for almost one year for several reasons beyond school closures and health and safety restrictions. These included factors such as the ongoing violent conflict, such as the 11-day escalation of conflict in Gaza; the uncertain relationship between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and civil society, where the Ministry wants to be responsible for implementing the project within schools, not local institutions; the high staff turnover at senior level at the MoE; and teachers’ strikes in the West Bank, as well as strikes by UNRWA workers, which affected the continuity of public education and the education of refugees (KIIs). Similarly, while the ECW MYRP in Ethiopia (Amhara and Tigray regions) has been significantly delayed, this is likely to be as much because of issues related to project coordination (as well as the impact of man-made and natural crises) because of school closures (MFA, 2020d; MFA, 2022h; Country Case Studies; KIIs: MFA, EDUFI, CSOs).

Partnering with the multilateral organisations in the overall COVID-19 pandemic response and supporting multilateral and multi-donor interventions in Ethiopia and Nepal positively affected the relevance and efficiency of Finland’s pandemic response. The Team Europe collaboration opened opportunities for coherence and communication.

4.5.5 Human resources

Human resources are limited to managing and coordinating the multi-actor approach. Positively, progress has been made to increase the pool of education experts in the embassies. Several departments and units in the MFA, ranging from the regional to the political departments, implement a wide range of ODA-funded interventions. However, as described in the sub-chapter 3.3 Financial Framework and Institutional Arrangements, there is only a limited number of staff within the MFA who are directly responsible for duties, especially in education sector development policy and cooperation. A major achievement has been that there is a significant pool of staff responsible for education development cooperation in embassies, including locally employed and sent staff. While almost all the Finnish embassies in Finland’s long-term partner countries have staff with dedicated education advisory roles, they also carry out other duties.



Collaborative actions with non-MFA partners potentially bring additional human resources to the education sector dialogue and implementation. However, coordination and collaboration at different levels and with different partners require a significant amount of time. MFA is a siloed organisation where the staff are stretched to the limit with their current day-to-day tasks. It is not foreseen that there will be any staff additions soon; on the contrary. In this situation, it is understandable that in the interviews, staff strongly emphasised the need for a stand-alone education sector plan and corresponding budget to improve the coherence and efficiency of implementation.

While progress has been made to increase the pool of education experts in the embassies, human resources are limited.

4.6 Coherence

This sub-chapter includes an assessment of the compatibility of the measures with other implemented measures and the extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the measures and vice versa.

Finding 5. Formalising the Education in Developing Countries Coordination Group and establishing FinCEED improves coordination, but future coherence is uncertain due to the evolving collaborative vision. Challenges include conceptual ambiguity in the multi-actor approach and state-private sector collaboration. Partner governments value jointly designed and monitored development cooperation programmes, enhancing relevance and coherence. Ensuring coherence in a multilateral support strategy requires aligning priorities between them and the MFA. CSO support, designed with beneficiaries, is appreciated for its responsiveness and focus on marginalised groups, reinforcing coherence. EU TEIs are expected to boost access to funding for Finnish companies and CSOs in education projects, which also constitutes an opportunity for improved coherence.

4.6.1 Institutional measures

Education in Developing Countries Coordination Group was established in 2020 to promote the collaboration between the ministries (MFA, MEC and EDUFI) and other actors in the education sector development cooperation in Finland. It is co-chaired by MFA and MEC. Stakeholders identify the Coordination Group as a clear sign of mutual interests, with CSOs and higher education institutions also represented. In 2020, member organisations comprised MFA and MEC (co-chairs), EDUFI, CSOs, universities, vocational colleges, education export representatives and individual experts. The Coordination Group is mandated to perform a set of specific tasks: to strengthen strategic collaboration and influence, to build and strengthen the network of Finnish education actors, enable information sharing, and to develop a national long-term roadmap for education sector cooperation.

The establishment of the Coordination Group has improved information sharing between the different EDC actors but is still not all-inclusive. While the Coordination Group is generally considered good and important, CSOs interviewed criticised the limited involvement of CSO actors. It has



improved over time (CSOs were at first represented by FINGO) as more individual CSOs were invited to participate, but some central actors are not yet included (e.g., Save the Children, which is a central actor in the area of Education in Emergencies). The Coordination Group is found to be a well-functioning coordinating and sharing platform but with limited results in generating concrete cooperation.

The Coordination Group is not an executive body, and it is not clear where the responsibility for coordinated collaboration lies, which decreases its relevance as an executor and decision-maker. Despite not having an executive function, the implemented measure has enhanced the relevance of education in Finland's EDC by promoting collaboration and exchange of information through existing networks and taking collaborative action forward. Indeed, as a follow-up measure, in 2022, the group developed the 'Roadmap to Strengthen Cooperation with Developing Countries in the Field of Education' (*koulutus kehittyvissä maissa koordinaatioryhmän tiekartta*). The 'Roadmap' presents a shared vision of the key steps and actions by which Finland will become a more significant player in the resolution of the global learning crisis. Triangular collaboration between the MFA, the MEC and EDUFI has been strengthened between government sectors, representing a nexus of ODA and non/ODA actors, with EDUFI functioning as the operational arm [i.e., through FinCEED].

Finland's development cooperation policy objectives are built into FinCEED's operations.

The Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education Development (FinCEED) was recently established, financed by MFA, and housed by EDUFI. FinCEED was born out of a recommendation of the 2018 'Stepping up' review team to establish a platform to allow Finnish education experts to be made available to developing countries and international organisations. Under the umbrella of contributing to the achievement of SDG 4, FinCEED brings together the main objectives of the Finnish development policy (eradicate poverty and reduce inequality), the policy priorities of the education sector (improve access to high-quality basic and secondary education, especially for girls and vulnerable children) and those of the humanitarian assistance (support the right of all children to learn), underpinned by expert support to further the role of the government as duty-bearers and build the capacities of rights-holders.

FinCEED has three main functions, all of which take account of Finland's development policy human rights-based approach (HRBA) as well as its cross-cutting objectives. FinCEED strengthens the competence and capacity of actors in the education sector in Partner Countries (e.g., ministries of education, national authorities, and teacher training actors) through both bilateral and multi-lateral development. To do this, FinCEED strengthens the competencies of Finnish development partners in the field of education and training through actions to support multi-actor collaboration. This will, in the long run, improve the capacities of Finnish actors to act as project implementers and experts in the education sector on a larger scale than the activities funded by the MFA. (MFA, 2022e; EDUFI/FinCEED, 2023).

Although inter-sectoral collaboration is essential for EDC, the sector ministries' collaborative vision for Finland's EDC is still in its early stages.

As seen above, a promising picture has emerged in terms of collaboration between the development cooperation and education sectors. Yet, closer scrutiny of sectoral collaboration suggests that the picture of policy objectives, consensus-building processes, and joint implementation is somewhat blurred. While the ministries share a commitment to the policy objective of Inclusive Quality Education, each Ministry has a different point of view when looking at the same picture. There is a need "to co-create and to clarify a shared vision". Joint planning between the MFA and EDUFI to identify strategic partnerships is required to fully leverage the value of the centre in multilateral partnerships.



4.6.2 Multi-actor approach and new partnerships

The 'Stepping Up Report' 2018 recommended that development cooperation becomes more closely integrated into Finland's other international educational activities, such as its 2017-25 international higher education and research policy, education exports, and ed-tech start-up activities. The 2019 Task Force's follow-up measures further emphasised the multi-actor approach and developing financial instruments motivating multi-actor cooperation, especially facilitating CSO, HEIs and private sector joint ventures and enabling collaboration between public and private actors. The 'Roadmap' in 2022 further recommended the assessment of financial instruments and domestic and international funding sources for multi-actor collaboration and mapping existing financial instruments for multi-actor collaboration.

The most controversial measures are the strong emphasis on the multi-actor approach as well as the promotion of the EdTech and private sector in education sector development cooperation. The role of the education export and private sector involvement in public sector reforms aiming at improving learning outcomes is not clear, and there are differing views on their relevance in this context. The question of the relevance of education export in the context of Finland's EDC is underpinned by two unresolved issues: the conceptual clarity of education export: what is it and what is it not, and the coordination of education export actors: who coordinates and how? Argumentation in Finland is like what is presented below (**Box 9**).

Box 9. Engaging with the private sector

Non-state involvement in education generates passionate debate on equity versus freedom of choice concerning this question: 'To what extent is education a public investment or a private consumer good?'. In the debate for or against the non-state provision, proponents argue that non-state actors are cost-efficient; they fill genuine gaps, and they present alternatives to bureaucratised public education systems that inhibit innovation. Opponents argue that even where there is a clear cost advantage, underlying issues are not addressed; gap-filling raises equity risks because disadvantaged populations have less access to the options non-state actors offer, and innovations by non-state actors are often exaggerated and not replicable. Underlying this is the question: 'What are state and non-state actors' responsibilities regarding the right to education?'

Source: UNESCO, 2021

Education export contrasts with Finland's primarily public education system. In terms of conceptual clarity, the notion of education as an asset and, therefore, an export product is not a new phenomenon. Anglo-Saxon countries have long pioneered and dominated global education export, primarily associated with the internationalisation of HEIs aimed at attracting foreign students to domestic institutions, and new players have emerged in education export, such as Singapore, India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and China. In Finland's case, the domestic education system gained attention on the back of the 'PISA miracle', with countries in the Global South projecting their education systems based on Finnish education (Hinke-Dobrochinski, 2021). However, Finland's education export diverges from other countries' education export practices due to its socio-historical context. While it has been legitimised

Education export diverges from Finland's predominantly publicly funded education system.



by the branding of Finnish education as a unique public good, ‘the ‘naturalised’ market-oriented nature of Finnish education export contrasts with the Finnish primarily public education system’.

Education export contrasts with Finland’s policy focus on LDCs/LMICs. EDUFI’s ‘Roadmap for Education Export, intended to complement the Coordination Group’s Roadmap, states that ‘Finnish education expertise is of interest to the world’; this primarily refers to upper/middle-income countries such as the Arab States (e.g., United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia), Latin America (e.g., Brazil and Mexico) and countries in South and South-East Asia (e.g., India, Indonesia, Malaysia), as well as China and South Africa. Indeed, the TFK experts are positioned in the capitals of key education markets (Singapore, Beijing, New Delhi, Washington DC, Buenos Aires, Abu Dhabi, and Pretoria). The demand for Finnish expertise from these countries is in the following areas: in-service teacher training (with a distinction between teaching methods and management); education development services, foreign language training leading to higher education degrees, study tours to Finnish Schools, EdTech and digital innovations, VET, and education evaluation and assessment.

In 2020, Finland had approximately 300 companies or educational institutions engaged in education export, described as external trade in the following services: Early Childhood Care and Development, basic education, VET, higher education, student exchange, and EdTech. However, the EDUFI Roadmap also makes an important distinction between these services and a standalone thematic area of expertise: development cooperation. This is an important distinction: it suggests that education export in the context of EDC may include some, but not all, of the above areas. During interviews, we asked respondents, ‘For whom is education export relevant?’ In response, a related question was raised: Is EDC a pathway for private sector opportunities, or are private sector opportunities a pathway for more effective education development cooperation? Interviewees also responded that “*advocates of the ‘business agenda’ should take account of lessons learned at home*”, such as recent national research on the negative impact of digitalisation on equity in learning outcomes among children in Finnish Schools.

From the perspective of the TFK network in the African region (where the private sector is “*not yet established*”), investment in education export is strategic primarily for Finnish business interests because “*Finland wants to expand its trade through the commercialisation of education know-how*”. CSOs meanwhile assert that the contextualisation of education projects requires an adequate understanding of local conditions, culture, and procedures, which can only be obtained through a sufficiently long-term on-site presence, “*which may not be available to Finnish education experts, while many local organisations already have networks in the country and have worked with authorities to develop the education sector*”.

Coordination of education exports in the context of education development cooperation is challenging. As a concept, ‘education export’ has evolved into the concept of ‘multi-actor partnerships. Overall, MFA and its partners agree that the Government’s Development Policy

Coordination of education exports in the context of education development cooperation is challenging.

Programme ‘requires extensive involvement of Finnish society for sustainable development’. The previous Minister of Development Cooperation and Trade, Ville Skinnari pointed out the importance of multi-actor partnerships between the Finnish public sector, civil society, companies, research, and educational institutions as means by which Finland can take a globally influential role. However, education export actors work in different networks and ecosystems, which are dispersed across

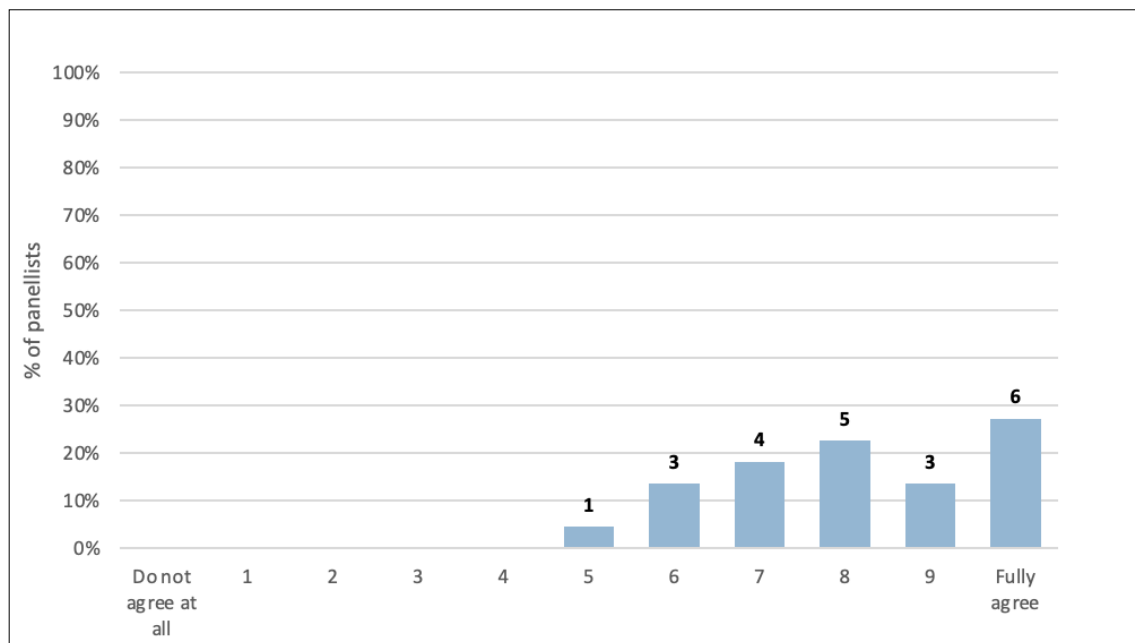


different government organisations (MFA/MEC, 2019). This hinders rather than enables different types of actors to synergise their work. Similarly, lack of regulation contributes to fostering a sense of lack of possibilities as well as competition in the sector (Hinke-Dobrochinski, 2021).

Stakeholders assert that the All-For-All model of education export creates a very disorganised picture of the Finnish field of education export. Potential partners indicate a need for more targeted services and government assistance. They also point out that creating a sustainable foundation for change in partner countries requires a longer perspective and consideration of the country's policies. At the end of the day, "comprehensive country strategies and country programmes are the basis for the development of multi-actor cooperation and the efficiency of synergies" (Hinke-Dobrochinski, 2021; Oinas, 2023; EDUFI, 2020; Oinas; MFA, 2020c; MFA, 2021b; KII: MFA, EDUFI, TFK).

Also the Delphi panellists viewed the concept of 'multi-actor approaches' as not yet fully formed, confirming the need for a coherent strategy and guidance on multi-actor collaboration, including for Team Europe Initiatives, as well as better integration and coordination of non-state actors in EDC. A considerable share of panellists (10 out of 27) did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable about assessing more nuanced theses on the multi-actor approach. Overall, EDC stakeholders diverge in their understanding of the concept of 'multi-actor approaches'. Confirming this, Delphi panellists suggest that the concept has not yet been well translated from Finnish policy into action. Most (about two-thirds) of the panellists strongly agree with the thesis that the concept is not yet clear to all stakeholders involved. Similarly, Finnish CSOs, companies and HEI are uncertain how the MFA wants to involve them in multi-actor approaches. Echoing respondents to EQ1 and EQ2, Delphi experts assert that the MFA must provide a coherent strategy and guidance on multi-actor collaboration, which includes clarifying actors, their roles, and their responsibilities in the partnership; defining fields of action/engagement and stating the partnership objectives (see **Figure 11**).

Figure 11. Multi-actor Approaches: Thesis 4 – Strategy and guidance on multi-actor collaboration



Statement: The concept of a 'multi actor approach' is not yet clear to all stakeholders involved. Finnish CSOs, companies and HEI are uncertain how MFA wants to involve the in multi-actor approaches. MFA must provide a **coherent strategy and guidance on multi-actor collaboration**, which includes clarifying actors, their roles, and their responsibilities in the partnership; defining fields of action/engagement; and stating the partnership objectives.

Source: Evaluation team



Similarly, as seen in section 4.2, **the coordination of EDC stakeholders is a challenge**. About half (9 out of 17) observe **a lack of coordination among Finnish state and non-state actors and acknowledge the difficulty for CSOs and companies to see what other groups of stakeholders are doing** and who they could potentially partner with; only some (5 out of 17, about a third) appreciates FinCEED's action to bring multiple actors together and EDUFI's provision of the link to companies and education export. Thus, about half agree with the observation that there is an urgent need for MFA to ensure better coordination and facilitate partnerships between the actors (see **Annex 10**, Figure 5).

4.6.3 Channels and instruments

Education sector support is highly appreciated by the partner country governments, and the bilateral and multi-bilateral support are jointly designed with the government and/or direct support to the existing government programmes, which enhances the coherence of measures and their relevance in the country context. Finland's Country Strategies and Country Programmes, the 'heart' of Finland's bilateral support – and indeed Finnish EDC in general – place great importance on alignment with national education sector priorities in partner countries. Sector support is *“a robust vehicle to ensure that alignment on paper is matched by the coherent translation of policy intent into action”*.

Education sector support, bilateral and multi-bilateral support are jointly designed with the partner government and in support of government programmes. This enhances their relevance and coherence.

In the case study countries, the shared priorities of government decision-makers and development partners are to address the equity and quality dimensions of countries' respective learning crises. Finland's selected areas of support are highly relevant in the case study country contexts. In **Ethiopia**, for example, through sector support and technical assistance, complemented by policy dia-

logue, Finland has maintained a focus on the continuing expansion of equitable basic education provision, including increased access to preschool and secondary, while at the same time, highlighting major challenges in improving the quality of education provision. In **Nepal**, too, Finland has consistently supported the education priorities of the Government. Finland's Country Programme objectives have remained relevant, with a specific focus on the inclusion of girls, persons with disabilities and other groups in vulnerable positions. In **Palestine**, Finland's support focused on strengthening education institutions as well as the implementation of the Ministry of Education's sector programme, including school construction and the rehabilitation of schools damaged as a result of armed conflict. In addition, support focused on teacher education, including training in digital and distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and targeted support of pre-schooling and foundational learning (Country Case Studies, Vol. 2).

The coherence of a two-pronged strategy for multilateral cooperation, core contributions, and thematic assistance depends on the 'fit' between evolving institutional priorities. This 'fit' requires a specific focus on thematic profiling and depends on evidence of impact. To address the global learning crisis, Finland's contributions to multilateral organisations aim to strike a balance between the two strategies. First, financial contributions gain a 'place at the table' not only as a vehicle for Finnish policy influence but also to leverage Finnish expertise in EDC interventions of multilateral organisations. Second, multilateral funding leverages the credibility, presence and reach of multilateral organisations to meet partner countries' needs. Finland's policy influencing



aims to strengthen the commitment of partner countries and multilateral actors to quality inclusive education. In concrete terms, Finland's objective is that the partner countries allocate more funds to education, especially for basic education. Finland also advocates for increased multilateral funding for education with a focus on equity and the poorest countries. The aim is also to ensure that education policies promote equity, gender equality and inclusive education, improve the status of teachers, and the quality and relevance of education. In addition, Finland strives to ensure that the duty bearers' responsibility to promote the right to education and the protection of education in crises is realised.

Need to include a specific focus on learning in crises in policy dialogue to stay relevant in the global context and enhance the coherence of measures. MFA and its partners encounter several constraints regarding Finland's policy influence. Globally, due to the food crisis, climate change, Russia's attack on Ukraine and other urgent needs, education is being deprioritised by a global development policy agenda, and the need to support the resilience of school systems and to secure the continuity of learning in crises is increasing. Against such a backdrop, integrating a *specific* focus on learning in crises (as recommended in 2018) into multilateral influencing would be advisable. At the same time, while thematic profiling is important (e.g., school meals, teacher education, digital learning and learning technology), thematic profiling requires concrete cooperation [and] impact requires evidence of concrete actions. This, in turn, requires maintaining and increasing the level of funding for education to strengthen the credibility of policy influencing. (MFA, 2020d; MFA, 2021f; MFA, 2022e; online survey; KIIs: MFA, MEC, EU, GPE, UNICEF).

Given that interconnected conflicts, natural disasters, COVID-19, and climate change have disrupted the lives of children in so many countries and compromised their most fundamental rights, Finland views UNICEF as needed more than ever. Nevertheless, the question is how UNICEF's digital innovation supports the most vulnerable and how it will take place in practice. From the perspective of headquarters, membership of the Executive Boards of UN organisations raises Finland's profile at the global level, but according to some interviews, Finland does not have clear messages regarding sector priorities and priority strategies, and there needs to be a sharper focus for policy influencing to stay relevant in the education sector. This is especially true when core funding is limited.

There are expectations that EU TEIs will help to increase the credibility of not only Finnish companies but also Finnish CSOs in the education sector, and the funding base of their education sector projects will expand (MFA, 2020c). Notably, the TEIs are perceived to be about political and trade development as much as education, which sets it apart from bilateral cooperation. Overall, in Finland's development policy and cooperation, in line with MFA's Africa Strategy (and MEC's Action Plan for the same), at the forefront of Finland's recent cooperation with the EU is its engagement with EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package and the TEIs, the flagship of the Team Europe approach. There is strong interest among the Finnish stakeholders to participate in the TEI's for leveraging Finnish competencies, including in EDC and education export.

Finnish private sector and civil society organisations expect the EU Team Europe Initiatives to increase their credibility and funding base.

At the same time, through its engagement with the GPE – the biggest fund in the education development sector – Finland can potentially influence education transformation in 90 countries in the world and address the global education crisis through multi-actor partnerships. This said, from GPE's perspective, Finland, "*perhaps even more than the other Nordic countries*" has been more than a donor. Efforts to address the global education crisis need more



than big financial partners; *“You need loud voices”*. Finland’s financial contribution to the World Bank Foundational Learning Compact trust fund and support to the Banks flagship initiative on teachers, COACH, both through global level work and a pilot in Mozambique, enable MFA and its partners to bring Finnish solutions and expertise to the forefront of project design and joint policy discussions. Through cooperation with regional development banks, such as ADB, Finland can enhance the relevance of the response in the education sector.

Capacity development for research projects on digital and distance learning has been increasingly relevant, but beyond the HEI ICI programme, collaborative research is uncharted terrain. Within the HEI ICI framework, Finnish HEIs work in line with EDC policy priorities. They respect the ‘do no harm’ principle, ensuring that programming responds to specific challenges in partner country contexts. Some interviewees stated that *“we should not have a ‘we know best’ attitude but remember that we are at the receiving end of innovation and learning from Africa”*. Indeed, HEI ICI partnerships benefit from Finland’s long-standing presence in some countries and previous collaborations. For example, the HEI ICI projects in Palestine and Ethiopia benefitted from linkages between CSOs and HEIs, within the respective country programmes. Importantly, while the selection of country partner institutions is made by the Finnish university, *“they don’t always go for highest-ranking African HEIs and also work with the hidden gems”*. North-South research cooperation enhances relevance in three ways: First, internationalisation is a process of engaging and co-creating knowledge, not going to Africa with products or solutions that already exist. Any capacity development initiatives are premised on *“needs that are carefully defined by our African partners”*. Second, internationalisation is about promoting the engagement of African scholars who have been studying in Finland and know the Finnish policy and education system. Third, it is about inspiring students to look beyond the borders of Finland.

Efforts to build the expert pool are highly relevant and enhance the coherence of measures, particularly given the growing emphasis on multi-actor approaches, including CSOs as key country-level partners. The ongoing challenge of securing and retaining development expertise within MFA is challenging. Several recent evaluations, as well as the 2018 ‘Stepping Up’ review report, reiterate that Finland’s development cooperation is most impactful when financial support is based on long-standing partnerships and when this is combined with political dialogue, as well as expertise and influencing efforts. Yet, as noted by an OECD DAC mid-term review of Finland’s development cooperation (OECD-DAC, 2021), including but not restricted to education, ‘it is clear that attracting and retaining people with sufficient development policy and programming expertise within the MFA and in embassies remains a challenge for Finland’. While the review team commended Finland on four positive developments since the last review in 2019, they also identified three challenges; these are shown in **Figure 12**.

Figure 12. Challenges of Finland’s development cooperation (OECD/DAC)



Source: OECD DAC, 2021

The view of the DAC team is reiterated by MFA experts: “Our ODA financing is a drop in the ocean, so we need to maximise our influence”. One way to do this is by making optimal use of mechanisms for pooled resourcing, such as membership of Team Europe, and there is a need to work through multilateral channels and position experts in the multilateral organisations. Yet, here again, resource gaps are apparent. In the case of Finland’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, for example, where Sweden has three representatives for UNICEF, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and UNFPA, respectively, a single individual represents Finland on the Executive Boards of all three organisations. Moreover, such efforts need to consider Finland’s policy imperative of responsive EDC. If internal resources are limited, there should be ways to manoeuvre. On the one hand, multi-actor platforms in multilateral cooperation can mean more scope for Finnish actors; on the other hand, it is a tricky route when trying to meet the needs coming from the field” (OECD/DAC, 2021; MFA, 2020g; MFA, 2021q; MFA, 2022m; MFA, 2022n; KIIs: MFA, MEC).

CSO programmes have, in general, been very sensitive to the needs and priorities of stakeholders and beneficiaries. CSOs have largely succeeded in addressing the needs and priorities of marginalised groups and accordingly, complementing other forms of cooperation. There is often a divergence between the programmes and the ‘real’ policies and interests of governments in the sense that authorities do not always prioritise marginalised stakeholders (children with disabilities, girls and boys, remote areas) targeted by the CSOs. In the case study countries, especially in Nepal, CSOs complemented the work of the government by specifically focusing on access to education in remote areas, children with disabilities and mental health challenges. Finland supported the seven-year School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2016, which recorded significant progress in increasing access to education, achieving more gender parity in enrolment and reducing illiteracy (MFA, 2016b; MFA, 2017; Chapter 5: Results).

Civil society organisations' work has been sensitive to the needs and priorities of stakeholders and beneficiaries, including those in marginalised situations.



5 Findings: The Results of Finland's education development cooperation

EQ2: What have been the relative and overall effectiveness of the various measures taken by the different actors in development cooperation (overall and by cooperation instrument/channel).

Summary answer: Finland has contributed to improving access to primary and secondary education, but poor learning outcomes persist, highlighting a continuing learning crisis in partner countries. Finland's EDC has also effectively promoted inclusive basic and secondary education, influencing policies at national and global levels and enhancing teaching practices. However, increases in access to vocational training for women and girls with disabilities remain limited.

Successful EDC at the country level relies on strategic financing through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, fostering expertise in Country Teams, drivers like policy dialogue and targeted financing, as well as positive results such as increased girls' participation. Challenges remain, including, for example, learning poverty, high dropout rates and limited vocational opportunities. The most effective EDC instruments are bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Also, FinCEED shows promising potential. However, at the country level, effective synergies between state and non-state actors are limited, partly due to the absence of a clear multi-actor approach and partnership-building guidance to enhance teaching and learning quality at primary and secondary levels. CSOs and HEIs are critical partners, but while CSOs show important EDC results, their potential remains underutilised. Private sector involvement in EDC adds limited value, prompting a reconsideration of its role.

Finland's domestic Coordination Group lacks authority, a clear plan, and defined roles, hindering its impact on basic education partnerships. Finally, while the UNICEF and GPE-led innovative initiatives aim at disrupting traditional education development, doubts about the transformational impact of these persist.

In this chapter, we assess the performance of Finland's EDC in relation to the evaluation ToC (see **Annex 4, Figure 2**), which includes the expected results identified in MFA's 2020 TOC (MFA, 2020b).

Note: the outputs included in the 2020 ToC correspond to 4 outcomes included in MFA's recently developed results framework, which are the same as the 4 priority thematic areas selected for special attention in the evaluation ToR (MFA, 2022c). **Table 10** maps MFA's expected results across the 2020 ToC and the 2022 results framework.



Table 10. MFA's expected results

2020 TOC	PRIORITY THEMATIC AREA (2022 RESULTS FRAMEWORK)
Output 1.1. Inclusiveness of the education system strengthened (mother-tongue, disability, gender and pre-primary education)	2. The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions is better realised
Indicators: Participation rate in organised learning one year before the official primary entry age by sex and disability; Percentage of students in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction. Number of students enrolled in education at: a) Pre-primary; b) Primary; c) Secondary; d) Vocational. e) Non-formal.	
Output 1.2. Enhanced institutional capacity to improve learning outcomes	4. Policy influencing: Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education
Indicator: Number of educational institutions reached through measures aimed to increase their capacity.	
Output 1.3. Teaching and learning practices and educational environments improved	1. Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes
Indicator: Number of teachers and teacher education students who participated in pre- or in-service training	
Output 1.4. Women and girls with disabilities have access to vocational training	3. Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life
Indicator: Number of women and girls with disabilities have access to vocational training	

Source: MFA's 2020 ToC and 2022 Results Framework

In section 5.1, we begin by summarising **what** happened in terms of overall performance at global and country levels. In section 5.2, we zoom in on inclusive education – widely acknowledged as one of Finland's strengths - to explore **why** (and why not) change happened across our three case countries.

In section 5.3, we go on to assess **how** change took place by means of various EDC instruments, assessing their relative effectiveness. In section 5.4. we review **who** has been engaged in making change happen, specifically through effective multi-actor approaches to EDC.



5.1 Progress towards expected results

Finding 6. Progress has been made in improving access to quality primary and secondary education, especially at the secondary level. Yet, persistent poor learning outcomes highlight the ongoing learning crisis in partner countries. Finland's EDC has been most effective in advancing rights-based inclusive basic and secondary education, enhancing teaching and learning practices, and influencing policies at both national and global levels to improve institutional capacity. However, limited efforts have been directed towards increasing access to vocational training for women and girls with disabilities.

5.1.1 Progress towards improving access to quality primary and secondary education

Finland's 2016-2020 Country Programmes show overall positive performance, with effective efforts in capacity building and inclusive education, but country programmes were limited in their coverage of vocational training and education quality. In terms of overall performance, MFA's analysis across all Finland's Country Programmes for the 2016 -2020 period³¹ shows that overall results at the global level (e.g., ratings of progress towards planned outcomes during the period under review) maintained a healthy average of 80% 'good', dipping to 'satisfactory' in 2020; and a similarly positive performance was reported in 2022. The year 2016 formed an exception because there were problems in assessing the progress due to a lack of data.

Finland's education development cooperation has enhanced access to primary and secondary education, with a strong emphasis on promoting inclusive practices and influencing educational policies.

EDC has been effective in building teachers' and schools' capacity (thematic area/outcome 1), and in promoting rights-based inclusive basic and secondary education (thematic area/outcome 2), but not in the thematic area of VET (thematic area/outcome 3). Multilateral influencing was gradually strengthened during the period under review (thematic area/outcome 4). Overall, efforts to improve education quality have

been less effective (out-of-school children and learning outcomes) than the efforts in the other areas. Finland's active involvement in sector coordination and policy dialogue (with a focus on gender equality, equity, inclusive education) featured as a key performance area for the Country Programmes in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Ukraine.

At the impact level, results confirm a long-term trend of improving access to education: a substantial improvement of access to secondary education in many partner countries (e.g., Gross Enrolment Rate to secondary education rose from 40 % to 62 % in Ethiopia and from 35 % to 46 % in Mozambique during the 2016-2020 period) was accompanied by some improvements in equity in access in all partner countries. An exception was formed by Afghanistan, where improvement has stalled in recent years and where reliable data is the most challenging.

³¹ The analysis of outcome- and output-level results on the basis of annual targets covered ten country reports and two regional reports. A detailed analysis of the ratings for the case study countries is included in the 'Contribution Story' in 5.2.



However, the global pandemic had a negative impact, reflected by the jump in outputs rated ‘unsatisfactory’ from 10% to 15 % in 2020 and the notable unavailability of data for this year. It should be noted that these results are based on self-reported data from MFA, which has its limitations. However, the case studies also provided an opportunity to examine the validity of MFA’s results statements.

Advancing rights-based inclusive basic and secondary education, enhancing teaching and learning practices, and influencing policies have been most effective.

Based on SDG4 scorecard data by UNESCO, progress towards national SDG4 benchmarks³² for Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine (and for our thematic study countries, Mozambique and Ukraine) also shows some improvements in access to education, particularly at the secondary level (see **Table 11**).

Table 11. Progress towards national SDG4 benchmarks of case study and thematic study countries

THEMATIC AREA	INDICATORS	DISAGGREGATION	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Ukraine	Nepal	Pales-tine
Early Childhood	4.2.2 Participation rate, pre-primary		Slow progress	No data	No benchmark	No progress	Slow progress
Basic Education	4.1.4 Out-of-school rate	4.1.4.b Primary	No progress	No benchmark	No data for trend	No progress	No progress
		4.1.4.c Lower Secondary	Slow progress	No benchmark	No data for trend	No progress	No progress
		4.1.4.d Upper Secondary	No progress	No benchmark	No data for trend	No progress	Average progress
	4.1.2 Completion Rate	4.1.2.b Primary	Slow progress	No progress	No benchmark	Slow progress	No progress
		4.1.2.c Lower Secondary	Slow progress	No progress	No benchmark	Slow progress	No progress
		4.1.2.d Upper Secondary	No benchmark	Slow progress	No benchmark	No progress	Slow progress
Equity	4.5 Gender Gap		No benchmark	No progress	No benchmark	No progress	No benchmark
	4.1.1 Minimum learning proficiency	4.1.1a. Reading, grades 2-3	No data	No data	No data for trend	No data for trend	No data for trend
		4.1.1a Math., grades 2-3	No data	No data	No data for trend	No data for trend	No data for trend
		4.1.1b Reading, end primary	No data	No data for trend	No data for trend	No data	No data
		4.1.1.b Math., end primary	No data	No data for trend	No data for trend	No data	No data
		4.1.1c Reading, end lower secondary	No data	No data	No data for trend	No data	No data
		4.1.1.c. Math end lower secondary	No data	No data	No data for trend	No data	No data for trend
Quality	4.c.1 Trained teachers	4.c.1.a Pre-primary	No data for trend	No data	No data	No progress	No progress
		4.c.1.b Primary	No data for trend	No progress	No benchmark	No progress	No progress
		4.c.1.c Lower Secondary	No data for trend	No data for trend	No data	Slow progress	No progress
		4.c.1.d Upper Secondary	No progress	No data for trend	No data	No progress	No progress
Financing	1.a.2 Education expenditure	FFA.1 % Total public expenditure	No progress	No progress	Average progress	No progress	No progress
		FFA.2 % GDP	No progress	No progress	Average progress	No progress	No progress

Legend: No data No data for trend No benchmark
 No progress Average progress Slow progress No progress

Source: UNESCO, (undated)

³² The first SDG 4 scorecard was published in January 2023 and monitors the progress of each country against their own national targets; data used for analysis and assessment covers the period from 2015 up to 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic largely disrupted normal education around the world and disturbed data collection systems.



Note: the SDG Scorecard data also shows that many indicators related to learning outcomes have not been measured or reported. This is either because the data are not available (as is the case for Ethiopia) or because the data for trend analysis are not available (as for Nepal and Palestine).

5.1.2 Achieving output-level results

With the support of Finland, education systems have gradually become more inclusive, and barriers preventing the participation of children with disabilities have been reduced. The capacities of duty bearers, such as parents, teachers and principals, have been improved. This has strengthened positive attitudes towards inclusion and the capacity of schools to accommodate learners with diverse needs³³. In 2019-2021, education projects funded by Finland in conflict and crisis situations reached nearly 1.1 million children and young people, of whom 48 per cent were girls. Cooperation with civil society organisations has resulted in pre-primary and basic education for 780,000 children and young people, of whom 1,800 were children with disabilities and 48% were girls.

Finland's support has made education systems more inclusive, and barriers preventing the participation of children with disabilities have been reduced.

Despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there were marked improvements in children's right to equitable and quality education in **Palestine**, albeit with discrepancies between the West Bank and Gaza: the retention of students until the 10th grade improved considerably, from 60% to 87.5 % net enrolment ratio in Grade 10 and the student survival rate until grade 10 improved from 84% in 2014 to

86.9% in 2020. Male students' higher drop-out is reportedly linked to their need to support the family economically and often also to political reasons, including detainments. Enrolment in pre-school education increased only marginally, from 75% in 2016 to 76.5% in 2020 (Gross Enrolment in KG2). In **Nepal**, too, despite the disruption of regular educational opportunities due to the global pandemic, 2021 saw a slight increase in children (50.9%) entering into secondary education (G9-12) compared to 2020 (47.6%). The SSDP final evaluation found that the SSDP has convincingly addressed the challenges in reducing social disparity by including children with disabilities and out-of-school children at the basic level, including children from disadvantaged groups such as the Dalit and Janajati.

In **Ethiopia**, progress towards the Country Programme Outcome 3.2 (Access and equity of general education is increased) was good in terms of the achievement of the GEQIP-E indicator targets, but major disparities in equitable access, particularly for CwD and children in emerging regions remain. This suggests the need for further efforts in system strengthening. Systemic constraints included the capacity for planning and management of inclusive education and the capture, analysis and use of data for evidence-based planning.

Teaching and learning practices and educational environments have improved, with progress in some countries lagging. The education reforms supported by Finland in Afghanistan, Mozambique (see **Box 10**), Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine and Ukraine have, among others, improved

33 The following analysis integrates data from the 2022 Development Policy Results Report (a full list is found in Annex 7) and related results-data drawn from our Country Case Studies and thematic studies.



the status of teachers, increased the number of female teachers and principals and developed teacher continuous professional development and support systems. Programmes implemented by Finnish CSOs have improved learning conditions and strengthened the competence of teachers and principals to adopt more pupil-centred practices. For example, the work of the CSOs has supported education related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, health, entrepreneurship and human rights.

In **Palestine**, a substantial increase in the share of qualified teaching staff in both primary and secondary schools (from 44.2% to 70% and 19% to 39.6%, respectively), coupled with the more widespread use of education technologies, have been among the major contributing factors for positive developments in the education sector. Conditions for teaching and learning in Palestine (including higher standards of school buildings, curriculum reform and new textbooks) have also improved, accompanied by a gradual decline in students' exposure to violence inside the schools.

Against a backdrop of multiple crises in **Ethiopia**, however, access to education steadily increased during the period under review, but the outcome-level targets for improving quality were not reached, and teacher performance remains a serious challenge to improved learning outcomes. In **Nepal**, COVID19-related school closures delayed the conclusion of the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), 2016-2021 and the start of the School Education Sector Plan (SESP), 2021-2030 and development partners efforts to strengthening the capacities of teachers, schools and education providers to improve the quality of education was undermined by the federalisation process and the dismantling of institutional structures in the teacher training system.

Box 10. Preliminary results of the COACH programme (Aprender+) pilot in Mozambique

After securing funding in October 2020, the World Bank's Aprender+ programme dedicated its initial months to meticulous preparations, paving the way for field interventions, including creating structured teacher guides and training materials. These efforts culminated in finalised materials in 2021, followed by a compact pilot involving a five-day training session in Niassa. The training introduced the programme's materials to 15 teachers and 15 Deputy School Directors (*Directores Adjuntos Escolares*). In 2021, establishing the Local Advisory Board (LAB) set another milestone for the programme's progress. While delayed from the initially planned schedule, a comprehensive pilot was launched during July and August 2022, involving training for teachers, coaches, and monitors from 45 schools in Niassa. This three-week pilot reached 116 teachers and various education stakeholders. A series of tailored training sessions, focusing on effectively implementing the Aprender+ structured lesson plans, further equipped Grade 1 teachers and programme coaches. The pilot continued with specialised training for 51 programme coaches, honing their observation, improvement selection, and coaching skills through Aprender+ lesson plans. Concluding this stage in Niassa, a condensed coach training aimed to establish a deep understanding of coach responsibilities within the programme. Following the piloting in Niassa and building on its lessons, a smaller pre-pilot was organised in Manica, where it trained 53 individuals, including Grade 1 teachers, pedagogical directors, Zones of Educational Influence coordinators, and district officers in the Aprender+ programme and its methodology. During 2023, the programme plans to expand its presence across both provinces. This expansion involves including more schools and extending the programme's coverage to Grade 2 classrooms.

Source: Thematic case study: teacher education in Mozambique (desk-based mini case)



There has been limited engagement in increasing access to vocational training for women and girls with disabilities. Through cooperation with CSOs, vocational and life skills training has been provided for 6,000 persons with disabilities, 56% of whom were women and girls. Vocational

Engagement in increasing access to vocational training for women and girls with disabilities has been limited.

skills, literacy, entrepreneurial skills and life skills have been generated for 135,000 young people and adults, 58% of whom were women and girls. (MFA, 2022i). **In Ukraine**, through the EU4Skills project, Finland has addressed the participation of women and girls in VET and, as particular policy dialogue topics, emphasised the gendered norms and practices that negatively affect girls' educational and work–life choices and opportunities (see **Box 15**).

In **Palestine**, while major system-wide change occurred in the expansion of VET, thus better bridging general to vocational education and to higher education, skills-development projects have met with limited success thus far. In **Ethiopia**, the Country programme's expected results did not include this thematic area, and Finland does not support secondary-level TVET in **Nepal**. Expansion of VET may require careful consideration of country contexts on a case-by-case basis, depending on in-country expertise as well as the relative strength of Finland's position within the local development community.

Institutional capacity to improve learning outcomes has been enhanced through policy influencing at country and global levels. In **Palestine**, the operationalisation of the policy of inclusive education was one of Finland's major policy-influencing-related results, contributing to both education equity and quality. During 2016–2020, the policy and action plan for inclusive education were prepared, and implementation began slowly with the establishment of a number of resource centres. Well-functioning sector and technical working groups also provided a platform for Finland's policy dialogue, which in turn has strengthened the Country Programme results.

In **Ethiopia**, Finland's influential and widely acknowledged policy dialogue for equity resulted in a strong equity emphasis in the GEQIP-E. In the words of a stakeholder interviewed, "*Finland is one of the most active and technically strong partners in inclusion, and Ethiopia's advance in this area would probably not have happened without them*". Finland's longstanding presence in Ethiopia provides entry points for future policy dialogue beyond development cooperation partners, but Finland's political and economic repositioning, in line with the EU, has also meant political conditionalities for advancing new EDC interventions.

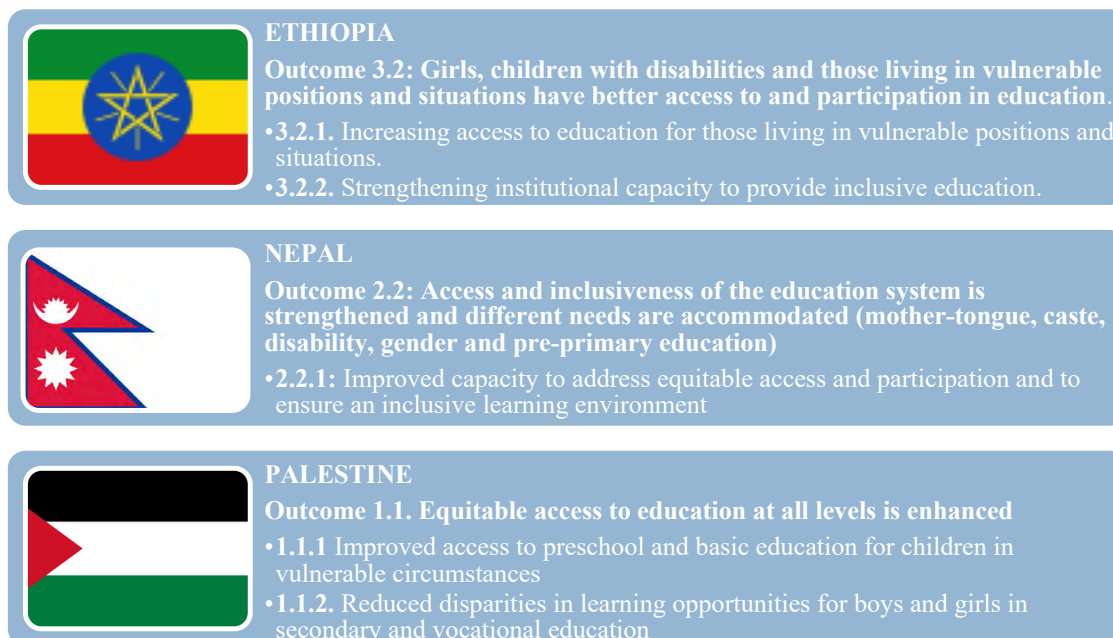
In terms of policy influencing (discussed in some detail in section 5.3), Finland' has strengthened inclusive education in the World Bank and the programming of Education Cannot Wait. The Global Partnership for Education, which Finland supports, helped to organise distance education and to support the safe reopening of schools in 74 countries. Indeed, as said by a stakeholder interviewed, Finland has "*succeeded in being a multilateral influencer larger than its size*" (MFA, 2021i; Country Case Studies).

5.2 Results at the country level: a 'Contribution Story'

In this section, we draw on the Country Case Studies (Volume 2). In line with our methodological design (Chapter 2), we undertake a cross-analysis of Country Programmes in Ethiopia, Nepal and

Palestine to assess their effectiveness and develop a 'Contribution Story'. We do this in terms of the progress towards three outcomes (see **Figure 13**), which, together, contribute to MFA's Output 1.1: Inclusiveness of the education system strengthened³⁴.

Figure 13. Three country-level outcomes expected to contribute to gender-/disability inclusive education



Source: MFA-Ethiopia, 2021b; MFA, 2021; MFA-OPT, 2021b

Rather than describing **what** happened, which is touched on above and presented in detail in our Country Case Studies, the 'Contribution Story' below explores **why** change happened (or not), taking account of contextual factors that enabled change as well as the country-specific constraints and considering the strength of evidence for causal pathways to the planned outcome.

Finding 7. Effectiveness in EDC at the country level stems from a strategic financing mix, combining bilateral and multilateral cooperation and fostering expertise in Country Teams. Other positive drivers of change include policy dialogue, targeted financing, technical assistance, policy enhancements, increased girls' participation, and some progress in reducing barriers for children with disabilities. Partner country ownership, policy dialogue, sectoral expertise, and adaptive management also play a role. However, the evidence supporting enhanced access to education in emergencies is limited. Challenges also include high dropout and repetition rates and limited vocational opportunities, particularly for girls, unique country contexts and political factors.

³⁴ Note, while the country cases rely largely on Country Programme statistical data for 2021-2024, the evaluation team's interviews and the document review covered the period 2019 to date.



5.2.1 Overall programming performance and measures of effectiveness

Overall, Country Teams in Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine have rated their Country Programme performance – based on country-specific monitoring indicators - as ‘good’ or ‘satisfactory’ during the period under review (see **Table 12**), with the exception of 2020, which saw the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both implementation of planned activities and data collection.

Table 12. MFA’s rating of effectiveness

EXPECTED RESULTS	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Ethiopia						
Outcome 3.2:	S	G	G	G	G	S↑
Output 3.2.1	S↑	G	G	G	G	S↑
Output 3.2.3	G↑	G	G	G	G	S
Nepal						
Outcome 2.2:	G	G	G	G	G	G↓
Output 2.2.1	G	G	G↑	G	S	G↓
Palestine						
Outcome 1.1	G	G	G	G	U	S
Output 1.1.1	G	G	G	G	N/A	S
Output 1.1.2	S	G	G	S	N/A	S

Rating guide (colour codes):

- G Good:** achievement of over 80% of the target.
- S Satisfactory:** achievement of 60-80% of the target.
- U Unsatisfactory:** achievement of 0-60 % of the target.

Source: Annual Progress Reports for 2020 and 2021, Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine

Findings from our Case Studies reinforce the above ratings. These suggest that Finland has contributed directly to addressing the learning crisis in **Ethiopia** by means of policy dialogue. Targeted financing for inclusive education via the GEQIP-E, as well as TA support for disability-inclusive education incorporated into GEQIP-E has also been appreciated by Finland’s local partners.

In the case of **Palestine**, Finland’s country programme also focused on sector support, specifically through the Joint Financing Agreement (JFA) with partners (Ireland, Norway and Germany), contributing to enhanced equitable access to education at all levels through the provision of facilities, equipment and resource rooms for CwDs, and transportation for students in dangerous areas. Finland’s support in developing education sector policies and introducing the first-ever education law has resulted in inclusive quality education emerging as a stated policy priority for the Palestine Authority. A major achievement in **Nepal** is gender parity across basic education Grades 1 to 12.



Nevertheless, the ‘Contribution Story’ also highlights the weak ‘missing middles’ in the form of intermediate outcomes in the evaluation theory of change. Persistent challenges for Ethiopia’s education sector remain, including the high and increasing dropout before Grade 6 as well as the high repetition rate from Grade 1 to Grade 2. Despite the best efforts of the Technical Assistance (TA) team, the enrolment of children with Special Education Needs (SENs) remains very low, although, as said by a stakeholder interviewed: *“the identification of children with special needs is much better in schools with inclusive education resource centres”*. As in Ethiopia, gains in Palestine are offset by the remaining challenge of equitable learning outcomes, with the educational attainment of boys in secondary school significantly lower than that of girls, as well as limited vocational education options for all vocational students (particularly girls). The picture revealed by Nepal’s sector performance monitoring indicators is similar to that in the other two partner countries: encouraging results in access, with less progress towards quality indicator targets. While the trend in net enrolment in Grades 1-8 has increased (95% in 2021 against the target of 97%), the completion rate remains off target (76.23% in 2021 against a target of 85%), with only slight improvements in learning outcomes in Nepali, Math and English. (Country Case Studies, Vol.2).

To assess the strength of evidence for the above summary of Country Programme performance, the evaluation team reviewed four measures of effectiveness as reflected in the evaluation ToC. The measures are: (1) Strengthened system capacity for inclusive education; (2) Improved girls’ participation in education; (3) Increased measures to reduce barriers for CwD; (4) Improved access to education in emergencies (including for CwD). **Table 13** shows the measures of effectiveness for Ethiopia, **Table 14** for Nepal, and **Table 15** for Palestine. All tables (including the summary **Table 16**) use the following red-amber-green (RAG) rating scores:

- Strong:** more than 2 informants refer to this result; supported by documentary evidence.
- Acceptable:** at least 1 informant; supported by documentary evidence.
- Weak:** documentary evidence only.

Table 13. Ethiopia: strength of evidence for measures of effectiveness

MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	Docu-ment review	Statisti-cal data	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS					
			MFA	Global Partner	Embassy	Partner Govt	Dev partner	Other
Measure 1: Strengthened system capacity for inclusive education.	✓							
Measure 2: Improved girls’ participation in education.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Measure 3: Increased measures to reduce barriers for CwD.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Measure 4: Improved access to education in emergencies (incl. CwD).	✓							

Source: Team analysis



Table 14. Nepal: strength of evidence for measures of effectiveness

MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	Docu-ment review	Statisti-cal data	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS					
			MFA	Global Partner	Embassy	Partner Govt	Dev partner	Other
Measure 1: Strengthened system capacity for inclusive education.	✓				✓	✓		✓
Measure 2: Improved girls' participation in education.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Measure 3: Increased measures to reduce barriers for CwD.	✓							
Measure 4: Improved access to education in emergencies (incl. CwD).	✓							

Source: Team analysis

Table 15. Palestine: strength of evidence for measures of effectiveness

MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	Docu-ment review	Statisti-cal data	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS					
			MFA	Global Partner	Embassy	Partner Govt	Dev partner	Other
Measure 1: Strengthened system capacity for inclusive education.	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Measure 2: Improved girls' participation in education.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Measure 3: Increased measures to reduce barriers for CwD.	✓						✓	
Measure 4: Improved access to education in emergencies (incl. CwD).	✓							

Source: Team analysis

Table 16 shows the composite ratings across the three case study countries.

Table 16. Ratings for the strength of evidence across Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine

CASE COUNTRY	MEASURE 1: Strengthened system capacity for IEQE	MEASURE 2: Improved girls' participation in education.	MEASURE 3: Increased measures to reduce barriers for CwD	MEASURE 4: Improved access to education in emergencies (including for CWD)
Ethiopia				
Nepal				
Palestine				

Source: Team analysis

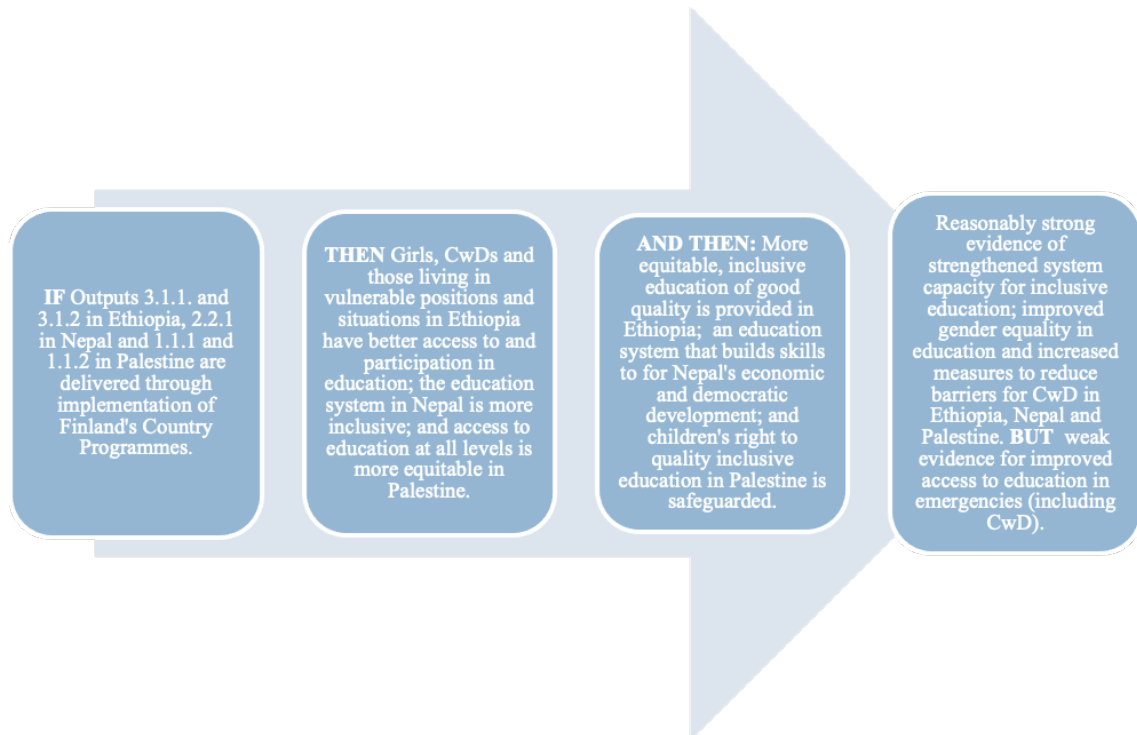


Informed by the above analysis (and as detailed in our Country Case Studies), the evaluation team can broadly confirm that progress along planned pathways to change has been made in our case countries. This said, in all three countries, particularly in Ethiopia and Palestine³⁵, **improved access to education in emergencies, particularly for children with disabilities**, remains a significant challenge for partner governments.

Improved access to education in emergencies, particularly for children with disabilities, remains a significant challenge for partner governments.

Overall, increased access to education for those living in vulnerable positions and situations (Output 3.1.1) in **Ethiopia** was accompanied by external TA to strengthen institutional capacity to provide inclusive education (Output 3.1.2). These gains contributed to girls and other vulnerable children (including children with disabilities in some regions) having better participation in education (Outcome 3.1) in Ethiopia. Improvements in the sector's capacity to address equitable access and participation (Output 2.2.1) were achieved through sector programme support, contributing to ongoing efforts to build a more inclusive education system (Outcome 2.2) in **Nepal**. Access to preschool and basic education for children in vulnerable circumstances (Output 1.1.1) was improved, coupled with some reduction in disparities in learning opportunities, and this has enhanced equitable access to basic education (Outcome 1.1) in **Palestine**.

Figure 14. Pathways to change in Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine



Source: Evaluation Team

These **outcomes have, in turn, contributed to** more equitable, inclusive education of good quality (Impact 3) in Ethiopia, an education system that provides students with the necessary skills to contribute to Nepal's economic and democratic development (Impact 2), as well as safeguarding

³⁵ It should be noted that much of education provision in PA schools (and all of it in UNRWA schools) depends on external funding, including Finland's.



children’s right to quality inclusive education in Palestine (Impact 1). A composite micro theory of change (micro-ToC) for Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine is illustrated in **Figure 14**.

5.2.2 Pathways to change, enablers and contextual constraints

In addition to reporting on progress, MFA’s Annual Reports on Country Programmes routinely include an identification of the factors which support or limit progress towards planned outcomes related to inclusive and equitable quality education. **Table 17** summarises these factors across case countries.

Table 17. Positive, negative and neutral factors influencing the achievement of outcomes

INFLUENCING FACTORS	Ethiopia	Nepal	Palestine
	<i>Limiting/Supporting/Neutral factors (colour coded)</i>		
1. National ownership and capacity to implement			
2. Finnish policy dialogue and engagement			
3. Adaptive management including mitigation of risks			
4. Quality of expertise used for the implementation			
5. Selection of support modality/efficiency of support			
Other: Contextual factors			

Legend (colour codes):

- Limits achievement*
- Supports achievement*
- Neutral (neither limits nor supports achievement)*
- Not recognised as an influencing factor*

Source: Annual Progress Reports for 2020 and 2021, Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine

Based on the above categorisation of factors, we find several key similarities and differences in **the drivers of effective Country Programmes** in our case study countries.

- 1. Ownership of the programme by the Government and other partners** has supported progress towards planned outcomes in Nepal, but weak national capacities have been a limiting factor in Ethiopia. While commitment is high at the policy level, continuously low budgets for inclusive education, preschool education and non-formal education result in education services that depend heavily on aid funding. In Palestine, the sustainability of the education reforms remains precarious due to a host of reasons beyond the Palestinian Authority’s control, including Israel’s building permit regime, demolition threats and other measures, which prevent sustainable education development in East Jerusalem and Area C.
- 2. Engagement in policy dialogue** – and, crucially, the mainstreaming of a rights-based approach to sector dialogue - has been a positive factor in Nepal and Palestine, where Finland occupied chair/co-chair positions during the period under review and participated actively in technical working groups related to education; in Palestine, for example Finland



has played a key role in moving engagement with ministry ahead with, in the words of an interviewee, “*brilliant coordination*” through its role as the co-chair of the education sector technical working group, a very big and challenging forum.

3. At the same time, it is important to have the right kind of **sectoral expertise** at the Embassies to facilitate effective sector dialogue and provide technical advice to partners in Government. This has been an enabling factor in Nepal and Palestine, but it is considered a ‘neutral’ factor for Ethiopia because the reduction of the number of experts following budget cuts at the end of the previous Country Strategy/Programme period has narrowed the expertise at the country level.
4. **The strategic choice of cooperation instruments** has been an enabling factor for Country Programmes in all three countries. Evidence shows that education sector support (swap) especially is highly appreciated by the partner country governments, and the bilateral and multi-bilateral support are jointly designed with the government which enhances the relevance in the country context. Senior decision-makers in MFA underline the need for Finland: “It is not a given that we can deliver: we need to ask ourselves ‘what can we bring to answer these needs?’ [and] shape ourselves” to choose the right delivery mechanisms (KIIs).
5. **Adaptive management** was identified as an influencing factor in Ethiopia and Palestine, and it was flagged as a supporting factor in MFA’s global analysis of Country Strategies/ Programmes. Particularly in volatile contexts where contextual risks require adaptive management, continuous risk management also supports the achievement of results.

Drivers of effective Country Programmes include ownership of the programme by the Government and other partners, policy dialogue, sectoral expertise, the right choice of cooperation instruments, and managing adaptively.

Contextual constraints. Table 17 above also shows that contextual factors were a key constraint across all case countries’ programmes. Our cross-analysis of the strategic risks³⁶ identified by the country teams in Ethiopia, Nepal, and Palestine suggests shared contextual constraints in three areas, all adversely affecting the education sector.

1. **Political economies.** In Ethiopia, recent social and political developments have brought regional ethnic tensions to the fore, with conflict breaking out in Tigray in November 2020, spreading south to the Amhara and Afar regions in June 2021 and triggering a humanitarian and refugee crisis. Since 2015, Nepal has been undergoing drastic political and constitutional change, transforming from a monarchy into a Federal Republic, with 753 local government authorities introduced by the new Constitution and the process of federalisation in a state of flux.

In Palestine, over 25 years after the Oslo Accords, the Palestine Authority (PA) still operates as a transitional authority with an economy that is, in effect, operating under Israeli occupation; the last general election (2006) was followed by an intra-Palestinian split between the Fatah-controlled PA in the West Bank and the Hamas-administered Gaza Strip, accompanied by an increasing concentration of powers in the executive and restricted freedoms for Palestinian civil society (MoE-Ethiopia, 2023; WB, 2021; KIIs: MoE-PAL).

³⁶ Operational risks in the three countries include implementation capacity gaps and high staff turnover in partner governments, as well as the lasting impacts of health pandemics and natural disasters. Fiduciary risks are very similar across all cases, centering on weak financial management systems and capacity gaps.



2. **Security crises.** Deterioration of the security situation lowered access to project sites, information and cooperation in Ethiopia. Access restrictions to Gaza hindered programme monitoring and implementation, confiscation and demolition of donor-funded infrastructure; programme implementation is further hindered by Israeli measures and restrictions in Palestine.
3. **Climate-related crises.** Ethiopia is prone to flooding, and drought is expected to increase the severity and frequency of climate-change shocks, with internal conflicts increasing as a result of competition over grazing/arable land and water. Conflict and climate-related disasters have triggered a displacement and refugee crisis. Similarly, in Palestine, a projected temperature increase of between 1.2°C and 2.6°C and resultant food and water shortages are expected to affect Palestinians and Israelis alike, exacerbating current conflicts. With winters projected to be drier and up to a threefold increase in monsoon rainfall, the number of people in Nepal annually affected by river flooding caused by climate change could double in 2030 (UNICEF, 2019, MoE-Ethiopia, 2023; EU, 2020b; World Bank, 2022).

Unexpected outcomes. In all the above areas, a further constraint is the *volatility of country contexts*. This surfaces growing humanitarian needs in Ethiopia, with inadequate funding and access; the risk that the conflict between Israel and Palestine escalates to a war in Gaza or to an intifada or major clashes, resulting in an increase in humanitarian needs; and political instability in Nepal, leading to an increase in inequalities, discrimination, and social exclusion. Emerging from such contexts is an unexpected development in all our case countries' programming: an increasing and urgent recognition of the need to strengthen the resilience of education systems to cope in the volatile context.

Ensuring the continuity of learning in humanitarian crisis situations (beyond engagement with programmes such as Education Cannot Wait) is increasingly important. MFA experts and their partners alike underline the need to find ways to operate in the most challenging operating environments to avoid a backslide on gains made. Relatedly, while the COVID-19 pandemic deepened an existing learning crisis in all three cases countries, it also boosted interventions related to digital innovation. For instance, in Palestine, Finland's support started to partially focus on training in digital and distance learning in teacher education (Country Case Studies, Vol. 2).

5.2.3 Enabling factors, risks and assumptions

Taken together, the final outcomes of the Case Study Country Programmes have **contributed to progress towards the desired final outcome** (discussed in section 5.1.1): improved access to quality primary and secondary education. Given that the learning crisis is one of the burning issues for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Low-/middle-income countries (LMIs), bilateral cooperation has intensified during the period under review and *"tangible results have been delivered by the interventions supported within the Country Programme portfolio"*. At the same time, *"dialogue with high-level government representatives from our partner countries has increased"* in the post-pandemic context of learning recovery. Concrete experiences of positive change in partner countries are likely to have strengthened Finland's position in global advocacy and policy influencing (as discussed in section 4.6 and discussed further in section 5.3.2) to promote and support the achievement of the global SDG 4, particularly in its 'niche' area of inclusion (MFA, 2021g; Country Case Studies; KIIs: MFA; MEC; EDUFI, CSOs).



Based on stakeholders' interviews at the global level, several **enabling factors** for this positive contribution emerge. These are outlined below.

- 1. Promoting 'creative' ODA through a strategic mix of financing modalities.** Given the experience of budget cuts in the past, MFA experts assert the importance of *"Being more creative with ODA while simultaneously safeguarding ODA"*. This entailed encouraging country teams to increasingly construct 'synergic portfolios' to work different angles of the result areas with a mix of organisations that complement each other and can work in remote areas (MFA, 2021g; KIIs: MFA, EDUFI, MEC).
- 2. Viewing bilateral and multilateral cooperation as two sides of the same coin.** While Finland's choice to support sector programming in partner countries is the right one and should be continued, it is best accompanied by policy advocacy for inclusive, equitable and quality education in international organisations and in the EU. The global funds, GPE and ECW, are both supporting most of Finland's partner countries. While at the moment, connections are not there or remain limited, Finland could benefit from the combination of funding both the global funds and being present at the country level. This would entail sufficient human resourcing both at the Embassies and GPE and ECW units concerned, as well as introducing a systemic effort to create shared added value between the bilateral and multilateral programming. At the same time, *"we should take care that the number of influencing goals does not become too large"* and MFA does not spread itself too thinly across diverse multilateral partners. Thematically, MFA's development cooperation policy makes linkages between its education policy priorities. But in practice, *"linkages are tricky, and Finland's policy discussion remains too much at the higher level; we need more practical solutions"*. This view is echoed by experts in MFA's partner ministry who call for *dialogue that is less reactive and more proactive and based on country partners' needs* (KIIs: MFA, EDUFI, MEC).
- 3. Building public sector capacity to implement interventions.** Finland's EDC has focused on financing interventions that are implemented by others, but *"to maintain and develop credibility, it is important to implement our own projects and demonstrate Finland's added value"*. Similarly, it may be true that *"those with deepest pockets have the loudest voice"* in policy dialogue. However, better-resourced bilateral donors may lack education expertise, and as noted above, the expertise within Country Teams is critically important. If Finland wishes to *"diversify the relationship with our partner countries"*, this is best done by building Finland's public sector expertise (KIIs: MFA, EDUFI).

Enabling factors at the global level include a strategic mix of financing modalities, viewing bilateral and multilateral cooperation as two sides of the same coin, and building public sector capacity.

Generally, assumptions in a ToC are the necessary conditions for change, and risks are the potential impacts that may undermine the programme's success. The evaluation ToC includes several assumptions behind the pathways to change. **Note:** these are drawn from assumptions made for both MFA's 2020 ToC and the results chain presented in the 2022 results framework.

Our Contribution Story points to several risks related to assumptions in the evaluation theory of change (i.e. assumptions in the MFA's 2020 ToC and the 2022 results framework). Using Palestine as an example, when analysed in light of the Country Team's own risk analysis for the Country Programmes, the following four assumptions in the evaluation ToC are shown to be particularly risky:



1. Duty bearers are accountable for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to education for all;
2. States and donors are committed to SDG 4 targets relating to financing, improving education quality and equality. (This was elaborated in the 2022 ToC: increased and more equitable international and domestic education financing with a focus on LDCs, basic education and education in emergencies);
3. International and domestic education policies to strengthen teacher's professional status and support transforming teaching and learning;
4. Countries have sufficient resources to produce reliable SDG 4 data and statistics.

The riskiness of the assumptions is evidenced by **Table 18** below, which focuses on the indicative Palestinian case. Highlighted in italics is the 2020/2021 status of anticipated risks.

Table 18. Risks and assumptions in the case of the country programme in Palestine

ASSUMPTIONS	RISKS AND ACTUAL STATUS IN PALESTINE.
Duty bearers are accountable for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to education for all.	Risk: the Palestinian Authority (PA) collapses/dissolves itself voluntarily or involuntarily' given the failure of the Oslo Accords and Israel's inability to follow through its commitments. In late 2020, security coordination halted for approximately 6 months and in 2021 the situation was deteriorating.
Increased and more equitable international and domestic education financing.	Risk: erosion of the PA's legitimacy due to external pressure. This led to some international donors reassessing their partnership with the PA and withdrawing from direct funding to the PA in 2021; similarly, 60% of the domestic budget is dependent on Israel tax collections, the disruption of tax revenue transfers has resulted in a drastic decline of the PA's financial situation, leading to partial payment of civil servant salaries and teacher strikes.
International and domestic education policies to strengthen teachers' professional status and support transforming teaching and learning.	Risk: defamation and delegitimisation campaigns by Israel and/or supporting lobby groups have led to increased politicisation of the question of support to education; we discuss the impact of the curriculum/textbook controversy in our Palestine case study.
Countries have sufficient resources to produce reliable SDG4 data and statistics.	As shown above indicators related to learning outcomes have not been measured because the data for trend analysis are not available.

Source: MFA, 2020b; MFA, 2022c; MFA-OPT, 2022

5.3 Modalities assessed most effective in Finland's EDC

In this section, we review the diverse financing modalities at work in Finland's EDC in order to assess their relative effectiveness in contributing to the expected results analysed above.

Finding 8. The three most effective EDC instruments are bilateral cooperation (the core of Finland's work), hand-in-hand with multilateral cooperation and FinCEED, though its present role could be fine-tuned. Humanitarian assistance is becoming increasingly important in Finland's partner countries, but evidence suggests a need for rethinking this modality.



Evidence supporting this finding is provided in the following chapters: We begin, in 5.3.1, with a brief analysis of bilateral cooperation (i.e., joint sector support and bilateral projects to engage the use of Finnish expertise); and multi-bi aid (which is counted as bilateral but channelled through and implemented by multilateral agencies). In sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3, we assess multilateral cooperation and the initial efforts of FinCEED, respectively. In section 5.3.4, we discuss interventions funded through humanitarian assistance.

5.3.1 Bilateral cooperation

Country programmes are the backbone of Finland's bilateral cooperation and joint sector support, with its holistic focus on sector system strengthening features as the core modality. Finland's bilateral cooperation in the education sector is grounded in MFA's Country Programmes for each of its long-term partner countries, which focus, in line with EU guidance (MFA, 2023g), on a few thematic areas. However, bilateral EDC is implemented through several modalities, and the right choices in diverse country contexts have made a difference. Just a few of the examples of these modalities (see Annex 3 for an overall view), drawn from the Country Case Studies, are outlined below.

Joint sector support has been a key modality in all three case countries; the main results have been discussed in the previous section. Country Teams have collaborated with like-minded donors to push forward sectoral reforms and systemic change (albeit slowly and in the long term), which Finland could not achieve alone. Finland has supported the Government of **Nepal** consistently and continuously under two sector-wide programs: the School Sector Development Plan (2016-2021) and its successor, the School Education Sector Plan (2022-2030). This support has led to improvements in the targets for access and equity of basic education in SSDP (2016-2021), with a growing focus on the inclusiveness of education in the SSDP and inclusion of support for children with disabilities as a priority for the SESP (Nepal Case Study).³⁷

Country programmes are the backbone of Finland's bilateral cooperation, and joint sector support with multi-bi support also shows good results.

Bilateral project support. The Technical Support for Enhancing Equitable and Inclusive Education in Ethiopia Project (2018–2020 and extended to 2023) in **Ethiopia** has, according to stakeholders, benefited from a long-standing bilateral partnership.³⁸ Stakeholders verified the Country Team's claim that technical assistance (TA) helped to keep inclusive education on the agenda of the Ministry of Education. Among the most cited achievements of the project was the (previously limitedly available) enrolment data on children with disabilities generated by 709 of the 763 Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERC) established by the TA team. What is new is the calculation of

37 In **Palestine**, too, support for the Education Sector Support Programme through the Joint Financing Agreement JFA has enabled risks to be shared and as a preferred channel of support for the Government, it is a critical platform for sector dialogue. A strategic risk identified for the Country Programme in Palestine is that joint financing partners withdraw from the co-funded instrument (as Germany has done) due to domestic political pressure, leading to increased uncertainty and the risk of JFA falling apart. All the ministry officials we interviewed asserted that Finland's withdrawal from the JFA (following Germany's policy shift to focus on VET) would "negatively affect our progress and the quality of basic education".

38 The project emerged out of the Finland-supported Special Needs Education Project (1994–1998), which continued through Finnish TA to the MoE from 2004 until 2007, resulting in the Special Needs Education Program Strategy (2006). Finnish TA subsequently supported the implementation of the Strategy, which led to the 'Enhancing Inclusive Education Capacity of Teacher Education and Resource Centers in Ethiopia' project (2013–2017).



gross enrolment rates and the quick expansion of the inclusive education resource centre network. However, systemic constraints regarding data on CwD included the lack of teachers' capacities to identify and assess disabilities during school registration and the need to integrate the assessment of CwD into pre-/in-service training. Indeed, the sustainability of the project's results is an issue. On the other hand, Finland's bilateral partners confirm that "*IERCs must be sustained but not through more donor funding*" (Ethiopia Case Study).

Multi-Bi support. Against a background of protracted occupation as a driver of violence, coupled with the normalisation of gender-based violence against children as part of child-rearing, UNICEF's BRAVE project in **Palestine** was implemented in partnership with the UNICEF State of Palestine and the Finnish company, Huippu Education Ltd. The project focused on the most at-risk children and adolescents in selected communities in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and East Jerusalem. Although the project was substantially delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as by the Ministry of Education's reluctance to engage with CSOs, the project has achieved modest results. Yet, questions were raised about the appropriateness of a model which may have worked elsewhere but which may be less effective in the Palestinian context. Addressing violence is a complex community issue requiring concerted efforts of the Palestinian public sector and civil society. While Huippu has expertise in positive pedagogy and the prevention of school violence, the reach of the training they provided was limited by the realities of teaching and learning in Palestinian schools, such as low pupil-teacher ratios and the heavy teaching workload (Palestine Case Study).

Encouraging country-driven choices in programme design, rather than decisions on support modalities being imposed by MFA in Helsinki, enables an effective focus on sector support as the core modality of country programmes. This also can boost complementarities with other cooperation instruments. Nevertheless, CSOs and MFA alike point out that Finland's focus on, for example, opportunities for digitalisation is at the expense of systems strengthening efforts: "*We need to address the education crisis more holistically*".

5.3.2 Multilateral cooperation

Evidence shows that multilateral cooperation is effective, and multilateral partnerships, particularly with the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE and ECW, are crucial. Overall, a combination of core funding, policy dialogue, technical cooperation and thematic funding with the multilateral actors is effective. Yet, in the context of this evaluation, as noted in Chapter 2.3 on limitations, a detailed comparison of these different modalities within the instrument of multilateral cooperation could not be made because it would have required a full evaluation of the various interventions funded by the different modalities and this is not within the realm of a strategic centralised evaluation.

While they are all effective in the provision of EDC, the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE, and ECW are each important for reaching Finland's EDC goals for specific reasons. As the world's top donor

While all effective in the provision of education development cooperation, the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE, and ECW are each important for reaching Finland's EDC goals for specific reasons.

when it comes to supporting education, the EU plays a vital role in promoting education globally. Together with its member states, including Finland, the EU's funding accounts for around 55% of ODA to education. Between 2019 and 2022, EU policy has focused increasingly on sustainable education financing, and Finland's policy influencing has aimed at making inclusive, quality education a key objective of EU cooperation.



Given a clear alignment of policy interests, the EU is a natural channel for influence in Finland; on the one hand, the EU needs Finland's support to strengthen the global role in the education sector, and on the other hand, EU cooperation enables Finland to have a greater chance of influencing relative to its size.

The EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package and the Team Europe Initiatives (TEI), the flagship of the Team Europe approach, raise strong interest among the Finnish stakeholders for leveraging Finnish competencies, including in EDC. Also, for the 2021-2027 period, the EU will dedicate a percentage of its INTPA budget to climate action, with additional financing for education, aiming at creating a win-win opportunity for climate education. The concept of Green Education, linked to this INTPA budget coupling of climate action and education, is anchored in the EU's Green Deal, which highlights the transformational power of education and, as a part of it, in the recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, adopted by the Council of the European Union in June 2022. As discussed in various parts of this report, Finland could intensify the relevance of its EDC by developing pioneering partnerships in green education, bringing together multilateral (e.g., the EU and World Bank) and bilateral cooperation in particularly vulnerable partner countries.

The World Bank plays a significant role in advancing the global education agenda with its global presence. It shares the same objectives as Finland, notably to improve educational access, equity, and quality. Finland contributes to various international education initiatives of the World Bank. In addition to bilateral co-financing of sector support programs such as GEQIP in Ethiopia, Finland's cooperation extends to two significant areas: the IDA and participation in the Global COACH programme.

UNICEF remains a key partner to Finland in EDC. During the period reviewed, Finland engaged with UNICEF in various ways, drawing on multiple funding streams. This included significant financing for UNICEF's multi-bi projects at the country level, such as supporting children's schooling in Syria, strengthening resilience in crisis areas in Ethiopia, and developing the education sectors in Somalia and Nepal, among others. Finland also supported UNICEF through the Reconstruction Fund for Afghanistan. Finland's commitment to UNICEF extends to core support, advocacy, communication, and working with key stakeholders. Finland actively participates in UNICEF's Executive Board, seeking collaboration within the UN reform framework between UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, and WFP to advance discussions initiated during the Transforming Education Summit. The UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub in Helsinki, with a significant injection of funds from the Government of Finland, is discussed in Chapter 5.6.2.

GPE is the key global platform for education development and the world's largest education-only fund, and Finland, like most development partners active in EDC, is fully committed to advancing it. Finland reaffirmed its commitment to the GPE's mission by allocating EUR 2 million to GPE's COVID-19 response in December 2020. In 2021, Finland re-engaged with GPE, pledging 25 million EUR towards the replenishment campaign seeking to mobilise at least 5 billion USD over five years to transform education systems in more than 90 low-income countries and territories, benefiting over 1 billion children. Finland also plays various roles, globally and at the country level, in GPE coordination, monitoring and development.

While evidence shows multilateral cooperation being overall effective, and the above-discussed factors support in particular focusing on the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE and ECW, with the commitment already made to the UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub, specific policy dialogue benchmarks are lacking, and this should be addressed. Strengthening these partnerships can also enhance policy influence and access to new opportunities for participation by the Finnish stakeholders.



Finland channels its funding for UNESCO's education sector through the Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED), which is a platform translating global advocacy for education into tangible actions, with a particular emphasis on LDCs and fragile nations in emergencies or post-conflict and disaster recovery phases. Although Finland is not among UNESCO's largest donors, its support plays a role in strengthening education systems. Through the CapED, Finland supports the formulation and implementation of better effective education policies, ensuring an equitable right to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. Through its partnership with UNESCO and contributions to CapED, Finland significantly contributes to global efforts focused on education, gender equality, vocational training, and media development, which are all integral elements for building a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world. **Box 11** provides examples of country-level results generated with the CapEd support.

Box 11. The CapED programme in Mozambique, Myanmar and Nepal

UNESCO's CapED programme is a global initiative, active since 2003, with a focus on 26 least-developed countries, including Finland's partner countries (e.g., Mozambique, Myanmar and Nepal). The programme is one of UNESCO's key operational responses to strengthen systems and assist countries in achieving national priorities in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Globally, the programme focuses on three priority areas: sector-wide policy and planning, skills for life and work, and teachers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational responses to Covid-19 were added as the fourth intervention area.

Overall, during the period under review, the programme provided training for almost 18,000 education officers in planning as well as in data collection, management and analysis for better monitoring and evidence-based policy making; supported approximately 19,000 learners (63% female) in accessing skills development and learning opportunities as well as benefitting from distance learning solutions; supported the development of 300 gender sensitive and relevant curricula and learning materials; and mobilised of 59 million USD in GPE grants.

With CapED support, Mozambique, Myanmar and Nepal have developed national strategies for the development of education statistics, a policy instrument that provides a medium-term vision for a strengthened education data system and data management platform in a country. In Mozambique and Nepal, the programme supported the inclusion of alternative and non-formal education for youth and adults in education sector plans and strategies. These countries were also supported in the implementation of UNESCO's Strategy for TVET 2016-2021, especially in the areas of policy reviews and policy development, promoting targeted policy measures for disadvantaged groups, and fostering cross-sectoral approaches to TVET. In 2023, the programme will enable the Government of Nepal at central and local levels to integrate a non-formal Education Management Information System (EMIS) into the national Integrated Education Management Information System.

Source: UNESCO, 2022

Finland's engagement with ECW further shows commitment to addressing the urgent educational needs of children in crisis situations. Over the period of 2020-2022, Finland contributed a total of EUR 6 million in core support funding to ECW. Moreover, Finland allocated an additional 4 MEUR to a MYRP in Ethiopia, focusing on Tigray and Amhara, with funding channelled directly to UNICEF. While Finland's financial share accounts only for around 1 % of ECW's total financing,



every contribution holds significant weight in ensuring that children affected by conflicts, disasters, or emergencies have access to quality education, directly aligning with ECW's mission. Finland's participation in ECW reinforces the ECW's vital mission and underlines Finland's commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable children and youth during times of crisis.

Generally, Finland's multilateral influencing in EDC includes (i) an advocacy focus on strengthened commitment to inclusive education by international financial institutions, the African Union (AU), the EU and partner countries; and (ii) lobbying for increased funding, especially for basic education and for the poorest countries, and highlighting thematic areas (education for girls and children with disabilities, parental/maternal education, teacher training, school meals, innovation and digital learning). However, multilateral influencing also means increasing Finnish actors' access to multilateral projects, with an emphasis on multi-stakeholder partnerships. This common objective reflects, in the words of an interviewee, the "*unique inter-sectoral synergies*" within Finland's EDC, as well as Finnish governance values such as shared government objectives across parliamentary terms and the horizontal Finnish working culture.

However, with no monitoring targets or benchmarks to clarify progress in terms of global policy influencing, we cannot say with conviction that explicit policy dialogue results have been achieved during the period under review³⁹ (MFA, 2022c). Indeed, as some stakeholders state, "*It is difficult to verify specific Finnish contributions*"; nevertheless, it is evident that "*We need to incorporate the policy dialogue more concretely in the results framework by setting clear targets and monitoring them*" (MFA, 2021f; KII: MFA, EDUFI, MEC, EU HQ, GPE Secretariat, UNICEF).

5.3.3 The Finnish Centre for Expertise in education development

Building on gains made in the start-up phase, staff note the need to sharpen **FinCEED's** role as a facilitator of EDC, taking account of fundamental constraints: a shortage of EDC expertise in Finland, a mismatch between countries' needs and expert deployment, and the disincentives for experts to pursue a career in the civil service. Given the ambitious and somewhat unrealistic three-year timeframe for FinCEED's results framework, some stakeholders state that FinCEED's main result was its "*getting off the ground*". We view this as an understatement, however. In fact, FinCEED accomplished several main activities within the framework of the first of its three function areas.

FinCEED has already accomplished several main activities within the first of its three function areas.

1. Strengthening competencies in development cooperation in education and training. An expert register for educational development has (**FinCEED Expert Directory**⁴⁰) been set up.

The Directory includes a web form to be filled out by experts. Based on replies, FinCEED can find suitable candidates for the expert assignments. FinCEED publishes expert assignments (mainly short-term) on its website. Sometimes, the number of candidates has been few because the Terms of Reference are too specific. To address this challenge, FinCEED is doing a systematic analysis of

39 It is thus reassuring to see that MFA's 2022 results framework includes these monitoring benchmarks: increased financing to the poorest countries and basic education and more equitable financing within the education sector; education sector plans and policies promote equity, inclusive and gender transformative education for all and enhance teachers professional status and quality education; duty bearers guarantee, protect and advance the right to education including protecting education in conflict and crisis situations.

40 Available on <https://www.oph.fi/en/services/finceed-expert-directory>



profiles to better understand the scope of Finland's expert pool. In addition, as many submissions of Curriculum Vitae (CV) are either foreign PhD students with limited understanding of the Finnish education system or EDC policy or teachers with no experience of teaching abroad, there is a mismatch of CVs. An underlying issue is the question of who is and who is not a Finnish expert. Some stakeholders argue that "*Finnish expertise is not just white Finnish citizens; expertise is also available among alumni from African countries*".

FinCEED has piloted modular blended training for education experts in collaboration with HEIs, CSOs, and partners in the Global South; the focus is on specific questions related to teaching activities in Finland's EDC response to the learning crisis in partner countries. A pilot training '*How to respond to the challenge of transforming education*' was organised in February-March 2023⁴¹ with 31 participants. Training had speakers from international organisations (UNESCO, GPE, World Bank, EU, UNICEF), from HEIs, CSOs, ministries and governmental agencies. (MFA, MEC, EDUFI) Training is yet to continue with an *Advanced Training in Transforming Education* organised in autumn 2023 (EDUFI, 2023a & 2023b). FinCEED also publicised existing training opportunities on its website. To maintain interest in applying for short-term positions, FinCEED has also offered free access for selected individuals to online training courses provided by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO-IIEP); viewed, though, by some stakeholders as "*an expensive solution*".

In addition, FinCEED maintains the Howspace platform of the Education in Development Countries network and supports broader knowledge sharing among the education sector by promoting a peer community of experts to address the need for knowledge sharing.

2. Providing expert support. FinCEED provides education expertise 'for system-level development and policy issues as part of development cooperation and development of the education sector in partner countries'. Stakeholders agree that Finland is working much harder to build competencies, particularly for EU delegated cooperation, through the work of FinCEED. However, given current human resources limitations⁴², it is not likely that FinCEED can become the equivalent of an institution such as the state-owned Finnish Institute of Public Management, active in EU-related training for state personnel and EU-Twinning projects, or, as stated by a stakeholder, "*for example, the AFD [Agence française de développement] which has around 3000 employees*".⁴³

In addition, in its launch phase, FinCEED carried out two expert support needs surveys for the MFA. For example, in the first needs survey conducted in October 2021, a total of 25 expert support needs were received, prioritised and selected by the FinCEED Steering Committee at the beginning of 2022. Some of the proposed assignments did not materialise due to different reasons. As of the end-2022, a total of seven short-term experts have been planned for deployment, including 3 Seconded National Experts to the EU Delegations/Commission, 1 for the UNICEF's Global Learning Innovations Hub in Helsinki and a six-month secondment to the funding mechanism secretariat of the GPE. In addition, during 2022, FinCEED provided 'call down' expert support to the MFA (for ECW), GPE and the World Bank COACH programme) and coordinated two regional preparations of the Team Europe initiative for Finland, as well as participating in a working group of the EU Digital Development Hub (D4D Hub). In addition, FinCEED has prepared an Exploring Finnish Digital Education website that collects the best digital learning practices and solutions from Finland.

41 Please note that the piloting phase does not fall within the scope of this evaluation.

42 Although the FinCEED staff is expected to increase to 15-20 during 2024 with additional EU funding.

43 This may change given then forthcoming pillar assessment of EDUFI, under which FinCEED is a unit.



In the second survey, 17 needs were identified, 16 approved, and by early 2023, 7 were in active preparation. These included South Africa (teacher education and early education), Kenya (vocational training), Lebanon (remote education), Myanmar (inclusion), Uganda (K-12), and flexible support to the Embassy of Finland in Nepal to the Education Cannot Wait and Global Action on Disability (GLAD) network. The specification/expert identification to meet needs related to Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ukraine and Vietnam was ongoing. (EDUFI/FinCEED, 2023; online survey; KIIs: FinCEED, EDUFI).

3. Influence and Networking. FinCEED has hit the ground running in the area of networking. An example is the FinCEED Forum, the first of a planned series, held on 2-3 November 2022, bringing together stakeholders in Finland's education development cooperation.

Education sector stakeholders agree that FinCEED is an experiment in filling a gap, but it is much too soon to say whether it is a successful or failed experiment. Nevertheless, FinCEED staff shared useful learnings from their first operational year. In general, there is a gap between policy intent and strategies for policy implementation, and expectations tend to fall through the cracks: *“There is a mismatch of expectations in terms of policy goals [which drive the requests] and what can be practically achieved; where realism is lacking, we need to manage expectations”*. Specifically, of the FinCEED programme's three components, deployment was especially challenging because it was based on three unsafe assumptions.

First, the view that the deployment of Finnish experts will open the door to influencing multilateral policy is a risky assumption. In fact, the ‘elephant in the room’ is that there are not enough appropriately and adequately qualified applicants from Finland for expert tasks that often require ‘extensive/deep system-level competence: *“When we just don't have the people, we won't get the results we want and need”*, said one of the stakeholders. The positioning of Finnish experts for policy influencing is thus only part of the complex puzzle of how to meet policy objectives and, in FinCEED's experience, *“the benefits of this strategy need to be weighed against the relatively high costs”*; at present 45% of FinCEED's operational budget is allocated for deploying national experts to the EU Commission/Delegations. The decision to allocate a substantial share of the budget for secondments has been driven by both the exigency of adhering to budgetary timelines⁴⁴ and the strategic alignment with the broader context of EU's intensive engagement in programming its education sector support, altogether, optimising the impact and effectiveness of FinCEED's interventions.

Rather, Country Programmes are critical for the translation of policy intent into action *“as long as Embassies remain engaged in the deployment process, beyond just making the request”*. But here again, the assumption that expertise will match country-level needs was also called into question. The *“needs of partner countries often extend beyond what can be realistically implemented with short-term (6-months) expert support”*. In addition, many experts cannot detach from their daily work as quickly as their partner would like or require. FinCEED experienced that the newly-established unit lacks the required specialist competencies and resources necessary for expert recruitment and identified gaps in HR procedures and administrative systems for deploying experts, particularly when considering deployments to organisations operating in challenging or hardship environments.

Relatedly, FinCEED's first operational year raised the question of resource shortfalls within MFA itself. While MFA financing is short-term (and may well undergo substantial cuts), it is expected that EU Pillar status may bring some sustainability to the Centre's work. However, it is not clear

⁴⁴ The funding earmarked for FinCEED's establishment was derived from the 2021 budget, and is yet to be spent by the end of 2023



how MFA intends to address its internal human resource gaps. The civil service career point is not related to MFA but comes with the need for more flexibility between international positions and work in Finland in education-specific positions. These could also include MEC and EDUFI. A recently commissioned review of the recruitment of Finnish experts in international organisations found certain disincentives to pursuing a civil service career. For example, there is little distinction between domestic and international career paths across various sectors and the career paths open to experts on their return to Finland are limited. The review recommended encouraging students to apply for development cooperation jobs. From the perspective of HEIs, while efforts are being made to use graduates to fill HR gaps, “*We are struggling with how to attract our students to jobs in the civil service*” (EDUFI/FinCEED, 2023; MFA, 2022B; 4Front, 2023; KIIs: FinCEED; MFA, TFK, GINTL).⁴⁵

5.3.4 Interventions funded through humanitarian financing

Support for school feeding is a key feature of **humanitarian assistance** in Finland’s education sector. While education in emergencies has not been a clear humanitarian priority for Finland due to its emphasis on needs-based and non-earmarked funding, it is a clear priority in the programmes for partner countries, including Myanmar, Syria, and Lebanon, and plays a role in parts of the programmes for Palestine, Nepal, Ethiopia, and Somalia. While UNHCR is the main channel for Finland’s interventions funded by humanitarian financing, the two main channels that are relevant to the education sector are the Education Cannot Wait and the World Food Programme (WFP). This is in line with “*the Finnish idea of quality education, where education has well-being as a dimension of inclusive learning*”. According to stakeholders, although it is early days for both investments of two, school feeding appears to be yielding more convincing results (see 5.6.2. for more details on the School Meal Coalition, and **Annex 8** for further details of Finland’s overall engagement with WFP and ECW and WFP).

While education in emergencies has not been a clear humanitarian priority for Finland, it is a clear priority in the programmes for a number of partner countries.

For example, Finland’s EDC in Ethiopia takes a nexus approach, integrating a focus on child protection and education and the provision for school feeding is included to secure a daily meal for students in targeted schools. Finland’s nexus approach brings real-life examples to multilaterals’ attention: “*It is a lot about linking the right people together through sector coordination, not just raising issues, but making sure they fly*” (MFA, 2021r, MFA-Ethiopia, 2021; Ethiopia Case Study; KIIs: MFA).

As described in sections 5.1 and 5.2, Finland’s portfolio of partner countries includes most of which are in varying states of fragility. In the context of fragility as the ‘new normal’, nexus programming in general – and education in emergencies in particular – appears to be emerging as a new priority for Finland’s EDC. Indeed, although education in humanitarian settings appears in a separate 2020 ToC for interventions funded by humanitarian financing (not under education), MFA’s more recent results framework includes Output 2.4 ‘*Continuity of education in emergencies is better protected*’. Relevant departments in MFA emphasise the need to “*ensure strategies are adaptive and realistic and more focused on approaches for education in emergencies*”.

⁴⁵ Current legislation (primarily the language criteria) makes it difficult for non-Finnish alumni of Finnish universities to be recruited into public sector jobs. While “*we need adjustments if we want to use the knowledge of people of African people living in Finland*”, legislative changes in one area will need to be made across all sectors, which requires a conducive political climate (KII: GINTL).



CSOs draw attention to their underexploited potential in planning and delivering Education in Emergencies. However, the role of CSOs in the HDP nexus programming requires careful consideration and guidance on how to promote these synergies. In Afghanistan, for example, collaboration between humanitarian and development actors deepened as a result of intimidation and criticism towards CSOs in Taliban-controlled areas; but in Mozambique, partnerships with CSOs in periods of crisis were limited because it was difficult to find funding within the country strategy budget which is pre-programmed and relatively small.

In **Ethiopia**, MFA recognises that ‘To improve the access and participation of vulnerable children, emergency responses must intersect with development needs’. Moreover, policy dialogue with multilaterals in the context of nexus programming can build on previous relationships at the country level. For example, following the military coup in **Myanmar**, with significant weight behind their dialogue with the government, education sector partners – coordinated by MFA’s education expert in Myanmar and led by UNESCO - drafted the Joint Response Framework for the Education Sector 2022-2025.

Box 12. Building on Finland’s strengths in peace mediation, conflict prevention and water diplomacy

Finland is among global signatories to the **Safe Schools Declaration**: ‘Governments across the world should stand firm on human rights violations, it’s our moral obligation to stand with the marginalised’. Yet in at least 37 countries globally, including Ethiopia, Palestine and Myanmar, there is a pattern of attacks on education by state security forces and non-state armed groups. Protecting education from attack demands more significant political and legal investments. Indeed, peace mediation and conflict prevention have been promoted as a longstanding priority in Finland’s foreign policy; ‘a more stable world also benefits the Finnish people’.

Finland’s **Centre for Peace Mediation** was established in October 2020 under the MFA’s Political Department, intended to ‘strengthen Finland’s expertise and capacity in mediation matters’. Note, an action under Objective 3 of MEC’s Action Plan for the Africa Strategy (‘Finland promotes conflict prevention and resolution by strengthening of crisis resilience’) is to ‘utilise the expertise of Finnish peace and conflict research institutes on peace mediation and peacebuilding; e.g., MFA’s Centre for Mediation’.

Water diplomacy, i.e., the prevention and resolution of political tensions related to water and water use, which combines water expertise with conflict prevention and resolution, is another area of Finland’s strengths.

Source: GCPEA, 2021; MEC, 2022; MFA, 2021; KIIs

MFA and its development partners in **Palestine** have described a ‘*de-development*’ trajectory, suggesting a ‘rethinking’ of the nexus in protracted crisis settings. This would entail Finland’s continued (and proven) role as coordinator of high-level dialogue at national as well as regional levels. Such dialogue has two dimensions. First, clarifying how education-related interventions funded by humanitarian financing can best complement ODA in protracted crisis settings, not only in response to immediate crises. Second, deciding on how peace education can be embedded in that trajectory (see **Box 12**) (MFA, 2020b; MFA, 2021g; MFA, 2022c; KIIs: MFA, CSOs). Nevertheless, as stakeholders across the board agree, policy influencing in the occupied territory is



itself influenced by geo-political factors: *“In Palestine, the ‘P’ in the HDP nexus is about politics”*. Information accessed during the evaluation suggests that donor aid is based on the flawed assumption that aid buys time to uphold the viability of the two-state solution, but development aid on its own, without challenging the occupation and advancing the peace process, is unsustainable and may even be counterproductive.

Globally, humanitarian expert practitioners suggest that, paradoxically, when the education-related needs for assistance worldwide are rapidly increasing, the suitability of interventions funded by humanitarian financing to address these needs may be shrinking.⁴⁶ Education in humanitarian crisis settings requires the coordination of different forms of assistance: ‘the best possible synergies are achieved by means of coordinating military activities, civilian crisis management, development cooperation and humanitarian aid’⁴⁷ (MFA, 2019b; Lilly, 2023; KII: MFA).

5.4 Modalities assessed less effective in Finland’s EDC

In this section, we continue to review the diverse financing modalities at work in Finland’s EDC in order to assess their relative effectiveness in contributing to the expected results analysed above.

Finding 9. CSOs and higher education institutions are critically important partners in EDC, yet their potential has not been exploited to the full, and their relationship with private companies lacks enablers and remains uncertain. Private sector instruments appear to add little value in the education sector, and stakeholders suggest MFA and its partners reflect on the pros and cons of private sector involvement in EDC.

Evidence supporting this finding is provided in the following chapters: Support channelled through Finnish, local or international CSOs (5.4.1), the HEI ICI programme (5.4.2) and PSIs (5.4.3).

5.4.1 Civil Society Organisations

CSOs make important contributions at the grassroots level and in geographical and thematic areas that are often ignored, but the role of CSOs is implicit in Finland’s EDC policy and remains unclear in practice. Their partnerships with private sector actors are challenging, and a fit-for-purpose instrument for such collaborative ventures is missing. CSOs are critical partners in Finland’s development policy (see **Box 13**). CSO support increases the diversity and effectiveness of Finland’s development cooperation, provides a significant contribution to the implementation of the policy and brings unique long-term contextual expertise to EDC. While CSOs have strongly prioritised education, and Open Aid data shows that education sector payments to civil society have increased between 2018 and 2021, CSOs have also suggested that Education

46 Large-scale economic recovery is best addressed by international financial institutions (e.g., through debt relief) while small-scale community assistance is better provided by local groups (as was seen in recent crises in Sri Lanka and Pakistan). In some cases, as with the Ukraine crisis, humanitarian aid agencies struggle to absorb the vast sums of funding available; Oxfam UK recently chose to refuse the funding provided through the UK’s Disaster Emergency Committee. ‘As humanitarian aid and development cooperation are becoming far more difficult to distinguish, at least in terms of the problems they respond to, it is not inconceivable that the World Bank will become one of the most important funders for humanitarian actors in the future’ (Lilly, 2023).

47 <https://um.fi/bilateral-partner-countries>



in Emergencies should be a priority track (MFA, 2021m; MFA, 2022j).

Projects and programmes implemented by CSOs “fill gaps left by others”, supporting inclusion at the grassroots level by involving people in remote areas being present when or where others are not. Finnish CSOs also make an important contribution to an education sub-sector that is often neglected by other donors, calling for better recognition of non-formal education in Finland’s EDC, as well as their own role as its providers; “there is a need for wider recognition and inclusion of non-formal education in education sector development cooperation, which is what CSOs mostly do and we could do even more” (KII: CSO). Notably, while Finland considers CSOs as independent and autonomous actors, the goals and methods of their activities, as well as the areas and sectors of their engagement, have followed Finland’s development policy.

Civil society organisations make important contributions at the grassroots level and in geographical and thematic areas that are often ignored.

Box 13. Civil Society in Finland’s Development Policy

Finland’s Development policy recognises that a free, strong, diverse and independent civil society is a prerequisite for sustainable development, democracy and the fulfilment of human rights. Yet, in a ‘shrinking space’ for civil society, it is critically important to strengthen civil societies in developing countries, where human rights defenders are at risk.

Thus, Finland’s aim for CSO support, guided by the Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy (2017), is twofold. First, to support civil society actors in their work to help achieve Finland’s development policy objectives, and second, to strengthen civil societies in developing countries. CSOs are key partners in implementing, for example, Finland’s Africa strategy. However, at the core of ‘all activities funded from the Ministry’s development cooperation appropriations are practices that strengthen civil societies’. CSOs also work to support people’s capacity and right to pursue changes to detect problems and defend the freedoms of speech, expression and assembly.

Civil society plays a strong role in promoting the rights and position of women and girls, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights and preventing and eradicating gender-based violence, as well as building the capacities of women and offering microcredits and support for setting up businesses. Furthermore, Finnish CSOs and their partners play a significant role in addressing multiple discrimination, with a focus on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Source: MFA, 2022j, MFA, 2020C

In 2019,⁴⁸ Finnish CSOs received **project support** to implement 71 projects in 40 countries. Rather than the grants being concentrated on a limited number of large projects, they were spread across a range of projects to preserve the diversity of the grant recipients, with a focus on the African region (with a majority in Tanzania (13) and Somalia (9)).

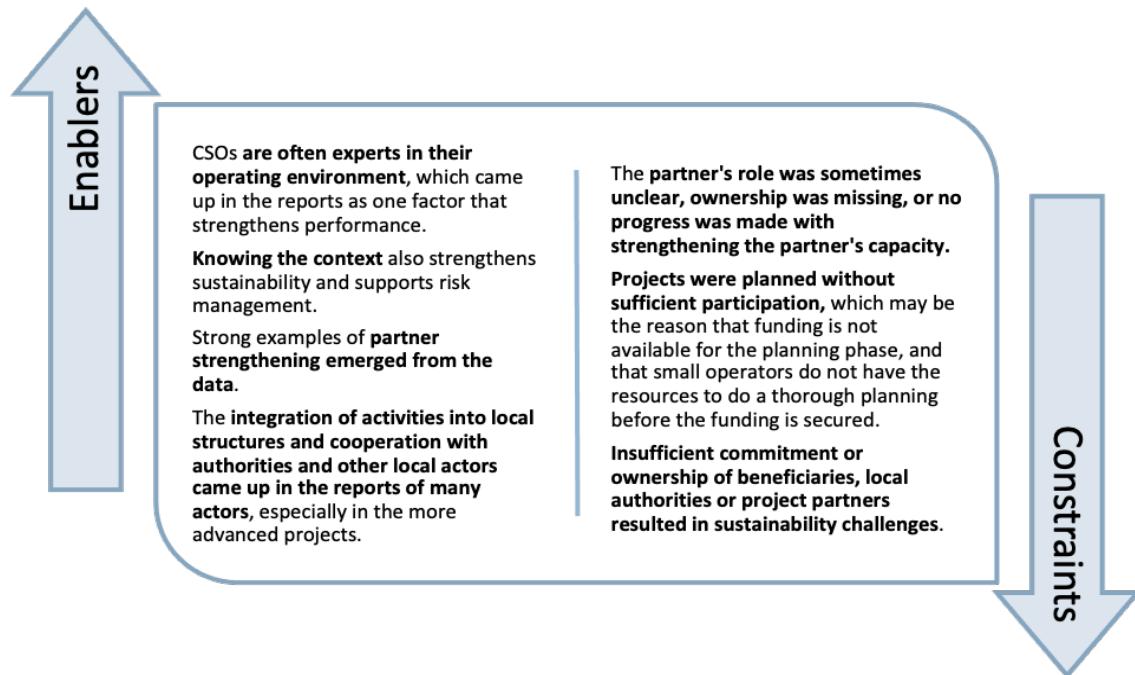
An analysis of 53 annual reports for 2019 conducted by the Civil Society Unit showed that, overall 48 the CSO projects had achieved their goals mainly or partially. While 2019 was the first year

48 Please note that this refers to **all CSO projects** regardless of their sector, and not education only.



of project implementation for most of the projects, there were delays in the launch of (over a fifth of projects), arising from 'the late decisions on sub-granting to local partners, which in some cases, emerge from weak participation of local partners in planning processes' (see **Figure 15**) (MFA, 2022j; MFA, 2021m; MFA, 2020C; KIIs: CSOs).

Figure 15. Enablers and constraints in CSO project and programme performance



Source: Evaluation Team (analysis based on the findings presented in this section)

Similarly, a 2022 analysis of the annual reports submitted by 19 CSOs awarded **programme support** (a total of MEUR 63 million) showed that despite the challenging operating year, the programmes implemented in over 70 countries (mainly in Africa) progressed towards their set goals and many organisations even exceeded the result targets they had set, for example. The transition of training to digital platforms enabled larger participation numbers' (MFA, 2022j). FCA's volume of education sector support is notable, and it operates with large amounts of funding outside of MFA. Annual education budgets are in the range of 30 MEUR. It also acts as a global advocate and partner for many global players such as ECW and UNHCR.

CSOs' participation in primary education has been rather limited, but their capacity and comparative advantage have not been sufficiently acknowledged in Finland's EDC. In their programming, CSOs understandably focus on their comparative advantages. In autumn 2022, when the new results map on Finland's ECD was launched, a joint meeting with CSOs confirmed that CSOs are widely and broadly involved in contributing to all outputs of Finland's EDC. Data in MFA's results report confirmed that CSOs had a higher total number of beneficiaries in primary and secondary education programmes than in adult education programmes (MFA, 2022i). There are opportunities for CSOs to be more involved in the sector, including primary education and VET. Their comparative advantage is that they can fill in the gaps when the issue is reaching the most vulnerable (e.g., disability) and geographically remote and challenging areas. (MFA, 2016b)

Box 14 illustrates in a summarised form results achieved by selected programme-based CSOs during the evaluation period. Longer presentation of the results mentioned above in various education sub-sectors can be found in **Annex 12**.



Box 14. Selected results of programme-based CSOs in the education sector

Girls' attendance in high school (Felm). In Tanzania, girls' chances of attending high school improved and **nearly doubled their opportunities from 2018 to 2021** in the project area. Twenty-four project secondary schools in the Meru area adopted **tools and teaching methods** that promoted girls' learning and active classroom participation, significantly improving the performance of initially disadvantaged low-performing community schools with limited resources in remote rural areas. In 2017, 19.7% of girls in project schools reached the level (Divisions 1-3) that qualifies candidates to enter Advanced Level studies. By 2021, this figure had risen to 37%.

In-service training for teachers (Fida International). The quality of education for 151,000 children, including 69,700 girls and 4000 children with disabilities, was improved. Quality was improved through, among others, **in-service training for teachers on the use of modern, inclusive teaching methods**. Follow-up monitoring found that **almost 9000 teachers were actively using new skills acquired**.

Vocational skills (Finnish Refugee Council). Vocational skills are provided for young and adult refugees and internally displaced people in **Myanmar** and **Ethiopia**. Trainings are based on market surveys and include apprenticeships, linking with job opportunities as well as small business skills and life skills. In **Uganda**, business skills training for refugees and host community members contributes to the self-reliance of refugees. The ability to widen their income-generating sources after the business course was remarkable (94% of the sampled learners reported that they had created jobs for themselves and others through the small business enterprise, IGAs and adoption of better farming methods). There were, in total, 8779 students (F65%, youth 44%) in vocational and business skills training with an 85% graduation rate.

Environmentally friendly inclusive learning environments (Taksvärkki). In **Nepal**, School Improvement Plans (SIP) to meet the criteria for child and environmentally-friendly inclusive learning environments (including equity, safe drinking water, girl-friendly accessible sanitation, greenery, nature club management and school stakeholders' relationships) are being implemented in all 15 project schools. Most of them are situated in hard-to-access rural locations where school stakeholders often lack information on available public mechanisms for school improvement, while the education sector officials have very little or no contact with the reality of these schools.

Employment of vulnerable youth through TVET (World Vision Finland). In **Rwanda** and **Kenya**, approximately 1200 youth had access to skills training enabling them to get employment or start their own businesses, with a focus on disability inclusion (with a 10% target for persons with disabilities), gender equality, and cooperation with local authorities and the private sector. Both projects have had positive results, even with the COVID-19 affecting both. In Rwanda (Buliza) 55% of the participants had their income increased, and 94% of respondents were satisfied with their current work. In Kenya (Roysambu) the proportion of youth who were ready for employment had risen from 13 % (2018) to 76 % in 2021 among the youth who had gained training through the project. Positive changes in the youth's attitudes, confidence, and aspirations have been assessed as the main impacts of the project.

Source: Fida, 2019-2021; FRC 2021-2023; Taksvärkki, 2022 & 2023; World Vision, 2022; CSO survey



Our review of a sample of CSO projects brought up examples of the results of well-established initiatives with built-in cooperation components. For example, U-landshjälp från Folk till Folk i Finland's (UFF Finland) project in **Mozambique** demonstrated a good understanding of Finland's development policy and cooperation priorities, in line with country plans (strategy/programme) and operated with a well-established, reputable and valued local partner. The same project has also shown promise in bringing in Finnish expertise from other CSOs not involved in this particular project but substance-matter experts in disability and with experience from and presence in the country.

Another interesting result, this time from **Palestine**, is The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation's (KVS) joint project with Birzeit University Media Development Centre and Bethlehem University Institute for Community Partnership (ICP), which was built on previous projects ("Civic Skills via Media Education in Palestine" 2015–2016 and "Media Literacy for Sustainable Society"). The project has empowered young adults in Palestine to participate in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society by building the capacity of adult educators working in media literacy. In addition to training 150 Palestinian teachers and community leaders, as well as ten local trainers, in media literacy, a Guide on Media Literacy Skills, the first in Arabic, is considered the project's major achievement. While it is challenging to evaluate the wider impact (e.g., regional and national) of the project, KVS reports that the project has been important for all the participants – teachers, experts or students.

Overall, the programme-based CSOs contribute to Finland's education sector development cooperation in various sub-sectors and in geographical areas not covered by bilateral programming. The focus of their programmes varies, e.g. from improved access to education by children with disabilities, minorities and girls, quality of education through in-service training of teachers and inclusive teaching methods, establishing training centres with national learning curriculum and home learning materials in times of crisis, TVET, learning environment and education in emergencies.

Nevertheless, the thematic area of disability inclusion is not well-reflected in all CSO projects. On the one hand, some CSO projects specifically target persons and children with disabilities. For example, a project implemented by the YMCA East Jerusalem reached its 2021 targets for promoting the livelihoods and employability of young people, including the most marginalised rights-holders: women and persons with disabilities. On the other hand, in the case of 17 annual reports of projects implemented in 2019, Persons with Disabilities (PWD) had not been mentioned in the reporting at all or had been acknowledged in only one sentence; moreover, multi-based discrimination is not yet sufficiently identified, and disabled persons are not sufficiently considered. FCA has set up a school for pupils with special needs in Uganda, but there is a need for "*more second-chance opportunities for CwD*" (MFA, 2021m; Palestine Case Study; KIIs: MFA, CSOs).

Despite some creditable ground-level results, CSO projects and programmes face three main challenges.

First, the role of CSOs is implicit in Finland's EDC policy and remains unclear in practice. As seen above, the role of CSOs is at the policy level, and the necessary Guidelines are in place. But we note a shift in recent years, with the role of a CSO evolving into that of an implementing actor in a landscape where, as stated by a stakeholder, development cooperation and education export, including EdTech, are closely intertwined and should be considered integral components of the same entity. At the same time, as noted in a recent study of Finland's action to strengthen civil societies (and as mentioned in section 2.1.7), no actor holds explicit responsibility for overseeing the application of the [CSO] guidelines across Finnish development policy.



The risk of EDC turning into an unregulated free-for-all is a major concern for MFA and its partners. The knock-on effect of a lack of EDC *implementation* guidance is that CSOs report in detail on education-related activities and targets with regard to building local CSOs' capacities in basic education service delivery, but this is not the case for reporting on the policy goal of engaging local duty-bearers in defending the operating space of local CSOs in the education sector. Here, the treatment in CSOs' reports is thin. Indeed, the Civil Society Unit's analyses of CSOs' annual reports in both 2020 and 2022 flag various limitations in performance monitoring.⁴⁹ (MFA, 2020c; MFA, 2021g; MFA, 2021m; MFA, 2022j).

Second, CSO partnerships with private-sector actors or even public-sector HEIs are not an end in itself. A recommendation of the recent study on MFA's support for CSOs is the establishment of well-functioning collaborations between CSOs, HEIs in the global South, and Finnish researchers; the further strengthening of linkages with HEIs is considered important to all three groups of EDC actors. However, CSOs struggle to find avenues for connecting non-profit and profit actors. CSOs may act as 'brokers', connecting social enterprises with the local communities; however, *"There are already ICT solutions in countries, which are not known to Finnish operators, so we don't need to reinvent the wheel, but should instead take the time to find out what ICT innovations or methods are already available in the country for further development"*.

Establishing cooperation and finding synergies with the private sector is challenging for practical reasons. For example, business interests are reluctant to operate in fragile or low-income countries, which is where CSOs are most effective; *"least-developed countries where the infrastructure is rather poor, and institutions are not very effective - the private sector just doesn't want to go there"*. In addition, *"CSOs commit to a long-term presence, and this contradicts business-driven initiatives"*. Indeed, MFA's analysis of CSO reports for 2019 found few business partnerships; *'cooperation in itself is not a goal if it does not bring added value in terms of the set goals* (MFA, 2020c; MFA, 2021m; MFA, 2022o; online survey, KIIs: CSOs).

Third, in order to leverage and scale up, CSOs seek a fit-for-purpose instrument for collaborative ventures. A general perception is that efforts have resulted in increased – although still relatively scattered - information and advisory services for CSO-PSI partnership initiatives, but in practice and while Finnpartnership can offer some support, *"An instrument that would facilitate the CSOs and businesses coming together does not exist"*. The Discretionary Government Transfers Act has limited pooled funding opportunities for Finland, particularly in fragile and conflict situations; this *'potentially limits new partnerships with UN and World Bank partners, as well as partnerships with and between civil society and start-ups'*. Relative to multilateral cooperation, for example, CSOs can make small but important ground-level impacts with moderate financial investment. Finland increasingly channels aid to civil society through multilateral agencies, but this support remains largely invisible since Finland does not have a direct relationship with the local CSOs who might receive funding in this framework. Moreover, while financing via multilaterals requires less human resources for MFA, *"For CSOs this type of funding is second hand"* (MFA, 2022o; OECD, 2022b; KIIs: CSOs).

49 For example, the types of CSOs, as well as the field and scope of activity are diverse and CSOs' results monitoring systems are different; baselines and annual target levels are not set, indicators do not enable an accurate assessment of the achievement of the targets on an annual basis and disaggregated performance monitoring data based on disability, gender or age are lacking in many cases



5.4.2 Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument

HEI ICI projects, while enhancing education quality, served as testing grounds for Finnish market-driven solutions, facing connectivity issues, sustainability challenges, inconsistencies in objectives, and a need for better alignment with local contexts. HEI ICI projects have reportedly improved research and teaching capacity and increased access to good quality teacher education may, in time, improve the quality of basic education in LDCs, but the programme appears to have served primarily as a testing ground for market-driven Finnish solutions, which may be difficult to sustain in partner countries without external financing.

Global programme results reported for the years 2017-2020⁵⁰ included a change of mindset among Finnish academics and improvements in knowledge and awareness among Finnish academics on scientific and contextual matters. In addition, Finnish HEI staff gained experience in teaching and research methods in different socio-economic contexts and in teaching multicultural and multidisciplinary groups; they also gained management skills, in particular linked to result-based management. Moreover, in many Finnish universities, the project has increased the cooperation between departments in their own institution and even led to new mutual learning and joint teaching activities.

However, **projects in the education sector had a positive impact on national reform processes and legislative decision-making at the country level.** For example, the Teacher Educators in Higher Education as Catalysts for Inclusive Practices in Technical and Vocational Education (TECIP) project influenced national vocational teacher education reform in Ethiopia, and the Teacher Preparation Programme through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Mode for

HEI ICI projects have reported positive impact on national reform processes and legislative decision-making at the country level as well as improved access to higher education and research information.

Enhancing Quality in Education (TPP) project in Nepal contributed to national teacher education reform in Nepal. Similarly, the Social Innovations in Geo-ICT education at Tanzanian Higher Education Institutions for improved employability (GeoICT4e) project laid the foundations for transformative change in Tanzanian society through new and renewed curricula programmes and improved skills and competencies of the staff and students in four universities.

Access to higher education and research information has reportedly improved (e.g., projects have introduced online learning to improve access for students in partner countries, and several new study programmes have been developed, reaching some 8900 individuals). The quality of higher education and research environment has also improved (e.g., 42 revised or new study programmes at PhD, Master's or Bachelor level were introduced, of which 28 were accredited/approved; and at least 1885 students have enrolled or applied for revised/new courses or programmes; several diploma, short- or summer courses developed; and 101 joint publications have been published). In addition, institutional, management and leadership capacities were improved.

Notably, the follow-up HEI ICI Programme for 2020-2024 was designed specifically as a response to this question: given the rapid change in the global set-up of universities, how can Finland support

⁵⁰ More recent results were presented in section 4.1.5.



the developing country HEIs to prepare for the future? In a changing, increasingly digitalised institutional environment⁵¹, the solutions of the partnership programmes needed to be forward-looking in both Finland as well as in its partner countries. (MFA/EDUFI, 2019) A “*win-win situation*” was identified: create content which is relevant for Finland but which can also be adapted to countries and so have “*potential for wide markets beyond the partner universities in the developing countries*”. It would seem that HEI ICI projects are, among other things, a testing ground for potential market-driven solutions.

However, such contextual change in terms of **digitalised higher learning in partner LDCs is likely to be much slower than it is in Finland**. Indeed, the HEI ICI projects reported that their operational environment was affected by multiple crises; for example, unexpected natural hazards in Mozambique, strikes in Kenya and political conflict in Ethiopia and Myanmar. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 also led to delays in activities.

We found **inconsistencies in the HEI ICI programme theory of change**.⁵² First, as seen in our case study country HEI-ICI projects, we found no credible evidence of improved connections between HEIs and businesses in the education sector. Second, the programme is premised on the efficacy of digital technologies to scale up students’ access to higher education in developing countries. Yet the projects encountered a fundamental challenge: poor connectivity. Although projects reportedly improved the internet connections of HEIs in developing countries during the project cycle, this systemic challenge suggests it may be difficult to sustain e-learning gains in these countries without donor financing. Third, there is an underlying tension in programme objectives. On the one hand, the projects sought to build research and teaching capacities with a view to improving learning outcomes in developing countries. On the other hand, partnerships between universities in the global North and South served as a ‘laboratory’ for market-driven course context and blended learning solutions (MFA/EDUFI, 2019; MFA/EDUFI, 2021b; Country Case Studies; KIIs: MFA, HEI, GINTL network).

5.4.3 Private Sector Instruments

Private sector instruments have tried to reconcile private sector interests with the need to address the global learning crisis, but education is not a priority for impact investors, and partnerships are weak: the identification of shared results is a challenge; synergies require additional human resources; and without the right kind of financing for partnerships in LDCs, investment is more safely directed at middle-income countries. In MFA’s overall assessment of the performance of private sector instruments in Finland’s development cooperation, Finnfund and Finnpartnership were rated ‘very good’ and ‘good’ (against goals and targets) in both 2019 and 2021. Our findings show that private sector instruments have made efforts to reconcile private sector interests with the need to address

There have been some attempts to reconcile private sector interests with the need to address the global learning crisis but education is not a priority for impact investors and partnerships are weak.

51 Changes included advancement of Open Educational Resources (OER), Open Distance Learning and Massive Open Online Courses (changing needs in the employment markets, increased demand for HEIs and the mobility of students)

52 The theory of change was as follows: **if** Finnish HEIs working on similar issues collaborate and connect with businesses **and if** cooperation from well-established partner country universities can be expanded to cover smaller and less resourced partner country universities, **then** research and teaching capacity as well as access to good quality services in HEIs is improved (MFA/EDUFI, 2019).



the global learning crisis. Finnfund⁵³, in their own words, “looks for players who can do two things: benefit fee-paying students by providing quality offerings but who also have business models that do things differently”. Finnfund’s major direct investments in the education sector have been in the Maarifa Education Group in Uganda and Zambia and the Service, Persistence, Achievement, Responsibility and Kindness (SPARK) Schools Network in Africa.

However, education is not a priority for **Finnfund**; “it’s not an easy sector for us to work in because by definition private sector involvement means commercial, fee-based education; but Nordic countries feel education should be a public good”. Indeed, with only two education sector investments (although several education-related investments are not reported as such), Finnfund experts express doubts regarding their overall relevance in EDC: “we don’t engage in public-private partnership, so we are not sure that we have a role to play in the public education sector; the private sector can help with improving quality but inclusion is the responsibility of the public sector” (MFA, 2019b; MFA, 2021k; Annex 10; KIIs: Finnfund, Business Finland).

Although education is **Finnpartnership**⁵⁴’s biggest sector, business partnerships in this area are weak. This, according to a stakeholder, is because “the Finnish education sector does not have the right products and the commercial side is lacking in experience and expertise in how to adapt them”. The Finnish private sector actors have “just not tailored products to different contexts”. Finnpartnership assesses grant proposals on the basis of development impact. However, we found little evidence of any post-project effort to evaluate and document lessons learned from investment in innovations in the education sector. Nevertheless, our own assessment of one of a range of sampled projects (see **Annex 3**) supported by Finnpartnership suggests that both grantors and grantees may have lacked the technical expertise in education development to deliver and assess interventions that are relevant in terms of EDC.

Moving away from the ODA-funded private sector instruments, from the perspective of **Business Finland**, education comes with much less business potential than many other sectors, and the organisation does not maintain any specific programme for education sector business initiatives (Annex 10; KIIs: Finnpartnership, Business Finland).

Indeed, **the identification of shared education-sector results from the private sector instruments and integrating them into MFA’s RBM has been a challenge**. MFA underlines that working with the private sector needs to be grounded in “finding the points of convergence of the interests of the public and private sectors and coordinating them”. Currently, EDC projects financed with private sector instruments risk remaining isolated individual projects without wider impact and without linkages with Finland’s Country Programmes in partner countries.

On the one hand, **partnerships require less talk and more action**; “you can’t build synergies by sitting in meetings or coordination groups”. Although FinCEED is viewed as playing a promising role as a global facilitator, Finland’s embassies could potentially engage more in identifying investment opportunities and strengthening their own ties with the regional TFK network experts since, after all, the embassies are well positioned to identify needs and possible connections. On the other hand, action requires resources, and resource allocation depends on priorities; and because education is not a priority for investors, embassies don’t put in the resources either. The

53 Finnfund is a development financier and impact investor, providing businesses operating in Africa, Asia and Latin America with risk capital, long-term investment loans, mezzanine financing and expertise on how to invest in the developing markets.

54 Finnpartnership is a business partnership programme financed by MFA and managed by Finnfund aimed at generating positive development impacts by promoting business between Finland and developing countries.



experience of education export tells us, “*You can’t assume that the private sector will just jump into its place in development cooperation*”.

At the same time, despite the increase in non-grant funding as a share of overall bilateral ODA, **MFA staff resources dedicated to private sector instruments and development financial investments have not increased much since 2017**. This gap places additional risk on MFA’s role in assuring development outcomes of the financed interventions, including ensuring that operations are adapted to the country context and offer sustainable solutions for developing countries. The bottom line is that although Finnfund offers special risk guarantees, private companies need to be encouraged through risk-sharing incentives and facilitated by “*the right kind of financing*”. There is growing consensus among stakeholders that private sector investments are more safely directed at middle-income countries, which, from the development policy perspective, are not the target (MFA, 2021k; OECD, 2021; KII: Finnfund, Finnpartnership, TFK, EDUFI, MFA).

The Delphi findings reveal a lack of consensus regarding the prospective role of the private sector in Finnish education development cooperation. Approximately two-thirds of panellists acknowledge the potential of the private sector in areas like TVET, career development, and skill-building through programmes such as apprenticeships and internships. However, concerns are voiced by approximately one-third of experts, emphasising potential drawbacks, such as compromising educational quality due to commercial pressures and ethical dilemmas. This uncertainty persists in crisis settings, where opinions on the compatibility of the commercial sector with education vary, highlighting the complexity of private sector engagement in education development cooperation.

5.5 Relative effectiveness of EDC instruments

This section assesses the comparative effectiveness of bilateral aid, sector support, multi-bi, and multilateral cooperation, as well as the roles of CSOs, HEIs, and the private sector.

Finding 10. Relative to other EDC instruments and with FinCEED in need of a sharpened role, bilateral cooperation complemented by multilateral cooperation have been the most effective modalities. CSOs, HEIs, and private sectors are vital partners, but their roles need clarification.

In terms of contributing to improved access to quality basic education, **bilateral cooperation** has been the most effective EDC instrument. However, evidence also suggests that sector support, **bilateral projects and multi-bi financing work best when they go hand-in-hand with multilateral influencing** with organisations such as the EU, the World Bank, GPE, ECW and UNICEF at the global level, particularly through engagement with these organisations at the country level.

CSOs and **HEIs** are critically important partners in Finland’s EDC. However, the role of CSOs in the practice (not only EDC policy) requires clarification if the potential of partnerships between non-state actors is to be exploited. Higher education institutions may have contributed indirectly to improving the quality of primary and secondary education, but this has been difficult to assess as the HEI ICI programme stands somewhat apart from other EDC instruments and does not feature prominently in Finland’s RBM in the education sector. Similarly, **private sector instruments**



have thus far added little value in the education sector, but to dismiss private sectors out of hand – particularly in the case of Finnfund, would be to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

If fundamental constraints can be considered, there is a noteworthy opportunity to explore and establish **FinCEED**'s role as a facilitator for bilateral cooperation as well as multilateral engagement in the education sector. But FinCEED may also support Finland's EDC by helping to facilitate partnership-building between non-state actors and supporting the sector ministries in coordinating the joint ventures.

Relative to other cooperation instruments and with FinCEED in need of a sharpened role, bilateral cooperation complemented by multilateral cooperation have been the most effective modalities.

Our analysis has implications for the **evaluation ToC**. A key one is identifying and addressing a 'missing middle': intermediate outcomes. Intermediate outcomes are the changes in organisational or institutional behaviour and are the necessary means for outcomes to be achieved. Intermediate

outcomes are often described as the 'missing middle' in a results chain. Indeed, neither MFA's 2020 ToC nor the reformulated 2022 results framework included intermediate outcomes. However, the evaluation team included the 7 'Stepping Up' measures in the first iteration of the evaluation ToC.

The analysis thus guides a second iteration of the ToC, which is found in **Annex 4**). The revisited ToC includes the following *indicative* intermediate outcomes, which reconsider and nuance the 7 'Stepping Up' measures.

1. Strengthened collaboration between government sectors is grounded in a **consensus-based focus on the right to education**.
2. **Country Programmes are prioritised**, with continued emphasis on a targeted mix of EDC instruments.
3. Multilateral engagement is strengthened by means of **selective, clear and actionable policy messaging with a focus on building the resilience of education systems and funding**.
4. VET programming is strengthened by **maximising Finland's convening power and partners' trust in Finland's role as coordinator**.
5. **Measures to test the value-addition of EdTech** clarify its role, and these are tested in more and less predictable operational contexts.
6. **Efforts to build the pool of expertise benefit from stronger engagement with CSOs** to ensure government partners have the longer-term capacity to implement education reforms.

These indicative intermediate outcomes inform our recommendations for further stepping up Finland's education development policy and cooperation.

5.6 The effects of the multi-actor approach

This section examines the effectiveness and challenges of coordinating domestic partnerships, highlights global multi-actor approaches like the Global Learning Innovation Hub, and assesses state and non-state actor partnerships at the country level, particularly focusing on digital solutions in education.



Finding 11. The Coordination Group, lacking executive authority, a clear operational plan, and defined responsibility for collaborative efforts, obscures the practical impact of domestic partnerships on improving access to quality basic education. While UNICEF’s Global Learning Innovation Hub and GPE’s new partnership compact aim to disrupt business-as-usual education development, it remains to be seen if they prove to have a transformational impact on education systems and address the global learning crisis. In Finland’s engagement at the country level, effective synergies between state and non-state actors have been limited, potentially due to insufficient information on Finnish ODA modalities and the absence of a clear multi-actor approach and partnership-building guidance to enhance teaching and learning quality at primary and secondary levels.

5.6.1 The ‘effects’ of coordinated domestic partnerships

In 2022, the Inter-sectoral Coordination Group was established (as was mentioned in section 4.1.1), but without executive authority, its ‘Roadmap to Strengthen Cooperation with Developing Countries in the Field of Education’ lacks resources and actionable plans, raising concerns about its feasibility. Setting up the Coordination Group was in line with recommendations of the 2018 Stepping Up reviews to ‘ensure coordination and collaboration’, with an emphasis on domestic partnerships’. However, as stakeholders across ministries, as well as HEIs and CSOs, point out, the Coordination Group is not an executive body, and the bulk of implementation work is currently undertaken by FinCEED.

Soon after the group was set up, it developed the ‘Roadmap to Strengthen Cooperation with Developing Countries in the Field of Education’. However, the Roadmap is primarily a long-term strategy and not an action plan to be financed and implemented. As noted in section 4.5, lead roles and responsibilities for collaborative strategies were not allocated. Moreover, with no additional resources to implement the Roadmap, diverse EDC actors were required to make use of own-source funds.⁵⁵

Inter-sectoral Coordination Group lacks executive authority, a clear operational plan, and defined responsibilities for collaborative efforts. These hinder the effects of the multi-actor approach.

This has raised the question of the extent to which Roadmap strategies are actionable and accompanied by follow-up mechanisms. For example, an important planned Roadmap activity, the mapping of all ODA- and non-ODA actors, was not done because it was considered too difficult. Just the mapping of HEIs done by the Global Innovation Network for Teaching and Learning (GINTL) was considered difficult enough.⁵⁶

Public-private partnerships in VET are regarded as crucial to support the employability of youth and all adult populations and to develop economic sectors for growth. Finland has a

55 For example, HEIs use their own-source funds for research cooperation, drawn from, for example: the EU’s Horizon funds, and Erasmus+; Academy of Finland; Business Finland; and national and international foundations.

56 GINTL Africa undertook a mapping exercise of the network (including 20 research institutes, but not Applied Science universities); this was an initiative imposed on GINTL under MEC’s financing for internationalisation, with no additional funding. This task was challenging, given fragmented data sources across universities and different departments within a university, as well as some collaborations being undertaken by individuals as part of their research. Such a ‘map’ is not static: “we are constantly hearing about new collaborations”.



pool of VET expertise, which is not fully exploited in the current MFA EDC and is not supported in existing financing instruments. At the same time, according to some stakeholders, increasing attention to public-private partnerships has meant that there's more commercialisation of education export of Finnish VET. Omnia, one of the biggest VET schools with a large campus, has operated with OEP in the EU4Skills project in Ukraine (see **Box 15**). OEP is a private consulting and training entity owned by Omnia, the Joint Authority of Education in the Espoo Region, the Finnish Institute for Enterprise Management, FCA, and the Savo Consortium for Education (KII: MFA, EDUFI, CSOs).

Box 15. Highlights of EU4Skills results generated in Ukraine with the support of Finland

During the years 2012-2023, Finland has been part of EU4Skills – Better Skills for Modern Ukraine, a multi-donor action supporting the reform and modernisation of VET in Ukraine. Implemented in 21 schools of seven pilot areas, namely Chernivtsi, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Poltava, Rivne, Vinnitsya and Zaporizhja, the project has contributed to the effectiveness, quality and attractiveness of Ukrainian VET by, for example, updating standards and curricula as well as by training teachers and school management.

Finland's particular contributions have focused on the reform of vocational qualifications and curricula, as well as the development of education of teachers and school management. Despite challenges constituted by both the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Finland has made steady contributions to the quality of VET through the delivery of education to VET practitioners and the management of institutions. Among other results, Finland's support has resulted in the full revision of 20 qualifications (in Ukraine known as occupational and educational standards) and the selection of another 100 priority occupations to be taken for the renewal process, 20 curricula with a plan for the remaining 80. At the pilot VET schools, 40 cook teachers and 63 school managers have been trained, and 50 trainers have been involved in the Training of Trainers programme.

Since February 2022, the objectives of the project were partially shifted from the development of VET, balancing between the continuity of education and sector reform, and the provision of emergency assistance. During the year of repurposed action, Finland's efforts have resulted in a variety of online learning and teaching solutions, including 33 online courses for educators and school managers and 20 self-paced online courses particularly addressing the priority occupations, including e.g. topics related to reconstruction, first aid, entrepreneurship, as well as information technology and communications. The online training offering designed by Finland reached more than 19000 enrolments in the first three months, with over 12500 certificates issued by the end of March 2023.

Source: Thematic case study: vocational education and training in Ukraine (desk-based mini case)

Similarly, Finnish CSOs recognise the need for closer collaboration due to shared challenges, but this is not fully realised, hindering effective cooperation. Closer collaboration between Finnish CSOs is recognised as critically important, given that CSOs face similar challenges. Yet the expertise and innovation opportunities of local NGOs do not feature highly in planning multi-actor partnerships. The establishment of the Coordination Group has improved information sharing between the different EDC actors. However, although CSO participation has improved over time, this group is not as inclusive as it could be. Moreover, there are still gaps in terms of bringing coherence to CSO work in Finnish EDC: while established and well-resourced CSOs in the Coordination Group can raise the level of quality of cooperation, particularly in advocacy work, there is a view that *“it is usually the same MFA-supported CSOs who work with local CSOs again*



and again; meanwhile, the smaller actors operate in their own field and find it difficult to transfer the focus of their activities". With limited involvement of CSO actors in the Coordination Group, concrete cooperation between CSOs has been also limited; "there is no clear change in national-level collaboration between Finnish CSOs, let alone collaboration between CSOs and government".

CSO projects have complemented Country Programmes, particularly where these projects are working at the grassroots level, and as they also operate in countries that are not Finland's long partner countries. Abilis Foundation's collaboration with UN Women in disability inclusion in **Nepal** has been fruitful. Yet linkages between Country Strategies/Programmes and the development cooperation of CSOs were 'sometimes loose'. In **Palestine**, the work of the Finnish CSO, KVS, has, according to the country team, "*little connection with our programme*". In **Ethiopia**, partner CSOs (e.g., SIL) had little or no idea of the substance of Finland's Country Programme. However, their work aligns with shared goals. For example, SIL is actively engaged in supporting language minorities in pastoralist regions of Ethiopia, contributing to the broader objectives of Finland's development cooperation efforts. Furthermore, with a strong alignment to Finland's country programme in Ethiopia, particularly in the areas of inclusive education and community awareness, Felm's project plays a pivotal role in enhancing access to quality education and fostering inclusion for the deaf and hard-of-hearing population, totalling over 3 million individuals in the country. Information exchange and joint advocacy with CSOs potentially add value to Country Programmes, but the exchange of information is not always enough to create synergies if the connections are not real and both sides are not benefitting. At the same time, as seen in our Ethiopia and Palestine country case studies, a shrinking civic space has limited CSO engagement (MFA, 2020c; MFA, 2021g; online survey; Case Study Reports; KIIs: CSOs).

Ultimately, it is not clear where the responsibility for coordination lies or the extent to which it is even feasible within the current coordination setups. Indeed, global evidence suggests that coordinating and monitoring the work of non-state providers, particularly in emergency or crisis settings, poses a real problem for many donors. Where government leadership in such coordination mechanisms is weak, a number CSOs may engage in delivering education services in different parts of the country, and where CSOs undermine the capacity of the state to deliver public services using donor funds, the sustainability of such services is under threat (GEMR, 2021; online survey; KIIs: MFA, CSOs).

5.6.2 Effects of global multi-actor approaches

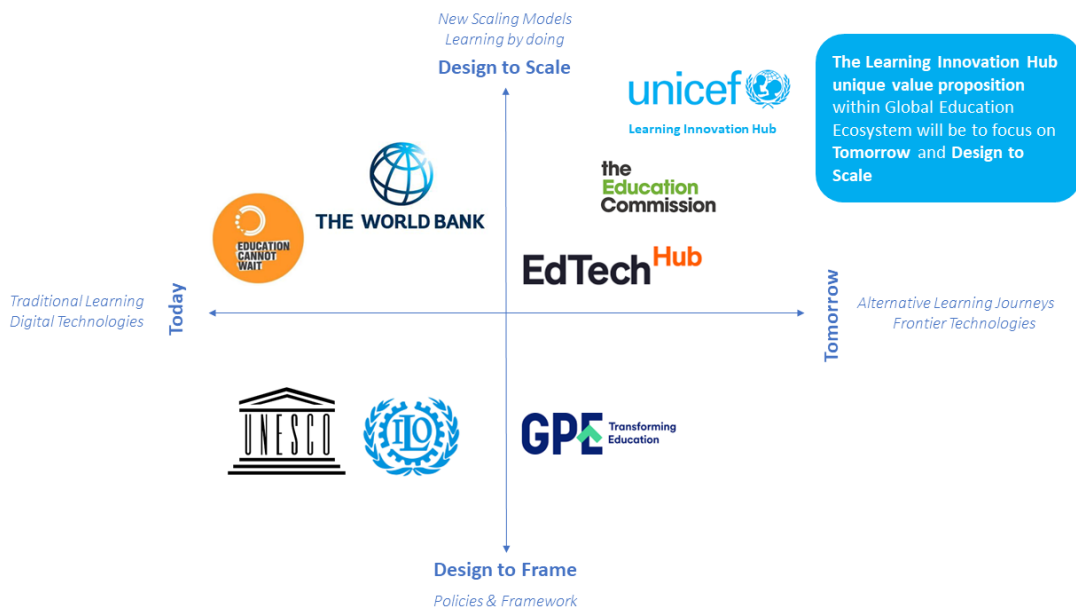
The most notable example of a global multi-actor approach identified by Finnish EDC stakeholders is the UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub. The Hub emerged out of UNICEF's decision to decentralise their Innovations Office, raising the opportunity to establish the Hub in Helsinki with a significant injection of funds from the Government of Finland. It aims to offer new opportunities for multi-actor collaboration between state and private sector actors, bringing together diverse EdTech and education experts to develop and pilot scalable innovations and models to tackle the global learning crisis; this is coupled with research collaboration to find out how the new models and solutions work in different contexts.

While UNICEF's Global Learning Innovation Hub and GPE's new partnership compact aim to disrupt business-as-usual education development, their transformative impact remains to be seen.



UNICEF describes the Hub as a ‘global home for the architects of the future of learning’, intended to leverage digital solutions at primary and secondary education levels as well as providing UNICEF country offices with the support they need in innovation and digital learning. Notably, stakeholders generally referred to it as ‘UNICEF’s Learning Innovation Hub’. However, besides promoting partnerships between private EdTech companies, CSOs, higher learning and research institutions and state actors, the Learning Innovation Hub is embedded in a global education system including several UN and other multilateral partners (see **Figure 16**).

Figure 16. The Learning Innovation Hub within a global education eco-system



Source: UNICEF, 2022b⁵⁷

While setting up the Learning Innovation Hub, UNICEF has worked closely with FinCEED; “We shared the same birthing pains, so they were very helpful in guiding us and helping us understand the landscape”; key milestones have been shared planning events and introductions to stakeholders and Finnish EdTech, education specialists and EDC practitioners coming to Helsinki for an internal meeting.

Since its launch, the Hub team has recruited two staff, with a further two joining in the near future. UNICEF has already partnered with the University of Helsinki on the development of Artificial Intelligence curricula, and potential partnerships with the University of Oulu to develop competencies in the use of robotics technology are being investigated. UNICEF is appreciative of the “upfront and transparent” relationship with MFA and MEC; “they have been very open and honest in saying what they need” despite the pressure behind the scenes arising from “issues of working with the UN in general and Finland’s ambitions to host more UN organisations”.

As it has only recently been launched, it is too early to tell if the Hub has played a disrupter role in driving a change from business as usual, as intended. Beyond overall engagement in the domain of new and emerging technologies, it is difficult to see how the Learning Innovation approach is a significant departure from standard pilot processes.

57 Visual re-design by the Evaluation Team



The main change seems to be the terms used to describe elements of the pilot process: ‘spacecraft’ (a design phase group), ‘playground (testing environment), ‘Blue Unicorn farm’ (incentives) and ‘engine room’ (technical assistance). The Blue Unicorn Farm is intended to ‘challenge the trending concept of a company that is valued in 1+ Billion dollars’ [a unicorn company]. The Blue Unicorn Farm will be ‘pushing the boundaries [by offering financial awards] of tech entrepreneurs proposing to build ventures that impact 100 million children’. Notably, the first EdTech award was presented in 2022 to the Finnish Company Eduten.⁵⁸

EDC stakeholders point out that *“right now, Finland and the UNICEF Learning Innovation Hub share an interest in digital solutions as a type of export of Finnish expertise”* But to optimize the potential synergies enabled by the Hub, MFA and its partners, *“will need to influence the Hub’s strategic focus”*. Moreover, it is crucial that it is *“not an isolated thing”*, separate from MFA’s engagement with the global UNICEF programme. At present, the immediate strategic focus of digital solutions is to address the learning crisis but it is not clear if and how the initiative will align with Finland’s EDC going forward and in the longer-term (UNICEF, 2022a; UNICEF, 2022b; KII: UNICEF, MFA, EDUFI, MEC).

Like UNICEF, the GPE is a notable proponent of a multi-actor approach, as well as exemplifying it. Partners include Ministries in diverse national governments, multilaterals, bilateral donors who may also act as Grant Agents, the private sector, and private foundations. CSOs, in particular, constitute critically important partners in GPE’s new operational model, in addition to a wide range of other groups. From GPE’s perspective, CSOs must be seen more than service delivery partners: *“We don’t want CSOs to only work within the operational model but leverage it, and own it, moving beyond operational and transactional processes to engage in and influence country dialogue”*. As the new model has only just been introduced, evidence of its effectiveness is this, but in Nepal, CSOs *“flagged the need for a stronger focus on inclusion in the private sector’s engagement in programming”* (KII: GPE).

The School Meal Coalition (SMC), led jointly by Finland and France, is an example of a multi-stakeholder approach. The recent review commissioned by the MFA, *“Review of the process leading to the formation of the School Meals Coalition”* (MFA, 2023i), considers SMC as a model case for a new type of global partnership/coalition. The SMC was officially launched at the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021. It is a member-state-led platform for governments and supporting partners (UN organisations, NGOs, and academic institutions). It has gathered more than 80 countries (and 90 partners) to work towards achieving the goal that every child can receive a healthy, nutritious meal in school by 2030. It works in an assemblage with regional, national, and local actors, as well as non-state actors. The review data shows that during the Coalition’s short life span, substantive political will has been mobilised on global and regional platforms and bilateral collaboration.

Access to school meals has surpassed the pre-COVID status and provides the most extensive safety net in the world. The review findings indicate that the major achievement of the SMC is that access to school meal programmes lost during the pandemic has not only been restored but has already surpassed that of the pre-COVID status. Further, based on the WFP data, school feeding is stated as one of the most rapidly growing success stories in global development in the 2020s and as the most extensive social safety net in the world. In addition, the provision of school meals has resulted in spin-off effects in various areas (e.g., local agriculture, green transition, entrepreneurship, women’s empowerment, public infrastructure, and funding efficiency).

⁵⁸ Eduten’s gamified math learning platform reaches a million teachers and students in more than 50 countries; with a content library of 200,000 math problems, Eduten’s Artificial Intelligence engine helps teachers tailor content to each student’s learning pace and is adaptable to many cultures, languages, and curricula.



Policy commitment and domestic financing at the country level have increased. The review findings suggest that countries have increasingly shown policy commitment to scale up and improve the quality of national programmes. Measures include, e.g., an increase in domestic financing (more than 90 per cent of the cost of school feeding currently comes from domestic funds), increasing the amount of food bought locally, and strengthening the connection to smallholder farmers, co-operatives, and local economies; striving to put in place an appropriate institutional and policy framework; and the development and testing of approaches to shift towards more nutritious options for school meals.

Drivers for the success of the SMC. The review identified three major drivers that have contributed to the success of the Coalition: internal features of the Coalition and the actors that comprise it (leadership, structure, composition, and issue framing); external environmental factors (COVID-19 context, allies and opponents, funding, and policy context); and the characteristics of the issue it addresses (severity, tractability, and affected group). The drivers for the successful development of the Coalition centre around 1) the involvement of high-level political actors from countries with proven track records on solving the thematic issue in their own countries to start and drive and guide the process; 2) adopting a minimalistic and flexible approach in the governance structure with a strong, even if small, secretariat office; 3) clearly identified goals asserting the multisectoral nature of the thematic focus; 4) a multistakeholder approach instead of moving the issue through a single entity; but with a larger focus on country-led action; and 5) a solid research evidence base is needed to motivate and support the actors.

5.6.3 ‘Effects’ of state and non-state actor partnerships at country level

At the country level, instances of effective partnerships between CSOs, HEIs and private companies, or engagement of private companies in Country Programmes are few and far between⁵⁹. However, the **Palestine** case offers an interesting example of a multi-actor approach in a nexus setting, which has emerged out of local needs. The West Bank Protection Consortium is a strategic partnership formed in 2015 between the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), ten EU Member States and the United Kingdom, five international NGOs, and a recent International Finance Corporation investment supported by a local company.⁶⁰ The Consortium has provided education-related humanitarian assistance to over 50,000 Palestinians each year at risk of forcible transfer in Area C, East Jerusalem and H2 Hebron, where Palestinians face a daily threat of displacement due to demolitions and confiscations, settler and military violence, harassment, and restrictions on movement and access to resources and basic services.

Although the Consortium’s resilience-building activities are “*In line with our HDP nexus approach*”, this has been the subject of much debate among the Consortium partners: “*Some say peace-building is not possible in the Palestinian context and we should focus on building social cohesion with Palestinian groups (but other actors are better placed than us to do this); and others say we are indeed addressing the ‘P’ in HDP, but we’re interpreting this as ‘politics’ not ‘peace’ – the debate is still going on, with no internal consensus*” Indeed, while civil society advocacy works well

59 An example from 2018 is a partnership of UNDP Syria and Funzi, a mobile learning service from Finland, which delivered a 2-year blended (online and in-person) training programme for over 50 NGOs in UNDP management practices and, in the longer term, helped to mitigate internal displacements. Funzi helped UNDP to reach a target of 2500 participants (KIIs; Funzi 2023)

60 Massader (a subsidiary of the Palestine Investment Fund) received a loan from the European Investment Bank and has leveraged blended concessional finance from the Finland-IFC Blended Finance for Climate Program for a programme to construct solar rooftop panels for schools.



and delegations on the ground bring violation of international humanitarian law to the attention of their capitals, there is “a gap between the diplomatic level and the higher level, where the EU takes the side of Israel” (Palestine Case Study).

At the country level, effective synergies between state and non-state actors have been limited, potentially due to insufficient information on modalities and the absence of guidance on the multi-actor approach and partnership-building.

An interesting development, albeit a very recent one, is in digital learning solutions in **Ukraine**, where Finland is positioning itself as “a good practice partner”. Taking advantage of its role as a GPE Co-coordinating Agent (shared with UNICEF), Finland played a lead part in coordinating state and non-state actors in the education sector to unlock a GPE multiplier grant. The multiplier grant and application process were unique in this instance for two reasons. First, Ukraine is a new partner for GPE, becoming a member only 6 months into the process. Second, this was the first time that co-financing for a multiplier grant has been provided by private sector partners (Microsoft and Google). GPE described Finland as very responsive throughout the process; the discussion is now entering a second phase of the multiplier to ‘crowd-in’ additional financing to unlock the remaining funds in Ukraine’s GPE Multiplier envelope (KII: GPE; email communication).

The collaboration between **Finnfund** and the **TFK Network** is a further example of present (and potential) multi-actor approaches. From Finnfund’s perspective, the TFK Network is “*Very useful as eyes and ears on the ground*”. While an education export network and an investment platform are not the same thing - “*we’re doing different things, so it is difficult to find suitable projects*” - an area of shared interest is the export of Finnish EdTech expertise. A case in point is the introduction of Claned (a Finnish EdTech company) to Maarifa (a Kenya-based education holding company), which was an investment opportunity identified by the Africa-based TFK expert.

In addition, **FinCEED** plays a key role, as said by a stakeholder: “*Everybody’s using the ‘seed-money approach’ as an opening for bigger financing, but without FinCEED, we wouldn’t be able to access the big financing*”. While the TFK Network is not a recipient of ODA, its experts play a role in identifying opportunities for Finnish expertise in multilateral tenders in African countries, as well as opportunities raised by Global Gateway TEIs. For example, an opportunity has arisen for Finland to be part of the emerging Centre of Artificial Intelligence in Johannesburg. But as said by an interviewee: “*If we want to do targeted interventions in this area, we need FinCEED’s deployment of expertise; we need to grow our expertise for country programmes*”.

MFA’s own reporting notes that **direct synergies between country programmes and other development cooperation or Team Finland work were lacking, and interventions were not interlinked**. Importantly, insufficient information on other Finnish ODA sometimes hinders the building of synergies. This is reinforced by the views of Embassy staff in Ethiopia, for example – who have not yet engaged directly with the regional TFK expert directly: “*if we want to contribute to sustainable development, we need to find different ways of working together*” (MFA, 2021i; Ethiopia Case Study; KII: MFA, TFK).

It is striking that **when considering collaboration between state and non-state actors, a majority of stakeholders focused on partnerships in the domain of digital solutions**. During the period under review, momentum has been building in this domain, with a forward-looking emphasis on ways of accelerating the motion. We discuss potential directions for a ‘fit-for-purpose’ multi-actor approach in the EdTech domain, reinforced by the views of Delphi expert panellists, in Chapter 6.



6 Findings: The future

EQ3: In the next 8 years, what kind of a multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups would yield the best results in order to maintain and strengthen Finland's role in the specific areas of expertise and added value unique to Finland, allow the response to the global learning crisis and quality education to stay relevant in different contextual settings, and establish a size and set-up that is realistic for sustained level of development cooperation funding yet securing Finland as a credible actor in resolving the global learning crisis?

Summary Answer: Considering the increasingly fragile contexts in partner countries, Finland's reinforcement of its long-term commitment to EDC, accompanied by the maintenance or increase in funding, is crucial, with a specific focus on strengthening the resilience of education systems.

Finland's distinct value in EDC lies in its dedication to assisting partner countries in their reform processes. This commitment extends to critical areas like teacher education, inclusive education, early childhood development, well-being services, and learning assessment. While VET is not a strong suit, there is potential in integrating it with higher education. The expansion of Finland's pool of experts could amplify its global impact. Initiatives like EdTech and the Global Learning Innovation Hub can improve teacher education but must undergo testing solutions locally in the partner countries by local experts before widespread implementation.

To stay relevant, Finland needs to update its global role in EDC, emphasising education's integral role across various sustainable development sectors, an approach known as 'multi-sector nexus thinking.' Experts recommend innovative strategies within the triple nexus context, supported by long-term financing spanning humanitarian and development sectors.

MFA could adopt a more strategic approach to allocate limited ODA funds. Prioritising partnerships with specific target countries, multilateral organisations, and FinCEED is essential. Despite budget constraints, MFA must ensure the continued funding of education while also establishing flexible financing mechanisms for diverse partnerships in the short to medium term.

In this chapter, we bring together EDC stakeholders' views on future multi-actor approaches across our three streams of evidence: (i) **documentary evidence** generated by our desk review, (ii) the **summative** and **formative** views on Finland's future EDC based on past experience, drawn from interviews at global level and in case study countries; and (iii) views which feature **futures-thinking**, based on a strategic foresight technique: the Delphi method (see **Annex 10**). **Note:** 30% of the Delphi panellists (i.e., 8) were experts from multilateral organisations, and the remaining 70% of the panellists were staff from Finnish government bodies (5), practitioners (8) or academics (6). Experts from embassies who are close to bilateral programming, as well as experts in partner countries, were not part of the Delphi panel but were interviewed in the summative and formative interviews of the evaluation.



6.1 EDC in increasingly fragile context

Finding 12. Given the increasingly fragile contexts of partner countries, stakeholders assert that Finland needs to continue and strengthen its long-term work in EDC, matched by a need to (at least) maintain the current level of financing, with a strategic focus on building education system resilience.

Despite gains in improving access to quality primary and secondary education, widely acknowledged concerns of the global education crisis remain. These include the number of children outside of education, which has not decreased significantly and is a significant problem in Ethiopia; the girls' drop-out rate from secondary education is still a major challenge in most partner countries (except in Myanmar and Palestine, where boys' drop-out is a bigger concern). The challenges impacting the quality of education are severe, especially in Finland's poorest partner countries, with a decrease from already low levels in learning outcomes (although the lack of comparable trend analysis data makes it difficult to ascertain these levels).

There is consensus that, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more important that Finland continues and strengthens its long-term work in the education sector. This has led experts in sector ministries to reflect that *"we need to consider whether our education sector addresses the learning crisis to a sufficient extent"*.

Finland's education stakeholders recognise that addressing the global education crisis is a key to progress towards the goals of the entire Agenda 2030. Yet, experts also note the *'Long way to go to the funding targets they recommended in the 2018 report – we need to at least maintain if not increase education financing'*. At the same time, it is important to put the results of Finland's EDC into context, considering the *'big picture of increasing fragility in partner countries'*. The overall trend is concerning; fragility is worsening in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Syria, Somalia and Ukraine⁶¹ (of which the Fragile States Index score has risen from 68.6 to 95.9), with Palestine remaining in a state of protracted crisis. The level of fragility has improved in Kenya, Nepal, and Tanzania (which experienced a slight dip in 2020-2021).

In the face of growing challenges in partner countries, focus should be placed on bolstering the resilience of education systems.

In such settings, the challenges of the environment, conflict and crisis situations highlight the need to support the resilience of school systems and to secure the continuity of learning in crisis situations (MFA, 2020d; MFA, 2021g; MFA, 2022e; MFA, 2022i; KIIs: MFA, EDUFI, MEC, CSOs; Country Case Studies).

⁶¹ Following the Russian invasion in February 2022, Ukraine's Fragile States Index score for 2023 has surged significantly, soaring from 68.6 to 95.9. This dramatic increase in the score has propelled Ukraine from its previous ranking as the 92nd most fragile nation to the 18th position, earning it the unfortunate designation of being the 'Most Worsened' country of the year." (Fund for Peace, 2023)



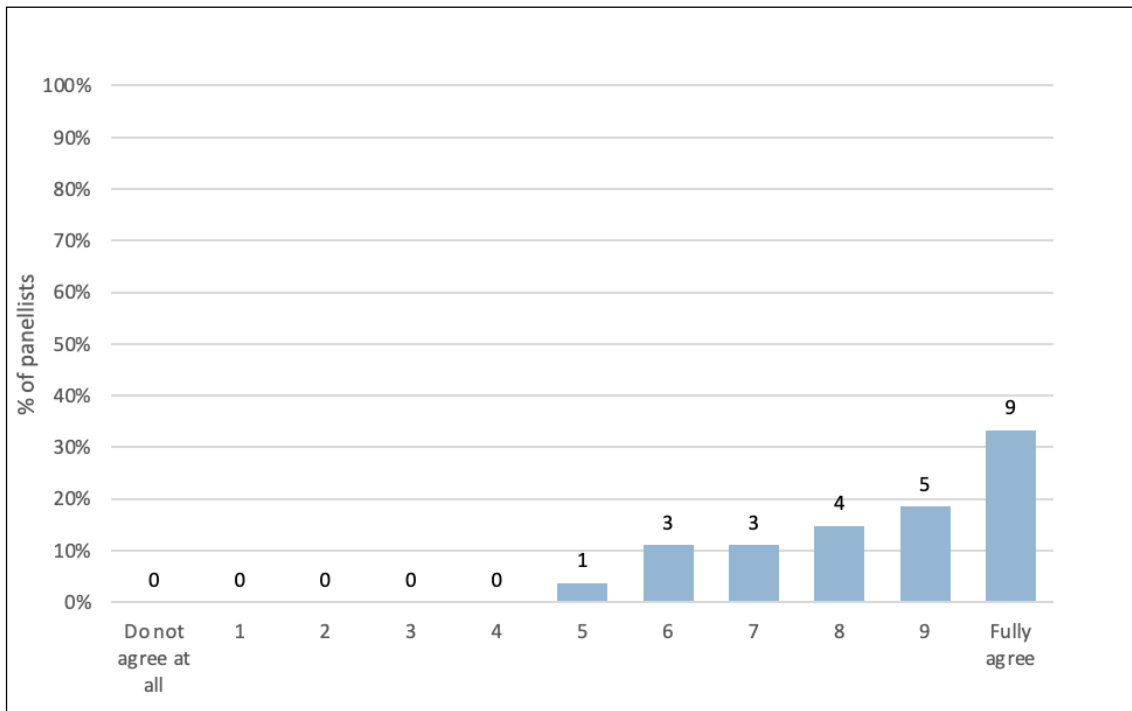
6.2 Maintaining and strengthening Finland's response

Finding 13. Finland's main value lies in its commitment to partner countries' reform processes, particularly in teacher education, inclusive education, early childhood development, well-being services, and learning assessment. While its EDC TVET expertise is not particularly strong, connecting VET with higher education institutions shows potential. Expanding Finland's expert pool will bolster its global role. EdTech and initiatives like the Global Learning Innovation Hub can enhance teacher education efforts, but testing of the innovations in the partner countries by local experts is essential before broader implementation.

In terms of maintaining the unique added value of Finland's EDC, an important future focus area is support to partner countries in implementing sector-wide reforms, informed by Finland's own experience in institutional reform. Globally, Finland is internationally recognised for its achievement in public governance reform, being 'known for high respect for the rule of law, high levels of administrative ethics and high trust in government'. Education governance, specifically "*a transfer of knowledge and experience in decentralised education systems*", is a valued strength. A majority of responding Delphi panellists (about three-quarters, 18 out of 25) strongly agreed that Finland and its EDC experts should focus on supporting partner countries in implementing their own reform process. **Figure 17** shows that all respondents agreed at least to some extent with this statement: rather than focusing only on a specific area of the education system, Finland, EDC practitioners and Finnish experts should share their experience and support partner countries in prioritising and implementing reforms, organising political support for a reform process, and institutionalising innovations. The message must be '*don't copy our system, understand how we developed our system to become effective*'.



Figure 17. Finland's Unique Value Addition: Thesis 1 – Support partner countries in their own reform process



Statement: Finland's own education reform process is of interest to partner countries. Rather than focusing on a specific area of the education system (e.g. teaching practices or non-standardised continuous assessment), **Finnish experts should share their experience and support partner countries in prioritising and implementing reforms, organising political support for a reform process, and institutionalising innovations.** The message must be: "don't copy our system, understand how we developed our system to become effective".

Source: Evaluation team

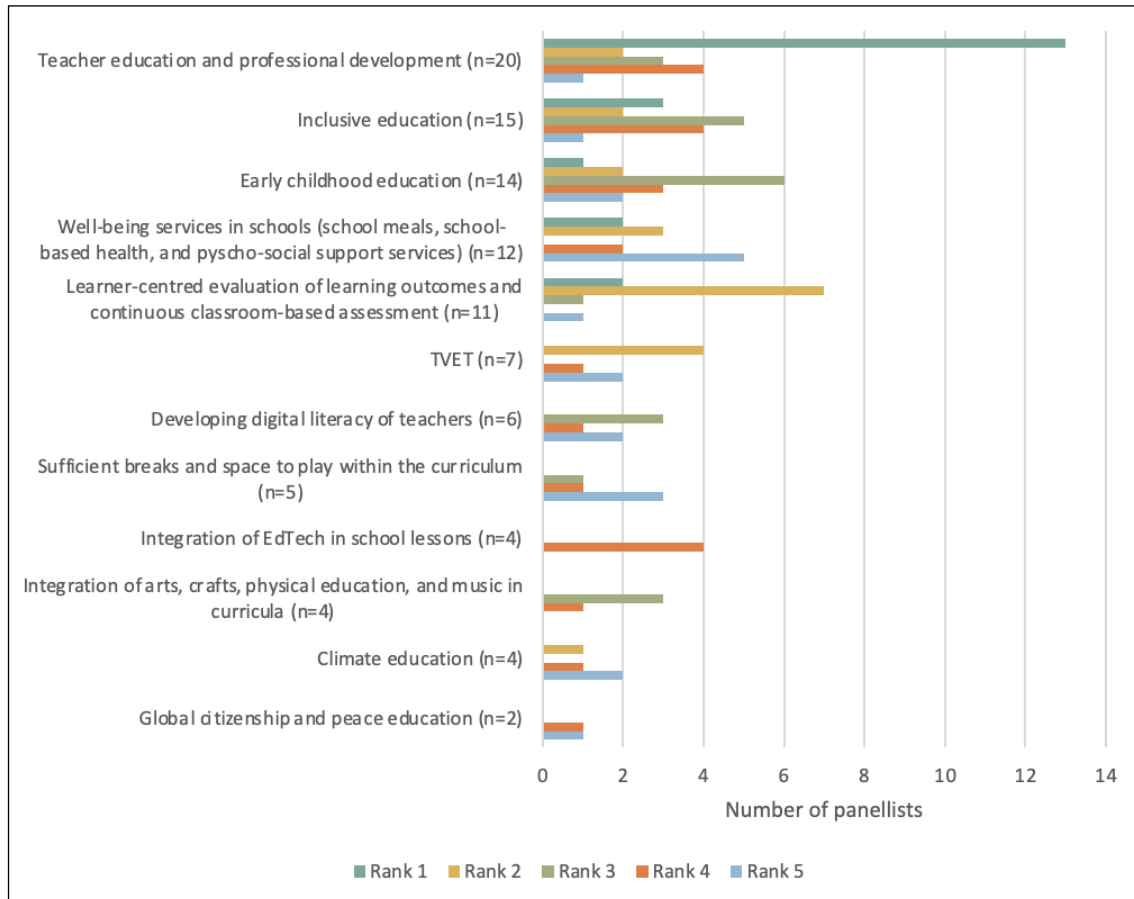
As pointed out by some of the respondents, "Reform as a process is a top priority but the process varies depending on local structures" (panellist 1); "it is important to "respect the partner country's ownership and motivation" (panellist 4). This corresponds with an assessment by another Finnish Delphi panel expert: Supporting partner countries in their own reform process "is fine just as long as we don't imagine that we as Finns can solve the partner countries education problem. We can be part of it, but the partner country should be in the driver's seat. We should be decolonising development assistance. There is a fine line here." Taken together, evaluation stakeholders clearly suggest that **Finland should prioritise its support to the institutional reform process in partner countries.** (OECD, 2022b; Delphi survey; KIIs: MFA, MEC, Delphi panellists).

The main thematic areas in which Finland may strengthen its role in addressing the global education crisis are an intensified focus on inclusive education, teacher education and professional development. We have noted in previous chapters that perceptions of Finland's areas of expertise are grounded in the international reputation of its domestic education system. Interviewees at both global and country levels highlighted the importance of the focus on improved access and inclusive education as one of Finland's EDC major strengths. With respect to thematic areas where Finnish experts possess a high level of expertise and where future engagement is regarded as most promising, Delphi survey results draw a clear picture. As shown in **Figure 18**, inclusive education emerged as a future priority area (mentioned 15 times), followed closely by early childhood development (14 times), well-being services in schools (i.e., school meals, school-based



health, and psycho-social support services, 12 times) as well as assessment of learning outcomes and continuous classroom-based assessment (11 times).

Figure 18. Finland’s Unique Value Addition: Thesis 2 – Ranking of 5 intervention fields of particular importance and to be further exploited by MFA



Source: Evaluation Team

However, in a ranking exercise where panellists were asked to identify and order the five most promising themes to be further exploited by MFA, **teacher education and professional development** were at the forefront. It was mentioned 20 times and ranked first 13 times. In line with other panellists, one expert further elaborated, “*Teacher professional development can address a number of focus areas and is a scalable way to support the education sector*”. At the country level, too, technical assistance expertise in digitised teacher education is viewed as particularly valuable for Finland’s development cooperation in future. Yet, as an MFA expert pointed out, “*The problem is that Finnish expertise is expensive – who’s going to pay for it?*”.

Summative/formative and futures-oriented **views diverged on the potential role of VET in strengthening Finland’s future EDC**. Among Delphi panellists, the VET sub-sector is one of the areas where Finland is viewed as not having specific expertise. However, **at the country level, stakeholders pointed to the potential of Finnish expertise in blended learning in tertiary education** provided through the HEI ICI projects, taking forward Finland’s systems-based and student-focused approach in the domestic VET sub-sector.



Stakeholders across ministries also agree on the potential for synergies between higher education and VET institutions; “*The goal of financing multilaterals is to impact bigger, new opportunities together, and a good way forward is to focus on more concrete areas - these could be thematic ones, like synergies between higher education and VET*”. A significant development in this regard is that the new HEI ICI programme is targeted to all ODA-eligible countries, not only to partner countries as was previously the case; “*This is so there can be synergies between different instruments and sources of financing*”. For some MFA experts, Finland has not fully investigated opportunities for VET expert deployment across sectors where Finland is strong, “*Rather than competing with the big players, like GIZ*” (Delphi survey; Ethiopia Case Study; Nepal Case Study; Palestine Case Study; interviews: Delphi experts, MFA, EDUFI, EU, FinCEED, CSOs).

Meanwhile, stakeholders at the country level assert that **Finland’s long-standing commitment to strengthening institutions and state-building, coupled with its adaptive programming, has been a particularly important advantage of Finland’s EDC**. This commitment is reflected in the prominence Finland gives to **policy dialogue**. Given that effective policy dialogue has been promoted through Finland’s convening power and coordination of development partners, EDC practitioners and global partners such as GPE suggest that this may be built on in the future. Notably, two critical voices among Delphi panellists, however, also called for future prioritisation of the requirement for coordination and alignment with other donors in view of needs-based education development co-operation.

Finland’s advantage has been the long-standing commitment to strengthening institutions and state-building, coupled with its adaptive programming.

Reflecting retrospectively on Finland’s country programming, MFA experts note that “*Synergies between sector programme support, technical assistance and multi-bi pilot innovations*” have enabled Finland’s policy of incremental capacity building in partner countries. However, governments are the only actors with the capacity and scope to truly transform education systems, and they must lead the push for sustainable change. Partner countries require financing, not only technical assistance. In this light, “*In-depth policy-level dialogue is needed for trade-offs between country partners’ limited demand for Finnish technical assistance and their high demand for direct cooperation financing*” (Delphi survey; Ethiopia Case Study; Nepal Case Study; Palestine Case Study; KII: Delphi experts, MFA departments).

In light of the Delphi panellists’ views presented above, **Finland’s expert pool should continue to expand**, particularly in order to build on its convening and coordinating power to promote harmonised systems strengthening in partner countries. Indeed, as seen in Chapter 4 (section 4.1.7 and section 4.4) the expansion of an expert pool is critical. As a Delphi panellist suggests, this is increasingly urgent given the drastic reduction in Finland’s expert pool due to a retirement wave, coupled with limited efforts over the last 15 years to build a new generation of development experts. Delphi panellists suggest the following measures as important for the future: (i) Scale up **secondment** of Finnish EDC experts to multilateral organisations (mentioned 19 times, although it is not clear how this measure would expand the expert pool), (ii) promote **mobility** between Finland’s education and

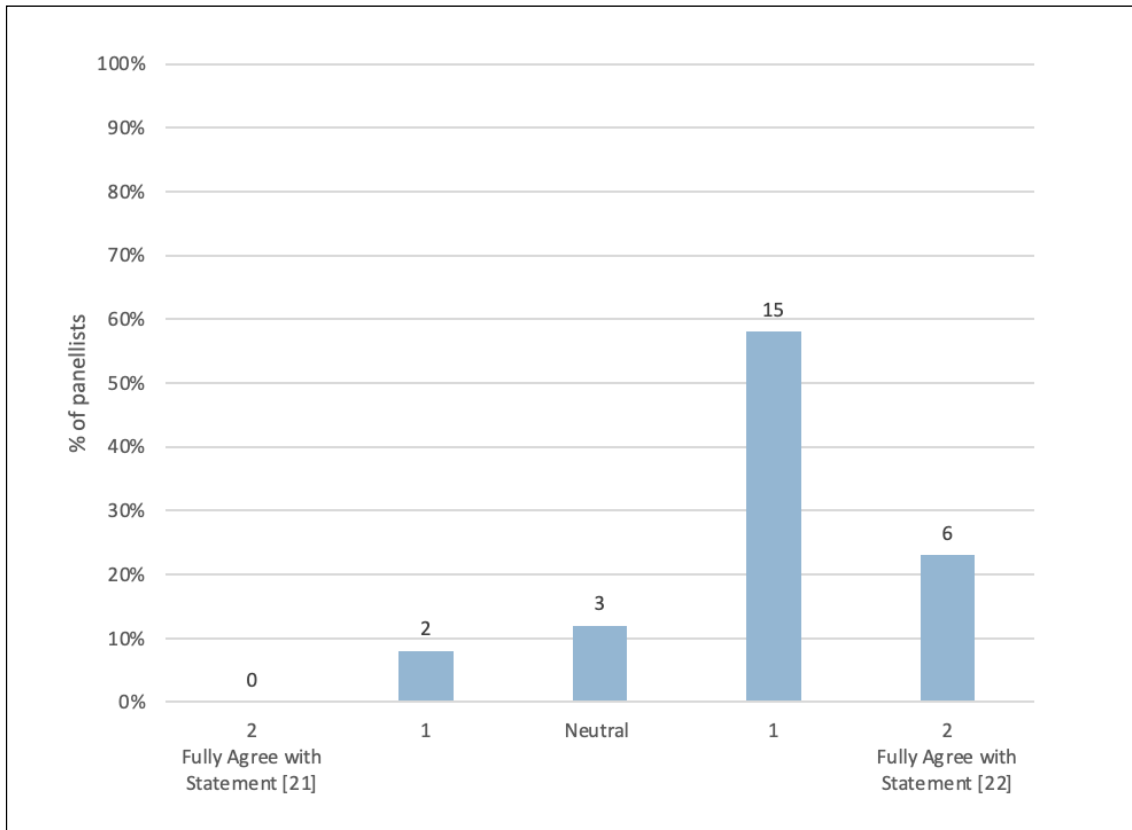
Finland’s expert pool should continue to expand, and EdTech has potential to strengthen Finland’s response to the education crisis.



development sectors (16 times), (iii) scale up programmes for **collaboration of higher education institutions** in Finland with partner institutions abroad (15 times), and (iv) build the **international experience of Finnish teachers** by supporting exchange programmes in partner countries (13 times) (see also **Annex 10**, Table 4).

EdTech can potentially contribute to strengthening Finland’s response to the education crisis, particularly with the involvement of local expertise to help bridge the digital divide, specifically in the domain of teacher education and not simply in the development of e-learning apps. There is strong consensus among expert panellists that EdTech is important and necessary. The vast majority of respondents (18 out of 27) strongly agreed or agreed (7) with the following thesis: EdTech can empower children because every child is able to work at her/his own pace (see **Annex 10**). **Figure 19** shows that a clear majority (21 out of 26) of the panellists agree with the thesis that MFA should not miss the chance and support EdTech; only two panellists opt for the contrary thesis that MFA should refrain from such support, while three panellists took a neutral position.

Figure 19. Education export and EdTech: Contrary Theses 21 and 22 – Should the MFA support EdTech?



Statement 21: The risk of deepening the digital divide is a 'knock-out-argument' against introducing EdTech in developing countries. **MFA should refrain from supporting EdTech.**

Statement 22: If it can potentially reach even only half of the population with a technology that has a positive impact on learning outcomes, **MFA should not miss that chance and support EdTech.**

Source: Evaluation team

To bridge the digital divide and adapt digital learning solutions to the needs of least developed countries, most of the panellists strongly recommend a **combination of infrastructure development, software development, and teacher training on digital literacy and learner-centred pedagogies**. Reiterating the views of experts in MFA and MEC, as seen above, they urge the involvement

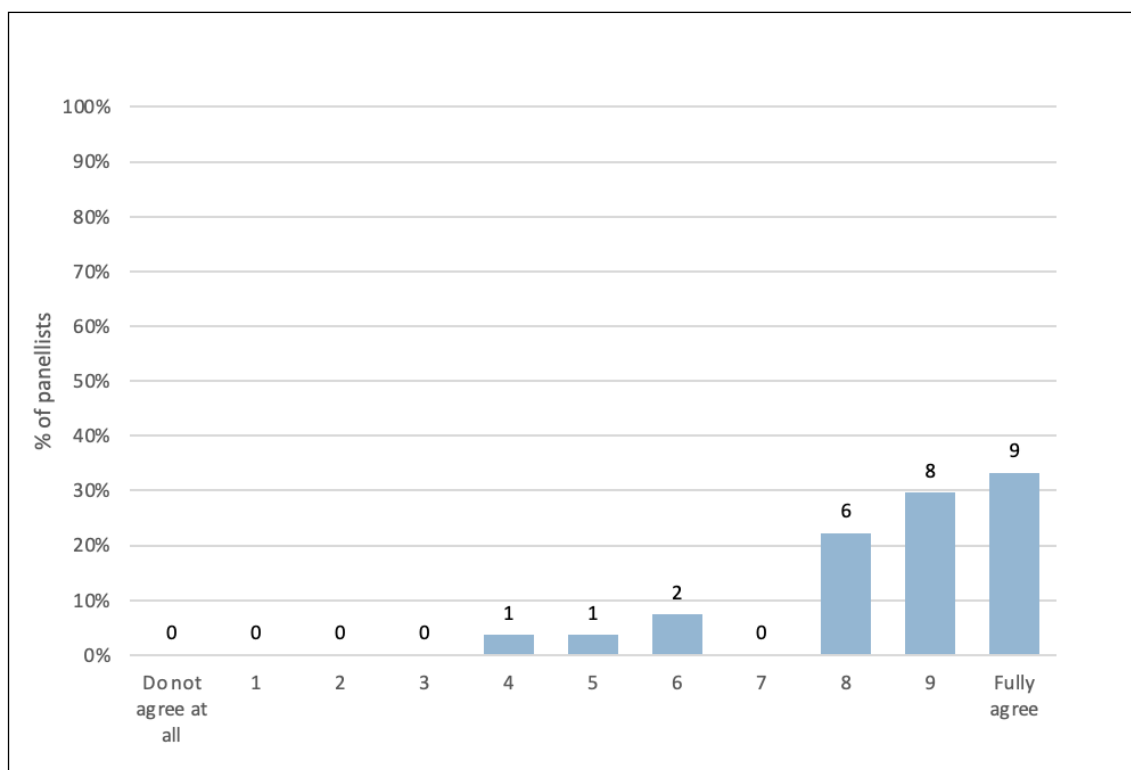


of the local actors to localise technology, engaging CSOs in the development of solutions that fit specific contexts within a country and meet the needs of learners in those contexts, as well as to combine 'high-tech' and low-tech or analogue solutions, such as radio, TV, and print media. (For further details and measures (see **Annex 10**, Table 5).

Global experts recommend a combination of infrastructure development, software development, and teacher training on digital literacy and learner-centred pedagogies to bridge the digital divide and adapt digital learning solutions to the needs of least developed countries.

From panellists' perspectives, the **digital solutions** which are likely to become more significant in the near future are: (i) Solutions to improve teacher training/professional development (15 times mentioned), distance/remote teaching and learning support (basic education, VET, and higher education) (13 times), strengthened EMIS (data capture, management, analysis, visualisation, and use, 11 times) as well as (iv) support for classroom-based teaching and learning (for pre-/primary and secondary levels, 11 times) (see **Annex 10**, Table 6). Nevertheless, there is one thesis on EdTech which stands out. As shown in **Figure 20**, a large majority (23 out of 27) of the respondents strongly support that MFA should focus on teacher education and professional development, prioritising teachers' own digital literacy rather than engaging EdTech companies in developing e-learning apps.

Figure 20. Education expert and EdTech: Thesis 23 - Focus on teacher education and professional development



Statement: EdTech cannot replace teachers, particularly at the primary level, it can only support the work of teachers, **MFA should focus on teacher education and professional development, prioritising teachers' own digital literacy** rather than engaging EdTech companies in developing e-learning apps.

Source: Evaluation Team



As EdTech cannot replace teachers, particularly at the primary level, it is all the more important to support the work of teachers. This is in line with the top thematic area where Finnish experts possess a high level of expertise and where future engagement is regarded as most promising (see above). In the words of one panellist: *“EdTech... provides new tools to teachers, but teachers are key. The main issue is how to develop teachers to teach more effectively using EdTech as a powerful tool. Some learning apps can be developed to help with specific problems (e.g., games to teach language), but the main criteria for selection should be whether the solution is scalable in public schools and with current skill levels of teachers”*.

The views of Delphi experts are supported by those of EDC stakeholders in partner countries⁶². For example, EDC stakeholders in Ethiopia suggested a variety of transformative digital solutions, illustrated below (see **Figure 21**), ranging from tools for transforming in-school teaching and learning as well as for teacher training to systems-strengthening solutions with a special emphasis on strengthening the national EMIS. Clearly, stakeholders view EdTech as having the potential to improve the overall education system. However, associating EdTech with the private sector, stakeholders were also careful to point out that public-private partnerships in Ethiopia are a potential minefield: *“Not many private companies are willing to go into primary education (and instead get into private secondary, VET or higher education)”* and it is important to bear in mind that in a country like Ethiopia, *“Private enterprises are often owned by the elite, intersecting with the political class”*.

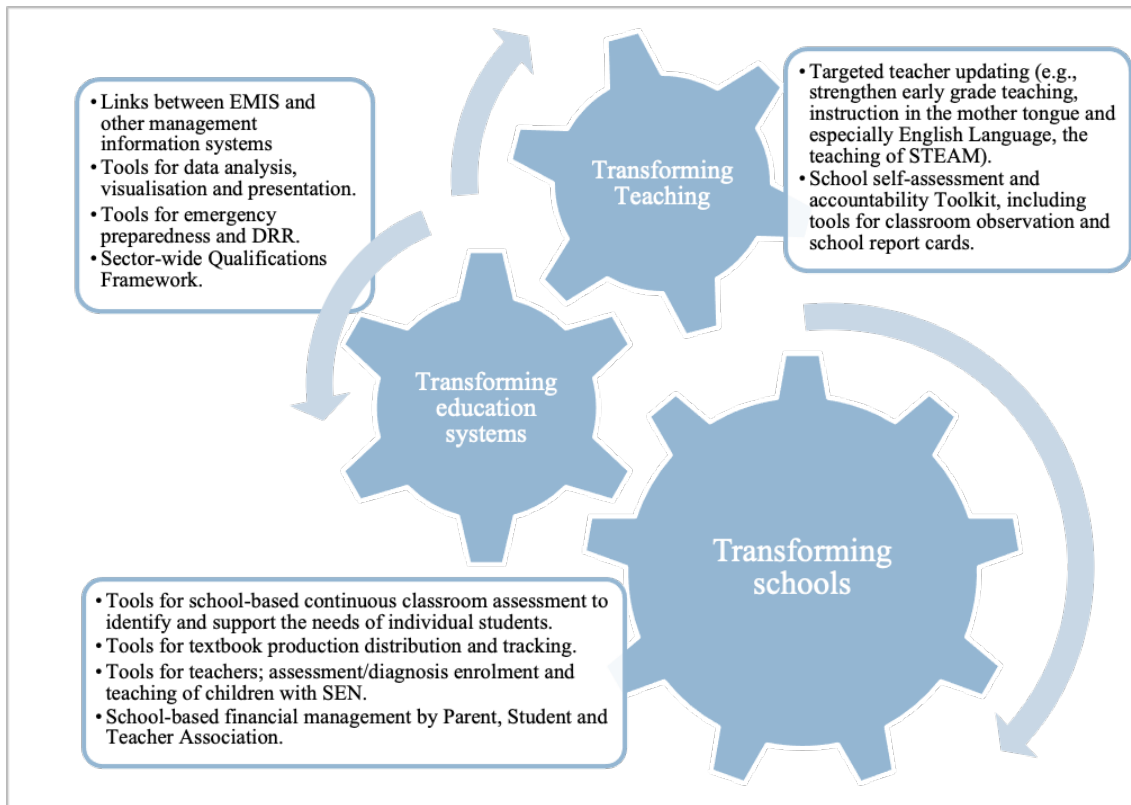
Similarly, MFA experts agree with UNICEF that the **Global Learning Innovation Hub has strong potential**, viewing it as an opportunity for intentional disruption and for Finland to do things differently; yet quiet excitement is tempered by circumspection: *“Will we actually develop learning solutions which are profitable for the private sector but which are also of good quality and are relevant and accessible to all learners?”*. In fact, during the recent UN Transforming Education Summit, Finland was invited to play the role of leading the action track on digital learning in the preparations for the summit. Both of these were opportunities for Finland to strengthen its EDC, reinforcing the view of one stakeholder: *“I’m not sure why we didn’t take this up!”*. Finland has since planned the Gateways to Public Digital Learning initiative⁶³.

According to global experts, the evidence base for EdTech support of progress towards SDG 4 is so far weak.

62 The interviewees included Finland’s local partners in Federal and Regional government, as well as HEI ICI project partners, CSOs and other development partners (e.g., FCDO, EU-Delegation, Norwegian Embassy, the World Bank).

63 While out the scope of this evaluation, this has been announced in September 2023.

Figure 21. Examples of potentially transformative digital solutions (Ethiopia)



Source: Evaluation Team

Yet, the evidence base for EdTech support of progress towards SDG 4 is so far weak; to take forward multi-actor collaboration in the EdTech domain, the partners will need to test, test, and test again, and findings suggest that a programme of innovative approaches to effect transformative change in the EdTech domain must go hand-in-hand with approaches to measure transformative change. The rush to deploy technology in times of urgency and crisis has resulted in untested claims⁶⁴ about the ‘transformation’ that technology can bring to learning. Delphi experts assert that **digital learning solutions should be tested**, building careful mappings to match solutions to needs as well as process evaluations and impact assessments into the pilot design. In the words of one panellist: *“EdTech is part of the solution but not THE solution.”* As one panellist pointed out, *“EdTech tends to have a ‘magic bullet’ flavour to it”* and further clarified that evidence is still missing on the types of EdTech that can work, as well as a sound understanding of why and how specific EdTech solutions work best in reinforcing foundational reading and maths skills, by comparison with those which develop more creative skills (panellist 6).

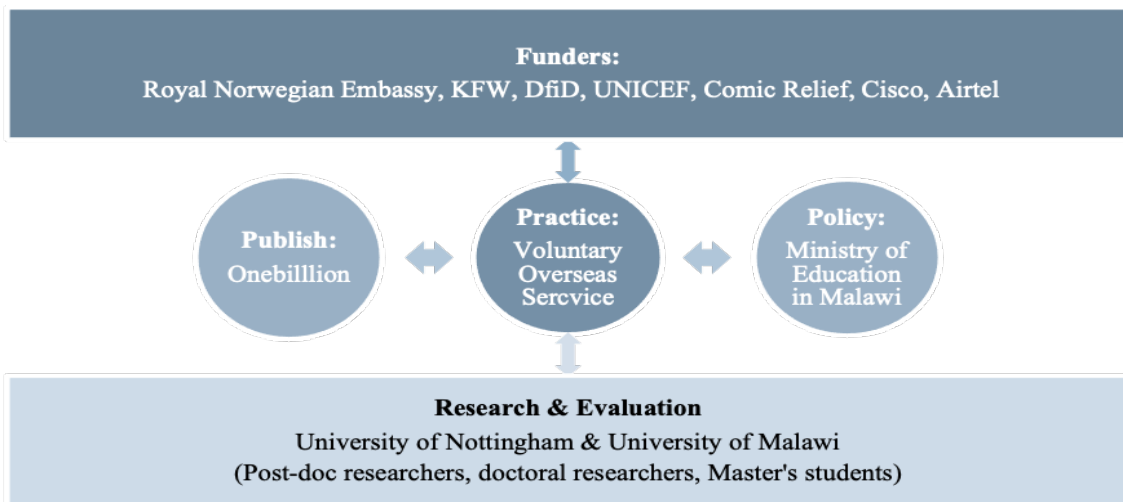
Delphi experts’ views reiterate the results of international research, which underscores the lack of published research specifically addressing issues within LMICs related to equity or the use of EdTech by marginalised groups within or outside of school systems. A recent systematic review of existing credible studies found that technology as a standalone intervention will not work to improve teaching practices or student learning. Much stronger evidence is needed for the impact

64 The One Laptop Per Child programme distributed 2.4 million laptops to primary-level children in 42 countries around the globe without piloting or evidence of positive impact; evaluation of the scheme showed it to be ineffective for children’s learning.



of digital solutions in, specifically, LDCs/LMICs. The ‘Unlocking Talent’ (see **Figure 22**) initiative is an example of a long-term approach aimed at designing, customising and scaling an e-learning platform, harnessing technology to deliver high-quality education. This global alliance, illustrated below, was established in 2013 to address the global learning crisis and included a catalytic international NGO (Voluntary Service Overseas VSO), the digital innovation provider (onebillion), the Ministry of Education in Malawi, donors and the private sector and a global North-South evaluation partnership. The alliance used a developmental evaluation approach. After nearly a decade of evaluating the effectiveness of the onebillion apps – and VSO’s implementation of the platform – in Malawian primary schools, research has provided the critical evidence base to scale the initiative in Tanzania, Mozambique and Francophone West Africa.

Figure 22. Example of a long-term multi-actor partnership to test and measure digital learning solutions



Source: Pitchford, 2023⁶⁵

Similarly, as UNICEF says, “We need to begin by testing solutions for education sustainable development in less fragile contexts”.

Such views are also echoed by experts in MEC who suggest the need for a programme to showcase Finnish innovations; “Our thinking is too short-term to have any real impact - I would love to sit down and be able to say this is the Finnish way of working in country X and we will stay there for 20 years to prove our way works”. Experts also suggest several prerequisites for state-non-state actor collaboration to work in the EdTech domain. The one they consider most important is working with CSOs to ensure other actors have the expertise and long-term commitment they need to function in fragile country contexts. Similarly, there is an important role for Finland’s research community in helping policymakers and practitioners understand the factors that either facilitate or obstruct the take-up and effective use of EdTech in order to maximise its impact: “It seems important to cooperate with higher education as there is continuous pressure to have the work done validated or supported by academic research”. Indeed, future partnerships with Finnish research networks to develop “Think pieces and knowledge pieces, best practices” will be a key feature of the Global Learning Innovation Hub (Segura, 2020; UN, 2020; Hennessy et al., 2021; Pitchford, 2023; KIIs: EDUFI, MEC, CSOs, UNICEF, Norwegian Embassy in Ethiopia).

65 Visual re-design by the Evaluation Team



Indeed, findings suggest that there has been a lot of hype in the EdTech sector, sometimes driven by political and financial interests but also arising from the uncritical assumption that technology itself has the agency to effect change. In this light, Finland may potentially play a role in safeguarding digital solutions as a public good (Ethiopia Country Case Study; Delphi survey; KIIs: Delphi experts, MFA, CSOs, UNICEF).

6.3 Maintaining the relevance of Finland's response

Finding 14. The decline in domestic education system performance suggests that to remain relevant, Finland updates the premise of its global role in EDC. This could be done by spotlighting education as integral across multiple sectors of sustainable development (what MFA's partners call 'multi-sector nexus thinking'). Experts who participated in the Delphi panel of this evaluation call for new and transformative strategies for EDC in the context of the triple nexus, with long-term financing across humanitarian and development sectors.

In the context of global education development and the recognition of interdependence among development goals, **Finland's relevance in EDC could be enhanced by adopting a 'multi-sector nexus thinking' approach**, as suggested by various EDC stakeholders, allowing Finland to maintain its global role in education development. During the period under review, Finland's image and reputation in the international media has been growing; a consistent picture of Finland's reputational strengths has emerged, including governance, equality, social justice, the education system, and environmental protection, in addition to the well-established reputation of Finland's domestic education system (MFA, 2023f). On the one hand, there are 'significant international expectations that, based on its track record, Finland will play a central role in resolving the global learning crisis'; but the 'decline in Finland's domestic education performance', on the other hand, 'throws this premise into question'.

To remain relevant, Finland should update the premise of its global role in education development cooperation by spotlighting education as integral across multiple sectors of sustainable development.

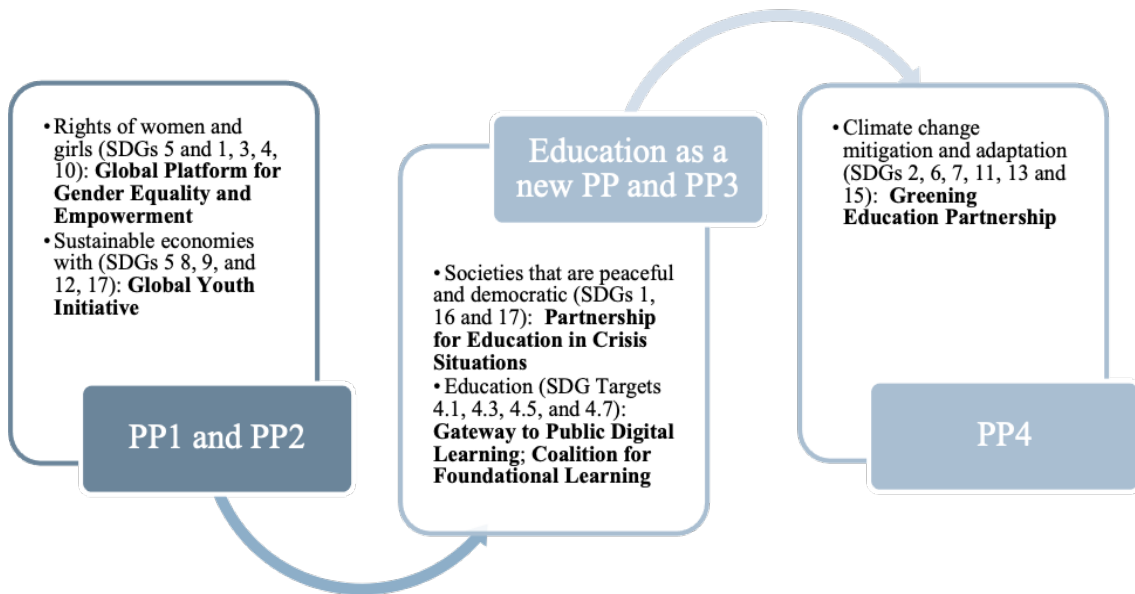
Indeed, the interdependence of education and sustainable development in other sectors has been increasingly spotlighted by global dialogue: there is 'no economic growth, no human development and no equality without education' (European Commission, 2019). The Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms states that Finland's development policy is based on its strengths, stressing Finland's adherence to the 'interdependent' sustainable development goals as its development cooperation framework⁶⁶ (MFA, 2020b; MFA, 2021b). Meanwhile, six new Global Initiatives were introduced in the recent Transforming Education Summit, all of which are underpinned by the collective global effort to 'transform the financing of

⁶⁶ Finland's development policy is guided by its commitment to policy priorities (PP) upholding the rights of women and girls (PP1: SDGs 5 and 1, 3, 4, 10), and the right as well to decent work (PP2: SDGs 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13), as well as the right to education (SDG Targets 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, and 4.7) in the context of peaceful and democratic societies (PP3: SDGs 1, 16 and 17) and climate change mitigation and adaptation (PP4 SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 13 AND 15).



education' (MFA, 2022d).⁶⁷ **Figure 23** shows the linkages between Finland's policy priorities, the SDGs and the TES 2022 Global Initiatives (MFA, 2021b; MFA, 2021e; KIIs: MFA, GPE).

Figure 23. Finland's policy priorities, linked to the SDGs and the 2022 Transforming Education Summit Global Initiatives



Source: Evaluation Team

In line with new global directions such as the EU's Green Deal and the Greening Education initiatives, Finland could intensify the relevance of its EDC by developing pioneering partnerships in green education, bringing together multilateral (e.g., the EU and World Bank) and bilateral cooperation in particularly vulnerable partner countries. In their ranking of thematic areas, Delphi experts mentioned climate education as being a thematic area for Finland's future EDC (although, as seen in section 6.1.1, inclusive education and teacher education were ranked higher). When assessing the future relevance of Finland's EDC, it is worth considering the 'big picture' context of global poly-crises. The multiple crises experienced by Finland's partner countries are amplified by a set of global risks that feel both entirely new as well as 'eerily familiar' (WEF, 2023). These will, or should, shape Finland's EDC going forward. As 'older' risks (e.g., inflation, cost-of-living crises, trade wars, widespread social unrest, geopolitical confrontation and the spectre of nuclear warfare) converge with new threats, we are entering a turbulent decade to come.

Table 19 shows a comparative ranking of forecasted global risks over a 2-year and 10-year period.⁶⁸ Notably, natural disasters and the failure to mitigate climate change feature at the top of the ranking of global risks in the short and longer term.

67 These were: **Greening Education** to get every learner climate-ready; **Connecting** every child and young person to **digital solutions**; Addressing the crisis in **foundational learning** among young learners; Enabling all crisis-affected children and youth to **access inclusive, quality, safe learning opportunities** and continuity of education; Advancing **gender equality** and girls' and women's empowerment; and **Empowering young people** to be effective leaders in reshaping education.

68 The World Economic Forum's annual Global Risks Perception Survey, brings together leading insights from over 1,200 experts who predict global volatility to provide context to the evolution, assess the severity of the perceived likely impact of global risks over a one-, two- and 10-year horizon, considering potential impacts of a risk arising, as well as assessing the current effectiveness of the management of global risks and stakeholders are best placed to effectively manage them.



Table 19. Global risks ranked by severity over the short and long-term

2 years		10 years	
1	Cost-of-living crisis	1	Failure to mitigate climate change
2	Natural disasters and extreme weather events	2	Failure of climate-change adaptation
3	Geoeconomic confrontation	3	Natural disasters and extreme weather events
4	Failure to mitigate climate change	4	Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
5	Erosion of social cohesion and societal polarisation	5	Large-scale involuntary migration
6	Large-scale environmental damage incidents	6	Natural resource crises
7	Failure of climate change adaptation	7	Erosion of social cohesion and societal polarisation
8	Widespread cybercrime and cyber insecurity	8	Widespread cybercrime and cyber insecurity
9	Natural resource crises	9	Geoeconomic confrontation
10	Large-scale involuntary migration	10	Large-scale environmental damage incidents

Risk categories: Economic (blue), Environmental (green), Geopolitical (orange), Societal (red), Technological (purple)

Source: World Economic Forum, 2023

Indeed, Country Programmes that operate in fragile contexts require partnerships which aim at building education system resilience. For example, the forthcoming Ethiopia Education Transformation Programme (EETP) brings together a wide range of development partners to find solutions for learning recovery in Ethiopia but also to transform education in a rapidly changing world (see **Box 16**).



Box 16. Education transformation: improved learning outcomes with an emphasis on equity

The forthcoming four-year **EETP** is an initiative of Ethiopia's Ministry of Education to tackle barriers to learning achievement and retention across the General Education sector. Currently in its design phase, the initiative responds to the call raised during the 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit not only to find 'solutions to recover pandemic-related learning losses' but **also** to 'sow the seeds to transform education in a rapidly changing world' (UN, 2022b).

This Programme will follow and build on a succession of multi-donor GEQIP programmes, starting with GEQIP I, (2008-2013), GEQIP II (2014-2019), and GEQIP-E (2017-2025). In its design phase, the programme envisages a series of five transformative outcomes in Ethiopia's education sector, including transforming *schools into effective learning centres*, *transforming the ability of children out of school to be able to return to school* or otherwise access education, *transforming teaching*, and *transforming systems of quality assurance*. Underpinning these outcomes are efforts to **transform systems of planning, management and monitoring** to support this overall transformation, tackling the complexity of the governance and management structure, the quality and use of data and strengthening relationships and management capacities; 'technology is one of the key tools in bringing about this transformation'.

A major part of the funding will be from central government allocations through the national budget and will be supported by pooled funding from the International Development Association, GPE, UNICEF and major bilateral funders; 70% will comprise investment financing, and 30% will be results-based financing. In line with lessons learned from GEQIP-E, the main Disbursement Linked Indicators will be based on government actions to achieve national learning outcomes rather than on the outcomes themselves.

Source: MoE-Ethiopia, 2023

Under the leadership of Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen, the EU committed to further increase investment in education over the 2021-2028 programming cycle in interdependent areas. One of these is the Green Deal pointing out that 'education is central to addressing the causes and impact of climate change', which is in line with the Transforming Education Summit Global Initiative 'Greening Education to get every learner climate-ready' (European Commission, 2023). The National Statement of Commitment of Finland to Transform Education, made during the 2022 TES, asserted that Finland's resources would be used in a strategic way to support 'systemic changes' with climate change adaptation and mitigation as a key cross-cutting objective in Finland's support to education. Indeed, for both MFA and UNICEF, 'green education' has the potential as a new priority area for interventions implemented by the Global Learning Innovations Hub.

In this regard, **GPE's strategy is particularly well aligned with Finland's policy priorities in terms of its cross-sectoral systems approach;** "*Finland has been a vibrant partner, helping to spearhead the nexus between education, school meals and climate resilience*". But there is potential to extend such 'nexus-thinking' to pooled financing across education-related sectors. Together, Finland and the Secretariat "*could do more to explore how to tap into funds for climate action*". Indeed, 'GPE will search for opportunities to invest across sectors (e.g., WASH, nutrition, gender-based violence and climate) to improve education outcomes, recognising that development is not an isolated phenomenon; progress in one sector is intrinsically linked to gains in



others' (GPE, 2022). There is potential to extend such 'nexus-thinking' to pooled financing across education-related sectors: together, Finland and the Secretariat "could do more to explore how to tap into funds for climate action" (MFA, 2022d; KII: EU, MFA, UNICEF, GPE).

Global experts call for new and transformative strategies in the context of the triple nexus, with long-term financing across humanitarian and development sectors.

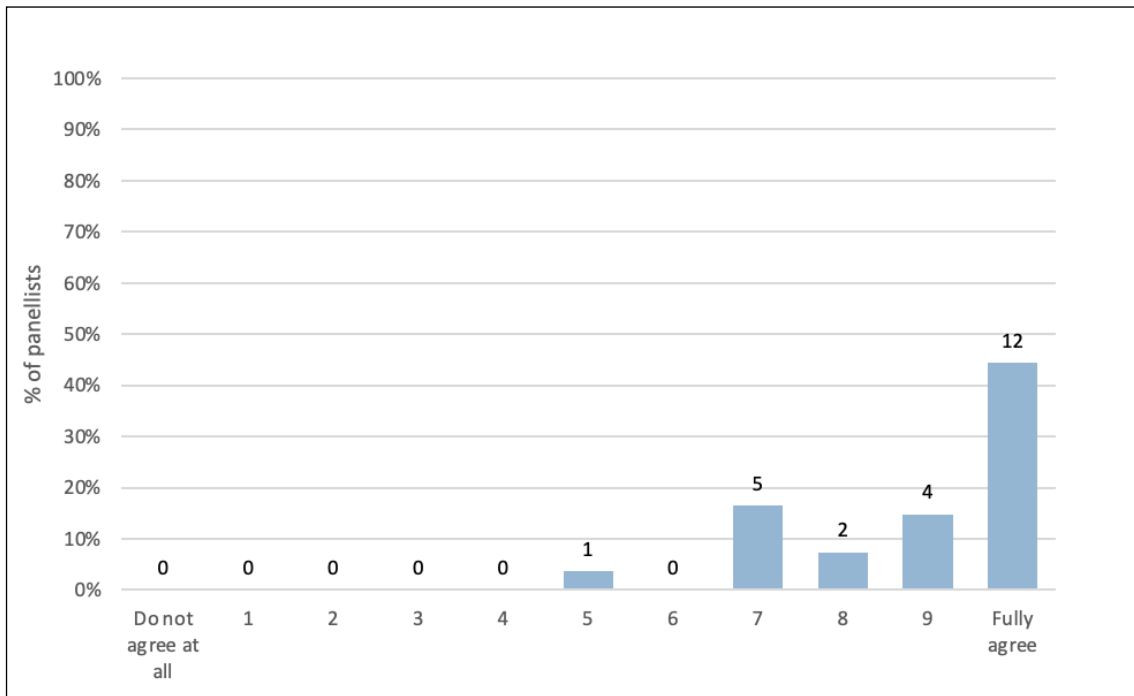
Given the fragile contexts of target partner countries, experts suggest a **need for new and transformative strategies for education development and long-term funding across humanitarian and development sectors in the context of triple nexus programming**. In semi-structured interviews, Delphi panellists were first asked what is required to allow Finland's response to the global learning crisis to stay relevant to different contextual settings of partner countries experiencing multiple crises. Delphi experts then rated single theses in an online survey. This resulted either in a powerful consensus built on experts from different stakeholder groups (i.e., national government bodies, multilateral agencies, academia, and practitioners) or suggested a more nuanced picture.

Panellists observed that Finland's long-term bilateral cooperation is often in countries that are vulnerable to violent conflict and/or natural disasters. Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises are becoming increasingly important (sometimes explicitly but also implicitly) in such countries. Meanwhile, in a mid-term review of Finland's development cooperation, OECD DAC applauded Finland's comprehensive approach to Country Strategies, which takes account of different diplomatic, business, development, security, and peace channels: 'Finland has strengthened its emphasis on peace (setting up a Centre for Mediation at the MFA to fund peace processes at the end of 2020) and is politically committed at the highest level to contributing to international climate finance' (OECD-DAC, 2021).

Almost all Delphi experts (except one panellist remaining neutral) called for new and transformative strategies for education development in the context of triple nexus (humanitarian-development-peacebuilding) programming (see **Figure 24** below).



Figure 24. Building Education System Resilience: Thesis 11 - New and transformative strategies for education development in the context of triple nexus programming



Statement: Finland's long-term bilateral cooperation is often in countries that are vulnerable to violent conflict and/or natural disasters. Education and Emergencies and Protracted Crises is becoming increasingly important (sometimes explicitly but also implicitly) in such countries. This calls for **new transformative strategies for education development in the context of triple nexus (humanitarian-development-peacebuilding) programming.**

Source: Evaluation Team

As we have seen in Chapter 5 (section 5.3.4), stakeholders at both global and country levels are of the view that **isolated emergency support in the education sector, provided by means of short-term humanitarian assistance, is often not the best solution for EDC.** Instead, continuity of learning and improved learning outcomes in fragile settings requires a holistic approach (rebuilding/repairing infrastructure; training teachers; involving parents in learning; providing remote learning opportunities, but also hybrid and low-tech solutions; pro-poor interventions such as feeding/school meals and cash support to families and so on). In light of this observation, the vast majority of panellists (19 out of 24) strongly agree that **long-term funding across sectors,** drawing on various development and humanitarian funding sources, is required for crisis response, recovery and resilience building in fragile countries.



6.4 Sustaining Finland’s education cooperation financing

Finding 15. Instead of dispersing scarce ODA funds across all EDC modalities and/or several interventions, the adoption of a strategic approach by the MFA is required. At the overall policy/strategic level of Finland’s engagement, this involves prioritising three crucial partnerships and enhancing the synergy among them: bilateral partner governments in specific target countries, multilateral organisations, and FinCEED. In the short/medium term, there is a recognised need for MFA to sustain education funding despite potential cuts to ODA and establish flexible financing tools for diverse partnerships.

Expert views suggest that priority funding channels should be **Country Programmes combined with selective multilateral engagement facilitated by FinCEED**. There was no consensus among the panel experts on the size and setup of Finland’s multi-actor approaches. However, experts highlight the need for coherent multi-actor collaboration guidance with innovative public funding instruments for non-state actors, as was identified in the 2018 review report.

Here, it is worth also highlighting an observation from an MFA expert, based on past experience: the EU’s *“Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) should bring together the best possible mix of modalities, tools and partners, especially CSOs, not only the private sector to deliver the intended impact”*. At the same time, GPE staff reflect on the fact that beyond the Global Gateway regional teacher programme for Africa, *“There is no real TEI in strengthening basic education systems”*. In the event of budget cuts to Finland’s ODA and limited opportunities for Finland to participate in GPE’s 2026 Replenishment, collaboration between Finland and GPE in initiating a TEI in basic education is *“something that we need to discuss more”*. Yet the majority (13 out of 16) of the panellists were in support of the following advice: **Finnish stakeholders need coherent guidance on participation in TEIs**; MFA should provide more information on the funding opportunities, identify potential Finnish actors for partnerships and support them throughout the tendering process (Country Case Studies; Delphi Survey; KIIs: MFA, Delphi experts, GPE, EU).

Instead of dispersing scarce funds across modalities or several interventions, a more strategic approach by the MFA is required. Focus should be at Country Programmes combined with selective multilateral engagement and their linkages with FinCEED.

Yet the majority (13 out of 16) of the panellists were in support of the following advice: **Finnish stakeholders need coherent guidance on participation in TEIs**; MFA should provide more information on the funding opportunities, identify potential Finnish actors for partnerships and support them throughout the tendering process (Country Case Studies; Delphi Survey; KIIs: MFA, Delphi experts, GPE, EU).

Finland’s EDC instruments are intended to serve different purposes and have diverse target groups. As reported by MFA, they are therefore ‘not comparable’. Yet the question raised by some stakeholders is: *“Why do we use all the instruments for everything, all at the same time?”*. Relatedly, although the decision to invest ODA using multiple channels may increase Finland’s credibility as a global player, some MFA experts argue that *“We should be more strategic – who are our priority partners?”*.

Answering this question, our analysis of summative/formative evaluation findings indicates that **Finland has three critically important types of partners: bilateral partner governments in target countries, multilateral organisations, and FinCEED**. It is important to note, however,



that underlying these partnerships has been Finland's global leadership in the call for increased investment in education. There is an expectation on the part of global partners that Finland will continue to demonstrate its leadership; *"we will give the wrong signal if Finland reduces its own financing for EDC"*. Indeed, Finland's *National Statement of Commitment of Finland to Transform Education*, made during the TES, reaffirmed the importance of advocacy for 'increased and more equitable financing for education'.

As seen in sections 5.1.1, 5.2.3 and 5.3.8, **Participation in partner countries' sector programmes is viewed as the most effective way to support sectoral reforms** aiming to improve both the coverage and quality of public basic education. Accompanied by policy dialogue, Finnish expertise and development policy priorities are brought to sector programmes, and ideally, these modalities are complemented by targeted technical assistance. Indeed, our Country Case Studies underline the importance of complementarity between EDC instruments (see **Box 17**). CSOs are potentially important partners; their role, however, is not clearly defined.

Based on the evidence presented in sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.8, the starting point in Finland's overall development cooperation programme is the agreed priorities across parliamentary terms, and one of these priorities is **multilateral engagement**; *"No big shifts are expected following the recent elections"*. However, MFA experts state that *"it will be difficult if we don't have funding for our work with multilaterals: How will we engage in policy influencing?"*. Among the difficult questions raised by stakeholders has been Finland's contribution to IDA, which has been difficult to justify in Finland because Finland's contribution may be rendered 'invisible' in large multilateral initiatives. Rather, as our thematic study on Mozambique⁶⁹ suggests, engagement with the World Bank at the country level is *"an entry point for more influencing of the development banks"*.

However, **the coherence between bilateral and multilateral programming is not as strong as it could be**. While the process of developing Country Programmes is rigorous and priorities are clearly identified, *"this is not the case for multilateral engagement at the global level"*. In order to enhance the added value of multilateral policy influencing, messaging for the UN needs to be strengthened. With the current cycle of most UN organisations' strategic plans ending in 2024/25, it is important that *"at the next global level discussion Finland gives a concrete message about its education strategies, to influence the next set of UN strategic plans"*. For examples, see **Box 17**.

69 Showcasing Finland's contribution to the Foundational Learning Compact Multi-donor Trust Fund and the Global COACH programme (see **Volume 2**).



Box 17. Complementary EDC instruments in Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine

There is a strong consensus that the bilateral support which has accompanied Finland's financial contribution to the sector support programme (GEQIP-E) in **Ethiopia** has been effective in spotlighting equity issues in Ethiopia's education sector. Finland's support of the ECW MYRP has been fundamentally constrained by the country context. The deployment of seconded expertise to the EU Delegation (via FinCEED) has been agreed upon for two years, but whether the current length and scope of the assignment serve the purpose, is yet to be assessed. Much remains to be done to strengthen elements of the education system, including the Education Management Information System (EMIS). While the results of the HEI ICI project are likely to be taken forward by sector stakeholders, stronger complementarities are required between Finland's CSO support and other interventions.

Similarly, in **Nepal**, Finland has supported the Government consistently and continuously under the sector-wide programmes of the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) 2016-2021 and the School Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2030. Utilising different funding instruments and programs, including budget, bilateral, multilateral, and CSO support, Finland addresses the needs of diverse targeted groups of children for inclusion. Strong policy dialogue in school sector development together with Joint Development Partners has strengthened access, equity and inclusiveness of education in the sector-wide program. Finland's added value in the HEI ICI has been supporting the digital higher education provision through three HEI ICI projects. Finland also works efficiently with multilateral funding, specifically with UNICEF in Nepal.

In **Palestine**, stakeholders across the board are highly appreciative of Finland's contribution to the sector support; Finland's leadership in policy dialogue has helped to keep basic education on the sector agenda, reinforcing its long-term efforts in building a resilient education system as a dimension of state-building. But multi-bi support to UNICEF has promised much but so far delivered little, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Bilateral support for the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) has spotlighted the impact of politics on human rights in terms of violations at both the individual and institutional levels. The HEI ICI OLIVE project, the Teachers Without Borders programme, and UNRWA's schools for refugees do indeed complement sector development. But their contribution in helping to bridge the triple nexus divide – which is critical in a country of protracted crisis - is not immediately apparent.

Source: Country Case Studies

As also suggested in sections 4.1.7 and 5.3.3 **MFA experts view FinCEED as critical in engaging Finnish expertise in EDC**: *“In the coming years, it is important that there will be value added; we want our experts to engage and not just give money to the organisation”*. The main catalyst for the effective operationalisation of Finland's ODA for education development cooperation, with a focus on quality improvement, is FinCEED. If UNICEF's Learning Innovation Hub is viewed as a 'spacecraft' for digital innovations in teacher education, for example, then *“FinCEED is the launchpad”* (MFA, 2021g; MFA, 2022d; Mozambique Case Study; Delphi survey; KIs: MFA, MEC, Finnfund, FinCEED).

On the one hand, some MFA experts are of the view that the existing EDC instruments are 'fit-for-purpose'; these include HEI ICI, NGO-financing, Finnpartnership, Business Finland's Developing



Markets Platform, and Finnfund's loan and equity-based portfolio to top-up multinational bank loans. Moreover, one expert argued that *"It is not easy to develop new instruments when we don't have the human resources"*. On the other hand, reflecting on past experience, MFA experts echo the calls of CSOs and Finnish companies for more flexible instruments for multi-actor collaboration, specifically an instrument for *"Results-driven joint CSO-private sector initiatives"*.

Similarly, a majority of Delphi panellists (13 of 17) point out that **there are currently no MFA funding instruments or programmes that encourage or even allow multi-actor partners to apply for joint projects** (e.g., CSO and a company, or a HEI and a CSO).⁷⁰ The suggestion

There are currently no funding instruments or programmes that encourage multi-actor partners to apply for joint projects. Increased use of guarantees for mobilising private resources and exploring Social Impact Bonds could be considered.

from Delphi panellists is that if MFA wants to engage with multi-actor partnerships, they should offer funding for such multi-actor partnerships and integrate it as a requirement for project proposals into the tendering process (see **Annex 10**, Figure 4).

Indeed, documentary evidence suggests that **more use could be made of guarantees**⁷¹ as a mechanism for mobilising private resources for financing development, particularly by DAC member development finance institutions. Considering this option, MFA ex-

perts acknowledge that Finnvera has guarantee tools (but not for ODA) and Finnfund has special risk guarantees, but *"Current legislation doesn't allow us to give repayable grants, which is what would work for the private sector"*. Another option would be to learn from other countries: *"Spain provides grants to private companies for feasibility studies in partner countries, where, if the project doesn't go forward, the grants don't have to be paid back"*.

In the same vein and reiterating a recommendation made by the 2018 Stepping Up review team (which was not taken up), **MFA and its partners could potentially explore Social Impact Bonds** (see **Box 18**). However, these would be appropriate only if they are *"driven by the needs of a given partner country and have a focus on systems strengthening"*, as well as being *"embedded in HRBA"*. In addition, other interesting examples from Finland's peer countries may inform MFA's reflections on funding for CSO-PSI partnerships. In Denmark, there are a number of pool schemes where a pool scheme manager, such as an umbrella CSO, administers project funding for small CSOs. The Netherlands has introduced a financing channel supporting consortia of Northern and Southern CSOs, where a lead Dutch CSO or a CSO from a low-income, lower-middle-income or upper-middle-income country is the grant recipient and bears full responsibility for implementation and compliance with the obligations in respect of the grant decision.

70 This said, funding for CSOs includes some measures that promote multi-actor projects and leverage of international funding (e.g. support for the self-financing share of EU projects, 10% flexibility in programme support).

71 Guarantees are a type of 'insurance policy' protecting banks and investors from the risks of non-payment; it is a promise of indemnification up to a specified amount in the case of default or non-performance of an asset, e.g., a failure to meet loan repayments or to redeem bonds, or expropriation of an equity stake. **'Developmental guarantees'** are a special category of official guarantees backing projects in developing countries intended to provide the measure of security needed to bring on board more private risk capital (from private companies, banks, individuals, NGOs, self-help groups, investment funds, etc).



Box 18. Social Impact Bonds

Social Impact Bonds are an innovative mechanism associated with an impact investment approach to financing social development. They are commonly used in high-income settings or settings with strong government-led public-sector financing. Under a Social Impact Bond, you have 3 principal stakeholders:

- An Investor: a private sector party who provides the capital to fund the attainment of specific outcomes.
- A Service Provider: an NGO or CSO who undertakes the design and delivery of the programme that will deliver the specific outcomes.
- An Outcome Funder: in a Social Impact Bond, the Outcome Funder is the national government, which repays the Investor their capital investment plus a proportional return at the point where the specific outcomes have been attained.

The principal stakeholders in any Social Impact Bonds are usually supported by two further partners: the Evaluator, an external body that assesses the project and verifies that the agreed outcomes have been achieved, and the Intermediary, a social financing institution that works with the Outcome Funders to structure and design the bonds, arrange negotiations and provide technical support. Social impact bonds' effectiveness has been questioned, however. On average, despite optimistic predictions, USD 1 of public investment from bilateral and multilateral donors mobilises only 75 cents of private investment in low- and middle-income countries and just 37 cents in low-income countries.).

A successful impact bond ran in Rajasthan, India, from 2015 to 2018 (India Educate Girls) with a capital commitment of 280,000 USD. Notably, India has offered more opportunities to experiment with impact bonds due to its regulatory environment and incentives for corporate engagement. An evaluation found significant costs associated with designing and launching the mechanism.

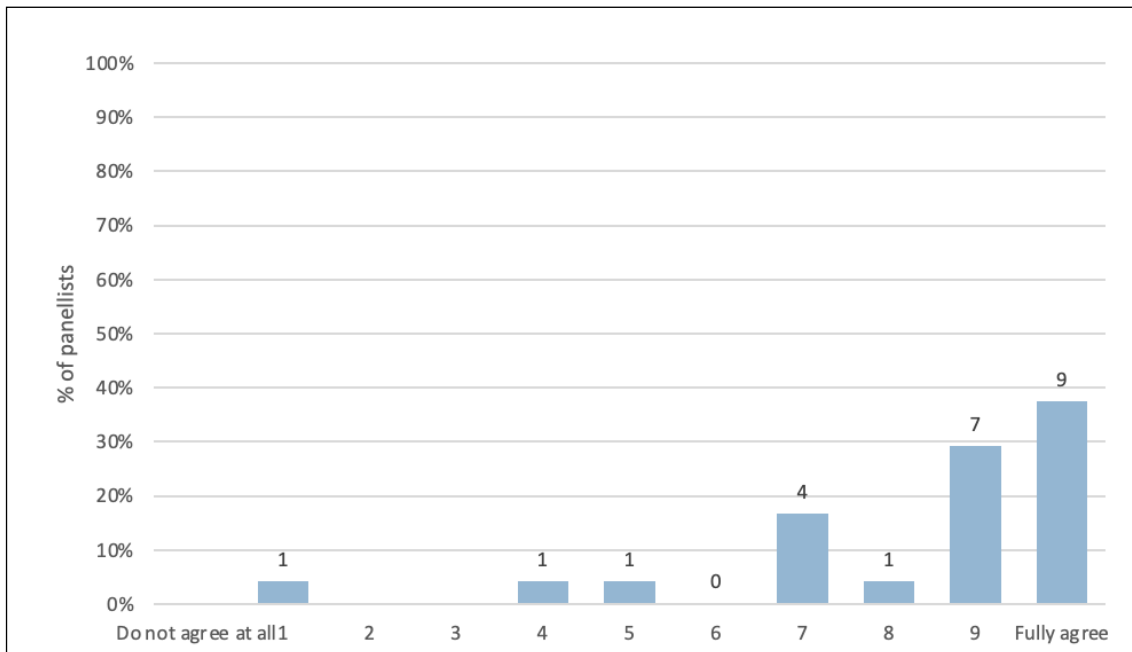
Source: Joynes, C., 2019. Attridge, S. and Engen, L. 2019 and Ecorys, 2019 (cited in GEMR, 2021)

Whatever the case, **an essential prerequisite for financing multi-actor partnerships is a regulatory framework.** A multi-actor approach clearly entails *“All actors in society working together to respond to partner needs, bringing in researchers and innovators working towards common goals within a strong regulatory, legislative framework”*. Relatedly, an effective multi-actor approach needs to be driven by a shared policy goal and common values vis-à-vis public education development in the world's developing and emerging economies: *“We can't build multi-actor partnerships without CSOs/private sector but we need to make sure CSOs know the policy and we have to make sure private companies don't abuse Finland's reputation for the sake of private profit”* (OECD, 2014; Joynes, C., 2019; GEMR, 2021; MFA, 2022o; Delphi Survey; KIIs: MFA, Delphi experts, FinCEED).

In particular, Delphi findings do not result in a consensus on a promising future pathway for private sector engagement. A contested issue regarding the future setup of Finnish education development cooperation relates to the question of whether or not to engage the private sector in EDC. On the one hand, **Figure 25** shows that about two-thirds of the panellist (17 out of 24) admit that the private sector can play a crucial role in TVET, career and skill development, e.g., by providing apprenticeship, internship, and career mentoring programmes.



Figure 25. Engaging the private sector in EDC: Thesis 28 - The private sector in TVET, career and skill development

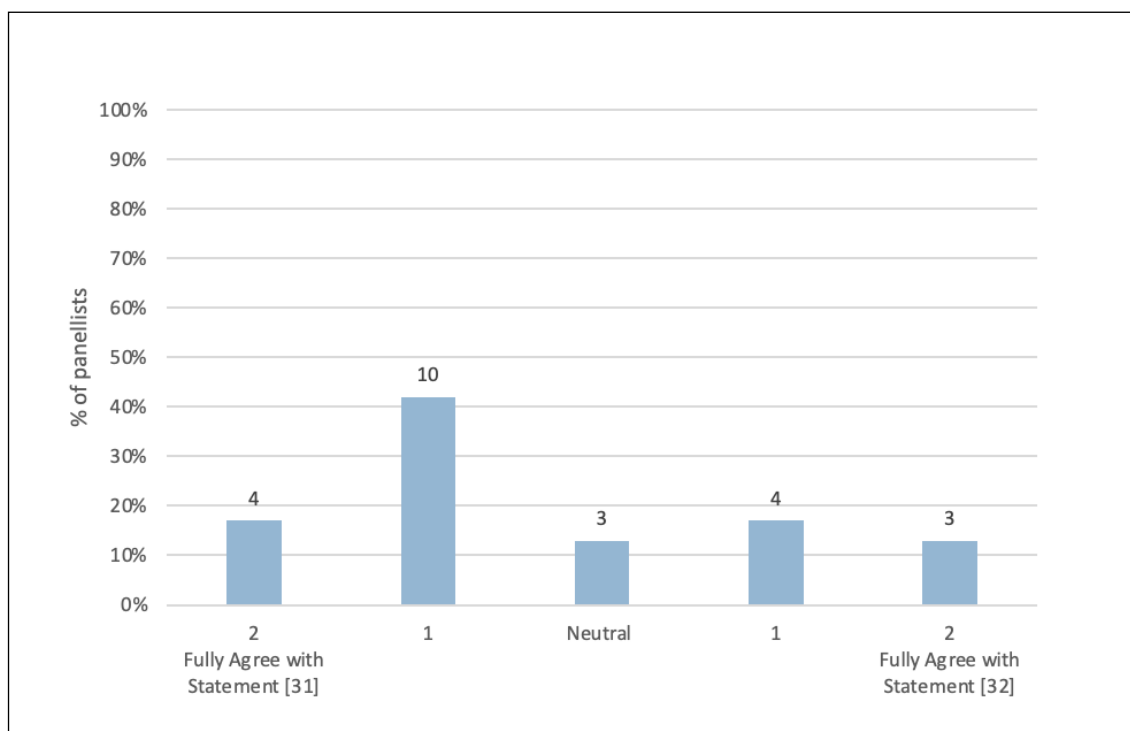


Statement: The **private sector can play a crucial role in TVET, career and skill development**, e.g., by providing apprenticeship, internship, and career mentoring programmes.

Source: *Evaluation Team*

In the light of an expected future decrease in global ODA caused by multiple crises facing partner and donor countries, about half of the panellists (14 out of 24) are convinced that Finland needs the private sector to engage in education development cooperation, stepping in to help fill financing gaps as shown in **Figure 26**. Those in support of engaging with the private sector in EDC also agree that there is an urgent need for new innovative public funding instruments for companies interested in investing in ECD and/or providing technical support for EDC interventions.

Figure 26. Engaging the private sector in EDC: Contrary Theses 31 and 32



Statement 31: Global ODA will decrease in the future as donor partner countries alike are impacted by various crises. **We need the private sector to engage** in EDC, stepping in to help fill financing gaps.

Statement 32: Universal access and public schooling for all are the foundation of a successful Finnish education system. **Exporting services in private primary and/or secondary schooling is against Finnish principles and can fail**, as commercial pressures compromise the quality of education.

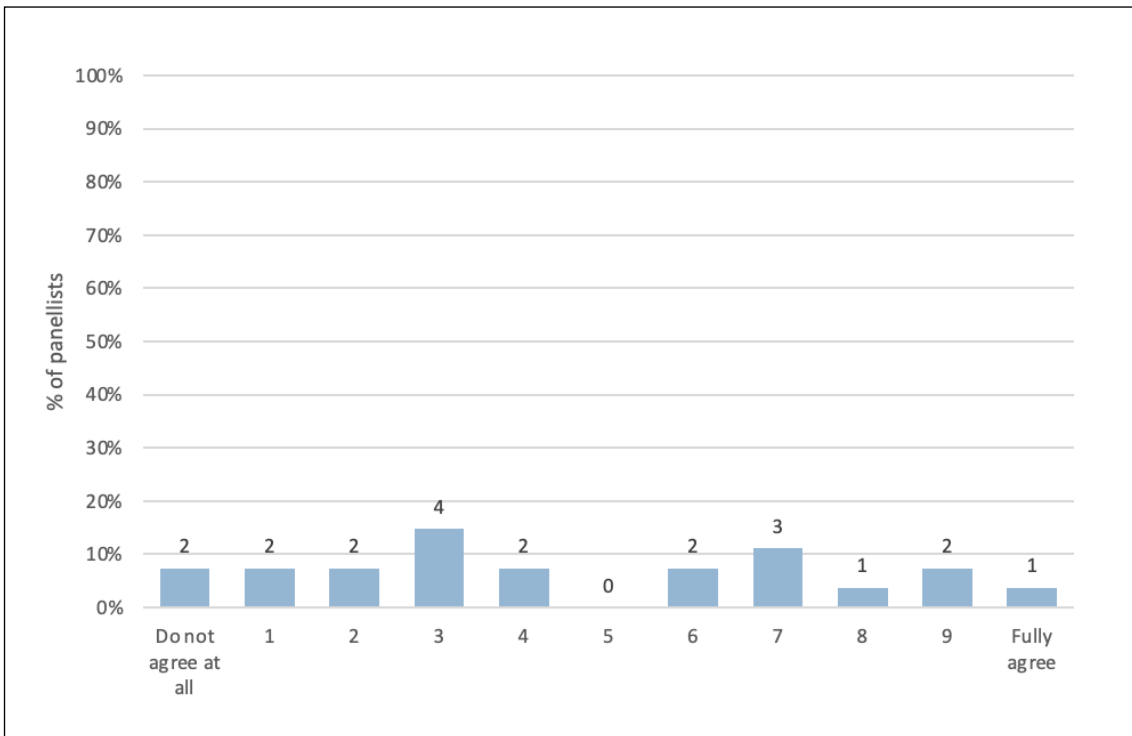
Source: Evaluation Team

On the other hand, some Delphi experts (about a third, 7 out of 24) expressed **concerns that exporting services in private primary and/or secondary schooling is against Finnish principles and can fail**, as commercial pressures compromise the quality of education. One panellist elaborated: *“In helping commercial firms [to] do this kind of work in the developing world, Finland risks tarnishing its reputation... EdTech has been repeatedly shown to be the product of manufactured need, serving companies far more than students”*.

For several panellists, such a scenario seems to be particularly **plausible in crisis settings**. One panellist, for example, put it very clearly: *“Crisis contexts and the commercial sector are oil and vinegar. They should not mix.”* There is, however, no consensus among panellists, as **Figure 27** illustrates: Some rather agree that there is no commercial market for education export and/or EdTech companies in crisis contexts, suggesting that the opportunities for engaging the private sector in building resilient education systems as very limited, while others do not agree at all (Delphi Survey; Delphi experts).



Figure 27. Engaging the private sector in EDC: Thesis 30 – Commercial markets for education export and/or EdTech companies in crisis contexts



Statement: There is no commercial market for education export / EdTech companies in crisis contexts and opportunities for engaging the private sector in building resilient education systems are very limited.

Source: Evaluation Team



7 Conclusions

In this Chapter, we conclude on the relevance, coherence and efficiency of Finland's response to the global learning crisis, the quality of education, and the effectiveness and results achieved in the area of development cooperation in stepping up Finland's global role in the education sector development in developing countries, and the value of the multi-actor approach therein. Similarly, we conclude on findings related to the alternative future approaches for 2023-2030 in which Finland's global role and response to the learning crisis and quality education could be most relevant, coherent, efficient, and effective.

The Response

Performance: Implementation of follow-up activities as a response to the 2018 recommendations

Conclusion 1: The establishment of education as a distinct policy priority within Finland's development cooperation and the formulation of a comprehensive theory of change have considerably enhanced the significance of education in Finland's development cooperation. This progress lays a solid foundation for Finland's support to the education sector, both in the near and distant future, in addressing the global education crisis.

The collaboration between MFA, MEC and EDUFI has steered the rise of EDC as a clear policy priority for Finland. MFA's strategic leadership of this inter-ministerial cooperation, as recommended in 2018, has successfully reinforced Finland's role as a key player in a global response to the ongoing education crisis worldwide. Such 'triangular collaboration' has also driven the response to several key recommendations made in 2018. Efforts were made to ensure funding for selected UN partners, particularly UNICEF, is adequate and to engage with the Development Banks as well as with the EU-Africa Global Gateway investment package. Finland's portfolio of partner countries expanded during the period under review, with an increased programming focus on complementarities between the diverse EDC modalities. Since the establishment of FinCEED, efforts have been dedicated to pooling Finnish expertise, representing a highly relevant development for Finland's EDC. However, as also noted in this evaluation, there is still work to be done in attracting qualified candidates with the necessary expertise to enhance the expert pool.

This conclusion is based on Finding 1.

Relevance

Conclusion 2: Finland's response to the learning crisis remains highly relevant. To maintain relevance and effectiveness in a dynamic global education landscape, Finland's future development cooperation would benefit from a focus on learning crisis mitigation at both global and country levels. Focus on learning crisis mitigation would utilise SDG 4 as a foundational pillar for advancing progress in other interconnected SDGs. This includes fostering innovative partnerships to simultaneously support climate and education goals



and activities while also proactively addressing the intricate interplay between development, humanitarian assistance, and peace-building efforts (triple nexus) within the educational context.

In today's complex global education development landscape, marked by multifaceted risks, the importance of aligning development goals across sectors is evident. Finland can enhance its relevance by embracing the triple nexus thinking, as suggested by its partners. This entails recognising education as a cornerstone of sustainable development and forging pioneering partnerships in green education. Key multilateral partners, including the EU, are charting new directions for global education development, such as the Green Deal and Greening Education initiative. Finland can leverage these initiatives to bolster its EDC's impact, especially in vulnerable partner countries.

The growing fragility of many partner nations necessitates a fresh approach to education development, emphasising the 'peace' element in the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. There is a need to allocate more of Finland's EDC resources to education in emergencies, aligning with the triple nexus concept. While Finland's recent results framework mentions education in emergencies, practical implementation and resource allocation require further consideration. Cooperation between modalities and actors, joint planning, and flexible funding are essential for effective triple nexus implementation. With adequate resources, these measures can significantly enhance EDC relevance.

This conclusion is based on Finding 2 and contributes to Recommendations 5 and 10.

Efficiency and resourcing

Conclusion 3: Evidence-based decision-making is challenging without a sector-specific plan with budgets and corresponding systematic monitoring regarding MFA's education sector development cooperation. However, it should be acknowledged that Finland has consistently succeeded in committing and disbursing increased funds to EDC.

While education has been established as a distinct policy priority within Finland's development cooperation, MFA's statistics on the education sector reveal limitations, and the absence of sector-specific plans and budgets affects monitoring and evidence-based decision-making in EDC. Full implementation and operationalisation of the education policy priority would benefit from taking increasingly informed and balanced decisions with regard to the education thematic priorities, use of instruments and modalities, and allocation of funding. For this to happen, both planning and monitoring for learning should be strengthened.

Positively, in spite of the limitations in planning and monitoring, EDC allocations have been on an upward trajectory. Yet, particularly in the current context of the possible development cooperation funding cuts, it is of utmost importance to ensure at least the current funding level for the education sector in the short-/medium term. In the longer term, the aim should be to systematically increase education sector funding. In order to do this, the MFA would benefit from improvements in evidence-based decision-making on its EDC.

This conclusion is based on Findings 3 and 4 and contributes to Recommendations 2, 3, and 4.



Coherence

Conclusion 4: Finland's EDC currently lacks a clear and unified policy vision. This vision should harmonise the expanded role of EDC and clearly define the role of private sector involvement and education export while also emphasising inclusivity.

Finland's current education policy aims to address the global crisis but lacks vision and coherence. Stakeholders have varying views on Finland's contribution, with development partners valuing its pro-poor, 'leave no one behind' approach, while Finland is keen on involving the private sector, especially for exporting digital solutions to partner countries, a point of contention. Balancing geopolitical and trade interests with country-owned development cooperation is crucial for Finland's credibility as an education sector leader. Measures should align with partner countries' needs and Finland's trade priorities.

This conclusion is based on Finding 5 and contributes to Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Conclusion 5: The operational efficiency of implementing a multi-actor approach is weak. The lack of guidance on the multi-actor approach and instruments for collaboration between state and non-state actors does not encourage or enable efficient implementation of multi-actor approaches and, overall, full implementation of the stepping-up measures.

Finland plans to implement a multi-actor approach in education development cooperation, but it is conceptually unclear and inefficiently implemented. Some view it as public-private partnerships, others as new domestic non-state actor partnerships. Clarification, a strategy, guidance, and a suitable financing instrument are needed for operationalisation. Examples like the UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub and the GPE's innovative financing tool, 'the Multiplier', show potential but are in the early stages.

While evidence suggests persistent conceptual uncertainty around multi-actor approaches, it highlights the potential benefits of a comprehensive strategy and guidance on multi-actor collaboration. Improved integration and coordination of non-state actors in Finland's EDC would enhance its effectiveness. To strengthen strategic planning, two practical measures could be considered. Firstly, the development of a guidance note on the multi-actor approach would provide clarity in the joint full implementation of the stepping-up measures. This guidance note could allocate responsibilities to specific sector ministry departments and identify key multilateral and non-state partners for implementation. Secondly, the establishment of an executive coordination mechanism could be explored. Such a mechanism would not only coordinate various EDC actors but also hold them accountable for priority strategy implementation.

This conclusion is based on Findings 3 and 4 and contributes to Recommendations 2, 3, and 4.



The Results and Effectiveness

Progress towards expected results, including results at the country level

Conclusion 6: Regarding the thematic areas and sub-sectors of EDC, the results vary from ‘good’ to ‘unsatisfactory’ depending on the supported area or sub-sector. Good progress has been made towards the overall policy goals, particularly at the secondary education level. The support has been most effective in the thematic areas of rights-based inclusive education, as well as improved teaching practices and school environments, accompanied by policy influencing at country and global levels. The results in VET have been unsatisfactory.

Evidence of the results of Finland’s EDC was strongest in the thematic area of rights-based inclusive basic and secondary education. Finland’s EDC has demonstrated a commitment to the cross-cutting objectives of gender equality and non-discrimination, particularly disability inclusion, and they are already embedded in country strategies and programming as well as multilateral, CSO and HEI ICI programming.

VET as a sub-sector is highly relevant in partner countries, but weak coordination, lack of joint planning and neglected linkages in EDC between Finnish VET actors at secondary education and post-secondary levels have limited developing strategies for strengthening Finland’s VET profile, and thus, responding to the high need in partner countries. Interventions in the VET subsector have been piecemeal. Increasingly limited ODA funding to respond to the rising needs suggests a need to limit engagement in this sub-sector to already-initiated interventions, at least in the short term. Across summative/formative expert interviews and the Delphi expert panel, views also diverge on the future importance of Finland’s VET expertise.

This conclusion is based on Findings 6 and 7 and contributes to Recommendation 9.

Effectiveness of aid modalities

Conclusion 7: The three most effective EDC instruments are bilateral cooperation (the core of Finland’s work), multilateral cooperation and FinCEED. CSOs and higher education institutions are critically important partners in EDC, yet their potential has not been exploited to the full, and their relationship with the private sector lacks enablers and remains uncertain. Private sector instruments add little value to development cooperation from the results perspective.

In terms of the instruments, Finland’s successful education sector development cooperation relies on bilateral assistance, including sector support and multi-bilateral aid. Country-level strategies and programmes, aligned with partner countries’ education priorities, are the foundation, with joint implementation and monitoring appreciated by partner governments. Multilateral cooperation is effective, and multilateral partnerships, particularly with the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE, and ECW are crucial. Evidence proposes that, overall, a combination of core funding, policy dialogue, technical cooperation and thematic funding with the multilateral actors is effective. Yet, in the context of this evaluation, a detailed comparison of these different modalities within the instrument of multilateral cooperation could not be made because it would have required a full evaluation of the various interventions funded by the different modalities, and this is not within the realm of a strategic centralised evaluation.



While they are all effective in the provision of EDC, the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE, and ECW are each important for Finland's EDC for specific reasons. The reasons for their importance are discussed in Chapter 5.3.2. While evidence shows multilateral cooperation is overall effective, specific policy dialogue benchmarks are lacking, and this should be addressed. Strengthening the above-mentioned partnerships can enhance policy influence and access to new opportunities for participation by the Finnish stakeholders.

This evaluation found that during its short existence, FinCEED has already accomplished several main activities within the framework of the first of its three function areas. In strengthening competencies in development cooperation in education and training, an expert register for educational development has been set up. In providing education expertise for system-level development and policy issues as part of development cooperation and development of the education sector in partner countries, FinCEED has made some inroads. However, as discussed in Chapter 5.3.3., issues remain, mostly because of the limited human resources. There is room for improvement for FinCEED to expand its pool of education experts for better synergy in the country programmes and results in multilateral partnerships. The shortage of expertise in Finland is a constraint. In influence and networking, FinCEED has hit the ground running, and an example is the FinCEED Forum, organised for the second time in November 2023 and bringing together stakeholders in Finland's education development cooperation.

The role of CSOs in EDC policy goals requires clarification to maximise non-state actors' partnership potential. While the EDC implemented by the CSOs yields significant results, it is not always linked to the more systemic EDC effort of the MFA. Higher education institutions have indirectly contributed to education quality, although their impact is challenging to assess. Private sector instruments like Finnfund and Finnpartnership have struggled to add value in EDC, but dismissing them entirely is not advisable. Investment in LDCs' non-state actor partnerships could be prioritised for higher impact.

This conclusion is based on Findings 8-11 and contributes to Recommendations 2, 7, 8, and 11.

The Future

Maintaining the relevance of Finland's response, including in increasingly fragile contexts

Conclusion 8: Progress in EDC has been made, but global and local education challenges persist. This underscores the importance of Finland's continued commitment to EDC. Emphasis is needed on building education system resilience in fragile settings, fulfilling theory of change assumptions, and supporting sector-wide reforms, particularly in inclusive education and teacher development. Finland is well positioned in the development of more relevant and effective EdTech, particularly for teacher education, so that in spite of the EdTech's current limitations, its potential could be fulfilled.

Despite progress, Finland's partner countries still face persistent learning challenges, necessitating the continued prioritisation of the education sector. This commitment should build upon enabling factors such as target country ownership, policy influence, and the strategic selection of complementary EDC instruments. Contextual constraints, including political, security, and climate-related crises, have underscored the importance of building education system resilience and addressing the root causes of the global learning crisis.



Finland can enhance its role in addressing the global education crisis by focusing on inclusive education and teacher training and development. This requires expanding the expert pool, leveraging Finland's convening and coordinating power, and promoting harmonised systems strengthening in partner countries.

While the global evidence of its impact on reaching the goals of SDG 4 is limited, EdTech holds potential. Finland's unique strength in EDC lies in its thriving EdTech sector, which has garnered international recognition by the education market intelligence, continuously ranking Finland as the country with the most innovative EdTech companies. Also, the experts who participated in the Delphi panel of this evaluation tend to believe that Finland's world-renowned technology sector can generate valuable contributions to Finland's EDC. Multi-actor collaboration in EdTech should be explored and tested to demonstrate its value in fragile contexts. Finland can play a vital role in addressing the global education crisis through a phased approach, prioritising evidence-based investments in digital solutions.

This conclusion is based on Findings 12-14 and contributes to Recommendations 1, 4, 10, and 11.

Sustaining Finland's education cooperation financing

Conclusion 9: Finland's global leadership in advocating increased education investment is recognised, but its image as an education excellence model and credible problem solver may suffer due to potential cuts to education ODA. Considering the budget constraints, the optimal distribution of limited ODA funds across different aid modalities and interventions in each modality is yet to be determined.

Global partners expect Finland to maintain its leadership in education sector development cooperation, as emphasised in Finland's National Statement of Commitment during the 2022 Transforming Education Summit. While Finland advocates for increased and equitable education financing, a decrease in funding for EDC would send a conflicting message. Persistent learning challenges in partner countries underscore the need for Finland to continue and strengthen its long-term EDC efforts, particularly in fragile contexts. It is vital to, at the very least, maintain the current level of financing and strategically focus on building education system resilience.

This conclusion is based on Findings 15 and contributes to Recommendations 6.



8 Recommendations

In this Chapter, we make recommendations as a response to the evaluation questions of what kind of multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups would yield the best results in order to maintain and strengthen Finland's role in the specific areas of expertise and added value unique to Finland; allow the response to the global learning crisis and quality education to stay relevant in different contextual settings; and establish size and set-up that is realistic for sustained level of development cooperation funding yet securing Finland as a credible actor in resolving the global learning crisis.

To this effect, the evaluation team makes recommendations on two different scenarios: **short-term** (current government 4-year period) and **longer-term** (8-year period). Recommendations include both **policy** and **operational** recommendations. Altogether, 12 recommendations are made.

Recommendation 1: Deliver a brief policy statement reiterating the commitment to a renewed joint vision for Finland's education development cooperation, emphasising the importance of LDCs even if trade interests gain prominence and maintaining a balanced focus on both trade interests and country-led approaches.

This recommendation is informed mainly by Conclusions 4 and 7.

It is addressed to the MFA for the leadership of the process together with MEC, in collaboration with Education Finland and FinCEED, and in close collaboration with the MFA and the members of the Coordination Group for being consulted and participating.⁷²

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period)

MFA, in collaboration with MEC, EDUFI and FinCEED, should deliver a brief policy statement to ensure the continuity of education as a policy priority and to further strengthen the role of education in Finland's development cooperation. The policy brief could be leveraged to communicate with and influence implementing partners (including the private sector, CSOs and academia) as a means of strengthening Finland's positive handprint in Finland and globally.

Informed by existing goals, principles and values, the statement should include the following policy objectives;

- Position Finland's EDC as a vehicle for transformative development across Finland's other four policy priorities (Rights of women and girls; Sustainable economies and decent work; Peaceful and democratic societies; and Climate and natural resources; as such, it is integral to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development);
- Uphold the right to education and the right to learn as a foundational principle of Finland's EDC, which underpins the well-being of people, nature, and Finland's security

⁷² Although it is recognised that MFA and MEC jointly lead the Coordination Group and share joint responsibility, this evaluation is mandated only to provide recommendations to the MFA. In the ideal case, the recommendations and their implications to other actors are discussed in their respective organisations and the evaluation offers a forum for joint discussion.



across all instruments and modalities (be it through the public or private sector, civil society or academia) and partnerships (such as Global Gateway Team Europe Initiatives or multilateral platforms); and

- Reinforce pro-poor inclusive and equitable quality education as a core value, delivering a clear message on politically neutral parameters for private sector involvement in EDC. MFA and its partners should draw a clear line between the expansion of EDC, including economic and political relationships, as well as trade and development in the middle-income countries. On the one hand, the integration of diverse forms of EDC delivered by state and non-state actors in the least developed, fragile, and lower-middle-income countries, on the other.

Recommendation 2: Issue a Guidance Note on the Multi-actor Approach to clarify the concept and guide its operationalisation.

This recommendation is informed by Conclusions 3, 4 and 6.

It is addressed to the MFA, with proposed partnership and leadership of the process by FinCEED and close alliance with MEC and Education Finland. They are recommended to maintain close collaboration with the members of the Coordination Group for consultation.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period)

This recommendation is to enhance understanding of and create a common view on what the multi-actor approach is and how it could be operationalised. The multi-actor approach is the approach foreseen to be implemented in Finland's education development cooperation, but until now, the progress has been limited, and there has been a lot of unclarity on what the approach entails. Developing a systematic multi-actor approach and a shared message on its' contents is already foreseen in the 'Roadmap'. The proposed action is still valid to guide the implementation and necessary for taking the next steps.

The Guidance Note should encompass a comprehensive framework that includes but is not limited to the purpose and strategy, concept, implementation of the approach, country-level cooperation between actors, coordination between the MFA and Finnish actors, joint analysis, planning and implementation, resources (financial and human), and monitoring. Additionally, it should provide a description and clarification of the diverse actors' mandates, roles, and responsibilities, encompassing public and private sector stakeholders, civil society organisations, and academia. The Note should also specify how these partners will collaborate, share knowledge, and coordinate their efforts. Furthermore, the Guidance Note should address key themes, geographical areas, and approaches such as digitalisation, engagement with LDCs/middle-income countries, varying education levels, and other relevant considerations, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the multi-actor concept.

Leadership for coordinating and executing measures related to the implementation of the multi-actor approach should be with FinCEED, and their capacity should be developed accordingly (Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 3: Establish FinCEED as an executive body to facilitate and coordinate Finland's Multi-actor Approach in EDC.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period) and longer-term (8-year period)



This recommendation is informed by Conclusion 3.

It is addressed to the MFA's leadership for the decision-making. The recommendation also proposes implications for MEC, Education Finland and FinCEED.

This recommendation is to enhance FinCEED's role and to build its role as the executor and co-ordinator of the Multi-Actor Approach.

FinCEED should be set up as an executive body for Finland's Multi-actor Approach in EDC through a process of organisational strengthening. This organisational strengthening should allow FinCEED to test and lead the coordination of various measures to facilitate multi-actor interventions, including facilitating private sector participation in Team Europe Initiatives, bringing together the best possible mix of modalities to deliver an intended impact, and, eventually, where required, FinCEED should guide partnerships and partnership building.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen MFA's strategic planning in the education sector by developing an education sector-specific implementation plan to operationalise the Policy Brief and the Guidance Note for the Multi-Actor Approach for the MFA's part.

This Recommendation is informed by Conclusions 3 and 4.

It is addressed to the leadership of MFA's Department for Development Policy as well as to the advisers for development policy in the Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period).

This recommendation builds on the already existing theory of change and aims at further enhancing the efficiency and coherence of MFA's education development policy priority area.

In the MFA's education sector-specific implementation plan, there should be a distinction between policy objectives (set in the existing documents and revised and reconfirmed in the joint policy brief), an implementation plan and budget, detailed work plans and monitoring mechanisms. As a tool for setting the MFA's priority medium-term implementation strategies to achieve longer-term policy goals, the strategic implementation plan should serve as a financial planning framework for more detailed short-term work plans/roadmaps. Roles and responsibilities for priority strategies should be assigned to specific departments, with key multilateral partners and non-state partners (CSOs, HEIs, and private companies).

MFA and its partners should commit resources to building a convincing evidence base for the effectiveness of the multi-actor approach and transformative solutions before taking these to scale. The inclusion of longitudinal process and developmental evaluations may strengthen MFA's existing MEL framework. Evidence-based information on multi-actor approaches to improving the quality of education at the country level may, in time, further enhance Finland's reputation as a credible partner in transformative EDC. Examples of multi-actor partnerships, such as the Global Learning Innovation Hub and GPE's new operational model, may eventually disrupt traditional practices in the education sector. In addition to supporting them, their progress should be closely monitored, and lessons learned for broader implementation.



Recommendation 5: Strengthen the response to the global and country-level learning crisis by emphasising education in emergencies, including by adhering to the MFA’s Guidance Note “The Triple Nexus and Cooperation with Fragile States and Regions” as relevant for education and by emphasising climate resilience (green education) in Finland’s EDC and its funding.

This recommendation is informed by Conclusion 2.

Regarding the role of the MFA, it is addressed to the leadership of MFA’s Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments as well as to the advisers for development policy in the Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments and to the relevant Country Teams. In addition to the MFA, the recommendation proposes action by FinCEED as well as all members of the Coordination Group.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period).

This recommendation is to further enhance Finland’s policy relevance and corresponding implementation to be able to better respond to the changing global context, which is marked by a cluster of related global risks. Education in emergencies is already mentioned in MFA’s recently developed results framework, but it has not yet been addressed as a priority. An important step has been taken by issuing the Guidance Note on implementing the Triple Nexus in 2022 (MFA, 2022I), which would form a solid basis for implementation, as well as enhance the coherence of the support overall through joint planning and monitoring. Implementation of the development-humanitarian-peace building nexus approach should be closely followed up, monitored, and evaluated in the medium term, within a 4-year period.

Operationalising response to climate resilience would include developing partnerships in green education (e.g., Green Deal and the Greening Education Initiative). Actions include incorporating education in emergencies and green education in the objectives of the multilateral policy influencing and in education sector reforms in particularly vulnerable partner countries.

Recommendation 6: As a policy decision, in the short-/medium term, ensure at least the current funding level for the education sector, even given the possible development cooperation funding cuts. In the short- and medium-term, test innovative funding mechanisms (e.g., social impact outcome investment), and in the longer term, as a policy priority, aim at systematically increasing education sector funding.

This Recommendation is informed by Conclusions 3 and 8.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period) and longer-term (8-year period).

It is addressed to the MFA’s leadership (overall funding level) and the leadership of MFA’s Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments, as well as to the advisers for development policy in the Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments (innovative funding mechanisms).

This recommendation is to maintain Finland’s reputation as a credible actor in solving the learning crises, which are at stake with possible funding cuts. Global partners have high expectations that Finland will continue to demonstrate its leadership in the education sector development cooperation. Finland has reaffirmed the importance of advocacy for increased and more equitable financing



for education. Possible cuts to the overall ODA take place in a situation where there are significant international expectations that, based on Finland's track record, Finland will play a central role in resolving the global learning crisis. In this scenario and considering the importance of education and the persistent learning crisis in Finland's partner countries, it would be a wrong signal if Finland reduced its funding for education sector development cooperation.

In the short- to medium-term, MFA should introduce innovative financing instruments, such as a social impact outcome investment mechanism, for operationalising the multi-actor approach. The complexity of a multi-actor approach calls for the development of a new, fit-for-purpose financing mechanism. Social impact bonds may serve this purpose, as diverse types of non-state actors, as well as state actors, all have a dedicated role to play. The program of digital innovations may function as a vehicle to test such a mechanism, informed by partnerships between impact investors (e.g., Finnfund) and state and non-state actors in target countries. Funds for the new financing mechanism may be drawn from a range of sources: ODA for CSO support and private sector instruments, augmented, if necessary, by financing for the HEI ICI programme.

In the short- to medium-term, MFA and its partners should pull in resources from the four other education-related policy priority areas. To further secure financial resources, MFA should consider developing regulatory and legislative frameworks which enable both pooled and pulled-in resourcing for education sector development cooperation. A further measure may be to explore opportunities to pool financing across the humanitarian and development sectors through the implementation of the development-humanitarian-peace building (triple) nexus and foreseen joint efforts in the Guidance Note 'Triple Nexus and Cooperation with Fragile States and Regions' in 2022 (MFA, October 2022).

In the longer term, as called for by the UN Secretary-General in his Vision Statement for Transforming Education, Finland, like all Development Partners, should allocate 15-20% of their ODA to the education sector.

Recommendation 7: Prioritise bilateral cooperation with partner countries, namely, joint financing of sector reform programmes, multi-bilateral assistance, technical assistance and policy dialogue at the country level.

This recommendation is informed by Conclusion 6.

It is addressed to the MFA's leadership as well as the leadership of MFA's Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments as well as to the advisers for development policy in the Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments and relevant Country Teams.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period) and longer-term (8-year period).

This recommendation is building on further enhancing the good results gained by using the bilateral assistance modalities. They have proven to be the most effective modalities in Finland's education sector development cooperation and the core of Finland's education sector support. In bilateral programming, focus on implementing education-related interventions in the countries where education is already part of the Country Programme, as the number of countries has just recently expanded. Strengthen links between country-level multi-bilateral assistance and multilateral assistance at the global level.



Recommendation 8: In addition to bilateral cooperation, prioritise cooperation with multi-lateral organisations in the education sector, including with the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, GPE and ECW, and create value-adding linkages between the bilateral and multilateral programming.

This recommendation is informed by Conclusion 6.

It is addressed to the MFA's leadership as well as the leadership of MFA's Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments as well as to the advisers for development policy in the Department for Development Policy.

Time period: longer-term (8-year period).

This evaluation concluded that multilateral cooperation is one of the most effective instruments for Finland's EDC. In addition, the EU, World Bank, UNICEF, and GPE are each important for Finland's EDC for specific reasons, discussed in Conclusion 6 and related findings sub-chapter 5.3.2. Moreover, the global funds, GPE and ECW, are both supporting most of Finland's partner countries. Finland could benefit from the combination of funding both the global funds and being present at the country level. This would entail sufficient human resourcing both at the Embassies and GPE and ECW units concerned, as well as introducing a systemic effort to create shared added value between the bilateral and multilateral programming. The MFA could consider implementing a pilot intervention to deepen the collaboration towards shared objectives through its bilateral and multilateral cooperation in one of its partner countries.

Recommendation 9: Prioritise supporting basic and primary education, with an immediate focus on rights-based inclusive access, including in multi-crisis settings. Limit the short-term engagement in the VET sub-sector to already-initiated interventions while planning for substantive development of Finland's VET sub-sector in the longer term. Conduct a follow-up review of VET in education sector development cooperation.

This Recommendation is informed by Conclusion 2 and 7.

It is addressed to the leadership of MFA's Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments as well as to the advisers for development policy in the Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments and relevant Country Teams.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period) and **longer-term** (8-year period).

This recommendation is to build on Finland's strengths and the level of results achieved/not achieved in the education sub-sectors. Given the current budget constraints and possible funding cuts affecting development cooperation in general, Finland's EDC focus should remain on the thematic areas where the effectiveness was high and the results good, i.e., in the thematic area of rights-based inclusive basic and primary education. Support in these areas should be accompanied by policy influencing, which takes account of country-specific contextual constraints. In the medium-/longer term, in response to the continuing challenge of education quality, we recommend measures for this in Recommendation 11.

In the short term, engagement in the VET sub-sector may be put on hold, except for interventions that are already underway, such as the TEI in VET and Country Programme support for VET in Kenya. This said, to strengthen Finland's VET profile in the medium-/longer term, MFA and its



partners should explore such measures as creating synergies between secondary education level VET schools, Finnish Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences, and private companies in relevant country-specific sectors (e.g., green tourism in Nepal). As a clear assessment of the results of VET programming is lacking, it would be advisable to carry out the follow-up review of VET in education development cooperation as recommended in the Stepping Up Report.

Recommendation 10: In the medium to long term, devise innovative strategies including related to EdTech to enhance education quality, focusing on the transformation of teaching methods, schools, and education systems in partner countries.

This Recommendation is informed by Conclusions 5 and 7.

It is addressed to the leadership of MFA's Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments as well as to the advisers for development policy in the Department for Development Policy and Regional Departments and relevant Country Teams.

Time period: **medium to long term** (8-year period).

This recommendation is to respond to the need to address the quality of education and, at the same time, enhance Finland's credibility as an education sector actor. Finland's reputation as a leading actor in the area of gender- and disability-inclusive education is well established. New and innovative measures – transforming, not tweaking – are required to rise to the challenge of persistently poor learning outcomes in Finland's partner countries. One such course of action is for MFA, with support from FinCEED, to develop a coherent strategy for multi-actor approaches aimed at improving education quality.

The strategy should be grounded in a clear concept of multi-actor approaches, accompanied by guidance on how to promote and build partnerships between state and non-state actors. The points of convergence of public and private sector interests and common operating methods for mutually beneficial cooperation should be clearly mapped.

An **indicative conceptualisation** has the following features.

Who: Country-specific 'constellations' of non-state actors (including Finnish and local CSOs, HEIs and private companies in Finland and in target countries), led by and answerable to the state education institutions in Finland's partner countries who are responsible for sector reform programmes.

Why: A clear rationale for a multi-actor approach should be 'to build the resilience of education systems to improve the quality of teaching, learning and education management'.

How: a single set of expected results in transforming teaching, transforming schools, and transforming education systems and clear roles for Finnish experts.

- Finnish CSOs may take the lead in identifying local partners and facilitating partnerships with non-state actors at the country level.
- Finnish higher education institutions may play a key role in contextualising country-specific multi-actor approaches by documenting the political economy of multi-actor approaches in target countries and tracking contextual change.



- Private companies may also play a role, investing in the export of Finnish expertise in niche areas (e.g., climate-resilient school infrastructure and facilities) in partner countries that are low risk.
- Working closely with FinCEED, Finland's embassies may be responsible for coordinating, leveraging, and following up on access to Finnish expertise, as well as facilitating dialogue processes for a two-way exchange between decision-makers in partner countries and Finnish policy experts.

We recommend designing and investing in a multi-actor program of EdTech solutions as a practical way forward. Finland's unique added value in the future EDC lies in EdTech. Finnish expertise can potentially assist in addressing the global education crisis if, and only if, MFA and its partners take a phased approach, building an evidence base for digital solutions before investing in the domain at scale.

EdTech can potentially strengthen Finland's response to the education crisis, specifically in the domain of teacher education and with the involvement of local expertise to help bridge the digital divide. Several conditions are required for this potential to be realised. First, the involvement of local expertise to help bridge the digital divide. Second, digital solutions should strengthen the domain of teacher education rather than being limited to the development of e-learning apps. Lastly, and most importantly, an evidence base for the contribution of Finnish EdTech in terms of progress towards SDG 4 must be established.

Despite the global evidence base of EdTech's role in supporting progress towards SDG 4 remaining limited, the evaluation stakeholders found to be a strength and an area where Finland can contribute. Multi-actor collaboration in the EdTech domain must be tested to verify and demonstrate the value addition of digital solutions in fragile country contexts. The programme of EdTech solutions could be planned across selected least-developed and middle-income countries. The justification for a programme should be safeguarding digital learning solutions as a public good. Taking forward the 'who and how' of the multi-actor approach strategy outlined above, the program should exemplify the 'what' of such a strategy.

Digital solutions could be planned in any of the following areas:

- Solutions to improve the quality of teaching and learning (e.g., disability-inclusive teaching and learning; school-based continuous assessment; teacher deployment, performance management and career development; parental involvement in their children's learning);
- Systemic solutions to take forward sector reforms in the areas of the teacher 'life cycle' (from recruitment to retention through to retirement); education management information system and use of data in decision-making, particularly financial planning; more and better community engagement in school-based management to address the challenge of out-of-school children;
- Investing in collaborative research with relevant UN partners (e.g., UNESCO and UNICEF) in innovative ways (e.g., EdTech) of addressing education in fragile contexts, including education in emergencies, to rethink strategies for 'education in emergencies' in protracted crisis countries such as Palestine and Sudan.



Recommendation 11: Address staff shortages by building skills and capacities through continuous learning, buying or borrowing additional skills from other ministries, and outsourcing to free up staff for other tasks. The embassy-based education advisers (erityisasiantuntija) should be retained at the country level, and more should be invested in locally recruited staff.

This Recommendation is informed by Conclusions 6 and 8.

It is addressed to the MFA for the leadership of the process. The recommendation also proposes action by MEC, Education Finland, and FinCEED, for close collaboration with the MFA and the members of the Coordination Group for being consulted and participating.

Time period: **short-term** (current government 4-year period) and **longer-term** (8-year period).

This recommendation is based on mitigating the reverse effects that the already limited staff resources might cause for education sector development cooperation. As a result, especially measures which require coordination and collaboration at different levels might be deprioritised.

MFA should revisit the specific recommendations made in the ‘Stepping Up’ report in 2018 (‘Building the expert pool’). To be creative with limited human resources in the short-/medium-term, MFA and its partners should consider the following options.

- Buy or borrow additional skills to make the best use of core staff, seeking out opportunities to crowd-in expertise and skills from across their ministries and institutions (for this, an approach to explore as a possible example would be, e.g., Norway’s Knowledge Bank).
- Outsource to contractors to provide experts when needed (free up staff for other tasks); this should be accompanied by learning objectives and structured feedback to ensure that knowledge is retained in-house.
- Opportunities for contracting partners to outsource staff to sit in the MFA (or MEC/ EDUFI) could be explored.
- Invest in-country presence, particularly in fragile contexts: senior roles can be created for locally recruited staff, providing institutional memory, building relationships and networks, and contributing to a better understanding of country priorities and needs.



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Sources and references used for the Country Case Studies are detailed in Volume 2 of this Report.



The Evaluation Team

The evaluation has been conducted by an independent evaluation team consisting of five experts with both education sector and specific methodological expertise required for the implementation of the evaluation, all of whom have significant experience in conducting evaluations at different levels. Key roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- Dr Criana Connal, Team Leader: Overall team lead and management, methodology design, drafting of main outputs, global education context analysis, Ethiopia and Palestine case study lead, leading the data collection and analysis of MFA Departments and all multilateral organisations.
- Pirkko Poutiainen, Deputy Team Leader: Joined the team at the start of the implementation phase, bringing in expertise in Finland's development policy and development cooperation, MFA's institutional structure, providing input and support in data analysis including formulation of findings, conclusions and recommendations, provision of management, coordination and quality assurance support.
- Dr Eila Heikkilä, Senior Evaluator: Nepal case study lead, responsible for data collection and analysis of the VET, HEI ICI, Education export, PSIs and CSOs, contributing to the areas of Global/Finland's Education development policy and cooperation and multilateral cooperation instruments.
- Dr Susanne Väth, Senior Evaluator: Methodological expert responsible for the overall design and delivery of the Delphi process, providing specialist expertise in conducting quantitative (financial) analysis related to the areas of MFA and MEC departments.
- Mervi Kuvaja, Emerging Evaluator and Project Manager: Supporting data collection and analysis related to VET, HEI ICI, EdTech and CSOs, leading thematic, desk-based Mozambique and Ukraine mini case studies. Responsibilities related to project management are separate from the evaluation core teamwork.



Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Right to Education, Right to Learn – Evaluation of Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation in the Education Sector

1. Purpose

To inform the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland on how the various development policy and cooperation actors have succeeded in stepping up Finland's global efforts in the education sector. Furthermore, the purpose of this evaluation is to provide information for the further development of Finland's efforts for maximizing their relevance, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in the future.

2. Background and Rationale

In 2015, at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, Member States formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda contains 17 goals including a new global education goal (SDG 4): “to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO).

The human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a basis for Finland's development policy and cooperation as set out in the 2015 Guidance Note. Education falls under the economic, social and cultural rights. Similarly, results based management (RBM) is applied in all interventions funded by Finland, in line with the 2015 Guidance Note.

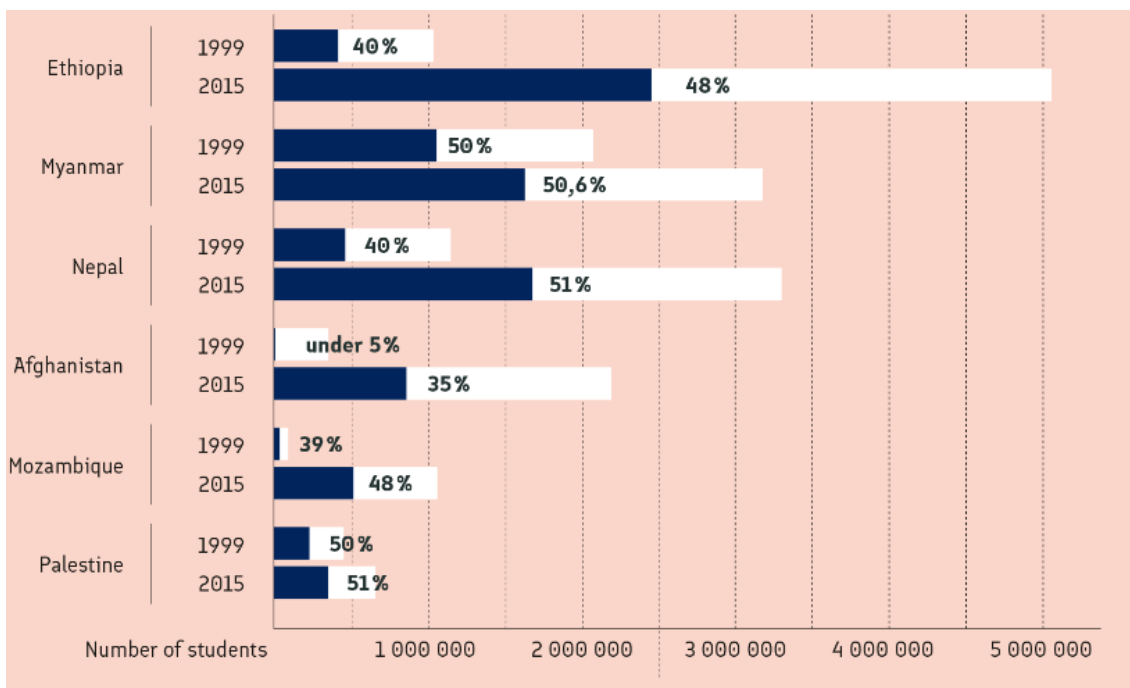
The 2016 Development Policy sets out four policy priority areas. Education was included under policy priority area III: “Societies have become more democratic and better-functioning”. It states that the sector will receive support because a well-educated population is vital for progress in all other development goals. This applies to both basic and higher level education. Furthermore, opportunities to increase support also to vocational training were to be explored as it is seen as the key to the inclusion of young people and to economic development.

The 2018 Finland's development policy results report to the Parliament presents some of the education sector achievements between 2015-2018. In the field of inclusive education in Ethiopia, for example, Finland has been ensuring that children with disabilities have the same right to education as other children. In Ethiopia, the inclusive education reform means changes in the curriculum of more than 30,000 schools. In attendance in secondary school in Finland's partner countries, the report shows the positive trends. The next report is in its finalization stages and is due at the end of 2022.



In 2018, the MFA commissioned a review of the education sector. It yielded recommendations, the key one being the title: *Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education*. The recommendations were:

- The Ministry to establish a multi-stakeholder Steering Group,
- Education quality and learning to be set up as the overarching theme and five sub-themes,
- Finland to participate in key multilateral education forums,
- Finland to prioritize education in its EU engagement in development cooperation
- Continue and intensify the work on education sector programs in long-term partner countries by engaging more systematically with Finnish institutions
- The Ministry to explore cost-efficient ways of engaging interested low and lower middle-income partner countries in a dialogue with relevant Finnish education policy-makers, officials and experts on key aspects of coherent education systems and their reform;
- The Ministry to find ways to encourage Finnish universities to engage in education globally
- The Ministry to make Teachers without Borders 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,
- Level of aid financing be increased to 100 million euros per year in the next four years. (MFA 2018)





Since the report was published, a multi-stakeholder task force was established together by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) for the period of 25.10.2018-15.2.2019, to further discuss and re-define action to be taken by the different actors. In the report that resulted (*Koulutus kehitysyhteistyön ja politiikan kärkitavoitteeksi. Toimenpidesuosituksia*), the following main actions were proposed:

- Setting education as a clear policy priority in development policy and cooperation, with increased allocations.
- Setting up a steering committee for strengthening the collaboration, implementation and monitoring that consists of different ministries and other actors in the education sector.
- Increasing effectiveness by additional strategic input towards the most prominent international actors.
- Strengthening influencing activities within the EU.
- Strengthening the capacities of Finnish education sector experts in multi-actor collaboration
- Strengthening the status of education sector research and collaboration with partner countries.
- Strengthening the collaboration between different government sectors.
- Developing funding instruments that incentivize multi-actor collaboration and new partnerships.
- Utilizing web-based learning environments and other Finnish innovations in the education sector open-mindedly and adapting to different operational contexts.
- Strengthening Finland's profile in developing technical and vocational training.
- Enhancing data and statistics, monitoring and evaluation of education sector development cooperation.

Following this, in 2020, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) established a permanent coordination group (*"koulutusala kehitysmassissa - koordinaatioryhmä"*) with the mandate to deepen the understanding, based on the task force's report on concrete actions strengthening Finland's contribution in education sector development cooperation and broader engagement of Finnish education actors in developing countries: The coordination group is expected to strengthen networking and collaboration among Finnish education sector actors. The specific tasks set for this coordination group are to:

- Build and strengthen the network of Finnish education actors, strengthen strategic collaboration and influence in Finland's international development cooperation and education export efforts.
- The group for this purpose maintains a virtual working space (Howspace) for discussion and sharing information
- Twice a year organize a broader stakeholder meeting to advance networking and information sharing



- Work on the recommendations of the task force and discuss other current issues.
- Develop a national long-term roadmap for education sector cooperation with developing countries.

The group, co-chaired by MFA and MEC has met regularly and it has compiled a road map that was finalized in May 2022.

The 2019 government programme aims at a globally influential Finland. In the government programme education, peaceful and democratic societies were mentioned as development policy priorities. The programme identifies education as one of the areas for cooperation between the EU and Africa. Furthermore, one of the objectives for Finland is to provide solutions to global development challenges relying on its value-centric image. As part of Prime Minister Marin's government programme, the MFA was allocated a total of 97 MEUR for the purpose of one-off investments for the future under the 3.2 strategic objective of a globally influential Finland.

In 2020, the MFA published the Theories of Change for the different development policy priority areas. Education was included under priority number three: Education, peaceful and democratic societies replacing the former: Societies have become more democratic and better-functioning – formulation from the 2016 development policy..

The 2021 Report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms sets out Finland's long-term development policy objectives with the intention to agree on policy priorities that would be continued across parliamentary terms. The report confirms education as one of the separate policy priorities in Finland's development policy, now stand alone from the previous area of peaceful and democratic societies. The report discusses factors linked with education and the reinforcing positive effects that education has on other development results. It states that one of the key prerequisites for development is access for all to high-quality education, emphasizing the quality aspect. The report draws on the Nordic experience in the education sector and Finland's strengths. It highlights the various partnerships that include educational and research institutions as well as multi-actor partnerships. On education under the development policy priorities the report states:

As the Finnish education system is highly regarded globally, Finland has the opportunity and responsibility to participate in solving the global learning crisis over the long term. Finland's development policy in the education sector aims to increase access to high-quality basic education as well as upper secondary education and vocational education and training, taking particularly into account girls and vulnerable children and young people. Support provided by Finland helps to strengthen both the inclusiveness of education systems and the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. Finland also has a great deal of expertise in the development of teacher education, school meals and school health care. The role of digital learning as a driver for development is significant and emphasised particularly in difficult conditions such as crisis and pandemic situations.

The COVID-19 pandemic that started in late 2019 has reversed progress in the global education goals by two decades. The crisis has dropped many children out of school and deteriorated the quality of education. Finnish development cooperation in the education sector tackles the global learning crisis by promoting the quality of education (MFA news item, 2021). Particular attention is paid to girls and to children and youth in the most vulnerable position. The pandemic has deepened a crisis in education, with severe disruptions in education systems worldwide. An estimated 147 million children missed more than half of their in-person instruction over the past two years. As a result, this generation of children could lose a combined total of \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings



(in current value). Governments need to implement ambitious programmes to ensure that all children return to school, recover their learning losses, and have their psychosocial needs met (SDG Report, 2022).

Due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many children suffer from deficient nutrition because they have missed out on school meals. In his role as the World Food Programme (WFP) School Meals champion in 2021, Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Ville Skinnari promotes global awareness and funding of school meals (MFA news item, 2021).

To operationalise the 2021 Report on Development Policy Across Parliamentary Terms steps have been taken to steer Finland's development cooperation with education as a priority on its own. In social media communications and in international meetings already for some time, in practice education has been highlighted as a key policy priority. A theory of change for the education priority area has been developed, and information on the new priority area is available on MFAs website. Next steps include amending statistical and management information systems (AHA-KYT and open aid) to be able to disaggregate information by this priority area as well as the respective aggregate indicators.

With the parliamentary elections approaching in 2022, and the subsequent government programme in the pipeline, it is necessary to take stock of the developments and achievements that have taken place.

It is against this background that this strategic evaluation is commissioned.

3. Description of the Evaluand

Since 2016, Finland's development policy objective has been to improve access to quality primary and secondary education especially for girls and for those in the most vulnerable position. Finland works to improve the inclusiveness of education systems and the teaching and learning processes by supporting education in learners' mother tongues, participation of persons with disabilities in education, and education policies that promote gender equality and non-discrimination. Efforts are also made to improve teaching and learning practices and educational environments, and enhance institutional capacity to improve learning outcomes. Finland's development cooperation supports access to vocational education and training for women and girls with disabilities. Finland promotes the education goals especially by collaborating with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, GPE, ECW, UNESCO, UNICEF and the European Union. Finland's country programmes (2016-2020) in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Myanmar, Palestine and Ukraine included major result areas focused on education. The country programmes (2021-2024) in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ukraine, Nepal, Palestine, Somalia and Kenya all include education as a main result area or a focus. In addition, education is supported through the regional programmes in support of the Syrian crisis and Central Asia (Uzbekistan). Although country programmes are not being implemented in Afghanistan and Myanmar due to political developments, their temporary operational plans include support to education in their focus. In addition, Finnish non-governmental organisations are active in the education sector, both those receiving core funding (FCA, FIDA, Finnish Refugee Council, Felm) as well as organisations receiving funding for specific projects.

Since 2020, Finland has also systematically supported the school meals agenda through WFP and Minister Skinnari is co-leading the Global School Meals Coalition, established in 2021 at the food systems summit.



In 2020, a decision was made by the parliament to appropriate 29 MEUR additional funding from the 2021 government budget for stepping up Finland's global role in education as part of the budgetary negotiations (*kertaluontoiset tulevaisuusinvestoinnit*). This included a decision to fund the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) with 25 MEUR for its current strategy period 2021-2025 and the establishment of a centre for expertise for education and development. The centre, known as FINCEED was set up in late 2021 and has started its operations.

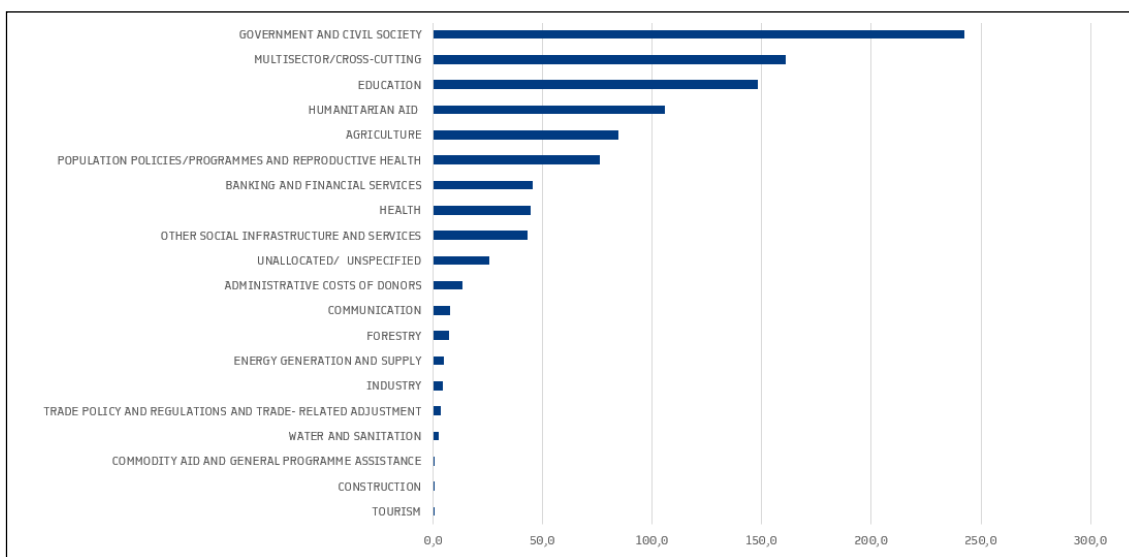
Finland has supported the education sector in responding to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, Finland pledged altogether EUR 8 million in additional contributions to Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and Global Partnership for Education (GPE), two global funds organising remote teaching and securing safe reopening of schools.

In 2020, additional contributions were granted, for example, to Nepal's education sector for the implementation of an adaptation plan to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. In the occupied Palestinian Territory, Finland's assistance was redirected to the provision of hygiene supplies in order to ensure that final exams in schools could be held in a safe and healthy manner. (MFA news item, 2021.)

In terms of the Ministry's organization, many departments and units ranging from the regional to the political departments implement ODA funded interventions. The Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20) under the Department for Development Policy (KEO) is responsible for preparation and application of sectoral and thematic policies and strategies, and participation in such international cooperation as does not fall under the competence of other units of the Ministry. The unit also provides expert services and advice to departments and units in charge of development cooperation issues. It is responsible for the improvement of the regulations, instructions, methods and administration of development cooperation related to sectoral policies, and monitors of the quality of development cooperation and upgrades development cooperation instruments among others.

In the 2022 Results Day on development cooperation, it was noted that in 2021 the largest cooperation instruments that have interventions with education as their primary objective were civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral cooperation in that order. In addition, development policy finance investments was another key channel.

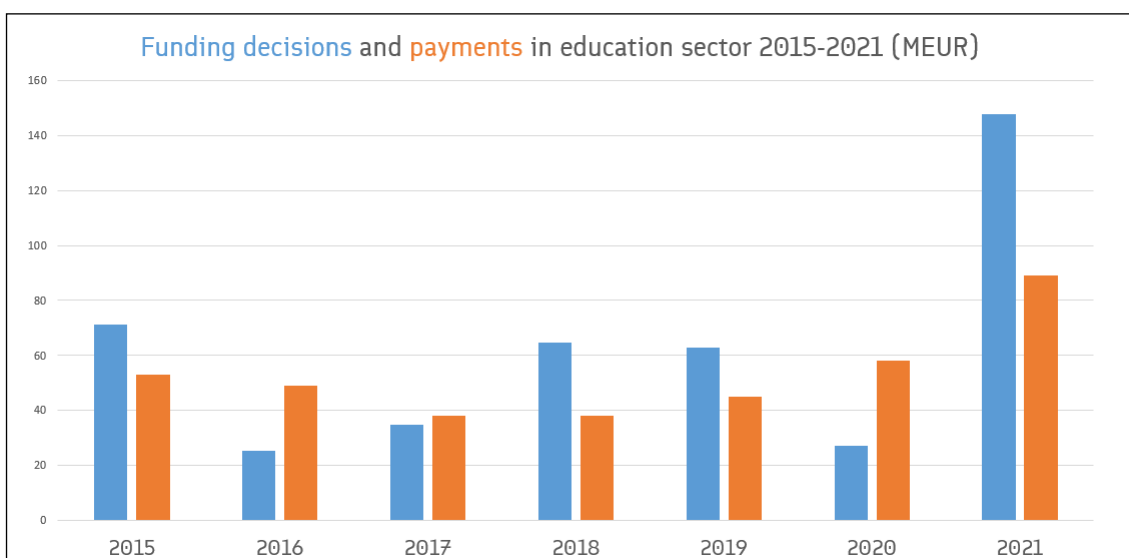
In 2021, education was the third largest sector covered by funding decisions.



Source: Results Day 2022, MFA Statistics team

According to the latest statistics, the share of education sector in Finland's ODA is 7,3% and of actual development cooperation 12,5% (but excluding core funding).

The trends in funding decisions have varied across years due to the varying volumes of different interventions. The payments have witnessed a growth between 2018-2021. Of the 2021 funding decisions, 59 MEUR was allocated to country or regional cooperation, 56 MEUR to CSO programme support and 25 MEUR to Global Partnership for Education.



Source: Results Day 2022, MFA Education sector team

Of the 37 interventions in the education sector that had their funding decision made in 2021, one was marked as a disability project, and two others had a disability component in them, and 10 were categorized as taking accessibility into account.



The 2022 ToC for the policy priority area on education identifies SDG 4 “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*” as the impact statement. Three outcomes have been identified: one on teachers and schools being better placed to improve learning and learning outcomes; one on the rights of girls, children with disabilities and persons in vulnerable situations to quality and inclusive education being better realized; and one on the youth having increasingly relevant prerequisites, capabilities and life skills for work. In addition, one outcome on policy influencing aims at multi- and bilateral partners have strengthened their commitment to quality and inclusive education.⁷³

An estimated number of interventions in the education sector based on funding decisions are: 27 (2019), 36 (2020) and 37 (2021). However, the numbers need to be confirmed later. These do not take into account on-going interventions that have started earlier.

Within the Ministry, the number of staff that are responsible for duties specifically in the education sector is limited. The ambassador for education is situated in the Team Finland Export Promotion Unit (KPO-50) under the Department for International Trade. Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20) in the Department for Development Policy houses the education sector thematic advisor. A new desk officer has also started in the Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50). The Unit for UN and General Global Affairs (POL-50) under the Political Department has witnessed a staff reduction of a UNESCO desk officer. The regional departments cover a multitude of development issues relevant to their region and the country strategies and programmes. Almost all of the Finnish embassies in Finland’s long-term partner countries have staff with dedicated education advisory roles although they also carry out other duties.

Previous evaluations

Evaluation of the Finnish Development Policy Influencing in the European Union (2022) analyzed influencing activities by the Ministry towards the EU and its institutions. One of the thematic areas of analysis was influencing on education. With the EU increasing its commitment to GPE, Finland has largely met its main objective under education, which is to strengthen the EU’s global role in education development policy.

The evaluation found among others that Finland has significantly stepped up its influencing activities with the EU on the education sector to respond to Commissioner Urpilainen’s personal commitment to increase the share of education in EU aid from 7% to 10%. This was reflected in the fact that the EU recently made an announcement to increase its contribution to the Global Partnership for Education, in line with one of the recommendations that Finland made to the Commission. Under the NDICI-GE, the annual action plan for Sub-Saharan Africa includes an education component for the first time in 2022. With Team Europe, the EU and EU MS, including Finland, have begun to strengthen their coordination on education, at country, regional and global level, on the back of the Council Conclusion on Strengthening Team Europe’s commitment to Human Development (June 2021). Team Europe Initiatives should also generate more funding on education in Africa.

The EU and MS in case study countries acknowledge Finland’s leading role in education, particularly in addressing teacher capacity and equal access to education (Nepal), and in primary and

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secondary education (Ukraine). In Ukraine, the EU has provided additional funding to a Finland-led education project.

Catalysing Change – Finland’s Humanitarian Assistance 2016–2022 (2022) noted increasing volume of protracted crises globally may result in increasing allocations of humanitarian assistance globally directed through national or, more commonly, joint national and multilateral assistance channels, such as for education in emergencies initiatives.

All stakeholders interviewed considered that the Finnish priorities, including the focus on education, were highly relevant to support humanitarian needs in the context. Positive results were found in improved access to education in Bangladesh, South Sudan and Syria case countries.

The evaluation found, among others, that the distinctions between ‘needs based’ and ‘rights based’ assistance are not always clear. The practical application of these rules in a protracted crisis is highly complex operationally, particularly where ‘needs’ and ‘rights’ may be conflated. An education for emergencies programme, for example, or a social protection programme which offers immediate livelihood support to those who cannot feed themselves, may require engagement with state systems.

Adapting to Change: Country Strategy Approach in Fragile Contexts (2020) evaluated country programmes in fragile contexts. As part of the development cooperation activities, it noted Finland’s efforts in this sector, among others in Myanmar and the Occupied Territory of Palestine.

Evaluation on Development Cooperation carried out by the Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including the Wider Europe Initiative (WEI) (2021) looked at, inter alia, the case of Ukraine. It found that achievements have been made in the modernization agenda of basic education and the development of: new curricula for grades 1-3; professional teacher standards; teacher standards for teaching Ukrainian SL/L2 in primary education; new teacher professional development system based on European experience. Finland has also supported the VET reform as well as access school by minority language groups.

In the case of Ukraine, the question of ownership was found paramount because of the linkage of project activities to reform agendas. Ownership by national stakeholders was found strong and is used as the basis for generally effective cooperation with Finland and other donors. It was noted that the selection of Ukraine’s education sector support was demand-driven and re-requested directly from Finland’s Ministry for Education by Ukraine.

Evaluations on Finland’s development policy influencing activities in multilateral organization (2020) and in the EU (2022) both included issues related to education sector, including key influencing effects.

An evaluation of inclusive education in Finland’s development cooperation in 2004–2013, published in 2015 found that Finland’s support has had a significant impact on the changes that have taken place in the partner countries’ legislation and on that attitudes towards inclusive education have become more positive. However, the changes have not influenced the educational outcomes of children with special needs.

Education sector is also incorporated in many other evaluations. A desk review of the evaluation results on education sector will be done as part of the inception phase, along with other relevant documents.



Ongoing reviews and studies

A developmental mid-term evaluation is underway by FinCEED, and the final report is due out in December 2022. The evaluation will examine, among others, the results achieved by the organisation during 2021-2022, the strengths, weaknesses and relevance of its operational modalities and its role, as well as areas for further development in order to maximize effectiveness and impact.

A study is being finalized and published on the presence and influence of Finnish education sector expertise in international organizations addressing the global learning crisis. The study examines the extent to which Finnish education sector experts and actors have been positioned in strategic multilateral vacancies regarding education development. It also analyses the influence and impact of their expertise in these organisations. The results will be used, among others in developing the future work of FinCEED. This evaluation will draw on the results of this study.

Another study on the value of education sector exports has been published at the time of finalisation of these ToR (see references).

The Association of Development of education in Africa (ADEA) has an ongoing situational analysis of the use of ICT in education and remote learning at the time of finalizing these ToR.

In 2019, a review of Stepping up Finland's support to education in Mozambique was carried out.

The MFA is conducting small-scale assessments of the various flagship activities, the so-called one-off investments into the future as identified by PM Marin's government programme. The assessments take place during the autumn 2022 and inform the upcoming government negotiations.

This evaluation is expected to utilize the past and ongoing evaluations and other assessment materials in order to minimize any duplication.

Some current and timely issues

The recent years have witnessed the establishment of new actors and avenues. The Finnish Centre of expertise in Education and Development (FinCEED) was established in late 2021. Working under the Finnish National Agency for Education and funded by the MFA, it strengthens the role of Finland in providing solutions for the global learning crisis. It also enhances Finnish capacity in education and development cooperation. The United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF will establish two innovation hubs in Finland. One of them, the Global Learning Innovation Hub, will promote teaching and learning especially in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education through digital solutions. Team Europe and Global Gateway are some of the most recent avenues for education sector collaboration as well.

The operating environment has become more and more challenging. In the past, work on education sector has been long-term. However, the increasing number of conflicts and disasters has affected the sector in increasing interventions aimed at education in emergencies and crises. There has been attempts to strengthen the nexus approach. However resolving the competing demands between long-term development of education systems and immediate access to education services has become a balancing act. With many competing funding needs, there is a risk of education becoming deprioritized.



Furthermore, there is a potential clash between focusing on persons in the most vulnerable situations and advancing digital technologies and innovation, with the poorest of the poor seldom having (equitable) access to digital avenues. Similarly, education export might not be suitable in all of the least developed countries. Finland does not have a position on whether support to private schools is acceptable or not, unlike for instance the IFC which no longer supports K-12 private schools in its loan portfolio.

The intension is to involve different Finnish actors but do all of them have the capacity and how could that be strengthened? Similarly, the MFA's human resources for specialized staff on development cooperation have gone down drastically. The expectations and the portfolio have expanded, yet human resources may not have grown at the same rate. What level of resources, both human and financial, would be adequate in order for Finland to seem a credible international actor in this sector? In the face of scarce resources, how could Finland focus and adjust its approach to be prioritized for greater effects?

Scope

The main focus of this evaluation is to examine activities that are funded through Finland's ODA and Finland's policy influencing related to education in partner countries (e.g. through country programmes) and organisations it supports (WB, ADB, UNESCO, UNICEF, GPE, ECW, EU) and that directly through their implementation feed into the development policy priority area of education sector development in partner countries, regionally and globally. However, linkages and coordination with other relevant actors will be looked at to a limited extent in order to respond to questions on relevance, coherence and coordination, and the implications of the multi-actor approach on the overall effectiveness of ODA-funded interventions.

The period under evaluation is 2019-2022. Due to the limited timeframe, the extent of evaluating long-term results on, for example, in learning outcomes may be limited. The evaluation will nevertheless seek to identify any broader societal effects and med-term outcomes to the extent possible, as well as Finland's contribution in them.

The evaluation will not include (not exhaustive):

- Interventions on development communication and global education
- Funds for Local Cooperation (PYM)
- Development research and other collaboration with higher education institutions other than the ones directly relevant to implementing the development policy priority area of education sector development (e.g. UNU WIDER excluded; projects with the sector codes educational research; and advanced technical and managerial training excluded).

The evaluation will include the following cooperation instruments:

- Country Programmes (including sector support, multi-bi projects, bi projects)
- Multilateral support (including core funding and specific support to WB, UNICEF, ADB, multilateral thematic funding (UNESCO Cap Ed, WB FLC), GPE, ECW, EU, as well as development policy influencing and the WFP collaboration on school meals)



- Support to civil society (programme and project-based instruments, INGO support)
- Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI)
- HEI-ICI: Higher Education Institutions- Institutional Cooperation Instrument
- Private sector instruments and development policy investments (e.g. Finnpartnership, Finnfund)
- Humanitarian funding where relevant (e.g. Education Cannot Wait)
- The evaluation will look at all levels ranging from country level to global level interventions and policy influencing when emerging from the evidence.

The evaluation will not look at interventions on global education and development communications. Funds for Local Cooperation are covered not as a whole (i.e. as a cooperation instrument) but only if they appear in the selected countries for country cases and relate to the education sector.

Some prospective country cases could entail for instance Nepal, Ethiopia, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Mozambique and Ukraine. However, the final selection of country cases will be made during the inception phase.

The scope will be further specified during the inception phase.

4. Objectives and evaluation questions

- Analyse the relevance, coherence and efficiency of the response to the global learning crisis and the quality of education by the various development cooperation actors involved, including education export and the private sector.
- Analyse the effectiveness and results achieved in the area of development cooperation in stepping up Finland's global role in education sector development in developing countries in line with its development policy objectives, and the value of the multi-actor approach therein.
- Explore and document alternative future approaches for 2023-2030 in which Finland's global role and response to the learning crisis and quality education could be the most relevant, coherent, efficient and effective.
- Provide well-justified and evidence-based recommendations on how the MFA together with relevant stakeholders could further improve their actions for a more relevant, coherent, efficient and effective response, including suggestions and options for practical measures to be taken by the different actors and through the different cooperation instruments.



Preliminary evaluation questions are:

Summative:

RESPONSE - EQ1: To what extent has the response to recommendations of the 2018 report⁷⁴, and follow-up measures agreed thereof, been appropriate for stepping up Finland's global role in responding to the learning crisis and improving the quality of education?

- 1.1 What follow-up activities have been implemented as a response to the recommendations to date and by which actor(s)?
- 1.2 How relevant have they been to responding to the learning crisis and improving the quality of education, and for whom and where?
- 1.3 To what extent have the measures matched partner expectations and their views of Finland's areas of added value?
- 1.4 How coherent have the various measures been by the different actors such as the multi-actor coordination group and the MFA?
- 1.5 To what extent has resourcing been adequate in relation to commitment to education financing?
- 1.6 How efficiently have the follow-up measures been implemented since 2019?
- 1.7 How have the Finnish development policy cross-cutting objectives been taken into account in the measures (if at all)?

RESULTS - EQ2: What have been the relative and overall effectiveness of the various measures taken by the different actors in development cooperation? Analyse overall and by cooperation instrument/channel.

- 1.1 What results have been achieved, if any, at different levels during 2019-2022? For whom and where? Disaggregate particularly on, (areas of interest based on the MFA ToC):
 - Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes.
 - The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions in better realized.
 - Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life.
 - Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education.
- 2.2 What have been the cumulative, synergistic effects, if any, of a fit for purpose multi-actor approach?

74 Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education (2018): <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/310306>



Formative:

FUTURE - EQ3: In the next 8 years, what kind of a multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups would yield the best results (explore alternative future scenarios and synergies entailed), in order to:

1. Maintain and strengthen Finland's role in the specific areas of expertise and added value unique to Finland?
2. Allow the response to the global learning crisis and quality education to stay relevant to different contextual settings?
3. Establish a size and set-up that is realistic for sustained level of development cooperation funding yet securing Finland as a credible actor in resolving the global learning crisis?

The evaluation is expected to produce evidence-informed recommendations based on past performance. The recommendations are expected to state how Finland and the MFA should develop the multi-actor coordination further. The recommendations will be addressed to the MFA. However, any suggested implications that are addressed to other actors will be also noted.

The evaluation is further expected to present alternative future pathways in which Finland and the MFA could respond better to the global learning crisis and the quality of education in the changing operational context and uncertainties in the coming years.

The foreseen **evaluands** for the EQs are:

EQ1: The activities that have taken place in response to the 2018 report by both development cooperation, **ODA-funded and other actors** relevant to the implementation, including private sector.

EQ2: The results produced by **ODA-funded actors only**, informed by the list of 2019-2021 funding decisions on interventions by the MFA. Overall results and by instruments. These include the various MFA cooperation instruments and channels mentioned above, including private sector. Country case studies further deepen the understanding on results as one stream of evidence.

EQ3: For **ODA-funded actors** and in the contexts of **ODA eligible countries and contexts**, as part of the broader coordination set up.

The estimated relative weight and importance of the different EQs are: EQ1 and EQ2 (70%), EQ3 (30%) in substantive terms.

Tertiary education is included to the extent it is incorporated in the selected cooperation instruments and modalities. The main bulk of the analysis is anticipated to fall on primary and secondary education levels.

The results of this evaluation will be used by the Ministry for gaining an oversight of the situation at the beginning of the new policy priority ToC being adopted as well as for informing the next government programme after the Parliamentary elections in 2023. The evaluation will also be used by the various actors involved, including the education sector coordination group, when planning their work for the future. The Development Policy Committee may furthermore utilize the evaluation results in their work.

The evaluation will begin in 2022 and be published in 2023.



6. Approach and Methodology

The focus of this evaluation is strategic, with an aim to establish a holistic understanding of the developments and achievements. The focus will not that much be on individual interventions, rather the evaluation team is expected to aggregate and consolidate results against broader areas of achievement and evaluation questions. Data and information from interventions will be used to inform this process.

The evaluation is to use a mixed methods approach. The methodology will entail a quantitative analysis on existing statistical and other information. Furthermore, a partner survey may be relevant to this assignment. Qualitative methods may include e.g. KII, focus group discussions and/or workshops. The evaluation is expected to use both primary and secondary sources of information, and ensure sound triangulation. Furthermore, the evaluation is expected to take into account the human rights based approach to development cooperation and evaluation to the extent possible.

Some of the key documents include the road map for stepping up Finland's response, minutes from the coordination meetings, MFA annual synthesis reports, project and programme plans, annual and evaluation reports from interventions.

Although the newly established objectives for education sector development cooperation in the Theories of Change are not used for the purpose of evaluating success against them, it is important that findings that emerge are further categorized in a way that allows reporting on the various elements under the new ToC. In other words, the results of this evaluation will also on their part serve as the baseline from the broader situational point of view, for future evaluations.

Nevertheless, this evaluation is likely to be theory-based. A specific theory of change will likely be established for the purpose of this evaluation. It is likely to draw on the list of 2019-2021 funding decisions and interventions therein, the previous and current ToCs for the development policy priority areas (particularly for EQ2 on results). Furthermore, the inputs and activities level will be informed by various funding streams and the action taken in response to the 2018 recommendations (particularly for EQ1).

It should be noted that the action taken in response to the 2018 report constitute only part of the overall set of activities taken by the various actors, and only partially constitute the results for EQ2. It will not be possible to evaluate the other standalone activities by the various actors beyond the response to the 2018 report, nor the entirety of all activities. The focus of EQ2 is likely to be at broad output areas, immediate outcomes, mid-term outcomes and where possible, long-term outcomes.

A key event is taking place in Helsinki in the beginning of November where EVA-11 evaluation manager and teams leader is expected to take part. The two-day event brings together key stakeholders in education sector development cooperation, and will be an opportunity for the TL (and possible team members as agreed) to meet the actors and possibly conduct some preliminary interviews to inform the inception report.

The team leader candidates are invited to propose approach and alternatives in their methodological notes. Any need for travel or in-country missions, and or selection of cases and samples, will be determined latest during the inception phase.



The methodology is to be designed in a way that provides practical recommendations also at the levels of cooperation instruments. The recommendations are addressed to the ministry. In addition, the evaluation team may issue out implications to other relevant actors if deemed relevant.

The final methodology will be specified during the inception phase together with the evaluation team and approved by the Ministry.

7. Evaluation process, timelines and deliverables

The evaluation will take place during 2022/2023. It began in September 2022 by conducting initial consultations within the ministry for drafting these Terms of Reference, nominating the reference group and launching the process for identifying Team Leader candidates. The evaluation follows the general phasing of the Evaluation Management Services (EMS II) framework used by the Development

Evaluation Unit (EVA-11). The timetable below is tentative, except for the final report.

Phase A: Planning phase: September 2022 (SO1)

- Preparation of the draft Terms of Reference: **September**
- Circulation for feedback from the Reference Group (RG): **October**
- Finalisation of the ToR and submission for approval: **October**

Phase B: Start-up phase: October/November 2022 (SO2)

- Recruitment of the team members
- Kick-off meeting by ET, RG and EVA (online): **mid-October**

Phase C: Inception phase: November 2022-January 2023

- Multi-stakeholder partnership forum, Helsinki: **2-3 November**
- Submission of Draft Inception Report: **11 January 2023**
- Inception meeting, (online): **18 January 2023**
- Final Inception Report: **latest 31 January 2023**

Phase D: Implementation phase: January – March 2023

- Data collection of the various data streams

Phase E: Reporting/Dissemination Phase: March-September 2023

- Analysis and joint report writing by ET **March-May**
- Internal sense-making and analysis workshop (2 d), ET: **First week of April**



- Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations (FCR) Workshop (ET, RG, EVA): **First week of April 2022**
- Joint writing/harmonization workshop (1d), ET: **May**
- Draft Final Report submission: **last week of May**
- Final Report: 1 Week of **August**
- Public Presentations, last week of **September 2023**.

The language of all produced reports and possible other documents is English. The timetables are tentative, except for the final reports.

A. Planning Phase: The Team Leader will submit comments to the draft ToR.

B. Start-up Phase: Presentation of the approach and methodology by the Team Leader.

C. Inception phase: The inception phase is expected to include a review of the existing documentation, further consultations and possibly some initial collection of primary data, to support the final definition of evaluation design and methodology, scope, sampling and/or case study selections. The inception phase will include a mapping of the various stakeholders and actors involved in education sector development cooperation.

The (draft and final) inception report will include the evaluation plan and initial desk study. The inception report will include the following sections: background and context; desk study and stakeholder mapping findings; further development of the analytical framework (the approach will reflect and address cross-cutting objectives); finalization of the methodology and summarised in an evaluation matrix including evaluation questions/sub-questions, judgment criteria, data/evidence streams, methods for data collection and analysis; final work plan and division of work between team_members; tentative table of contents of the final report; possible data gaps; tentative implementation plan for stakeholder consultations with a clear division of work (participation, interview questions/guides/checklists, preliminary list of stakeholders and organizations to be contacted); communication and dissemination plan; analysis of risks and limitations and their mitigation; and budget. The structure of the evaluation report and annexes or additional volumes will be agreed upon in the Inception meeting. The evaluation team will participate in the inception meeting (online) with the TL presenting the draft inception report.

D. Implementation phase: At the end of the implementation phase, a Preliminary Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations (FCR) Workshop will be conducted in Helsinki with key stakeholders to validate and align with the utilisation-focused approach of the evaluation.

E. Reporting and dissemination phase: Final report (draft final and final versions) and the methodological note will be reviewed by the quality assurance expert. Production of the first draft of the 4-pager for communication purposes will be the responsibility of the Team Leader/Evaluation Team. The first draft will be provided simultaneously with the first draft of the final report.

The final report will include an abstract and summary (including table on main findings, conclusions, and recommendations) in Finnish, Swedish, and English. The final report will be delivered in Word format (Microsoft Word 2010) with all the tables and pictures also separately in their original formats. The revised reports have to be accompanied by a table of received comments and responses to them. In addition, the MFA requires access to the evaluation team's tools, data sets,



or interim evidence documents, e.g., completed matrices, although it is not expected that these should be of publishable quality. The MFA treats these documents as confidential if needed.

Each deliverable is subject to specific approval. The evaluation team can move to the next phase only after receiving a written statement of acceptance by the MFA.

In addition to written deliverables, the Team Leader and the evaluation team are expected to participate in workshops and give oral presentations, often supported by PowerPoint slides (esp. during phases D and E). Should the COVID-19 situation allow, the public presentation of evaluation results will be held in Helsinki, with evaluation team members present. In addition, the Team Leader and other team members will give a short presentation of the findings in a public Webinar. This presentation can be delivered from distance.

The Consultant is expected to provide agreed visual materials.

The evaluation results will be published in early autumn 2022.

The deliverables and the timeframe will be further specified and agreed during the inception phase.

8. Expertise required in the evaluation

Besides complying with the requirements mentioned in the framework agreement for Evaluation Management Services contract (2020), the team of experts should demonstrate the following:

General for the team:

The evaluation team should consist of international and national experts. One expert shall be nominated as the Team Leader. The general expertise requirements for the team members are:

- Experience in evaluating the education sector policies and interventions in development policy and cooperation
- Experience in centralized, policy level evaluations in development policy and cooperation, with a strategic focus.
- A comprehensive understanding of education sector issues particularly in development policy and cooperation
- Knowledge of/familiarity with Finland's development policy and cooperation, including channels and cooperation instruments.
- Familiarity with results-based management (RBM) and measuring development results.
- Understanding of Finland's cross-cutting objectives and human rights-based approach
- Readiness to use a variety of evaluation methods (e.g. surveys, KIIs, FGDs, participatory methods, futures methods etc.) as well as readiness and availability to disseminate the evaluation results and recommendations in the way that it supports managing and learning.
- Conflict sensitivity, contextual awareness and risk management skills.



- Understanding and use of evaluation ethics, particularly information security.
- Good command of the Finnish language due to some limitations in documentation.
- Should be flexible, available as well as able to commit and allocate sufficient amount of time to the entire evaluation process, including when faced with unexpected changes.

9. Management arrangements

The evaluation is commissioned by the EVA-11. The Evaluation Manager of EVA-11 will be responsible for the overall management of the process. The Evaluation Manager will work closely with other units/departments of the MFA and other stakeholders in Finland and abroad.

This evaluation is managed and implemented through the EMS, and it will be conducted by an independent evaluation team recruited by the EMS II service provider (Particip GmbH – Niras Finland Oy). Particip as the lead company is responsible for the final quality of the services and deliverables.

There will be one Management Team responsible for the overall coordination of the evaluation. This consists of the EVA-11 Evaluation Manager, the Team Leader, and the EMS Service Coordinator and/or Deputy Service Coordinator (EMSC&D).

A reference group for the evaluation will be established and chaired by the Evaluation Manager. The reference group is constituted to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scoping of the evaluation, informing others about the progress of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs, quality assurance throughout the process, and using and disseminating the evaluation results.

The mandate of the reference group is to provide quality assurance, advisory support, and inputs to the evaluation, e.g., through participating in the planning of the evaluation and commenting on deliverables of the Consultant. The reference group is critical in guaranteeing transparency, accountability, and credibility, as well as the use of the evaluation and validating the results.

The Team Leader will manage the evaluation team. This requires careful planning to ensure that a common, consistent approach is used to achieve comparability of the data gathered and the approach used in the analysis.

The Team Leader will develop a set of clear protocols for the team to use and will convene regular online team meetings to discuss the approach. Particular attention should be paid to strong inter-team coordination and information sharing within the team during the process.

The evaluation team is responsible for identifying relevant stakeholders to be interviewed and organising the interviews. The MFA and embassies will not organize these interviews or meetings on behalf of the evaluation team but will assist in identifying people and organizations to be included in the evaluation.



Quality assurance of the Consultant

Internal quality assurance:

The consortium implementing this evaluation will put in place a three-layer system of quality assurance for all products/reports: at the level of the Team Leader, through the EMSC&D, and in-house senior QA advisors.

The Consultant is in charge of the impeccable quality of English, Swedish and Finnish texts of the reports and related proofreading. The EMSC will be responsible for the good quality translations in Finnish. All deliverables shall be of publishable quality.

The evaluation team should do their best not to exceed the total length of 80 pages for the main evaluation report and prepare an executive summary that is publishable as a stand-alone document and that includes visualizations. A separate volume on annexes may be produced. It will be agreed upon during the inception phase which of the final deliverables are to be published. The inception report should also outline the structure of the main report and the planned contents of the annex(es).

The report should be kept clear, concise, and consistent. The report must follow the writing instructions and template provided by the MFA, and it should contain, among other things, the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The logic between those should be clear and based on evidence.

The final draft report(s) will be sent for a round of comments by EVA-11. The purpose of the comments is only to correct any misunderstandings or factual errors.

All team members will need to subscribe to a confidentiality agreement which will comply to MFA norms for information security (including the different levels of protection of MFA's internal information management system). All team members will sign a non-disclosure agreement.

External quality assurance:

It should be noted that EVA-11 may obtain an expert as a Critical Friend (external peer reviewer) for the whole process. The person interacts directly with EVA-11 and provides expert opinions on the planning and implementation of the evaluations. EVA-11 may or may not integrate any such external advice as part of their overall feedback and management responses to the evaluation.

10. Budget

The estimated maximum budget for this evaluation is 450 000 euros (subject to further specifications on the scope and approach), including contingency.

11. Mandate

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organizations. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland or the Ministry. The evaluation team does not represent the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in any capacity.



All intellectual property rights to the result of the Service referred to in the Contract will be the exclusive property of the Ministry, including the right to make modifications and hand over material to a third party. The Ministry may publish the result under Creative Commons license to promote openness and public use of evaluation results.

12. Authorization

Antero Klemola

Director

Development Evaluation Unit

Some key sources (*not exhaustive*):

Website:

MFA: <https://um.fi/development-policy-education-and-peaceful-democratic-societies>

FINCEED: <https://www.oph.fi/en/finceed-finnish-centre-expertise-education-and-development>

Openaid: <https://openaid.fi/en/>

Policies:

<https://um.fi/policies-and-guidelines>

Report on Development Policy Extending Across Parliamentary Terms (2021): <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/163171>

Finland's Africa Strategy (2021): <https://um.fi/finland-s-africa-strategy>

Era of new cooperation – The Contribution of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland to Strengthen Multilateral Cooperation (2021): https://um.fi/policies-and-guidelines/-/asset_publisher/NgyU5oMVA9rg/content/uuden-yhteistyon-aika-ulkoministerio-monenkeskisen-yhteistyon-vahvistajana/35732

Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy (2020): https://um.fi/policies-and-guidelines/-/asset_publisher/NgyU5oMVA9rg/content/valtioneuvoston-ulkko-ja-turvallisuuspoliittinen-selonteko/35732

Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government (2019) <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161935>



The Government Report on Development Policy (2016): https://um.fi/policies-and-guidelines/-/asset_publisher/NgyU5oMVA9rg/content/valtioneuvoston-selonteko-suomen-kehityspoliitika-yksi-maailma-yhteinen-tulevaisuus-kohti-kestavaa-kehitysta/35732

Country programmes: <https://um.fi/bilateral-partner-countries>

Guidelines:

HRBA: https://um.fi/publications/-/asset_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/ihmisoikeusperustainen-lahestymistapa-kehitykseen-yleisohje

RBM: <https://um.fi/results-based-management-and-reporting-on-development-cooperation>

News items:

School feeding: https://um.fi/press-releases/-/asset_publisher/ued5t2wDmr1C/content/kehitysyhteisty-c3-b6-ja-ulkomaankauppaministeri-ville-skinnari-maailman-ruokaohjelman-kouluuokkal-c3-a4hettii-c3-a4-c3-a4ksi/35732

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Publication 10.8.2021: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/stepping-up-efforts-to-resolve-the-global-learning-crisis-exacerbated-by-covid-19>

Unicef HUB: https://um.fi/current-affairs/-/asset_publisher/gc654PySnjTX/content/unicef-innovaatiotoiminnot-suomeen-uudet-keskukset-edistavat-oppimisen-ja-innovatiivisen-rahoituksen-ratkaisuja

Ukraine https://um.fi/ukraine/-/asset_publisher/Y0jaBmUGpeDd/content/koronapandemian-karjistama-gloaali-oppimisen-kriisi-vaatii-ratkaisuja/35732

Evaluations and studies:

Evaluation of the Finnish Development Policy Influencing in the European Union (2022): https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointiraportti-suomen-kehityspoliittinen-vai-kuttaminen-eu-ssa/384998

Catalysing Change – Finland's Humanitarian Assistance 2016–2022 (2022): https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointiraportti-muutosta-kaynnistamassa-suomen-humanitaarinen-apu-2016-2022-1/384998

Review of the value of education exports in Finland (2022): <https://www.oph.fi/en/news/2022/education-exports-are-economically-significant-finland-growing-sector-already-worth>

The Presence and Influence of Finnish Education Sector Expertise in International Organisations (2022): https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/164367/UM_2022_8.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Evaluation on Finland's development policy and cooperation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (2021): https://um.fi/kehitysyhteistyon-evaluointiraportit-laajat/-/asset_publisher/



[nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointiraportti-suomen-kehitysyhteisty%C3%B6-it%C3%A4-euroopassa-ja-keski-aasiassa/384998](https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointiraportti-suomen-kehitysyhteisty%C3%B6-it%C3%A4-euroopassa-ja-keski-aasiassa/384998)

Evaluation on Country Programmes in Fragile Contexts (2020): https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointiraportti-ulkoministeri-c3-b6n-maaohjelmien-soveltuvuus-haurassa-maissa-ja-konfliktiymp-c3-a4rist-c3-b6iss-c3-a4-teht-c3-a4v-c3-a4-c3-a4n-ke/384998

Evaluation on Improvement of Women's and Girls' Rights (2018): https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluation-improvement-of-women-s-and-girls-rights-in-finland-s-development-policy-and-cooperation/384998

Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education (2018): <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/310306>

Evaluation on country programmes (2016): https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointi-suomen-kehitysyhteistyon-maaohjelmista/384998

Evaluation of inclusive education in Finland's development cooperation in 2004–2013 (2015): https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointi-inklusiivisesta-koulutuksesta-suomen-kehitysyhteistyossa-2004-2013/384998

Evaluation on Finland's Support to Higher Education Institutions North-South-South and HEI ICI Programmes (2014): https://um.fi/development-cooperation-evaluation-reports-comprehensive-evaluations/-/asset_publisher/nBPgGHSLrA13/content/evaluointiraportti-2014-3-evaluointi-suomen-tuesta-korkea-asteen-oppilaitoksille-north-south-south-ja-hei-ici/384998

Reports:

MFA results report 2018: <https://kehityspolitiikka2018.um.fi/en/>

(UNESCO) SDG Global monitoring report 2020: <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sdg-goal-4>

(UNESCO) Global Education Monitoring Report: <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/publications>

SDG progress report: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/>



Annex 2. People and organisations consulted

Government organisations

1. Deputy Director General, Department for Development Policy (KEO-01), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
2. Adviser (Development Cooperation), Department for Development Policy (KEO-01), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
3. Senior Adviser, Development Policy Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
4. Project Officer, Unit for Civil Society (KEO-30), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
5. Project Assistant, Unit for UN Development and Innovation Issues (KEO-40), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
6. Team Leader, Unit for UN Development and Innovation Issues (KEO-40), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
7. Desk Officer, Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
8. Desk Officer, Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy (KEO-70), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
9. Senior Adviser, Department for Africa and Middle East (ALI-02), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
10. Programme Officer (Ethiopia), Department for Africa and Middle East (ALI-02), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
11. Desk Officer (Mozambique Team), Department for Africa and the Middle East, Unit for Southern and Western Africa (ALI-30)
12. Senior Specialist, Department for the Americas and Asia (ASA-02), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
13. Desk officer, Unit for South Asia (ASA-40), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
14. Desk Officer (Myanmar), Unit for South Asia (ASA-40), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
15. Senior Specialist (Science and Higher Education, Team Finland Knowledge Network), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
16. Senior Specialist (Education), Embassy of Finland in Addis Ababa
17. Coordinator (Education sector and development cooperation, Embassy of Finland in Maputo)
18. Councillor (Education), Embassy of Finland in Yangon



19. Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture (former Programme Director/ Education Finland at the EDUFI)
20. Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture
21. Senior Specialist, Ministry of Education and Culture
22. Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, New York
23. Seconded National Expert, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), European Commission
24. Head of Unit (International Higher Education Cooperation), Finnish National Agency for Education
25. Chief Specialist (International Higher Education Cooperation), Finnish National Agency for Education
26. Counsellor of Education (Vocational Education and Training), Finnish National Agency for Education
27. Counsellor of Education (Vocational Education and Training), Finnish National Agency for Education
28. Counsellor of Education (Vocational Education and Training), Finnish National Agency for Education
29. Senior Programme Advisor, Finnish National Agency for Education
30. Senior Adviser, Finnish National Agency for Education (Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development)
31. Director (Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development), Finnish National Agency for Education
32. Programme Director (Education Finland), Finnish National Agency for Education
33. Senior Specialist (Education Finland), Finnish National Agency for Education (Education Finland)
34. Senior Adviser, Business Finland
35. Grants and Impact Manager, Finnpartnership
36. Director, Impact and Sustainability, Finnfund

Multilateral organisations

37. Social Sector Specialist (K-12 Education), Asian Development Bank
38. Chief (Global Citizenship Education), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
39. Director Global Learning Innovation Hub, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
40. Education Chief, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
41. Advisor, Team Europe Initiatives, European Union
42. Head of Partnerships, Global Partnership for Education
43. Team Lead (Private sector and foundations), Global Partnership for Education



44. Team Lead (Effective Partnerships), Global Partnership for Education
45. Country Team Lead (Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan), Global Partnership for Education
46. Senior Education Specialist and Lead (Education Out Loud), Global Partnership for Education
47. Country Team Lead (Uzbekistan), Global Partnership for Education
48. Acting Deputy CEO, Global Partnership for Education

Other stakeholders

49. Specialist (Stakeholder Engagement), Finnish Refugee Council
50. Senior Education Advisor, Finn Church Aid
51. Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Felm)
52. Plan International
53. World Vision
54. Taksvärkki
55. Specialist (Stakeholder Engagement), University of Helsinki
56. Head of Global Engagement, Aalto University
57. Project Manager (Global Innovation Network for Teaching and Learning), University of Jyväskylä
58. Senior Lecturer, Oulu University of Applied Sciences
59. Adjunct Professor, Director (Global Innovation Network for Teaching and Learning), University of Helsinki

People and organisations consulted for each case study

Ethiopia country case study

60. Country Director, SIL Ethiopia
61. Pastoralist and Special Needs Education Desk Head, Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)
62. Senior Specialist for Education, Embassy of Finland
63. Senior Advisor, Embassy of Finland
64. Deputy Director for General Academic, Federal TVET Institute
65. ICT Project Coordinator, Federal TVET Institute
66. Coordinator of GEQIP, Ministry of Education
67. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)
68. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)
69. Inclusive Education Expert, Oromia Regional Education Bureau
70. Advisor, Ministry of Education



71. Task Team Leader, World Bank
72. Education Expert, European Commission
73. Education Specialist, Embassy of Norway
74. Education Specialist, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Nepal country case study

75. Special Adviser (former Education Counsellor in Nepal), Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters (KEO-80), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
76. First Secretary, World Trade Organisation (former Desk Officer for Nepal), Permanent Mission of Finland in Geneva
77. Special Adviser, Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu
78. Head of Cooperation (Education), Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu
79. CEO, Lagankhel, Young Innovations Pvt Ltd
80. Professor (Online and Distance Education Centre), Tribhuvan University
81. Associate Professor (Online and Distance Education Centre), Tribhuvan University
82. Executive Director, LooNiva Child Concern, Interpedia Nepal
83. Development Assistance Co-ordination Section, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
84. Associate Professor, Kathmandu University School of Management
85. Doctor, Kathmandu University School of Management
86. Professor and Dean, Kathmandu University School of Management
87. Coordinator (Graduate Programme), Kathmandu University School of Management
88. Country Director, Finn Church Aid
89. Head of the Education Section, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
90. Programme Director, Nepal Lhomi Society
91. Executive Chairperson, Idea Studio Bagbazar

Palestine country case study

92. Deputy Assistance (Educational Affairs), Ministry of Education
93. Director General (TVET Programme), Ministry of Education
94. Director General (Preschool Phase and Kindergartens), Ministry of Education
95. Special Education Director (Preschool), Ministry of Education
96. Deputy Assistant (Planning, Projects, and Infrastructure), Ministry of Education
97. Director General (Planning), Ministry of Education
98. External Relations and Project Officer, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
99. Programme Coordinator, Finland Representative Office in Palestine



100. Professor and Teaching Trainer (former Dean of the Faculty of Education), Birzeit University
101. Programme Manager (Teachers Without Borders), Finn Church Aid
102. Adolescent Specialist, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
103. Education Specialist, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
104. Joint Financing Agreement Partner: Ireland, Representative/Education Specialists
105. Joint Financing Agreement Partner: Norway, Representative/Education Specialists
106. Joint Financing Agreement Partner: Germany - Representative/Education Specialists
107. West Bank Protection Consortium Member - Representative/Action Against Hunger
108. Head of Cooperation and Education Specialist, Representative Office of Finland in Ramallah

Desk-based Ukraine thematic case study

109. Counsellor of education (Vocational Education and Training), Finnish National Agency for Education

Desk-bases Mozambique thematic case study

110. Programme Manager (Education Policy), Delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia
111. Chief Specialist (International Higher Education Cooperation), Finnish National Agency for Education



Annex 3. Sample interventions

See Annex 4 for the sample criteria.

Year	Instrument	Recipient country	Channel of delivery	Main sector	Sector specification	Topic	Commitment*
2019	BI Cofinancing programme	Ukraine	German Development Cooperation	EDUCATION	Vocational training	EU4Skills: Better Skills for Modern Ukraine	EUR 2 000 000
2020	BI Cofinancing programme	Nepal	Recipient Government	EDUCATION	Education policy and administrative management	Support to Nepal's School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) Covid-19 response	EUR 2 514,000
2021	BI Cofinancing programme	Ethiopia	World Bank Group	EDUCATION	Primary education	General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP), 3rd phase	EUR 4 000 000
2021	BI Cofinancing programme	Ethiopia	UN Childrens Fund	EDUCATION	Primary education	The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Fund; "Increasing Access to Protective Inclusive Learning Opportunities for Crisis-Affected Children in the Tigray Region" project, a part of ECW's broader Ethiopian program to address Tigray's acute crisis.	EUR 2 000 000
2021	BI Cofinancing programme	Ethiopia	UN Childrens Fund	EDUCATION	Primary education	UNICEF -implemented project supporting conflict affected children in Amhara Ethiopia	EUR 4 000 000
2021	BI Cofinancing programme	Nepal	Recipient Government	EDUCATION	Primary education	Nepal School Education Sector Plan (SESP) programme	EUR 19 000 000
2021	BI Cofinancing programme	Ukraine	German Development Cooperation	EDUCATION	Vocational training	EU4Skills: Better Skills for Modern Ukraine	EUR 1 500 000
2019	Bilateral programme	Iraq	Donor Government	EDUCATION	Vocational training	Vocational education support in Iraq	EUR 500,000
2020	Bilateral programme	Ethiopia	Consultants	EDUCATION	Education policy and administrative management	Technical Assistance to the General Education Quality Improvement Programme for Equity	EUR 600,000



Year	Instrument	Recipient country	Channel of delivery	Main sector	Sector specification	Topic	Commitment*
2021	Bilateral programme	West Bank and Gaza Strip	Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR)	GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY	Human rights	Funding of the Independent Human Rights Commission (ICHR) work on human rights in Palestine, including some education/training component	EUR 550 000
2019	Finnfund	Africa, regional	Africa Edu Holdings (Maarifa)	EDUCATION	Tertiary education	Tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa	USD 7.000.000
2020	Finnfund	Africa, regional	eAdvance Proprietary Limited (SPARK Schools)	EDUCATION	K-12 education	Sparks School Network in South Africa	USD 5.200.000
2019	Finnpartnership programme	Mozambique	Soprano Oyj	EDUCATION	Teacher training	Accredited business partner for service business in Mozambique	EUR 65,051
2019	Finnpartnership programme	Nepal	GOI Finland Oy	EDUCATION	Education policy and administrative management	Nepal-Finland Innovation Cluster	EUR 15,356
2021	Finnpartnership programme	Ethiopia	Sera Helsinki Oy	INDUSTRY	Cottage industries and handicraft	Expand the import of handmade wool rugs subcontracted from Ethiopia e.g. identifying new partners developing collaboration with local stakeholders and further training carpet manufacturers.	EUR 37 562
2019	General core contribution	Developing countries, unspecified	International Development Association	MULTI-SECTOR AID	Multi-sector aid	IDA 19 (The Nineteenth Replenishment of the International Development Association IDA)	EUR 114 000 000
2020	General core contribution	Developing countries, unspecified	UN Childrens Fund	MULTI-SECTOR AID	Multi-sector aid	UNICEF/Annual contribution 2020	EUR 4 000 000
2021	General core contribution	Developing countries, unspecified	UN Childrens Fund	MULTI-SECTOR AID	Multi-sector aid	UNICEF annual contribution	EUR 7 000 000
2019	Higher Education Cooperation	Developing countries, unspecified	Donor Government	EDUCATION	Higher education	Higher Education Institutions - Institutional Cooperation Programme 2020-24	EUR 12 200,000
2021	Humanitarian assistance to countries and regions	Ethiopia	World Food Programme (WFP)	HUMANITARIAN AID	Emergency food assistance	Support to WFP's school feeding program in Ethiopia	EUR 1 000 000



Year	Instrument	Recipient country	Channel of delivery	Main sector	Sector specification	Topic	Commitment*
2021	Humanitarian assistance to countries and regions	Kenya	World Food Programme (WFP)	HUMANITARIAN AID	Emergency food assistance	Support to WFP's school feeding program in Kenya	EUR 1 000 000
2021	Institutional cooperation instrument	Developing countries, unspecified	Finnish National Agency for Education	EDUCATION	Education policy and administrative management	The Centre of Expertise in Education and Development at the Finnish National Agency for Education (FinCEED)	EUR 4 000 000
2019	Multi - bi project	Nepal	UN Childrens Fund	EDUCATION	Education policy and administrative management	UNICEF WASH and Education Programmes	EUR 8 000,000
2019	Multi - bi project	West Bank and Gaza Strip	UN Childrens Fund	GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY	Ending violence against women and girls	Non violence in school and child protection	EUR 1 600,000
2020	Multi - bi project	Mozambique	World Bank Group	EDUCATION	Teacher training	COACH in-service teacher training	EUR 3 000,000
2021	Multi - bi project	Iraq	UN Fund for Population	EDUCATION	Basic life skills for adults	UNFPA project empowering youth with disabilities and create an environment for young people with disabilities age 10-24 years to exercise their rights for basic services and civic engagement	EUR 1 475 000
2020	Multilateral thematic funding	Developing countries, unspecified	World Bank Group	EDUCATION	Teacher training	WB/Helping Countries Accelerate Learning	EUR 2 500,000
2021	Multilateral thematic funding	Developing countries, unspecified	Global Partnership for Education	EDUCATION	Primary education	Comtribution to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)	EUR 25 000 000
2020	Programme support	Developing countries, unspecified	Kirkon Ulkomaanavun säätiö	EDUCATION	Vocational training	FCA Global programme 2022-2025	EUR 2 700,000
2021	Programme support	Developing countries, unspecified	Vammaiskump-panuus ry	GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY	Democratic participation and civil society	Contribution to Disability Partnership Finland's programme, including Disability Inclusive Education	EUR 7 000 000
2021	Programme support	Developing countries, unspecified	Kirkon Ulkomaanavun säätiö	EDUCATION	Vocational training	Contribution to FCA's programme	EUR 26 500 000
2020	Project support	Ethiopia	SOS-lapsikyläsäätiö rs	EDUCATION	Basic life skills for youth and adults	Educare Project in Nekemte Oromia Regional State	EUR 735,039
2020	Project support	Ethiopia	Wycliffe Raama-tunkääntäjät ry	EDUCATION	Early childhood education	A Fair Start - Mother Tongue Preschool Education in the Konso and Ale Communities	EUR 225,000



Year	Instrument	Recipient country	Channel of delivery	Main sector	Sector specification	Topic	Commitment*
2020	Project support	Mozambique	UFF Finland	EDUCATION	Primary education	Improving Teaching Quality Inclusion and Community Engagement in Primary School Education in Zambezi	EUR 465,536
2020	Project support	Nepal	Wycliffe Raama-tunkääntäjät ry	EDUCATION	Primary education	Mother Tongue Based Basic Education Program into Lhomi language	EUR 409,217
2020	Project support	Nepal	Lääkäriin Sosialinen Vastuu ry	HEALTH	Basic health care	Unlocking doors to basic health and education for children with Sensory disabilities in Bara and Par	EUR 460,000
2020	Project support	Nepal	Interpedia	GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY	Public sector policy and administrative management	Promoting Right to Education and Protection of the Most Vulnerable Children (PREP)	EUR 478,000
2020	Project support	West Bank and Gaza Strip	Kansanvalistus-seura sr. (KVS)	EDUCATION	Teacher training	Empowered through media literacy in Palestine	EUR 204,791
2020	Project support	West Bank and Gaza Strip	Suomen YMCA:n liitto ry	EDUCATION	Vocational training	Contributing towards peace and justice through promoted resilience and livelihoods of women and young	EUR 650,000
2021	Project support	Ukraine	FCG International Ltd	EDUCATION	Teacher training	Finland's Support to the Ukrainian School Reform	EUR 789 881
2019	Sectoral budget support	Mozambique	Ministry of Finance of Mozambique	EDUCATION	Primary education	FASE Education sector support for Mozambique	EUR 28 000,000
2021	Sectoral budget support	West Bank and Gaza Strip	Recipient Government	EDUCATION	Education facilities and training	Contribution to Palestinian education sector through the Joint Financing agreement (JFA) with the Ministry of Education	EUR 6 000 000

List of select programme-based CSOs consulted

Abilis Foundation
Felm Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
Fida International
Finnish Refugee Council
Finn Church Aid
Fida International
Taksvärkki
World Vision Finland



Annex 4. Approach and methodology

4.1. Evaluation Questions

The ToR set three main evaluation questions (EQ) and related sub-questions, as follows.

The RESPONSE. EQ1: To what extent has the response to recommendations of the 2018 report⁷⁵, and follow-up measures agreed thereof, been appropriate for stepping up Finland's global role in addressing the learning crisis and improving the quality of education?

- 1.1. What follow-up activities have been implemented as a response to the recommendations to date and by which actor(s)?
- 1.2. How relevant have they been in responding to the learning crisis and improving the quality of education, and for whom and where?
- 1.3. To what extent have the measures matched partner expectations and their views of Finland's areas of added value?
- 1.4. To what extent has resourcing been adequate in relation to commitment to education financing? (covering both human and financial resourcing)?
- 1.5. How efficiently have the follow-up measures been implemented since 2019?
- 1.6. How have the Finnish development policy cross-cutting objectives been taken into account in the measures (if at all)?
- 1.7. How coherent have the various measures been by the different actors such as the multi-actor coordination group and the MFA?

The RESULTS. EQ2: What has been the relative and overall effectiveness of the various measures taken by the different actors in development cooperation? Analyse overall and by cooperation instrument/channel.

- 2.1. What results have been achieved, if any, at different levels during 2019-2022? For whom and where? Disaggregate particularly on (areas of interest based on the MFA theory of change):
 - Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes.
 - The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions in better realized.

75 Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education (2018): <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/310306>



- Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life.
- Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive quality education.

2.2. What have been the cumulative, synergistic effects, if any, of a fit-for-purpose multi-actor approach?

The FUTURE. EQ3: In the next 8 years, what kind of multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups would yield the best results in order to:

- 3.1. Maintain and strengthen Finland's role in the specific areas of expertise and added value unique to Finland?
- 3.2. Allow the response to the global learning crisis and quality education to stay relevant to different contextual settings?
- 3.3. Establish a size and set-up that is realistic for sustained level of development cooperation funding yet securing Finland as a credible actor in resolving the global learning crisis?

4.2. Evaluation Matrix

The Evaluation Matrix, below, was structured in line with the evaluation questions, offering judgement criteria as well as details of corresponding methods for data collection and analysis, as well as data sources.

To answer **EQ1** (sub-questions 1.1 to 1.7), the evaluation team analysed the performance, relevance, efficiency and coherence of efforts to boost Finland's role in addressing the global learning crisis and improving the quality of education. Using the following 7 'Stepping Up Measures' as a framework for analysis⁷⁶, we triangulated various streams of evidence (including documents produced over time and interviews with a wide range of key informants in Finland and in partner countries), checking the consistency of evidence across data sources.

1. Strengthened collaboration between different government sectors;
2. Strengthened multilateral engagement;
3. Intensified bilateral support;
4. Strengthened TVET profile;
5. Improved HEI ICI;
6. Strategic investment in new partnerships
7. Building the pool of expertise, including coordinated CSO engagement.

⁷⁶ The 7 Stepping Up Measures are strategic interventions which emanate from the recommendations of the 'Stepping Up' report (MFA/HELDA, 2018), outlined in section 2.3. These were reviewed and refined, first by a Task Force in 2019 (MFA, 2019) and subsequently in a recently developed Roadmap (MFA, 2022a) and are currently promoted by the Coordination Group to be taken up by education stakeholders, going forward. Notably, *intermediate outcomes* – the institutional/organizational changes in behaviour or practices of education development cooperation stakeholders – are often the 'missing middle' in a theory of change. Accordingly, the 'Stepping Up Measures' above feature as intermediate outcomes in our evaluation theory of change (see Figure 3).



A broad mapping of these strategic interventions is found in **Annex 6**.

To answer **EQ2**, we assessed the results of Finland's education development cooperation to improve inclusive quality education, as well as the relative effectiveness of these measures. Our analysis drew on findings from key informant interviews, substantiated by documented evidence, country case studies and thematic studies. We began by assessing the achievement of *overall* results at *global* and *country* levels (by cooperation instrument and across instruments) against Finland's policy objectives during the period under review (EQ2.1) and considering the *relative* effectiveness of various cooperation instruments at global and country levels.⁷⁷ We went on to identify few available multi-actor approaches (EQ 2.2).

To answer **EQ 3** (3.1, 3.2, and 3.3), we explored future alternative multi-stakeholder approaches and set ups for Finnish education development cooperation, in two ways. First, we analysed futures-related insights based on Finland's past performance (i.e., formative analysis of findings under EQ1 and EQ2)⁷⁸. Second, based strategic foresight techniques (i.e., futures thinking) we analysed the views of Delphi expert panelists on priority measures to enhance Finland's role an actor on the global education development cooperation stage⁷⁹.

To undertake a **summary analysis for the main evaluation questions**, the team conducted a three-day Synthesis/Sense-making Workshop (8-10 May 2023, in Helsinki). During this workshop, the (i) evaluation team synergized formative analysis and futures-thinking and (ii) derived conclusions and recommendations on Finland's strategic longer-term vision from findings from the different evidence streams for EQ1, EQ2 and EQ3. This was underpinned by reflections on results-based management and adaptive programming for education development cooperation. The Synthesis Workshop was followed immediately by a Findings-Conclusions-Recommendations (FCR) Workshop with evaluation users, to receive feedback on findings, conclusions and tentative areas of recommendation, including feedback on the futures-oriented findings and tentative recommendations.

Details of the Delphi method, which focused on EQ3, including the timeline is found in **Annex 10**.

77 To do this we referred to (i) the aggregate indicators set out in Finland's 2020 ToC and the SDG4 target indicators included in the 2022 results framework; and (ii) qualitative benchmarks formulated by the evaluation team based on the above 2020 and 2022 documents (see Measures of Effectiveness, **Annex 3**).

78 This was done through internal sense-making sessions conducted periodically throughout the implementation phase, during which the evaluation team reflected on the assumptions behind progress towards expected outcomes in the evaluation's ToC. Additionally, in a final session with the evaluation Reference Group and MFA's Community of Practice, we explored the evaluation's central hypothesis: *Finnish ODA contributes to achieving SDG 4 in the most effective way*, taking account of the contextual factors which enable or constrain change.

79 Data from the Delphi interviews were reviewed and coded using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA (to inform design of the online survey) and survey responses were descriptively analysed with the software package SPSS/STATA as well as qualitative content analysis.



Table 1. Evaluation Matrix

JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	METHODS	DATA SOURCES
<p>EQ1: The RESPONSE: To what extent has the response to recommendations of the 2018 report and follow-up measures agreed thereof, been appropriate for stepping up Finland's global role in responding to the learning crisis and improving the quality of education?</p>		
<p>1.1. Performance: Strategic measures. The extent to which the response to recommendations of the 2018 report and follow-up measures have been implemented by diverse actors (at global, regional and national levels) in line with Finland's policy objectives: (1) collaborative strategic planning between the Ministries; (2) joint influencing of multilateral organizations' global strategies/ programmes for systemic education reform; (3) intensified bilateral support; (4) targeted interventions by actors in the VET sector and (5) in HEI-ICI projects to engage in development cooperation; (6) public -private partnerships in the area of education export (including EdTech solutions); and (7) building the pool of expertise</p> <p>1.2. Relevance: Policy priorities. The extent to which the implemented measures have been relevant in terms of Finland's policy priorities: responding to the global learning crisis and improving learning outcomes for children and young people in least developed and low-/middle-income countries.</p> <p>1.3. Relevance: Partners' priorities. The extent to which the implemented measures meet global, regional, and national partner's expectations, match their views of Finland's added value in education development, and align with these partners' policy priorities, including strengthened systems for quality inclusive education for all.</p> <p>1.4. Efficiency: Adequate financial and human resourcing. The extent to which the implemented measures have been adequate in terms of ODA funding commitments and the allocation of staff and expertise; in ODA in relation to non-ODA financing (e.g., EE).</p> <p>1.5. Efficiency: Timeliness. The extent to which the strategic measures have been implemented in a timely way, i.e., in accordance with planned timeframes (2019-2022), taking account of influencing factors in the operational environment.</p> <p>1.6. Coherence: Cross-cutting objectives. The extent to which the implemented measures have taken account of gender equality, non-discrimination and climate resilience, making linkages between SDG 4 and other SDGs.</p> <p>1.7. Coherence: Creating synergies. The extent to which key actors, such as the MFA and the Coordination Group, have created synergies between Finnish Government sectors and departments, as well as across education development cooperation instruments; they have also promoted synergies between instrument-specific actors in government and civil society and between government and private sector actors. Such synergies are supported by results-based management (RBM) approaches to holistic planning, risk analysis and adaptive programming.</p>	<p>1. Ongoing desk review further elaborate the policy frameworks for Finland's development cooperation; and to establish the evaluation's nested theory of change (ToC), taking account of the global education crisis as well as fragile country contexts.</p> <p>2. Interviews with key informants (and focus group discussions where feasible) to assess Finland's response in terms of the relevance and efficiency of education development cooperation instruments; including an in-depth analysis of mainstreamed cross-cutting objectives in priority instruments in line with Finland's education development policy priorities. Res</p> <p>3. Trend analysis of available financial data over time.</p> <p>4. Online survey of CSOs to provide a snapshot of the enablers and constraints for collective action between CSOs and between civil society and other education development actors.</p> <p>5. Interviews with key informants to assess the coherence of the 7 'Stepping Up Measures' across cooperation instruments and channels.</p>	<p>Documents on Finland's global policies, including strategies, plans and monitoring of coordinated education development cooperation; theories of change for 2020 and 2022; multilateral and bilateral partners' strategies and programmes; CSO programme and project documentation; and relevant academic and grey literature.</p> <p>Insights from staff in governmental bodies: MFA experts; program officers for the countries; MEC experts; and EDUFI (1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7).</p> <p>Insights from staff in multilateral organisations and development partners at country level (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6 and 1.7).</p> <p>Insights from Finnish practitioners (experts, consultants, CSOs, private sector, Team Finland); and academics in Finnish universities (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6. and 1.7).</p>



JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	METHODS	DATA SOURCES
<p>EQ2. The RESULT: What have been the relative and overall effectiveness of the various measures taken by the different actors in development cooperation? Analyse overall and by cooperation instrument/channel.</p>		
<p>2.1. Effectiveness: Global level.</p> <p>The extent to which Finland's education development efforts (2019-2022) have achieved results against planned global policy objectives; where they have been achieved and for whom, including but not limited to the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes. (ii) The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions in better realized. (iii) Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life. (iv) Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education. <p>The extent to which progress has been made towards the results set out in the evaluation's global/ macro-level ToC.</p> <p>Effectiveness: Country level. The extent to which education development cooperation (all relevant cooperation instruments) in Ethiopia, Nepal, Palestine, Mozambique and Palestine has contributed to achieving results against global policy objectives; where they have been achieved and for whom, including but not limited to the above outcomes.</p> <p>The extent to which progress has been made towards the results set out in the evaluation's country/ micro-level ToC (in line with the partner countries' national sector programmes and policy objectives).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of global policy results <i>across cooperation instruments</i>, including an analysis of policy-level aggregate indicators. 2. Interviews with key informants in Finland on <i>specific instruments</i>, including an analysis of effectiveness benchmarks in relation to the outcome level results set out in the evaluation's nested ToC. 3. Development and analysis of Contribution Stories in the three case study countries (Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine). 4. Desk-review of Finland's support of teacher training in Mozambique and VET in Ukraine to develop supplementary thematic case studies. 5. Interviews with key informants (and focus group discussions where feasible) in Ethiopia, Nepal, Palestine to evidence results achieved against planned country programming objectives, in relation to the output level results set out in the evaluation's nested ToC 	<p>At global level:</p> <p>Reports on instrument-specific results; reports on Finland's development cooperation policy results; aggregate indicator monitoring data.</p> <p>Insights from staff in governmental bodies; multilateral organisations; and Finnish implementing partners, responding to 2.1. and 2.2.</p> <p>At country level:</p> <p>Finland's Country Strategies and Country Programmes for selected bilateral partners; national sector plans/programmes and annual statistical abstracts; annual sector review reports; HEI-ICI and CSO projects reports in case countries; UNESCO's annual GEM Reports.</p> <p>Insights from staff and experts in Embassies; and from local counterparts and implementing partners (Ministries, universities, consultants, CSOs), responding to 2.1. and 2.2.</p>
<p>2.2. Effectiveness: multi-actor approach. The extent to which the effects of Finland's multi-actor approaches have been felt at global level; and including synergies between cooperation instruments and between actors at country level, with linkages between bilateral cooperation and policy influencing at global level (EU, WB, AsDB, UN, etc).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews with key informants in Finland and in the three case study countries to assess the synergistic effects of Finland's multi-actor approach. 2. Analysis across the three Contribution Stories, as an indication of the contribution of country-level development cooperation results to achieving planned global outcomes. 	



JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	METHODS	DATA SOURCES
EQ3. The FUTURE: In the next 8 years, what kind of a multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups would yield the best results (explore alternative future scenarios and synergies entailed)?		
<p>3.1. To what extent multi-actor approaches/set ups which will maintain and strengthen Finland's role in the specific areas of expertise and added value unique to Finland.</p> <p>3.2. To what extent multi-actor approaches/set ups which will allow Finland's response to the global learning crisis to stay relevant to different contextual settings.</p> <p>3.3. What are the priority multi-actor approach(es) which will secure Finland's role as a credible actor on the global education development cooperation stage, taking account the size and set-up that are realistic for sustained level of education development cooperation funding.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structured internal (evaluation team) sense-making sessions for analysis of insights from EQ1 interviews (i.e., futures-related insights based on Finland's past performance in addressing the global education crisis), to identify 'hot topics' for Delphi. 2. If feasible, focus group discussion, to reflect on 'hot topics' in relation to contextual factors (as evidenced under EQ2) and assumptions in the evaluation's nested ToC. 3. Delphi surveys and analysis of experts' views (i.e., futures-thinking based on strategic foresight) on priority multi-stakeholder approach(es), to enhance Finland's role an actor on the global education development cooperation stage. 4. Evaluation team's synthesis of future-related evidence from EQ1, EQ2 and Delphi to inform the best multi-actor approaches and setups for Finland to use in different contextual scenarios ranging across different levels of stability and fragility. 	<p>Key informants for EQ1 and EQ2 interviews.</p> <p>Delphi expert panellists, responding to questions 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.</p> <p>Reference Group feedback on futures-oriented findings, conclusions and recommendations, conducted as part of the FCR workshop.</p>



4.3. Data collection methods and analysis

To answer the evaluation questions, the team used mixed data collection methods, detailed below.

4.3.1. Desk review

The evaluation team reviewed a wide range of documents including documents on Finland's global policies (e.g., strategies, plans and monitoring of coordinated education development cooperation; theories of change for 2020 and 2022); MFA reports on instrument-specific results; reports on Finland's development cooperation policy results; aggregate indicator monitoring data; multilateral and bilateral partners' strategies and programmes; CSO programme and project documentation as well as intervention-level key documents of a sample covering all MFA's instruments of EDC; and relevant academic and grey literature.

The sample of EDC interventions under each instrument was based on a long-list of EDC interventions as received by the Evaluation Team from the MFA and in selecting the sample, the Team used the following criteria:

- balanced coverage of interventions per instrument,
- balanced coverage of interventions addressing different areas of education development cooperation,
- balanced coverage of volumes with slight tilt towards those with most financing, and
- all interventions implemented in the case countries.

A list of documents reviewed by the evaluation team is found in **Annex 5** and the list of sample interventions in **Annex 3**.

4.3.2. Key informant interviews

Team members conducted fifty-two (52) interviews at global level with experts in the MFA and its partner organizations; and a total of fifty-two (52) interviews in Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine. The team used a semi-structured interview guide flexibly; sub-questions under EQ1 and EQ2 were targeted using probes (in italics underneath each sub-question), as appropriate. An example of the probing question for sub-question 1.1. is provided below.

1.1. What follow-up activities have been implemented as a response to the recommendations to date and by which actor(s)?

What has worked well (*focus on an example of one or more of the following measures*)?

What was the main challenge in taking action and what was done to address it?

(i) Follow up activities to strengthen collaboration between different government sectors? Probe collaborative strategic/thematic planning (MFA, the Embassies, MEC, EDUFI); measure to strengthen collaborative planning with the Embassies.



(ii) Follow up activities to strengthen Finland's engagement with multilateral organizations (influence in and/or active participation in implementation)? Probe the **UNESCO** CapEd programme; the Global School Meals Coalition (**WFP**); the **EU's** education development policy (TEIs); **UNICEF's** global 2019-2030 Strategy: Every Child Learns; the **GPE** global 2025 Strategy for 'systemwide transformation'; the **World Bank's** global 2020 Learning for All Strategy (i.e., systemic approach to education reform); the relationship with the **AsDB** (in addition to positioning of education expert in AsDB).

(iii) Follow up activities to strengthen bilateral support? Probe support provided to embassies to create synergies between cooperation instruments at country level; support provided to embassies' cooperation with key multilateral organizations (EU, WB, AsDB, AfDB, UN, etc.).

(iv) Follow up activities to strengthen Finland's VET profile? Probe added value of VET in education development cooperation; role of VET in addressing the learning crisis; government organizations' support in strengthening the VET profile; creating HEI-VET synergies; collaborative planning g in the VET sector between MFA, MEC, EDUFI and other institutions.

(v) Follow up activities to strengthen HEI-ICI and research collaboration with partner countries? Probe access to HE, digital learning environments, strengthening teachers' pedagogical capacity in digital instruction, and improving the platforms used for distance learning; redesign of HEI-ICI programme: major changes in direction; added value of the change.

(vi) Follow up activities to strengthen strategic investment in new partnerships, multi-actor cooperation? Probe why investment in EE is considered 'strategic'; Education Finland and Team Finland services; the role of EdTech in addressing the global learning crisis; threats (e.g., digital infrastructure; government buy in).

(vii) Follow up activities to strengthen Finland's pool of expertise, including coordinated CSO engagement? Probe platform for domestic CSO collaboration; and for global North-South collaboration; incentives for collaboration; challenges (e.g., competition for limited resources; 'shrinking space' for civil society in some countries) and ways to address these; government organizations' engagement with CSOs.

4.3.3. Country Case Studies

Studies of Country Programmes in Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine were conducted by core team members supported by national evaluators between March-April 2023, with each field visit lasting for a maximum of 7 days. The Country Case Studies were designed to serve a dual purpose.

First, to generate findings from the perspective of key informants in a purposive sample of Finland's long-standing Country Partners; these findings served as an additional evidence stream for the evaluation, supplementing global findings (for EQ 1 and, in particularly for EQ2 as well as EQ3).

Second, the case study generated findings to develop a 'Contribution Story', as a critical instance of the ways in which MFA's Country Programmes, support and strengthen and influence (or not), Finland's Education Development Cooperation (EDC) and EDC policy. The Contribution Stories were designed as part of a 'nested' evaluation ToC, which is discussed in section 4.3.5. of this annex.



The Contribution Stories offer indicative evidence of the ways in which Finland's education development cooperation at country level effect higher-level outcomes, in line with Finland's policy objectives. To develop the Contribution Stories, the evaluation team followed a four-step process, illustrated by **Figure 1**, below.

Before each field visit, evaluators reviewed documentation on the education sector programmes/strategic plans and Finland's country strategies for Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine, in order to identify the results to which Finnish development cooperation (including all country-specific cooperation instruments) is expected to contribute.

Based on the document review, micro-ToCs were developed for Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine; these highlighted expected results 2 in the thematic areas of interest, set out in the ToR.

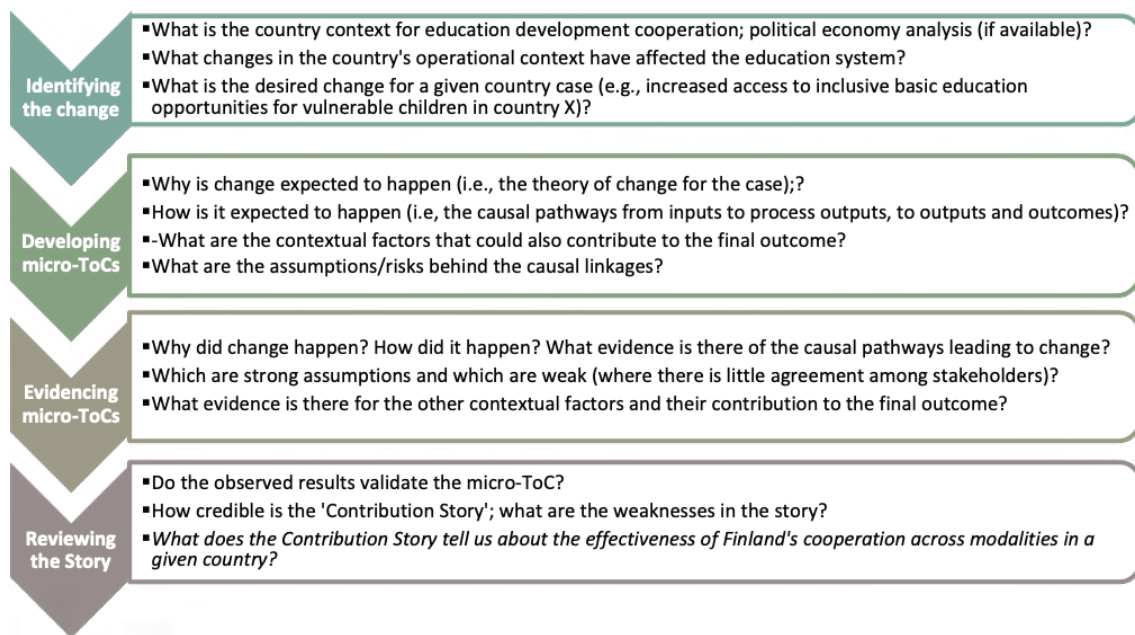
Data from the desk review and key informant interviews were analysed to evidence the pathways of change mapped out in the micro-ToCs, highlighting results which have been achieved (or not).

Assessing the strength of evidence of change across data sources, the evaluation team rated⁸⁰ the credibility of each country Contribution Story, taking account of contextual factors contributing to the change. The evaluation team then undertook a comparative analysis of the Contribution Stories, comparing credibility ratings as well as documenting the relative effectiveness of synergies between actors at country level (and linkages between these synergies and policy influencing at global level).

80 Strength of evidence was 'RAG' rated on the extent to which evidence was available across all data sources: Green = evidence found at least 2 data sources; amber = evidence found in at least 1 data source; red = no evidence.



Figure 1. Four-step Process for developing Contribution Stories



Source: Evaluation team

A cross-analysis of the case studies – an overarching Contribution Story - with examples of analytical findings from the case countries - is presented in section 5.2 of the main report.

4.3.4. Desk-based Thematic Studies

In addition to the Country Case Studies, the evaluation team conducted desk-based Thematic Studies on basic education teacher training in Mozambique, and TVET and life skills training in Ukraine). These provided a further evidence stream and complemented the Country Case Studies. The Thematic Studies are found in **Volume 2** of this report.

4.3.5. The evaluation's 'nested' theory of change - revisited

As mentioned in the main report, the evaluation's overarching analysis framework was theory-based contribution analysis⁸¹. During inception, the team developed a **nested theory of change**. A nested ToC helps to show how different parts of a complex intervention (such as Finland's policy and programme for education development cooperation) fit together, highlighting the pathways from inputs and activities on the ground all the way to impact level change. The ToC's two dimensions were:

- At the **macro-level**, we presented a causal mapping of pathways of change for Finland's *global* development cooperation for quality and inclusive education. This was

81 Theory-based contribution analysis is an approach for assessing causal questions (examining the relationship between cause and effect) and arriving at conclusions about the contribution a policy-/programme level intervention has made (or is currently making and could make in the future) to expected outcomes. It is particularly useful in validating or revising an existing theory of change. The approach is designed to reduce uncertainty about why and how observed results have occurred (or not!) and the role played by the intervention in the context of other internal and external factors.



based on the outputs and outcomes presented in the MFA's ToC published in 2020 as well as the education sector's current results framework for education development cooperation (MFA, updated November 2022), with *no change to the wording of these expressed results*.

- At the **micro-level**, theories of change for partner countries, charted out drivers of change identified in the evaluation case study countries (Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine). These were based on the results chains of the countries' respective Country Programmes. The **sub**-theories of change were 'nested' – or embedded - within the macro framework.

Assumptions behind the nested theory of change were drawn from two sources. First, we reviewed the assumptions included in MFA's 2020 Theory of change, as below (MFA, 2020b):

Outcome level:

- States and donors are committed to SDG4 targets relating to financing, improving education quality and equality.
- Better educated and informed citizens have greater willingness, ability and opportunity to influence political decision-making, demand for greater accountability and promote peaceful and democratic societies.

Output level

- National and international actors create new, effective and scalable models and methods to improve education and education environments.
- Developing countries' own action and good leadership takes place.

Second, we drew on the assumptions behind pathways of change presented in MFA's recent results framework (MFA, 2022c). These by and large expanded on the previous assumptions made in 2020.

Outcome level:

- Increased and more equitable international and domestic education financing with a focus on LDC's.
- Duty bearers are accountable for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to education for all.
- International and domestic education policies strengthen teachers professional status and support
- Regions have sufficient resources to produce reliable SDG4 data and statistics.
- Access to vocational education is substantially increased.
- International education policies strengthen links and relevance of education and labour market.



- The SDG4 global coordination mechanism is effective in strengthening sectorial and multisectoral collaboration and resource mobilization including from the private sector.

Output level

- Investments in multisectoral efforts (school meals, WASH, protection, mental health and psychosocial support) to improve student learning and well-being.
- Expertise is available to support quality improvements in education, including through increasing cooperation of private, public and non-governmental efforts.
- Connectivity for schools and distance learning is improved.
- Teacher supply issues are addressed in public sector policies.
- Data is available on SDG 4.5 and in particular education of children with disabilities.
- Multisectoral barriers to education are addressed (social protection, WASH, GBV, SRHR, infrastructure, DRR).
- The safe schools declaration is implemented.
- Relevant human rights monitoring mechanisms are functional.
- Private and public sectors collaborate effectively to develop vocational and higher education with strong links to labour market and informal sector
- Governments committed to promote topics of human rights, sustainable development, climate change and gender equality in school curricula and in lifelong learning

Our choice of a nested ToC was made for three reasons.

1. Our ‘three-parts-of-a-whole’ analysis required **an agile analytical solution**. Through internal sense-making sessions, the evaluation team attempted to use the ToC as an *iterative, ‘living’ analytical framework*, as a compass to navigate pathways to change, rather than as a static roadmap.

2. **Contexts matter!** Context determine the relevance, effectiveness, coherence and efficiency of change resulting from cooperation efforts The team grounded the evaluation ToC in the contexts of education development cooperation (*particularly at country level*), and a recognition that these contexts are *themselves continuously changing over time*. The importance of contextual volatility is referenced throughout this report.

3. **Drivers of change?** Stakeholders at both the global and the country levels want to know what has and has not worked well in the current multi-actor approach. But they also seek a better understanding of the *enabling conditions for desired change and the constraints that prevent that change from happening*. These are the assumptions behind pathways to change (mentioned above).

Based on the evaluation findings (MFA’s theory of change is referenced throughout this report and the Contribution Story is discussed in section 5.2), we revisited the evaluation’s ‘nested’ theory of change. This is presented below.

Note, two main amendments have been made to the evaluation ToC.



First, we have inserted the composite micro-ToC for Ethiopia, Nepal and Palestine into the 'nested' ToC.

Second, we propose the inclusion of the following intermediate outcomes, linking the macro- and micro-levels of the nested ToC.

Strengthened collaboration between government sectors, grounded in a **consensus-based focus on the right to education**.

Strengthened multilateral engagement by means of **selective, clear and actionable policy messaging**, with a focus on building the resilience of education systems.

Prioritized Country programmes and, within these, a synergic mix of EDC instruments.

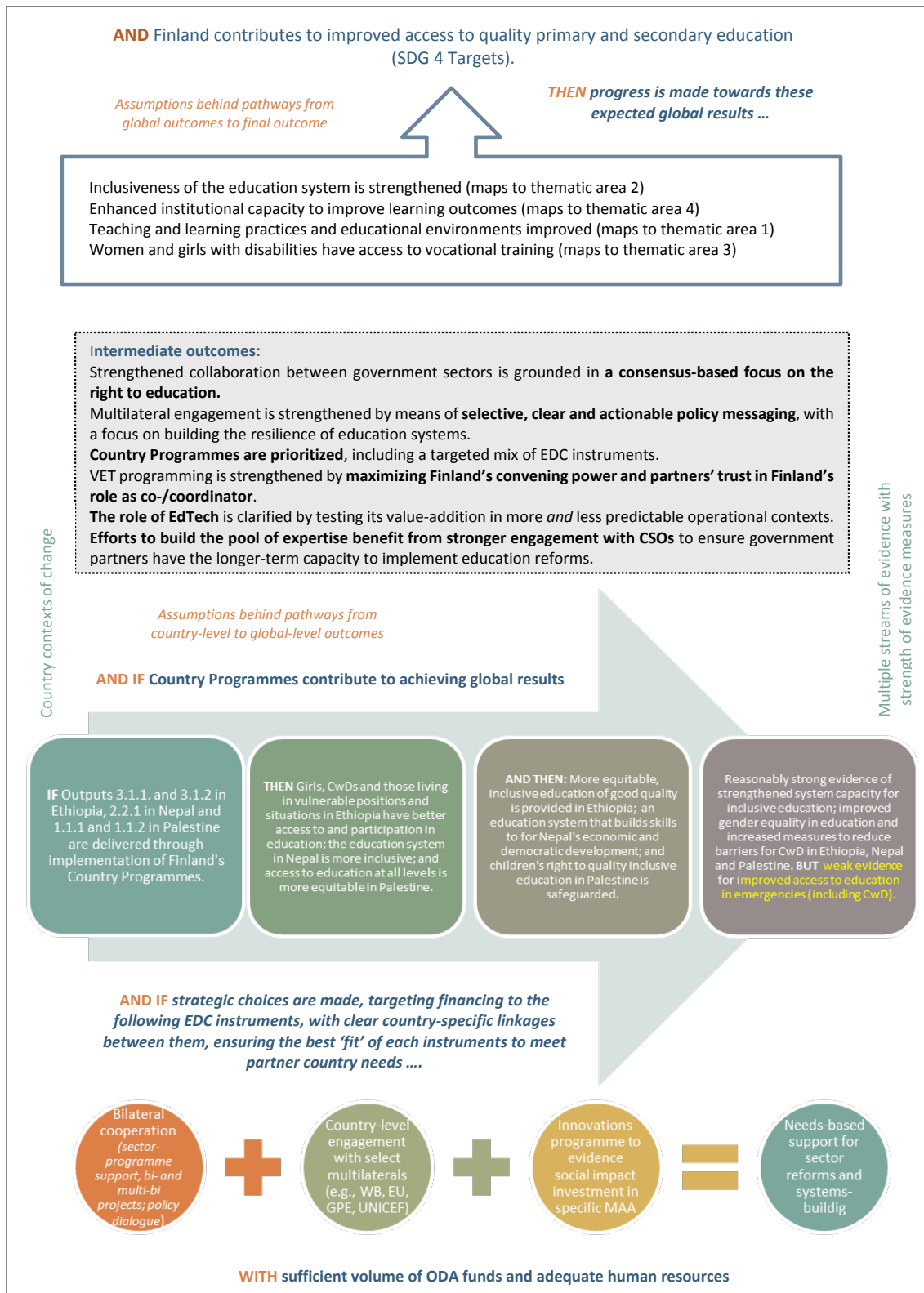
Strengthened VET within the basic-tertiary education continuum, by **maximizing Finland's convening power and partners' trust in Finland's role as co-/coordinator**.

Clarify the role of EdTech within the MFA's ToC, using adaptive programming techniques to test its value-addition in more *and* less predictable operational contexts.

Intensified efforts to **build the pool of expertise in partner countries**, as well as in Finland, in partnership with other donors as well as CSOs to ensure government partners have the longer-term capacity to implement education reforms.



Figure 2. Revisited nested ToC for the evaluation





Annex 5. Interview guide

1.1. What follow-up activities have been implemented as a response to the recommendations to date and by which actor(s)?

1. Please give us examples of follow up activities implemented as a response to the recommendation of the 2018 ‘Stepping Up’ report’; what have been the main challenges and how were these addressed? where relevant, focus specifically on one or more of the following:

1. Follow up activities to strengthen collaboration between different government sectors?
2. Follow up activities to strengthen Finland’s engagement with multilateral organizations (influence in and/or active participation in implementation)?
3. Follow up activities to strengthen bilateral support?
4. Follow up activities to strengthen Finland’s VET profile?
5. Follow up activities to strengthen HEI-ICI and research collaboration with partner countries?
6. Follow up activities to strengthen strategic investment in new partnerships, multi-actor cooperation?
7. Follow up activities to strengthen Finland’s pool of expertise, including coordinated CSO engagement.

2. What should Finland do to further strengthen education development cooperation over the next eight years?

1.2. How relevant have they been in responding to the learning crisis and improving the quality of education, and for whom and where?

3. To what extent has engagement with Finland been relevant for your organization in terms of the following? Where relevant, focus specifically on one or more of the following:

1. Multilateral engagement
2. Strengthening VET
3. Strengthening the HEI-ICI
4. Strengthening strategic investment Education Export (including EdTech)

1.3. To what extent have the measures matched partner expectations and their views of Finland’s areas of added value?

4. What in your view is the added value of collaborating with government organizations/ Finland?



5. What are your organization's expectations of Finland's education development cooperation? What are the gaps, if any?

1.4. To what extent has resourcing been adequate in relation to commitment to education financing?

6. To what extent is there a need for expanding the HR base/expert pool?

1.5. How efficiently have the follow-up measures been implemented since 2019?

7. What measures can be taken to ensure planned actions are implemented efficiently and in a timely manner?

1.6. How have the Finnish development policy cross-cutting objectives been taken into account in the measures (if at all)?

8. Please give us examples how follow up activities have mainstreamed Finland's cross-cutting policy objectives.

1.7. How coherent have the various measures been by the different actors such as the multi-actor coordination group and the MFA?

9. To what extent does Finland's strategic vision for education development cooperation address the challenges of prioritizing some cooperation instruments/modalities over others?

10. What, if anything, needs to be done to strengthen results-based management (RBM) in Finland's education development cooperation?

We may hold a focus group discussion on reflect on future directions for Finland's education development cooperation (in light of assumptions in the evaluation ToC). Are you interested in participating in this group discussion (scheduled for mid-April)?

2.1. What results have been achieved, if any, at different levels during 2019-2022?

1. To what extent has Finland's support contributed to change in terms of addressing the global learning crisis/in country XYZ?

2. What has been the main change; why and how did it happen? Would this change have happened without Finland's contribution; how do we know? Where relevant, focus specifically on one or more of the following:

(i) Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes.



(ii) The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions in better realized.

(iii) Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life.

(iv) Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education.

3. What was the main challenge in making this change happen; how was it addressed?

4. What in your view is the added value of collaborating with the Finns?

5. To what extent has Finnish expertise been relevant in addressing the learning crisis in country XYZ?

6. In which ways have the needs of the education system in country XYZ changed and/or increased between 2019 and 2022?

7. What are the emerging (future) thematic area(s) requiring Finland's support, if any?

2.2. What have been the cumulative, synergistic effects, if any, of a fit-for-purpose multi-actor approach?

8. What is an example of synergies between the various cooperation instruments at global/regional level? Who are the main actors engaged in this collaboration? If time allows, ask for further examples.

9. What are the effects of this multi-actor approach in terms of any/all of the following: Where relevant, focus specifically on one or more of the following:

(i) Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes.

(ii) The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions in better realized.

(iii) Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life.

(iv) Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education.

10. How could this multi-actor approach be strengthened?



Annex 6. Mapping of strategic interventions to identify 7 Stepping Up measures

Legend key: ■ Fast progress ■ Average progress ■ Slow progress ■ No progress Not applicable

2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Overarching measure: Education-focused development cooperation policy		
Education quality and learning are chosen as the overarching theme for all Finnish development activities in the sector, with priority thematic areas.	Education is set as a clear development cooperation and policy priority.	Shared Messages Develop a shared message: a systematic approach to comprehensive training development and the principle of multi-actor collaboration.
	More funds are allocated to development cooperation in the sector.	
Financing: Increase funding for development cooperation to an annual level of 100 MEUR.	Ensure adequate funding for UNESCO and UNICEF, the GPE fund and the ECW initiative.	
	Strengthen the education sector in ADB; consolidate an education expert to promote the bank's engagement in this sector.	
	General follow-up measure: Enhance the statistics, monitoring and evaluation of impact in development cooperation in the field of education in order to achieve these objectives.	



2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Measure 1. Strengthening collaboration between different government sectors		
<p>MFA provides Strategic Leadership.</p> <p>MFA sets up a formal Steering Group for education in development, co-chaired with MEC.</p> <p>MFA and EDUFI expand the areas of collaboration in education and development and institutionalise it to reduce response time and transaction costs.</p>	<p>1.1. Establish a steering group of ministries and other educational actors to strengthen cooperation and to implement and monitor proposed actions; create a national long-term roadmap for education development cooperation in partner countries.</p>	<p>Information exchange and coordination. Develop coordination and exchange of information among Finnish education actors about their cooperation with developing countries.</p>
	<p>1.2. Increase collaboration, strategic planning and communication between Delegations, MFA, MEC and EDUFI.</p>	
	<p>1.3. Leverage the Team Finland network and the related tools, including in partner countries, with particular attention to local cooperation with EU delegations.</p>	
	<p>1.4. Confirm the Team Finland network, including Business Finland's ability to monitor and inform the training project tenders in preparation.</p>	
	<p>1.5. Strengthen connections between specialists in Finland and the Team Finland Knowledge network; provide them with up-to-date information on the Finnish Education Policy; increase interaction between the network, the private sector, and the NGO field.</p>	
	<p>1.6. MEC organises an orientation course for leavers (using the TFK orientation course), including as part of the coaching of the leavers for development co-operation tasks.</p>	



2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Measure 2. Strengthen multilateral engagement (including EU-influencing in the education sector)		
<p>Finland takes the learning crisis as a key area of focus as a UNESCO Executive Board member, restores funding to UNICEF to its former level, and joins the GPE as a funder and an active member.</p> <p>As part of formulating a new education policy for Finnish foreign aid, full consideration is given to education in crises, emergencies and humanitarian assistance.</p>	<p>2.1. Increase impact with additional strategic investment in the industry's most significant public sector actors.</p>	
	<p>2.2. Participate in strategic discussions in UN agencies and development banks and in the development of their country programmes and country strategies.</p>	
	<p>2.3. Promote opportunities for Finnish actors, including educational export companies, to participate in projects carried out by UN actors, development funding institutions and the EU Commission as part of Team Finland.</p>	
<p>Finland prioritises 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.</p>	<p>2.4. Take account of links between Finland's education sector investment with other actors (e.g., WFP, ILO and UN Women).</p>	
	<p>2.5. Strengthen national EU coordination between government sectors; Strengthen impact on EU institutions, especially the Commission's developmental cooperation department at DEVCO; Consider inter-governmental cooperation by providing a national education expert to the Commission</p>	
	<p>2.6. Improve the opportunities for Finnish organisations and companies and other actors to participate in the Commission's tenders by increasing the communication of timely information about them and by actively encouraging the participation of Finnish actors in EU projects; Support education and training actors in the preparation of proposals for EU projects, as applicable.</p>	



2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Measure 3. Intensify bilateral support		
Continue and intensify the work on education sector programmes in long-term partner countries ---	Intensified bilateral support is reflected in many of the follow-up measures under the other six headings, in particular: 1.2, 1.3 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 4.1 5.1., 5.3, 5.4 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6	Identifying and contextualising partner countries' needs Strengthen dialogue with Partner Countries and local actors --- --- including leveraging the potential of digital transformation; Provide orientation on international actors (e.g., World Bank, UN System, GPE) in developing countries and their related needs.
--- by engaging more systematically with Finnish Institutions (e.g., EDUFI, universities).		Make better use of existing research produced in partner countries and international organisations;
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.		Strengthen understanding of the local context (e.g. draw on the Finnish delegation network, Team Finland and the expertise of HEI in the field).
Measure 4. Strengthen Finland's VET profile		
The report has no specific recommendations for VET, but '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 (HELDA, 2018, p.11); the suggestion was taken up in 2019.	4.1. Strengthen the profile of Finland as a developer of vocational training, especially in developing countries with a rapidly growing young population, bearing in mind the need for continuous learning in the adult population. Pilot innovative solutions for VET and continuous learning to have as much impact as possible in a work-life-oriented manner.	
	4.2. Conduct a follow-up review focused on VET to complement Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education report.	



2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Measure 5. Improve HEI ICI and research collaboration with partner countries		
UniPID initiates a consultative process to explore ways of realising the initial vision of a national network, including sustainable funding.	5.1. Strengthen the status and cooperation of education and training development research with partner countries.	
	5.2. Encourage higher education institutions to conduct research in the field of education in cooperation with partners in developing countries.	
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.	5.3. Under the leadership of the Academy of Finland, launch a research program focused on solutions to the learning crisis. The aim of the research programme is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries through research joint ventures and academic mobility.	
Measure 6. Strategic investment, new partnerships, multi-actor cooperation		
Development cooperation becomes more closely integrated into Finland's other international educational activities, such as its 2017-25 international higher education and research policy, education exports, and ed-tech start-up activities.	6.1. Increase effectiveness by combining instruments and pathways used by different actors; Develop financial instruments motivating multi-actor cooperation; Facilitate non-governmental organisations, higher education institutions and private sector joint ventures, e.g. by developing an Institutional Cooperation instrument or by opening thematic searches for joint ventures of actors; Develop a light-structured financing model for implementing pilot projects involving Finnish educational actors.	Financial Instruments Assess financial instruments and domestic and international funding sources for multi-actor collaboration; Map existing financial instruments for multi-actor collaboration; Engage in dialogue with developing countries and financiers to develop project proposals for international funding.
	6.2. Enable higher investment of education and training companies in development cooperation, respecting local ownership, competence and need; Try new partnerships and funding models to enable collaboration between public and private actors; Develop the recognition, functionality and synergies of the Public Sector Investment Facility PIF (e.g., Business with Impact (BEAM)); Develop procedures so that multi-actor joint projects are possible through the above-mentioned instruments.	
	6.3. Increase small-scale seed funding, e.g. by returning funding for pilot projects within Finnpartnership.	
	6.4. Explore the opportunities to use the concept of social impact bonds in development cooperation environments.	
	6.5. Through Finnish digital and technology solutions, aim for greater impact on development cooperation and permanently better learning outcomes in the target countries.	
	6.6. Use pilot projects to develop and test the cost-effectiveness and functionality of applications in developing countries, including in the event of humanitarian crises. Commit to internationally agreed digital principles.	



2018: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEPPING UP REPORT	2019: MEASURES FOLLOWING UP THE 'STEPPING UP' RECOMMENDATIONS, IDENTIFIED BY A DEDICATED TASK FORCE	2022: ACTIONS (PLANNED) IN THE ROADMAP DEVELOPED BY THE COORDINATION GROUP
Measure 7. Building the Finnish expert pool, including CSO coordination		
<p>MFA explore opportunities to initiate an expert capacity deployment window or organisation in partnership with other relevant development actors in Finland.</p>	7.1. Promote the recruitment of Finns for professional education expert positions in key organisations.	<p>Strengthening capacity in the field Develop an educational package of solutions to the learning crisis, utilising Finland's strengths, to provide direction for multi-actor collaboration.</p>
	7.2. Establish an arrangement to allocate human resources to UN organisations and developmental funding institutions in a targeted manner.	
	7.3. Establish a programme providing expert support in the field of education for development and humanitarian assistance, including coaching and training Finnish experts to work in developing country contexts. Resource higher education institutions, including collaboration between Unipd and EDUFI, NGOs and private actors, to provide in-service training on development cooperation in the education sector.	
	7.4. Strengthen the competencies of persons already working in development cooperation and community organisations; ensure messages are consistent and up to date.	
<p>MFA is encouraged to incentivise CSOs to develop joint programs around thematic areas where CSO expertise is strong, including support to education; encourage a closer relationship between CSOs' development activities and Finland's country strategies.</p>	7.5. Increase traineeships in higher education and vocational training for students in developing countries, which can be implemented through a traineeship programme coordinated by EDUFI.	<p>Promote opportunities to Finnish education experts.</p>
	7.6. Target the deployment of experts, UN Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and UNV volunteers. Continue to focus on education and training in recruitment for development finance institutions.	
	7.7. Increase traineeships and volunteering positions (including Teachers without Borders) and funding for development activities and projects in the field of education and training.	
	7.8. Include development cooperation and development issues in the field of education in teacher training and in-service teacher training as part of global education will be investigated with higher education institutions, organisations and private actors. Support sustainable development competencies through project and global education funding from NGOs. Increase funding to promote opportunities for organisations to promote content and pedagogic competencies in the promotion of sustainability objectives (e.g. Transformer 2030 funded and coordinated by EDUFI and Fingo).	



Annex 7. Education sector results from previous evaluations and reports

EDC Results in four policy priority thematic areas in 2021/22

In 2022, Finland reported the achievement of several important results in the **Development Policy Results Report**. The evaluation team analysed these and clustered them, as found below, under the four thematic areas of interest in the MFA's current Theory of change (pp. 32-37, MFA, 2022i).

Outcome 1. Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes.

1. Finland has supported the reform of school systems in 8 partner countries. The education sector programmes supported by Finland have developed the quality of education in 120,700 schools.
2. With Finland's support, the quality of teacher education has improved in 140 teacher education institutions and higher education institutions.
3. Between 2019 and 2021, 160,800 teachers or principals received in-service training with Finland's bilateral support and special multilateral funding.
4. The education reforms supported by Finland in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine and Ukraine have among others improved the status of teachers, increased the number of female teachers and principals (with the exception of Myanmar, and Palestine, where the majority of teachers are women), and developed teacher continuous professional development and support systems.
5. In Ethiopia, school improvement standards have been developed, and every school has its own school improvement plan focused on the quality of teaching and learning environments.
6. In Nepal, a national learning assessment system has been developed and a curriculum reform supported. Finland's position among the joint financing partners to Nepal's School Sector Development Programme provides Finland with direct contact with the country's Ministry of Education. Although structural changes are slow, the number of female teachers in secondary education has increased by almost 24 per cent over the past five years.
7. With Finnish support, the structure of initial basic and secondary teacher education, as well as the content and coverage of teacher education curricula have improved in Mozambique and Myanmar. With the support of Finnish higher education institutions, the pedagogical competence of teacher educators and the research-based and practical nature of teacher education have been strengthened.
8. Finnfund's contribution to the South African Sparks school network has strengthened the pedagogical competence and teaching methods of teachers in 20 schools. 12,000 students at the Sparks schools supported in grades 1–9 in South Africa. 56% of them are girls.



9. Finn Church Aid's Teachers Without Borders programme sent 92 Finnish teachers to Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Myanmar, Palestine, Somalia and Uganda during 2019–2021 to mentor their colleagues.
10. Programmes of Finnish civil society organisations have improved learning conditions and strengthened the competence of teachers and principals to adopt more pupil-centred practices. For example, the work of civil society organisations has supported inclusive education and education related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, health, entrepreneurship and human rights.
11. A total of 25,400 teachers, half of whom were women, have been trained in projects implemented by Finnish CSOs and higher education institutions in 2019–2021.
12. As a result of projects coordinated by CSOs and the private sector, the capacity of 1,600 schools and educational institutions has improved.

Outcome 2. The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions is better realised.

1. An increasing number of girls complete basic education in Finland's partner countries.
2. In Palestine, the education reforms have increased access to public pre-primary education
3. School toilets and water points have been built and rehabilitated in Nepal and girls' clubs that support school attendance have been initiated.
4. With the support of Finland, education systems have become more inclusive and barriers preventing the participation of children with disabilities have been reduced. Duty bearers, such as parents, teachers and principals have been trained. This has strengthened positive attitudes towards inclusion and the capacity of schools to accommodate learners with diverse needs.
5. In Ethiopia, 625 schools have expanded into inclusive education resource centres, and the number of children with disabilities in schools within the school cluster has increased.
6. In 2019–2021, education projects assisted by Finland in conflict and crisis situations reached nearly 1.1 million children and young people, of whom 48 per cent were girls
7. In Myanmar, assistance is directed to ethnic areas in order to improve the right of children and young people belonging to ethnic minority groups to attend school and be taught in their mother tongue (reaching approximately 200,000 children).
8. In Mozambique, an increasing number of children have the opportunity to read in their mother tongue.
9. Assistance has been provided in Lebanon to increase learning opportunities for Syrian refugee children and young people outside the school system. In addition, assistance was provided to allow disadvantaged Lebanese children who have dropped out of school to access education.
10. In South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia, Finnish organisations have supported vocational training and adult education of refugees.
11. With assistance from Finland and other joint financing partners, renovation work was carried out 30 schools in Palestine, which were damaged during the war in Gaza in 2021.



Outcome 3. Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life.

1. Cooperation with civil society organisations has resulted in pre-primary and basic education for 780 000 children and young people, of whom 1,800 were children with disabilities and 48% were girls.
2. Through cooperation with civil society organisations, vocational and life skills training for 6 000 persons with disabilities, 56% of whom were women and girls.
3. Vocational skills, literacy, entrepreneurial skills and life skills to 135 000 young people and adults, 58% of whom were women and girls.
4. In Palestine, the education reforms have enhanced the demand for vocational education and training and improved the labour market relevance of education.

Outcome 4. Multilateral partners and partner countries have strengthened their commitment to inclusive quality education (policy influencing is further discussed in some detail in section 5.1.3).

1. Finland's influencing has strengthened inclusive education in the World Bank Finland and Finnish funded experts to the World Bank have been systematically working to promote inclusive education within the World Bank's education programme. At the Global Disability Summit in 2018, the World Bank made a commitment to make all its education sector projects inclusive by 2025. Inclusive education has become a central part of the World Bank's educational policy measures to respond to the learning crisis.
2. Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education, which Finland supports, provided assistance to organised distance education and to support the safe reopening of schools in 74 countries. The preliminary figures available from a few countries suggest that the number of pupils has decreased since the pandemic. Donors are now working to prevent the change from becoming permanent. The Covid-19 assistance channelled through these, enabled 100 million pupils to continue their education during the pandemic. Of them, 48% were girls. During 2020–2021, 920,000 teachers received support and training for organising distance education.
3. A total of 6.25 million teachers have been employed or trained with the support of the World Bank between 2018 and 2020, more than half of whom were women. Finland supports the World Bank in the development of teacher continuous professional development materials.

Several recent evaluations commissioned by the MFA have assessed elements of EDC as a part of Finland's development policy and development cooperation. Included here are the key evaluations with their results, made use of by the Evaluation Team in the conduct of this evaluation:

EVALUATION OF FINNISH HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE 2016–2022 (MFA, 2022q)

- **Effectiveness. Little data is available to report on humanitarian results in education, and Finland's achievements (and under-achievements) of its humanitarian assistance are not fully reflected in available data.**

While the Humanitarian Policy contains strategies for intended results measurement, these in reality do not deliver robust results reporting. MFA trusts its partners to provide evidence of results, but the shortcomings of this expectation have been widely documented.



From the snapshot of available results, most tangible results achievements have been delivered on the provision of basic commodities, services and facilities to civilian groups, and on ensuring the protection of people affected or threatened by a humanitarian crisis. This is reflected in results data, where its assistance has helped reduce Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and maternal mortality; **enhance access to education for girls/women** and improve livelihoods for women.

- **No specific allocations for sectors.** While the 2012 policy also adopted a sector-focused approach,³ the 2019 policy in the main does not identify specific sectors for allocations, **apart from an opening Ministerial statement emphasising education in protracted crises** and emphasis on sexual and reproductive health rights, below;
 - In Bangladesh Cox’s Bazaar, a FinnChurchAid (FCA) project on Protection and Education for Adolescent Rohingya girls and Women used a wider range of sources to analyse needs, including the Mid Term Review of the Joint Response Plan, a Multi-sectoral needs assessment by UNHCR and the Joint Education Needs Assessment (JENA). Contributions to the JENA through the FCA project on education by targeting neglected age group of 15 – 24 years, and women and girls specifically; also support to GBV as per the JRP • Contributions to the GBV Strategy through FCA project’s provision of protection and psychosocial support to GBV survivors and linked basic literacy, numeracy and life skills.
 - 2019-2021 on Improved Education and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Conflict-Affected Children in Syria, Daar’a governate, forms part of Education cluster activities for the HRP co-led by UNOCHA and UNICEF
 - FCA supported construction of temporary schools and provision of learning materials in 2016. (South Sudan)
- **Relevance: There are positive external perceptions of relevance.** All stakeholders interviewed in case study contexts considered that the Finnish priorities, including the focus on education, resilience, peacebuilding and supporting women and persons with disabilities, were highly relevant to support humanitarian needs in the context. For example, in Syria, Finland was considered to align its assistance with some of the key vulnerabilities of the affected population, such as gender and persons with disabilities. In Bangladesh, stakeholders considered that Finnish humanitarian assistance addressed the gaps in service provision in health, education and protection in Cox’s Bazar, as well as targeting the most vulnerable women and girls.
- **Relevance: Finland is considered by partners to have a strong capacity and reputation for its gender work, linked to its long history of prioritising gender concerns in both its development and humanitarian assistance.** Finland’s advocacy on gender issues had actively introduced a ‘gender lens’ for example to UNICEF’s education programming inside Syria where Finland’s partners emphasised that Finland can play a significant role in leveraging other actors to engage here, given its strong reputational capital as an humanitarian donor. UNRWA praised the consistency and regularity of the Finnish voice on gender.
- **The right of every child to learning and personal development is facilitated.** Number of children whose access to education has been facilitated. Bangladesh: FCA literacy, numeracy and life skills intervention benefitted 560 women and girls (target 160), skills development 88 women and girls; parenting and early childhood pilots benefitted 201 children and 135 caregivers. South Sudan: FCA constructed five blocks of



classrooms and provided training materials to 4,100 children and 60 teachers. Syria: (development funding) Main contributions came through the UNICEF-led No Lost Generation (NLG) Initiative. An independent evaluation of the NLG initiative in 2019 found that the NLG positively influenced funding levels, especially earlier in the response and in relation to youth and adolescent programming later in the response. However, it never had the mechanisms to directly influence the scope or quality of programming and so its influence there was minimal.

- **The 2019 Humanitarian Policy is cognisant of these dynamics, noting particularly the need to intensify cooperation between actors in the development of the ‘nexus’ approach** (see section 4.5 below). More operationally, however, case study found different degrees of Finnish engagement in aid co-ordination structures. In the highly harmonised Syrian regional crisis, Finland’s Regional Strategy 2021-2024 (which combined development and humanitarian assistance) is explicit on its intent to participate in the collective response to the crisis, and lists, throughout its three impact areas and five strategic goals Finland’s role in joint initiatives. In practice, its Embassy presence in Lebanon allows for participation in relevant forums, for example in relation to EU co-ordination on the crisis or in the education sector working group. Even here, though, human resource constraints mean that Embassy staff must prioritise their engagement (pers. comm. 2022). By contrast, in South Sudan and Bangladesh, Finland has no direct engagement in co-ordination forums, but rather trusts its partners to engage as appropriate. The case studies found this engagement operational in practice, with partners linked in to/engaging directly in relevant forums, including e.g. the Food Security Cluster in South Sudan and the Education Sub-Group in Bangladesh.
- **Education in protracted crisis is an underfunded priority area, according to CERF.** In 2019, CERF outlined 4 priority areas that are generally underfunded. These were: (a) support for women and girls, including tackling GBV, reproductive health and empowerment; (b) programmes targeting persons with disabilities; (c) education in protracted crises; and (d) other aspects of protection.
- **CSOs have a comparative advantage in providing education related assistance, and insight and information on conditions for beneficiaries on the ground, in a way that e.g., UN agencies cannot always offer.**
 - HUM: They play a particularly important role in a system where agency resources are highly stretched, and also offer scope for more detailed results reporting than can be achieved through multilateral agencies. There is a need to strike the balance between multilateral and CSO funding. Within some contexts, it is appropriate to structure aid delivery between both multilateral and CSO partners. CSOs consume a relatively small proportion (10% per year) of Finland’s humanitarian resources, but occupy a much larger share of the workload, with proposals needing to be assessed, reviewed, adjusted and approved. The increased threshold of CSO grants to EUR 400,000, and the possibility to apply for two-year funding, introduced in 2021, has sought to mitigate these demands to some extent. However, if Finnish support to CSO humanitarian partners reduces within specific contexts, as for example in the Syrian regional crisis, it is important MFA is aware of potential trade-offs with effectiveness. If Finland reduces its CSO humanitarian funding in some contexts it will be important for the Humanitarian Unit to sustain close links with CSOs funded through development assistance for two main reasons. Firstly, many ‘humanitarian’ or ‘development’-funded CSO interventions in fact span the two as per the ‘nexus’ (see section 4.5 below). Secondly, given its



limited workforce, the MFA needs to avoid losing the sort of insight and experience that field-based CSOs can offer.

- **In the context of increasing fragility, poly-crisis, and protracted crisis the policy focus of development cooperation should be on improving resilience and ensuring quality of education in these situations, including education in emergencies.**
 - **F:** Policy does not sufficiently address these aspects – and the new government programme does not mention fragility and fragile contexts and education is more seen as an item for export
- **Operationalisation of education-related double-nexus (development and humanitarian assistance) has been challenging globally, not to mention triple-nexus (add peace-building).**
 - Finland provides humanitarian assistance in co-ordination with (but not through) national systems and structures. Being governed by the principles of independence and impartiality, humanitarian assistance is usually functionally independent from national systems and structures. **However, the increasing volume of protracted crises globally has complicated this issue, with increasing allocations of humanitarian assistance globally directed through national or, more commonly, joint national and multilateral assistance channels, such as for education in emergencies initiatives.** The evaluation has found that Finnish humanitarian assistance has retained these lines of distinction. While funded humanitarian assistance initiatives, such as a Fida education project inside Syria or the FCA education and GBV project in Bangladesh, were co-ordinated with relevant actors (here the Syrian Directorates of Education at governorate level and the government-led health systems in Cox's Bazar), but not directly implemented through them, its development assistance, where used for an humanitarian purpose, such as the UNICEF No Lost Generation initiative, is implemented directly through the national education systems of host countries (Lebanon and Jordan). Maintaining lines of distinction for humanitarian and development assistance respectively, has helped distinguish the respective purposes of the assistance.
 - Distinctions between 'needs based' and 'rights based' assistance are not always clear. The flexible use of development and humanitarian funding however does raise the question of the different 'rules' governing the respective assistance types. The needs-based principle on which humanitarian assistance rests – so central to the Finnish Humanitarian Policy – does not always sit comfortably next to the rights-based ethos of much (and particularly Finland's) development assistance. Moreover, the practical application of these rules in a protracted crisis is highly complex operationally, particularly where 'needs' and 'rights' may be conflated.
 - An education for emergencies programme, for example, may require engagement with state systems. The boundaries between needs and rights may be difficult to separate in practice. Even within agencies with very specific humanitarian mandates, the boundaries are not always clearly drawn; UNHCR, for example, adopts a strongly rights-based approach in its protection work, while much of UNICEF's emergency work, as in the regional crisis, serves needs as well as rights. WFP undertakes resilience work, and engages increasingly on social protection, but does not adopt a rights-based approach. International Humanitarian Law, of which Finland is a strong promoter, is a fundamental expression of rights.



- **Management and planning: At the country level in Finland’s partner countries the linkages between the education related multilateral assistance, bi-lateral assistance and other forms of support are weak. Linkages between bilateral and multi-bilateral assistance are strong as they are monitored and planned at the country level together with the country team, but links to multilateral support for education provided through multilateral, CSO channels (or humanitarian assistance, if it exists) are very weak, if non-existent.**
 - Country programme a strong platform for planning
 - What to do to strengthen linkages related to education – education advisor? Education-related thematic meeting?
- **Monitoring: Education does not feature in humanitarian assistance, and/or is difficult to track allocations to education.** This evaluation did not specifically look at the humanitarian assistance, however, the ET noted the same challenges related to data as in the overall education portfolio. As the significantly largest main sector is ‘unspecified allocations’ which include core funding and multi-sectoral funding, possible allocations to education might be underrepresented. Evaluation of Finnish humanitarian assistance 2016–2022 noted that more than half of the humanitarian assistance (59%) is ‘unspecified’. Findings of the evaluation showed that proportion of education is between 1-3% of the total funding. However, funding for other sectors, e.g., food assistance or ‘unspecified’ funding could include allocations indirectly related to education (e.g., school feeding).
- **Thematic priority in HUM: Education as Finland’s high policy priority, branding and reputation in education does not sufficiently feature in humanitarian assistance.** Education as a thematic priority is not reflected in operational commitments and accordingly also not featured in results. Finland should commit a part of its resources at the start of each year to thematic humanitarian priorities. These might include e.g., Disability Inclusion and School Feeding, given Finland’s longstanding expertise and reputation in education.

PROGRAMMES FOR EDUCATION AND GAMING. EVALUATION OF SKENE, LEARNING AND EDUCATION EXPORT FINLAND PROGRAMMES (Business Finland 3/19) (businessfinland.fi)

- “Future Learning Finland” (2011–2015) aimed to establish a national education business cluster to build Finnish education export brand and to promote education export in international markets. This programme was followed up by the Education Export, which was implemented during 2015–2016. Both programmes were led and coordinated by Finpro. The programmes provided to their members training on international marketing and internationalisation and organised opportunities to make contacts with potential clients. They also provided support to product development and particularly to the development of joint offers and proposals. The total funding for the programmes was 2,2 M€, of which 1,4 ME came from Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland.
- The programmes were relevant. The education sector programmes (Learning solutions, Future Learning Finland and Education Export Finland) aimed to contribute to the Government’s plan to increase education export, spelled out in the Government Decision in Principle in, which set a strategic target for Finland to become “one of the world’s leading education-based economies resting on the quality of the education system”. The target was set to increase education export to 350 M€ by the end



of 2018. With regards to the game industry, the need for a program to accelerate the Finnish game cluster, providing the funding needed alongside a push towards a business-first mindset was very high, and therefore, Skene was very relevant to the Finnish game industry, and was for the most part able to respond to their needs. The education export related programmes achieved their immediate objectives to a large extent.

- **The Future Learning Finland started a new era for education sector in Finland. It was first time ever to bring together organisations, such as Higher Education Institutions and companies, interested and engaged in education extent. This programme as well as Education Export promoted networking and internationalisation of their members, as well as visibility of education export in the international markets. The evaluation found some evidence that the Learning Solutions programme has contributed to the development of a few learning solutions and that it has also contributed to the development of products for national and international markets. It also resulted in new ways of working and multi-disciplinary expertise.** With regards to the economic impacts, the participants of Future Learning Finland and Education Export Finland have as a group experienced some 35 percent growth in revenue 2011–2016, driven by few larger companies. Companies engaged in Learning Solutions programme, especially smaller companies, showed increased export activity over time, as well as growth in revenue and jobs. **A significant number of companies went from no export activity to engaging in export activity over time with a significantly higher proportion of companies had positive export activity over the years compared to the proportion of companies with negative or zero activity, although it is unknown if the exports directly related to the Learning Solutions programme.** With regards to education export by Higher Education Institutions, data on student fees (sales based on tuition fees for students from outside the EU / EEA countries) is not yet available, because the year 2017 was the first year for tuition fees. However, estimates, a total of 2.7 M€ were accrued to higher education institutions by inter- national students in 2016. However, the contribution of FLF and EEF is not possible to verify. The growth of the game sector during the timeframe of the Skene programme is undeniable. To the extent that the goal of Skene was to professionalize the sector and enable it to have a greater economic impact, there is no question that Skene far surpassed its objectives, creating hundreds upon hundreds of new jobs and billions in increased turnover. During the timeframe of Skene, funding applications were up dramatically, there was a flurry of new game studio startups, the industry headcount more than doubled, turnover was up more than 10 ten times. The economic impact targets of Skene had been far exceeded with more consistent success stories, fueled by a business-first mindset from the game entrepreneurs. In this respect, the Skene programme had a significant impact on the goal of Finland becoming the number one player in the gaming industry in Europe. Considering that the unofficial target for Skene was to hit one billion euros in turnover by 2020, the objective was achieved just past the first year of the programme. There was limited cooperation and sharing of experiences between the programmes. More strategic planning would have been needed to generate complementarity between the education export programmes. With regards to Skene, the game industry is a different business than serious games related to, learning, education and game business. It runs a different business model for different clients with different needs and different goals. If Finnish serious game studios were to make great learning games, that would probably make for a very successful “education export” given the nature of digital games. It would likely require a dedicated program for that to happen. Detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations are provided in the individual reports. **A common nominator for all programmes**



was that the aims of the programme were vaguely specified making it difficult to assess success. Also, systematic planning and reporting would be needed to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of projects. Having clear results statements and monitoring frameworks help to use monitoring as a management and learning tool, and also promotes accountability. More tailored approaches would have been needed to meet the diverse needs of the actors. Also, having programme coordinator already deeply embedded in the sector, would help managing the programmes effectively. Supporting gamification and education export are well in line with the current strategy of Business Finland. **However, appropriate funding instruments would be needed to finance education export and strengthening the public and private partnership.**

- As a response to these desires, the Government of Finland made a decision that education should become a new export product. The Government Decision in Principle (April 24, 2010) set a strategic target for Finland to become “one of the world’s leading education-based economies resting on the quality of the education system”. The target was set for the proportion of education export to grown significantly in overall exports by 2015 and for the turnover of education export to increase to 350 M€ by the end of 2018. An Action Program for Education Export (2013) and the Road Map of Education Exports (2016) were published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC). **Education export is defined in the Finnish Education Export Strategy (MEC 2012) as “all business based on education, training or knowledge transfer, from which a foreign actor pays for a product or service”.** Means for the implementation of the education export strategy consists of **improving networking, productization, quality, marketing development, forming an educational export cluster and activating the higher education institutes as exporters.** According to the strategy, successful export of Finnish educational know-how will be built on the following principles.
- Future Learning Finland (FLF) was a powered by three Finnish ministries: Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (MEAE) and Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). In 2015, a decision was made to replace it with a new programme called “Education Export Finland” (EEF) which had similar objectives. EEF was also managed by Finpro. The Education Export Finland (EEF) was implemented only for one year in 2015–2016 before a decision was made to transfer the education export growth programme to the Finnish National Agency of Education. The work of Education Export Finland growth programme was followed by the **Education Finland -programme, which is managed by the Finnish National Agency for Education (FNAE).**
- **One of the limiting factors for the education export is the financing structure.** The public service providers such as HEIs are not eligible to apply public funding for export promotion and on the other hand, companies told that appropriate financing instruments to support engagement in emerging developing markets do not exist. This is contradicting with the current Development Cooperation policy (MFA, 2016), which calls for private public partnership and linking education export with development cooperation work. The challenges and bottlenecks need to be identified and appropriate measures developed to address and solve them.
- **Finally, education cannot be exported like a “paper machine” as it is based on a wider set of values, norms, and practices influencing teaching and learning.** The Finnish education model can be modified and transferred to international audience and setting, but the core of Finnish education needs to be clearly defined. It is essential to



analyses what were the “secrets” for the good performance in the international studies and then build the export on those. One of the reasons for Finnish reputation in the international markets is general education teacher education (K-12) provided by Universities.

- **Recommendations: The relevant ministries should ensure that the Government of Finland continues supporting education export. A long-term strategy is needed. Funding opportunities and instruments should be expanded to cover co-creation and developing markets, but in a strategic and well-coordinated manner. The relevant ministries should ensure that a proper monitoring system is established for education export and that education export is disaggregated from the customs records as an industry or sector. Clear instructions on what is counted as education export should be developed and disseminated in order to get robust follow-up information. Education export should focus on the strengths of the Finnish education system. Teacher pre-service training is claimed to be the reason behind the PISA success. This general education teacher training is delivered by the Education Faculties by the Universities, which so far have not been very active in education export. One of the suggestions of this evaluation is to explore what incentives are needed and what structural issues should be solved for the Universities to get involved in education export.**
- **Recommendations. The education export programmes should be well resourced and coordinated by experts who have experience both in the Finnish education system and in business development as well as broad understanding of the global education sector development and markets. Similarly, consultants and experts placed in the target countries must have a sound understanding of Finnish education system and its strengths so that they are able to tell the Finnish story. Business Finland should ensure that each programme has a robust monitoring system in place. This would enable learning and using monitoring information as a management and decision-making tool. Situation analyses both in Finland and in the target countries should be conducted, with links to Finnish education system. Programme planning should engage needs analyses.**

SELVITYS SUOMALAISEN KOULUTUSVIENNIN TALOUDELLISESTA ARVOSTA (EDUFI, 2022b)

- Education export is a growing industry in Finland, which is subject to great expectations. For example, the most recent Education Export Roadmap of the Norwegian Board of Education (2020) sets the goal that the value of education exports will increase to one billion euros by 2030. However, the political interest in the education export industry is not reflected in the availability of up-to-date and comprehensive research data, as there is so far only little systematically collected monitoring data on the industry and its economic value. **Political interest not reflected in the availability of data.**
- **Education export is not a clear-cut concept.** Narrowly understood, it means, for example, the export of education across national borders due to the international movement of students and teachers (transnational education), but in **the broad definition used by the Ministry of Education and Culture, education export includes “any business based on education, an education system, or the transfer of skills, for which a foreign entity pays for the product or service designed” (MEC, 2016).**



The lack of stability in the definition of education export naturally also makes it difficult to identify the entire spectrum of operators engaged in education export and thus to determine the exact economic value of education export.

- According to the breakdown of the World Trade Organization WTO's GATS service export agreement (WTO 2013), education exports can be divided into the following areas, the identification of which is important to determine the overall economic value of the activity: A. Education-related service exports: 1) Cross-border supply. A domestic producer sells training services or other intangible goods related to training (e.g. distance learning, correspondence courses, software) from home to abroad. 2) Foreign consumption in the home country. E.g. education of foreign degree students taking place in Finland. 3) Commercial presence abroad. For example, domestic university campuses and company offices are located abroad. 4) Movement of natural persons. Activities of domestic teachers and other trainers abroad. B. Export of goods related to education E.g., export of physical learning materials and contents abroad.
- **All the results of the surveys reveal that the monitoring of the economic value of education exports is quite incomplete all over the world**, as the countries' statistical authorities regularly collect information only on certain aspects of the export of education services and often ignore, for example, activities located abroad and the export of goods related to education, as well as the indirect effects that follow in particular about financial activities during and after foreign studies.
- Although there are still gaps in the data, based on the figures presented in the report, it can be said that the export of education is an economically quite significant activity, the value of which will clearly increase in the next few years. According to our estimate presented above, for example, in 2019, the value added brought by education exports was just under a billion euros, or just under half a percent of Finland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Only a small part of this value added came directly from the income accumulated from the export of educational services¹⁰, and the **value added mainly came from the business supporting the provision of education (especially learning materials and content) and from the indirect benefits of educating foreign students, which came from private consumption during and after studies**. In addition, we estimate that in the academic year 2019–20, foreign degree students at higher education institutions had a positive impact of 81 million euros on the public finances. The calculation takes into account both the resources used for the education of foreigners completing their studies in the relevant academic year, the net annual tuition fees received from them, and the indirect income transfer effects, which are the result of the students' consumption and work, as well as the income earned by foreigners who graduated between 2000 and 2019. The survey at hand has data collection deficiencies typical of such surveys, which is why the results should be considered indicative rather than definitive.
- **Recommendation:** In future data collection efforts should therefore be made to expand the sample of the survey. In practice, the broadest possible identification of the target group of education export operators will require the cooperation of entities close to the players in the field, such as Education Finland, Business Finland and EdTech Finland. (There are data challenges related to measuring EdTech.)



When considering options for determining the value of education exports in the future, one can identify three main approaches:

1. Survey for an identified group of training export operators
2. Searching for information from Statistics Finland's company-level register and survey materials
3. Merging the data from the survey and Statistics Finland (1. + 2.)

**ADAPTING TO CHANGE: COUNTRY STRATEGY APPROACH IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS - EVALUATION OF SELECTED FINLAND'S COUNTRY STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY STRATEGY APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH FOCUS ON FRAGILE CONTEXTS
Volume 1 – Synthesis Report (MFA, 2020g)**

Findings

Relevance: Finland's Country Strategies in the five fragile contexts were designed through diverse processes and served various – though mainly internally MFA-focused – uses. Strategic priorities for Country Strategies were aligned with – but not determined by – conflict and fragility factors. **The analytical basis of Country Strategies in terms of conflict and fragility was weak.** Programmatic assistance was well-aligned with both national strategies and plans, and with the needs of direct beneficiaries and national authorities. However, Country Strategies provided limited guidance to programme partners on ensuring appropriate targeting. **Key dialogue priorities were appropriate to context, and geared to statebuilding, though not informed by Finland's multilateral agency influencing plans.** In volatile environments, Finland's programmatic assistance showed some adaptation to conditions over time. However, the Country Strategy approach can further support adaptive capacity. **Important: Strengthen linkages between country strategies/programmes and multilateral influencing.**

Effectiveness: Despite some technical weaknesses and a lack of incorporation of conflict and fragility indicators, RBM procedures had matured over time. Patchy results were delivered against Country Strategy impact areas, with interventions delivering 'baskets' of individualised results and only limited contributions to fragility reduction (and with few links to the Country Strategy). Results on cross-cutting objectives mostly focused on the inclusion of women and girls in interventions. Positive results were achieved in policy dialogue and informal consultations, with Finland generating a reputation as a principled donor on human rights and gender. **Despite constraints from rigid financial procedures, choices and balance of aid modalities were appropriate, and Finland's choice to direct the bulk of its assistance to fragile contexts via the multilateral system validated. The multi-bi modality also demonstrated its utility. Assistance to fragile contexts validated, as well as multi-bi modality.**

Coherence: Other than in Afghanistan, **the siloed model of MFA assistance was reflected in limited internal coherence.** Finland's assistance was strongly coherent with external frameworks and initiatives despite a limited apparent role of the Country Strategy in promoting this. Programmes and projects financed both within and beyond the Country Strategy contributed to the realisation of Finland's Development Policy Programme priorities in the five contexts, but the Country Strategy had little role in supporting this contribution.



Connectedness: Finland strongly articulated human rights concerns from a principled perspective within its policy dialogue and informal consultations but **programmatic attention to human rights concerns was unsystematic**. Attention to the International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations within humanitarian assistance was variable and partner-dependent. **Although Country Strategies paid strong attention to statebuilding and peacebuilding concerns, a clear conceptual approach to statebuilding was lacking and funded programmes lacked a consistently medium or longer-term view in their designs.**

Conclusions: The evaluation draws eight principal conclusions:

1. Given its diverse applications, and limited awareness beyond MFA, the purpose of the Country Strategy in fragile contexts would benefit from clarification in the next generation, particularly in relation to adaptive management for fragile contexts
2. **The Country Strategy approach has further scope to support internal and external coherence, with fragmentation evident across MFA departments and units and little evidence of Country Strategy role in supporting Finland's strong external alignment.**
3. Finland's assistance to fragile contexts was broadly relevant to both the needs of beneficiaries and of key stakeholders. However, the first generation of Country Strategies (other than the White Paper for Afghanistan) played a benign but largely passive role in assuring relevance.
4. **Finland has valuable reputational capital as a principled and neutral actor in fragile states, including taking a progressive and proactive stance on gender and human rights. This capital has potential for further leverage to contribute to statebuilding and peacebuilding aims.** However, there was limited use and awareness of the 2014 Fragile States guidelines,
5. Results based management processes allied to the Country Strategy approach demonstrated a high value in a siloed organisation but still have potential to mature, including a more systematic approach to risk management
6. Valuable results were delivered in fragile contexts through the Country Strategy approach, but do not yet comprise 'more than the sum of the parts', being largely individualised and fragmented. They were **not steered by a clear fragility reduction agenda. Limited attention to some marginalised groups** bring into question the realisation of Finland's Human Rights Based approaches commitments. Choices and balance of aid modalities were appropriate for needs.
6. The Country Strategy approach can further support the linking of assistance to medium term objectives, for example through improved financial procedures, as well as help guide assistance towards nexus concerns, with a stronger emphasis on peacebuilding.
7. The Country Strategy approach can further support Finland in the delivery of a human rights-based approach. **Finland's role as a standard-bearer for human rights in policy dialogue within several fragile contexts was not consistently supported by programmatic attention to rights issues, arising from the largely trust-based approach to partners.**

Recommendations: Building on the evidence presented, the evaluation makes six recommendations, further elaborated in the full report:

Structural recommendations



Recommendation 1: Explicitly conceptualise the Country Strategy approach as a tool for adaptive management in fragile contexts, **building links between humanitarian and development assistance where possible**. This would require actions including:

- (i) Clear specification of the purpose of the Country Strategy within the fragile/conflict-affected context, geared to its role as a provider of strategic direction; internal and external accountability; and learning for MFA and partners;
- (ii) **Definition of the specific intent of Finnish assistance employing an explicitly political lens, and gearing intended contributions to fragility and conflict reduction/ specific peacebuilding and state-building aims for the operating context;**
- (iii) Specification of the intent of the Country Strategy as a tool for adaptive management in the context,
- (iv) Explicit recognition/statement of anticipated risk levels and types and
- (v) **Commitment to the pursuit of a closer relationship between humanitarian and development programmatic streams. These linkages are important in fragile contexts – also related to education.**

Recommendation 2: Enhance the technical rigour of Country Strategies in fragile situations, geared to specific peacebuilding and statebuilding aims in the context and with strong attention to risk.

This recommendation **includes enhancing the analytical basis of Country Strategies, particularly the Political Economy Analysis; improving the conflict/fragility sensitivity of Country Strategies, with a particular focus on state-building and peacebuilding goals; developing broad guidance on State-building and Peacebuilding in fragile situations; and ensuring that conflict and fragility issues are integrated into Programme based Support grants for Civil Society Organisations and Multilateral Influencing Plans**. It also includes linking assistance more closely to medium term goals, particularly with a peacebuilding and statebuilding lens.

Recommendation 3: **Increase financial flexibility for work in fragile contexts and develop appropriate financing modalities for fragile contexts**. This recommendation proposes two mechanisms to enhance flexibility in its financial processes; (i) Approve the Country Programme, including its respective financial allocation (subject to Parliamentary approval of the budget), for its duration (four year period) in advance, to maximise flexibility of programmatic approval and (ii) **Consider thematic windows for assistance to fragile contexts, specifically geared to providing rapid assistance, and which explicitly link humanitarian and development funding streams**. A Helpdesk function may also be considered around the issue of fragility and conflict, to support MFA staff.

(ii) Procedural recommendations Recommendation 4: Enhance the RBM systems allied to the Country Strategy to maximise their value with a specific emphasis on risk in fragile contexts.

This recommendation suggests reviewing and revising RBM frameworks to clarify the statement of Finnish intent in the country at impact level, centred firmly on fragility/conflict reduction; and to apply relevant international indicators on fragility as a reflection of progress. It proposes improving the system of Mid-term reviews and independent evaluations. It also suggests ensuring that risk management directives within the revised Country Strategy guidance are fully implemented.



Recommendation 5: Refresh or revise the key policy frameworks for working in fragile contexts. This recommendation proposes revisiting the 2014 Fragile States policy, which is not widely known or utilised within MFA; and developing an MFA-wide Risk Policy, which specifies Finland's degree of risk tolerance, and clearly sets out risk categories, including those related to conflict-affected and fragile situations.

Recommendation 6: Ensure more rigorous treatment of the Human Rights-Based Approach in fragile contexts. This recommendation suggests integrating a robust human rights context analysis into the strengthened Political Economy Analyses, and requiring all revised Country Strategies to include clarity on human rights aims and objectives. It indicates increased rigour in ensuring the use of human rights-based approaches within funded initiatives, and the inclusion of human rights analysis within Mid Term Reviews.

EVALUATION OF FINNISH DEVELOPMENT POLICY INFLUENCING ACTIVITIES IN MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS Volume 1 – Main report (MFA, 2020h)

– Education included

The evaluation team found that Finland – and Finnish development professionals – enjoyed a very good reputation in Multilaterals and among partners. Finland was considered a defender of human rights and strong supporter of multilateralism, and to possess experience, expertise and credibility especially related to gender equality, the rights of persons with disabilities, **education**, technology and innovation. Finnish development professionals were perceived to be honest, unbiased, well-informed, accessible, pragmatic, reliable, hard-working and non-hierarchical. This strong, consistent and remarkably positive perception of Finland and Finns was found to be of critical importance for effective influencing.

9. Innovation at UNICEF **UNICEF's Innovation Fund** is up and running. Several innovation programmes are being piloted and positive results already yielded in some areas. Important Finland, together with Denmark, supported UNICEF with softly earmarked funding for UNICEF's innovation work. UNICEF's innovation work may continue to keep yield new and innovative approaches to reach vulnerable children and youth with social and educational services.

A remarkable finding across many interviews conducted with staff in multilateral organisations and donor partners was that – over time and between different activities – Finland's "influencing message" would remain consistent. For example at the WBG, interviewees described that whether they had spoken to the Finnish Executive Director, MFA staff in Helsinki or listened to the Finnish president visiting the Bank or to Finland's Minister of Finance speaking at the Board of Governors, messages about the importance of gender equality, education and the rights of persons with disabilities had been very similar and constant over time, even when the people holding political or civil servant positions or Finland's government had changed.

Perceived areas of experience and expertise • Human rights (specifically gender equality and rights of persons with disabilities) • **Education** • Digital/technology, innovation

The observed influencing effect was that the 2018 WDR (World Bank 2018c) "Learning to Realise Education's Promise" heavily references the Finnish education model with a particular emphasis on learning outcomes and a core contributor to those outcomes, teaching quality: "Finland's system gives considerable autonomy to its well-educated teachers, who can tailor their teaching to the needs of their students" (World Bank 2018c, p.13). Analysis of the 2009 OECD's Programme for



International Student Assessment (PISA) results found that “the best performing school systems [in Canada; Finland; Hong Kong, Japan; the Republic of Korea; and Shanghai, China] manage to provide high-quality education to all students” rather than only to students from privileged groups (World Bank 2018c, p.78). **The WBG Education Global Practice embraced the criticality of the “learning crisis” identified in the WDR as part of its strategic prioritisation and noted the potential for the Finnish education model, and in particular the Finnish approach to teacher training, to address the learning crisis.** Consequent on the above, Finland is currently negotiating engagement in a **Trust Fund (COACH)** that will support teacher training. The COACH programme reflects a new effort to strengthen how the World Bank supports teachers to be effective and successful. The programme underpins the efforts of the second pillar of the Education Global Practice’s approach and the second component of the Literacy Policy Package. The COACH programme will focus on supporting teachers to improve the delivery of content, rather than the assessment and/or revision of the content itself. The global COACH team will work closely with other teams such as the Teachers Thematic Group, the Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Thematic Group and as part of the Learning Poverty team to develop Global Public Goods and guidance on content and curricula.

Based on desk review and a series of interviews at the MFA and the WBG, the WBG Agency Case found that Finland was very influential in the production and content of this WDR. The report shone a light on the Finnish education system/model and opened the door for Finland to exert influence in this hugely important area of development.

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The WDR was considered to have influenced strategies subsequently released by, for example, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Within the World Bank, there is ongoing interaction between the task team leaders of the 2018 WDR and the Education Global Practice Director, as the report continues to influence the Bank's education approach.

Thinking further ahead, the ongoing engagement between Finland and the WBG's Education Global Practice has significant potential in cracking what has been a very hard development nut i.e., ensuring quality education outcomes rather than simply having children enrolled and attending school. The literature (e.g. World Bank 2019b) suggests that quality education outcomes are critically predicated on teacher quality. It follows that, if teacher training can be improved in the developing world, education outcomes will likely be enhanced.

The new Trust Fund (COACH) supported by Finland may generate evidence to inform larger scale World Bank operations (as well as operations of other involved development partners). However, much as Finland's system – and that of other top performers – is admired, the WBG recognises that lower-performing systems that simply import Finland's teacher autonomy into their own contexts are likely to be disappointed. If teachers are poorly prepared, unmotivated, and loosely managed, then giving them greater autonomy will likely compound rather than solve the problem (World Bank 2018c, p.175). As such, in line with Finland's engagement with other The 2018 World Development Report may have influenced strategies of DFID and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation A Kenyan woman reading. Finland has been a global advocate for education sector development issues – e.g. gender, human rights – it is likely the realisation of real progress on teacher training / enhancing education outcomes, will require long term commitment.

Finding 6. Within its bilateral development cooperation in **Nepal** and Kenya, Finland has also been effective in influencing Multilaterals at the country level. Finland has worked with the IFIs and UN agencies in both Nepal and Kenya. Reflecting Finland's strong core support to UN Women on the global level, over the study period, Finland has also provided country-level multi-bi support to UN Women that is indicative of its determined and sustained support for the agency, with a view to enhancing its capacity to better represent gender issues in the development arena. **The evaluation team finds this support indicative of Finland's moving away from a project-based model to the provision of support for the country strategies of the agencies in question and Finland's broader commitment to a multilateral approach to development.** Donor co-ordination groups – overall and at sector level e.g., in Nepal, Finland has chaired the Gender and Social Inclusion Group for a period of time and is now moving on to Co-Chair the Education group; in Kenya Finland is currently chairing the Joint Donor Group on Elections and also Chairs the Education Group. Bilateral meetings to discuss programming and progress; • Monitoring field missions; • Day to day contact with some Multilaterals (e.g., UN Women in both Nepal and Kenya seeking opinions or requesting review of studies).

Education has become a focus area in development banks and was also mentioned for other agencies (while dropped in others, e.g. UNICEF).

that Finland was very much aligned with where the WBG wanted to get to with reference to education policy and the pursuit of quality outcomes. The Director added that **Finland could be hugely**



influential in promoting a broader holistic view of education. And that a revamped engagement was very much welcomed (approved citation). At the time of interview there was a single Finn on the Education team – there was a view that **there was room for greater presence of Finnish nationals on that team given Finland’s accomplishments, experience, and values concerning education.** The Director also suggested that there was space for more people in Finland to be exposed to international development challenges i.e., the challenge of translating national experience and expertise into other contexts to promote sustainable development. In addition, he also noted that **the use of technology in education was important and that Finland may have lessons to share in that regard – although there may be many contextual differences across countries, there should be lessons that can be shared about the basic question of how to effectively use digital tools in education** (approved citation).

Strong influencing effectiveness relates to long-term change processes

The selection of thematic areas and objectives is relevant

Finland’s reputation is a very important contributing factor that enables effective multilateral influencing.

Recommendations. Based on these conclusions, the theory of change for multilateral influencing and observed key factors affecting influencing effectiveness, eight recommendations were developed.

Four strategic recommendations focused on the continuation of multilateral influencing activities in light of their proven effectiveness, on their further strengthening through increasing staff capacity and using staff placements more strategically for influencing, and by slightly broadening and clarifying the overall approach.

1. Continue multilateral influencing largely in a similar manner as in the past, reflecting established good practices, and consider increasing political and financial support specifically for multilateral influencing activities. The processes and frameworks introduced with the MFA’s reform of development cooperation practices should be used to ensure that political and financial support is strong, explicit, consistent, predictable and reliable. **Within the multilateral development policy channel, the MFA should consider increasing political and financial support specifically for multilateral influencing.**
2. Allocate more staff capacity to multilateral influencing. The MFA should estimate capacity needs and moderately increase staff levels in critical areas to allow the MFA units, missions and embassies, representations and constituency offices to not anymore miss high-value opportunities for multilateral influencing.
3. **Use staff placements more strategically, and make better use of the information Finns working in multilateral organisations can provide.** The MFA should clarify priorities for staff placement programmes between simply placing Finns into multilateral organisations and using this channel strategically for influencing. Occasions for strategic targeting of staff placements should be identified in dialogue with multilateral partners and with Finns already working there.
4. **Broaden the approach from multilateral influencing to multilateral engagement by developing a structured rationale for each envisaged engagement.** The MFA’s approach to multilateral influencing should be described in a concise public policy note



that reflects established good practices and the findings of this evaluation. Multilateral influencing should be replaced by the broader concept of multilateral engagement that also covers less visible influence, and the note should clarify choices and trade-offs related to funding modalities, staff placements and Finland's governance duties in Multilaterals. Two operational recommendations served to reduce loss of influencing effectiveness due to staff rotations and difficulties in accessing relevant information.

5. Take measures to enhance continuity of staff in charge of multilateral influencing, ensure effective handovers during staff changes, and offer targeted coaching and training. The MFA should identify ways to allow key staff involved in multilateral influencing to stay in their positions for longer times, and good handover practices between outgoing and incoming staff should be applied that include a job dossier, coaching and mentorship.
6. Ensure that staff involved in multilateral influencing have access to the information and experience they need. Key staff involved in multilateral influencing should be assisted with collecting information from MFA embassies and other sources, and with relevant review and analysis. The MFA should also encourage more consultation and knowledge exchange in the context of multi-bi projects. The final two recommendations are aimed at further improving how the MFA manages multilateral influencing by strengthening strategic prioritisation and flexibility.
7. Continue to develop the MFA's influencing plans, reports and related processes towards a more strategic and adaptive approach for managing multilateral engagement. Building on the 2020 influencing plans, the MFA's future approach to multilateral influencing should strategically prioritise long-term, system level goals, involve influencing teams for each goal, and further increase flexibility of planning, implementation and reporting.
8. Conduct a pragmatic assessment of Finland's multilateral partners, and use this to prioritise strategic long-term opportunities for multilateral engagement. To support strategic prioritisation of scarce influencing resources, the MFA should conduct a pragmatic assessment of Finland's portfolio of multilateral partners, trust funds and programmes along the most important factors contributing to Finland's multilateral influencing effectiveness, as identified in this report.

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Summary answer: The MFA's EU influencing strategies are coherent with its development policy and generally well understood, but they are complex, not always well focused, and prioritised, nor always farsighted enough. In terms of resources, there is no monitoring of staff time on influencing and some staff are clearly stretched, though there are also some good examples of flexibility in staff deployment. Leveraging of EU funds for Finland occurs, but it is not extensive. External views are positive on the competence and professionalism of MFA staff and organisation. Internal views on roles and responsibilities are more mixed. There are some good instances of informal and ad-hoc reporting, but institutionalized. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems are almost non-existent.

Gender equality stands out as an area where Finland has achieved multiple outcomes though its ambitions on SRHR were not entirely met. There are also individual outcomes relating to other thematic priorities (e.g. rights of persons with disabilities, education), but no specific outcome on Africa. During both the process moments of the EU Presidency and the NDICI-GE negotiations Finland successfully achieved various outcomes it was seeking.



During the evaluation period, the MFA has achieved most of its EU policy influencing objectives on gender equality and education.

Education is another area where its leadership is recognised and respected.

There is also evidence of good coordination with the Ministry of Education on programmes in this sector (e.g., in Ukraine, Tanzania).

Respondents to the survey felt Finland was particularly strong in joint management of programmes and donor coordination as well as in building coalitions with the EU and EU MS. They had also played a strong role in debates on the rights of women and girls and on education and, to a lesser extent, on discussions on the sustainable use of natural resources.

Education is another area where Finnish expertise is widely recognised and respected as is apparent in evidence from both Nepal and Ukraine. Finland's demonstrated lead expertise in the education sector, coupled with its long-standing partnership with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, was in the eyes of the MFA key in getting the EU on board. "Finland is the biggest bilateral actor in primary and secondary education, EU had an agenda and realised it would be easier to channel their funds through Finland."

The MFA has also come to influence EU's response to Commissioner Urpilainen's personal pledge to increase the share of education in EU development cooperation, with the European Commission notably committing to an increase in its contribution to the Global Partnership for Education (Outcome 11).

Education The EU has increased its contribution to the Global Partnership for Education 2021.

With the EU increasing its commitment to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Finland has largely met its main objective under education, which is to strengthen the EU's global role in education development policy. The MFA developed a set of influencing objectives on education relatively recently, partly capitalising on the opportunity provided by Commissioner Urpilainen's prioritisation of the topic.

The choice of DG INTPA Commissioners (and their advisers) and their priorities are also an important factor. Under the previous Commissioner Mimica, gender equality was a priority. Under the current one, it is now education. In addition, the current Commissioner is Finnish, which Finland rightly identified as an opportunity to influence the EU (MFA internal report, 2021a). As part of her pledge to strengthen EU's commitment to education, the current Commissioner has also appointed a Finnish education adviser with strong links with the MFA which has boosted influencing opportunities for Finland.

A similar approach could be adopted to education and climate, particularly as education is fundamental to changing attitudes on climate.

Nepal: First case of EU Delegated Cooperation for Finland Strong focus on WASH, climate resilience, gender equality and education.

Education. Strengthening the strategic approach and impact of education cooperation overall with a focus on low income countries, basic and secondary education (including vocational training);



support to key funds and partnerships (GPE, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and SDG 4 coordination mechanism); prioritising girls and the most vulnerable children and young people, including the disabled; school meals; high-quality programming by placing three national experts in DG INTPA, the EU delegations in Addis Ababa and Abuja; linking Team Finland actors in the education sector to TEIs and EU programming; teacher training; EU education summit planning and implementation.

Looking across all relevant strategic documents over the review period, influencing the EU development cooperation on education has remained a secondary objective, until the new Commissioner Urpilainen (who took up her post in 2019) made an announcement that education will be (one of) her priorities.⁵⁶ The ToC (2021), under Priority Area 3, includes an explicit ‘policy influencing’ objective, with some reference to increasing the global commitments to inclusive education. The ToC output target does not just target the EU but also all IFIs. Since then, **the MFA has strengthened its emphasis on influencing EU’s development cooperation on education, including through Team Europe.** The MFA development policy objectives for the EU strategy (MFA, 2018c) include for the first time a stand-alone section on Education (over 2 pages). In MFA’s EU impact plan 2022 (covering all EU matters) (MFA, 2022c)”, Finland supports the strengthening of the EU’s global role in education development policy.

The EU has recently made an announcement to increase its contribution to the GPE, which is in line with one of the recommendations that Finland made to the EC and Finland’s specific focus on increasing the global commitments to education. Under NDICI, the Annual Action Plan for Sub-Saharan Africa includes an education component for the first time in 2022. With Team Europe (see below), the EU and MS have also taken steps to strengthen their coordination on education, at country, regional and global level, on the back of the Council conclusion on Strengthening Team Europe’s commitment to Human Development (June 2021), which Finland contributed to.



Annex 8. Multilateral deep dives

European Union

As the world's top donor when it comes to supporting education, the EU plays a vital role in promoting education globally. Together with its member states, the EU's funding accounts for around 55% of ODA to education. DG INTPA has increased its funding from 7 to a minimum of 10% for education. With its extensive reach, the EU supports education in approximately 100 countries across the world, both within its neighbourhood and beyond.

The EU's approach to education assistance is flexible and context-specific. It collaborates closely with partner governments, member states, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector to ensure its interventions align with the unique needs and priorities of each partner country. The EU employs various funding instruments to facilitate this support, embracing bilateral cooperation, regional funding initiatives like Erasmus+, and participation in global funds such as the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait.

At the national level, the EU aligns its support with the education sector policies and plans of its partner countries. Active participation in education sector coordination groups and policy dialogue forums helps shape these efforts. Typically, the EU's support for education involves multiple programmes or projects designed to enhance education system management and improve teaching and learning in schools. On a regional scale, the EU finances higher education initiatives like Erasmus+ and the Pan African Programme, which foster mobility, collaboration, and partnerships in education, training, youth, and sports. An outstanding example is the 100 MEUR Regional Teachers' Initiative in Africa, addressing the urgent need for 15 million qualified teachers in Africa by 2030. This initiative facilitates cross-country cooperation, partnerships, and peer learning, both within the region and with Europe. Additionally, the EU has established Trust Funds, such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis to address specific regional challenges. These funds, jointly financed by the EU, its member countries, and other development partners, work closely with local and national authorities, as well as civil society, to support vulnerable populations.

In the realm of global initiatives, the EU actively contributes to efforts aimed at enhancing policy dialogue and addressing financing gaps in the education sector. Key engagements include the following:

- GPE: the EU plays a significant role in GPE, contributing 475 MEUR, which constitutes 16% of total GPE funding. When combined with contributions from EU member states, the EU's share rises to 51% of total GPE funding. GPE works to strengthen education systems in developing countries and has positively impacted nearly 25 million children in partner countries between 2015 and 2018.
- Education Cannot Wait: the EU provides 27.5 MEUR to ECW, a fund dedicated to education in emergency and protracted crises. Together with its member states, the EU accounts for around 40% of total ECW funding. The EU also actively participates in



the high-level steering group of ECW. Since its launch in 2016, ECW has reached 3.4 million of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach children and adolescents in crisis-affected countries.

In summary, the EU's commitment to global education is comprehensive and multifaceted, aiming to address the diverse needs and challenges faced by partner countries while contributing significantly to global initiatives and partnerships focused on education. (European Commission, 2022 & 2023)

Between 2019 and 2022, EU policy has focused increasingly on sustainable education financing, and Finland has aimed at 'making inclusive, quality education a key objective of EU cooperation' (Prime Minister's Office, 2021). The EU's development cooperation is based on the European Consensus on Development (2017), aligned with the EU commitment to the UN 2030 Agenda, with a vision of education as essential for the achievement of all SDGs. Given this clear alignment of policy interests, the EU is 'a natural channel for influence in Finland'; on the one hand, 'the EU needs our support to strengthen the global role in the education sector', and on the other hand, 'EU cooperation enables Finland to have a greater chance of influencing relative to our size' (MFA, 2021f).

In line with MFA's Africa Strategy (and MEC's Action Plan for the same), at the forefront of Finland's recent cooperation with the EU is its engagement with EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package and the Team Europe Initiatives (TEI), the flagship of the Team Europe approach. (see **Box 1**). Team Europe is "*about branding EU interventions and creating more visibility*", but it is also – in theory - about building resilience; "*systems-strengthening is intrinsic to us, a foundation of efficient utilisation of ODA and achieving results*" (KII: GPE; KII: MFA). In practice, there is strong consensus among stakeholders that participation in the TEI's is about "*leveraging Finnish competencies*" (KII: MFA).

Box 1. Team Europe and the EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package

Introduced in April 2020 in a **changing geopolitical context**, the concept of Team Europe sends a 'strong message' of European partnership and solidarity to realise the SDGs, showing that multilateralism works by pooling resources and improving the coherence and coordination of efforts in order to make the greatest sustainable impact and transformational change, notably at partner country level. **Team Europe Initiatives (TEI)** are the flagship of the Team Europe approach, financed both from the EU budget as well as by participating EU Member States. Joint analysis, underpinned by the EU's political and policy priorities, identifies a priority bottleneck that is limiting development and where a coordinated and coherent effort by Team Europe would deliver concrete results for partner countries in line with their national priorities. TEIs can also be multi-country or regional, where synergies and efficiency at this level can be secured.

The **EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package** is delivered through TEIs in the following 5 priority areas.

Accelerating the green transition by achieving the following by 2030: increased renewable energy generation capacity; sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity protection; more sustainable African agri-food systems; and enhanced capacity of partner countries to adapt to climate change and reduce disaster risk.

Accelerating the digital transition through progress towards universal access for all in Africa to reliable internet networks.



Accelerating sustainable growth and decent job creation by means of improved multi-country transport infrastructure to facilitate mobility and trade within Africa and between Africa and Europe; increased private sector support for young entrepreneurs, especially women and especially in the North Africa region; progress towards realising Africa's vision of an African Continental Free Trade Area; sustainable mineral raw materials value chains; and improved capacities in science, technology and innovation.

Strengthening health systems by supporting Africa's efforts in vaccine deployment, infrastructure and production capacities, skills development, regulatory frameworks and universal health coverage.

Improving education and training by supporting the EU's African partners in providing modern, quality education and training for all children and youth, training that corresponds to the opportunities available at the labour market, facilitating youth mobility, and fostering innovative solutions to enhance teachers' competences and skills.

Source: EU, 2022a; European Commission, 2023a

Indeed, the EU's lack of education policies beyond the European Consensus on Development, has been identified as a *"major challenge"* by Finnish experts delegated to Brussels as well as in the EC delegation in Addis Ababa. An interesting attempt to address this lacuna is currently being addressed by the expert positioned in DG-INTPA: development of (draft) guidance documentation on sector-wide 'Green Education'. INTPA is drafting similar guidance for different education sub-topics. At present, based on COP 27, only 45/140 of the Nationally Determined Climate Contributions (NDC) have explicitly linked climate change and education (Kwauck, 2021). However, the concept of **Green Education** builds on existing initiatives, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in 2005; leading on to ESD being included as a focus areas in the EU's NDICI funding instrument for 2021-2027 and the EU's ambitious Green Deal⁸², which highlights the transformational power of education; and culminate in June 2022, with EU member states' confirmed commitment to green education (adopting both a Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainability and Council Conclusions on the transformative role of education for sustainable development).

Indeed, for the 2021-2027 period, *"the EU will dedicate a percentage of its INTPA budget to climate action, with additional financing for education"* creating a win-win opportunity for climate education (KII: MFA/EU). At the time of writing the EU's Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Ethiopia is *"under internal discussion"*; however, given Ethiopia's early engagement with the UN CCLearn initiative⁸³, it may be interesting for Finland and its partners to explore the opportunity for climate education in the Ethiopian context (KII: EU-Delegation).

82 For further detail, see: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/>

83 For further detail, see <https://www.unclearn.org/country-projects/ethiopia/>



World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB)

In addition to bilateral co-financing of sector support programmes (e.g., GEQIP in Ethiopia), discussed in **Volume 2** of this report, Finland's cooperation includes contribution to the International Development Association (IDA)⁸⁴ and participation in the Global COACH programme.

Contribution to International Development Association (IDA). As the largest source of aggregate external funding for education, IDA has provided over US\$28 billion to improve education over the last five replenishments, representing on average 10 percent of IDA commitments. The overarching theme of the 19th IDA, replenishment cycle (IDA19) was '*Ten Years to 2030: Growth, People and Resilience*', aimed at supporting the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries to implement country-driven solutions that strengthen resilience in the face of risks arising from conflicts, climate change, financial crises among others. IDA19 built on lessons learned under the five special themes of the previous cycle: Fragility Conflict and Violence, Climate Change, Gender and Development, Governance and Institutions, and Jobs and Economic Transformation. The most recent replenishment of IDA's resources, the twentieth (IDA20), was finalised in December 2021, resulting in a historic \$93 billion financing package for IDA countries for the fiscal years 2022-2025. IDA20 will focus on 'Building Back Better from the Crisis: Towards a Green, Resilient and Inclusive Future' and will continue to support the previous special themes. Notably, IDA20 will elevate Human Capital (including Disability as a cross-cutting issue) as a special theme and Crisis Preparedness is introduced as a new cross-cutting issue. Finland made a financing commitment to IDA19 of 114,000,000 MEUR for the period from July 2020 to June 2023 with nine disbursements scheduled between 2021-2029. In addition, along with 9 other IDA donors, Finland contributed to a Non-Paper on advancing gender equality for IDA19. Aimed at influencing the World Bank's strategy on gender equality, which highlights improved enrolment and retention rates of girls in education as essential for improving human endowment, this paper drew attention to IDA19 successes in sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and in addressing gender-based disparities in education. However, it is not clear if and how Finland contributed directly to the thematic focus of IDA19. Similarly, while IDA19 support included the Human Capital Project (HCP) to improve the quality of education, strengthen skills and create jobs, we found no evidence of Finland's direct participation in design of the (HCP). Again, we cannot say with certainty that the introduction of the cross-cutting theme of disability in IDA19 was a result of Finland's influence. (IDA, 2020; IDA, 2020a; IDA (undated) a-c).

The COACH Programme. The Global COACH programme (2021-2024) is a World Bank-led effort to *accelerate student learning by improving in-service professional development in low- and middle-income settings*. The programme is a shift from traditional professional development to one that uses insights from behavioural science (World Bank, 2020b); the COACH approach is to **C**reate an evidence-based approach to improve in-service professional development in low- and middle-income settings; **O**versee adaptation and implementation of this new approach; **A**ct on evidence, closely monitoring implementation and assessing the impact of the program; **C**hange teaching at scale by building a learning platform to help countries adapt and adopt this approach; and **H**arness technology wisely to accelerate the impact the program (World Bank, 2020a)

Finland's total financing of the GLOBAL program is 2.5 MEUR, contributed through the the Foundational Learning Compact (FLC) Umbrella Multi-donor Trust Fund (No. 0722554) 2020-2023. An additional 3MEUR supports a COACH pilot in Mozambique; we discuss this intervention in some detail in our thematic case study on Mozambique presented in Volume 2 of this report. So far, the

84 The IDA is part of the World Bank Group (WBG), funded by contributions from the governments of its 189 member countries which meet every three years to replenish IDA resources. More recently, IDA has mobilised private sector financing. For further detail, see: <https://ida.worldbank.org/en/replenishments/ida20-replenishment/ida20>



COACH approach has been rolled out in a further 14 countries, including DRC Congo, Pakistan, India, Romania, Djibouti, Somalia, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Cameroon, Mexico, Honduras, Cote d'Ivoire and Pacific Islands, Cabo Verde, Armenia and Brazil (World Bank, 2022d).

In addition, a Finnish expert was positioned in the World Bank's COACH team for a duration of two years; this is considered "*a good way of influencing*"; "*financing helps us bring Finnish solutions and expertise to the forefront – for example a teacher training expert team from the World Bank came to MFA for two days to have discussion with our experts*" (KII: EDUFI; KII: MFA). Arguably as a result of Finland's support, COACH applies a Human Rights-based Approach to help realize the right to quality education for all and emphasizes 'the diversity and inclusion and learning of all students, including students with disabilities and ethnic minorities' (World Bank, 2022d).

Finland also participates in the financing of the Asian Development Fund (ADF-13) of the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**⁸⁵, with other donors, including Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, the Netherlands and Canada. In the ADF-13 additional funding round of 2020, Finland committed EUR 7.7 million in additional funding. Through its participation in the fund Finland has sought to influence the Bank's strategy in areas such as gender equality, climate finance and private sector projects, and education. Specific cooperation channels are "*between the Bank, Education Finland and FinCEED, particularly in term of digital learning opportunities*" (KII: MFA). In the period under review, MFA reported that 326,000 women and girls in the region completed secondary or tertiary education or other education. ADB's funding to support the education sector has fluctuated in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic and during the corona pandemic, both quantitatively and proportionally compared to other sectors financed by the bank. In 2021, the total funding of the education sector was 965 million USD, or 5% of the bank's total funding, up from 3.7% in 2020 but down from 7.5 in 2018. In 2022, the Bank was once again "*increasing its efforts related to basic education and science education*", including the role of ICTs in the education sector (KII: MFA).

Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

GPE is a multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform dedicated to strengthening education systems in developing countries. It is the world's largest education-only fund, with a mission revolving around improving access to quality education, with a particular focus on countries facing significant educational challenges. GPE operates under, but independently from, the World Bank and its headquarters are in Washington, D.C. and funding at the country level is managed by *Grant Agents* (e.g. World Bank, UNICEF, SIDA and Save the Children), and implementation is supported by *Coordinating Agents* (e.g., Finland in Mozambique). (GPE, 2023; MFA, 2021f; World Bank, 2022e).

Between 2013-2016, Finland funded the GPE for a total of EUR 6 million. Funding ended due to budget cuts and during this period, although Finland was an "*inactive*" partner, they were invited to participate in discussions but Finland "*said they didn't want to engage if they weren't pledging*" (KII: GPE). Finland returned to funding the GPE in December 2020 by contributing EUR 2 million to the funding of the GPE's COVID-19 window. In July 2021, the Global Education Summit raised a record US\$4 billion from donors for GPE's Raise Your Hand campaign, putting GPE on the path to achieving its fundraising target of at least \$5 billion over the next five years; (MFA, 2021f).

⁸⁵ Founded in 1966, the Asian Development Bank (AsDB), with a total of 68 members and headquartered in Manila, supports member states, especially small Pacific island states and the fragile countries such as Afghanistan, to address their challenges (e.g., growing inequality, protracted crises, and risks related to climate change). In 2021, the total amount of funding (loans and TA) amounted to USD 35.7 billion, of which approximately 13 billion USD was co-financed.



Based on Finland's Global Plan for Multilateral Impact, the influencing goals for GPE are: '*Increased support for inclusive and high-quality education*'; Finland's communication and advocacy work aims at 'the highest possible level of funding for the GPE in the new funding period', (e.g., discussions with other Nordic and EU countries held in the *Nordic Raise Your Hand virtual event* in 2021); and 'in the work of the voting group and the board of trustees, we aim to influence how the GPE supports and assesses the development of the quality of teaching and how this issue is taken into account in the GPE's *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning work*' (MFA, 2021j). Other objectives are to Ensure the *functionality of GPE's new operational model*; Finland is in an excellent position to monitor this in our partner countries (Ethiopia, Nepal, Mozambique and Myanmar) at the country level and to influence the construction of partnership compacts. *Promote special themes important to Finland*, e.g., school meals, mother tongue learning, digital education (MFA, 2021f).

Box 2. GPE's operational model to facilitate transformational change

The GPE 2025 Strategy seeks *transformational change* to support GPE partner countries in *protecting past gains and accelerating progress toward more resilient education systems*. To realise these ambitions, the GPE is making bold changes to its operating model. These entail:

Leveraging partnership through support for a **country-level partnership compact** developed by local education groups which describe specific transformation priorities within sector policies and plans around which partners will align their efforts and strengthen mutual accountability at the country level.

Supporting education systems transformation, through a demand-driven **systems capacity grant**, including for the development of government-led education sector plans.

Sharpening GPE investments, including a **system transformation grant** (incentives tied to key enabling factors for prioritised reforms in the volume, equity and efficiency of domestic finance, gender-responsive sector planning, policy and monitoring; accumulation of data and evidence; and sector coordination); and an **accelerated financing mechanism** in crisis situations, channelled through existing humanitarian pooled fund mechanisms.

Serving as a platform to increase domestic financing for education, through global advocacy but also a menu of optional **innovative finance mechanisms** in addition to the GPE Multiplier, including *incentives for debt forgiveness; matching funds to incentivize contributions from the business community and private foundations*; impact bond modalities; and supporting country-led efforts to convene partners to leverage co-financing to trigger the Multiplier.

Raising the profile and importance of investing in inclusive, quality education, through advocacy to influence leaders at global and national level and reinforcing civil society's capacity to engage in education sector planning and policy development⁸⁶, including continued support for the Education Out Loud fund for advocacy and social accountability.

Source: GPE, 2022

⁸⁶ The GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is GPE's fund for meeting global public goods gaps in education. KIX connects the expertise, innovation and knowledge of GPE partners to help developing countries build stronger education systems. Through the sharing and funding of proven solutions and innovations, KIX ensures that evidence-based solutions get in the hands of national policymakers and directly feed policy dialogue and planning processes, and builds capacity to produce, integrate and scale knowledge and innovation in GPE partner countries. The International Development Research Centre is the grant agent for KIX.



Between 2015 and 2019, gender-and disability-inclusion was mainstreamed into the GPE's country-level work in many different ways, primarily in design of education sector plans; in 2019, the GPE Secretariat finalized the Leaving No One Behind KIX on Equality and Inclusion; in addition, the Secretariat carried out a study on equality and inclusion in analyses, plans and programme implementation grants in the education sector in different partner countries (MFA, 2021f). GPE's results for 2020 (focusing on themes that are important for Finland's development policy priorities) include building the efficiency of education systems: 70% of partner countries increased their share of education expenditure or maintained it at 20% or above; however, only 30% of partner countries reported at least 10 of 12 key education indicators to UIS; and only 34% of partner countries had fewer than 40 pupils per trained teacher (GPE, 2020).

Given that Finland has only recently re-joined GPE, suggestions for the future are two-fold. First, "Finland should play a stronger role in GPE governance" (KII: GPE). In the Executive Board, Finland belongs to the same voting group as Norway, Ireland and the United Arab Emirates, but Finland does not have its own board representative or committee member; 'it is important to assess through which channels Finland can achieve the most impact and the key channels of influence are the voting group and EU coordination' (MFA, 2021f). Second, should further replenishments not be feasible in the face of budget cuts, Finland may "consider having more presence on the ground - Finnish Counsellors could take on a coordinating role and as a policy actor" (KII: GPE) (see **Box 2** above).

UNICEF

UNICEF has been an attractive partner for MFA and its Embassies, given the organization's dual mandate - development cooperation and humanitarian aid - to support the rights of the child; its unparalleled field presence (in over 190 countries globally); and its strong role in the education-related sectors of water and sanitation and health and nutrition, which enabled the organisation to continue to operate flexibly during the global pandemic and subsequent education crises. Finland views UNICEF as 'needed more than ever' but MFA also urges collaboration, within the UN reform framework, between UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and WFP to take forward the results of discussions during the Transforming Education Summit (MFA, 2022f).

In the period under review, Finland has engaged with UNICEF in several ways drawing on multiple funding streams. Significant financing for UNICEF's multi-bi projects at the country level (a total of 22.3 MEUR) included, for example, support to the No Lost Generation project to support children's schooling in Syria (1MEUR), strengthening resilience in Ethiopia in crisis areas (4 MEUR), the development of the education sectors in Somalia (2.65 MEUR) and Nepal (1.2 MEUR) among others.⁸⁷ During the period under review, UNICEF has employed a total of 23 Finns in 18 different countries. Support has also been provided through the Reconstruction Fund for Afghanistan, which has been redirected from the World Bank to UNICEF. Finland also supports ECW, hosted by UNICEF. Finland has recently pledged support for UNICEF's Learning Innovation Hub and

⁸⁷ It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to report in detail on the results of Finland's support to UNICEF. But the organization's own reports indicate that significant progress has been made on the ground. For example, in 2021 UNICEF reported that 48.6 million out-of-school children had access to education with UNICEF support, 31.7 million of whom were living in humanitarian crises. Yet we also found that while country-level experiences of UNICEF as an operational partner are 'mostly good' (as suggested by our Nepal case study), cooperation could be improved in some countries (for example in Ethiopia).



Innovative Finance Hub (EUR 95 million over the next ten years); *we discuss the Hub as an example of a multi-actor collaboration in the following section.*

In addition, Finland seeks to influence UNICEF through its core support (approximately 7MEUR), including advocacy, communication and working with key stakeholders. Finland has served as an observer member of the Executive Board in 2023 (and will be a member of the Board in 2024) and cooperation with the Western Group (WEOG) comprising the Nordic countries and the EU countries is central to Finland's participation in UNICEF's Executive Board. Permanent Mission to the UN is intended to 'promote Finland's priorities in multilateral cooperation. advancing peace and security, sustainable development, and realisation of human rights'. (MFA, 2023f) However, the Permanent Mission to the UN faces several challenges:

Human resources are limited. Where Sweden, for example, has 3 representatives for UNICEF, UNOPS, and UNFPA respectively, a single individual represents Finland on the Executive Boards of all three organisations; this said *"if we don't have internal resources, at least we can find ways to manoeuvre"* through the JPO scheme for example, as well as better collaboration with UN regional offices (KII: MFA/UN).

Disconnect between programming at country- and global level programming. While the process of developing Country Programmes is very rigorous and priorities are clearly identified, including for investing in multi-bi programmes, *"this is not the case for multilateral engagement at the global level; in the absence of an internal communication strategy, "country-level colleagues don't know what we're doing and we don't know what's happening at country level"* (KII: MFA/UN). Yet, one of Finland's policy influencing goals for UNICEF is *'promoting ways to strengthen the country-level work'* of UNICEF by *'improving the dialogue with the headquarters and country-level operations to ensure greater consistency'* (MFA, 2023b).

Non-coherent 'strategic' investment. Finland's EDC and UNICEF's global programme are well aligned at the policy level but complex financing for UNICEF results in *"little coherence across the different funding streams"* in terms of strategic investment in UNICEF's global programme; *"we're too busy thinking about isolated programmes and projects, so we lose sight of the bigger picture"* (KII: MFA/UN).

Weak 'strategic' messaging. Because the education sector has only recently emerged as a standalone policy priority *"we don't have clear and targeted messages - we have to focus on something because not big core funder"* (KII: MFA/UN). We note Finland's policy influencing goals for UNICEF: *'strengthen the mainstreaming of the rights and status of persons with disabilities and women and girls'* in UNICEF's policy and country-level activities; and *'heavier investment in inclusive and high-quality education'* (MFA, 2023b). These are low-hanging fruit, given UNICEF's current strategic plan; *"I think we could better in our influencing – we need to ask ourselves what we are doing in New York"* (KII: UN/MFA).

UNESCO

Finland supports UNESCO, the specialised UN agency dedicated to advancing education, science, and culture worldwide. Its core mission is to foster global peace, sustainable development, poverty reduction, and the protection of human rights through initiatives in education, culture, and the promotion of free expression. Finland plays a significant role in supporting UNESCO's work, with a strong thematic focus on key areas. Firstly, Finland actively contributes to advancing gender



equality and human rights by investing in the education of girls and women. This support recognises the pivotal role that education plays in achieving sustainable development and equality. Secondly, Finland is committed to the development of vocational and technical education through UNESCO. This investment aims to enhance the capacity of member states in creating robust vocational training systems. By doing so, it helps reduce poverty, facilitates smoother transitions for youth from education to employment, and prevents social exclusion and radicalisation. Lastly, Finland places a high value on freedom of expression, independent media, and media development as crucial components of thriving democracies and societies. Through its partnership with UNESCO, Finland actively contributes to efforts aimed at strengthening these fundamental pillars.

Finland channels its funding for UNESCO's education sector through the Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED). CapED is designed to translate global advocacy for education into concrete actions, particularly in countries facing the greatest challenges in achieving global education goals. It primarily focuses on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and fragile nations in emergency situations or post-conflict and disaster recovery phases. In this collaborative effort, CapED empowers member states to formulate and implement effective education policies, ensuring an equitable right to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. For the 2023-2024 period, Finland has committed a total funding of €1,200,000 to support these vital initiatives. Through its partnership with UNESCO and contributions to CapED, Finland actively participates in global efforts to promote education, gender equality, vocational training, and media development, all of which are essential building blocks for a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world.

Finland's engagement with ECW and WFP in the context of a 'new normal'

By 2030, up to two-thirds of the world's extreme poor could live in a landscape of fragility, conflict and violence (FCV), which is increasingly marked by food insecurity, climate change, rising inequality and demographic change; global experts are increasingly describing FCV as the 'new normal'.

The OECD States of Fragility report, based on analyses of 2014 data, presents a multidimensional monitoring framework for analysing all countries' risks across five clusters of fragility indicators (violence, justice, institutions, economic foundations and resilience, with a sixth dimension, 'human' added in 2022), going beyond conflict-affected states (OECD, 2016; 2022a). During inception, the evaluation team built on the OECD model by compiling recent data for Finland's partner countries. Several global indices mentioned in the Table below were also used to monitor the Impact outcome for Policy Priority 3 in Finland's 2020 ToC (People enjoy equitable, quality education and accountable governance in inclusive, peaceful and democratic societies).



Table 1. Finland's partner countries and their fragility, freedom, and peace index scores

Finland Partner Countries	OECD States of Fragility Dimensions						Fragile States Index (total)	Freedom House (Global Scores)	Global Peace Index (overall scores)
	Economic	Environment	Human	Political	Security	Societal			
Afghanistan							105,9	10	3554
Ethiopia							99,3	23	2806
Kenya							88,2	48	2303
Kyrgyzstan							77,1	27	2028
Mozambique							94,3	43	2316
Myanmar							100,0	9	2631
Nepal							80,6	57	1947
Somalia							110,5	7	3125
Tajikistan							75,0	8	2031
Tanzania							78,2	34	2001
Ukraine							68,6	61	2971
Uzbekistan							69,6	11	2001
Vietnam							60,9	19	1786
West Bank & Gaza							85,6	23	2552
Zambia							83,6	51	1841

Legend:

States of Fragility	Fragile States Index *	Freedom House**	Global Peace Index
1 – severe	Alert	Not Free	Very low
2	Warning		Low
3	Warning	Partly Free	Medium
4	Stable		High
5 -minor	Sustainable	Free	Very high
no data			

*max. score=120

**0 = least free to 100 = most free

Source: Team analysis

MFA's humanitarian assistance – for example, engagement with Education Cannot Wait and the World Food Programme – takes place within this context of a 'new normal'.



Education Cannot Wait (ECW), is the United Nations global billion-dollar fund for education in emergencies, strengthening the long-term development and humanitarian support of education in conflict and protracted crisis situations. While ECW is hosted by UNICEF, its operations are run by the Fund's own independent governance structure, through its three investment modalities: the Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP), the First Emergency Response (FER) and the Acceleration Facility.

As noted in Chapter 4, Finland's role in policy influencing is as important as its EDC financing. Finland is not a major donor (with a 1% share of the actual financing of the Fund). However, Finland's Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Ville Skinnari, is a member of the ECW High Level Steering Committee (HLSG) and Finland also participates in the ECW Executive Committee for Government Officials. Between 2020 and 2022, Finland committed 6 MEUR in core support to ECW and 4 MEUR to a MYRP in Ethiopia (Tigray and Amhara) which is channelled directly to UNICEF (see Box 1 below).

Box 3. The ECW MYRP in Ethiopia

The MYRP takes a multi-sectoral '*whole of woreda*' approach in targeted areas (Amhara and Tigray, supported by Finland and Somali, supported by Norway) through interventions that **promote resilience of the sector**.

Initial interventions (Year 1) prioritised expanding access and getting out-of-school children (including girls and CWDs) amongst Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), returnees, and relocated children back into school and formal educational pathways through immediate infrastructure investments supported by inclusive quality enhancing and system strengthening interventions. Interventions will be scaled up (**Years 2 & 3**) to increase coverage from 17 woredas to 44 emergency-affected woredas building on the proposed system strengthening approach. Scaling up will depend on mobilising additional resources and anchoring the MYRP into national programmes such as the successor to GEQIP-E, the Ethiopia Education Transformation Programme.

- **Outcome 1: *Equitable access*** to safe, protective and conducive pre-primary and primary learning environments for emergency-affected girls and boys, including children with disabilities is increased.
- **Outcome 2: *Quality and relevance*** of education for emergency-affected girls, boys, including children with disabilities is enhanced.
- **Outcome 3: *Retention and transition*** for emergency-affected girls, boys, including children with disabilities is improved.
- **Outcome 4: *Strengthened education service delivery systems*** (risk sensitive data management; strengthening the preventive, responsive, mitigation, and recovery capacity of key stakeholders; and strengthening coordination between schools and the Education in Emergencies (EIE) Cluster.

Due to security issues and lack of access to conflict-affected areas implementation has been on hold since the launch of the programme; '*it is too early to comment on the project's contribution to achieving the expected outcome/impact at this stage*'.

Source: UNICEF, 2019; UNICEF, 2023b and UNICEF, 2023c



In terms of the MYRP in Ethiopia, as noted in our country case study, “Finland participated in design of the MYRP; ECW provided seed funding; and UNICEF’s huge resource gap was filled by Finland (supporting Amhara and Tigray) and Norway (supporting Somali and Afar)” (KII: Embassy). Yet, although Finland was heavily involved development of the MYRP, it has been “hi-jacked by UNICEF” (KII: EU-Delegation). Meanwhile, the EU’s future programme (2024-2027) is likely to have “more of a development focus than the MYRP”, targeting all regions, not only conflict-affected areas (KII: EU-Delegation).

Finland’s main influencing goals for ECW during the period under review are to ensure ‘HRBA, equality and non-discrimination’ and ‘access to education for girls and disabled children, school meals, and improved learning outcomes’ are taken into account in ECW’s work. Given that Finland’s engagement with ECW is relatively recent, MFA states that ‘reportable results’ are not available, beyond the following **snapshot of progress towards the policy influencing goal**.

In 2020 ECW developed eight Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs)⁸⁸, all of which included a strategic ‘whole-of-child’ well-being focus, aligned with existing national policies. In 2021, ECW approved six new MYRPs⁸⁹ and one renewed MYRP in Bangladesh (total amount of 121.2 million USD); 12 FERs (19 million USD); and 13 new AF grants (2.6 million USD).

- ECW supported 1.27 million girls’ access to education (48% of children/adolescents reached) in 2019-2020; and 1.8 million girls (49% of all children reached) through its regular programming in 2021.
- Back-to-school campaigns in 2021 reached 111,123 children, men and women in nine countries.
- ECW-supported School-feeding programmes for families without access to regular, nutritious food at home have reached over 186,000 children (48% girls) in 15 countries in 2021.
- Despite challenges raised by the movement of populations during crisis, compounded by school closures and the cancellation of exams during the global pandemic, 22 out of 119 grants were able to measure learning outcomes which reportedly showed ‘both promising changes as well as large gaps in current levels of learning’.

In addition, progress is underway to meet other organizational goals set by MFA. For example, as a result of a planned Organis. ational Review conducted in 2022, ‘ECW is looking to develop a clearer position on what is meant by MYRP sustainability’; and recommendations of a planned MYRP evaluation have informed ECW’s new strategic plan period for 2023–2026 (MFA, 2021I). Finally, in line with MFA’s goal of ‘monitoring *opportunities for Finnish organisations to access ECW funding*’, 2020-2021 Finnish Church Aid received ECW funding in Uganda, South Sudan and Nepal (MFA, 2021I).

88 Burkina Faso, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Peru.

89 Burundi, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan and the Sudan.



Nevertheless, we found several shortfalls in ECW's performance in relation to Finland's influencing goals.

- ECW set ambitious an ambitious target for girls' education (60% of all children) and has piloted a locally-driven gender analysis approach. Both these are supposed to be disability inclusive. However, we found little mention of **disability inclusion** (and no disability-disaggregated data) in reported results As our Contribution Story (section) suggests the inclusion of children with disabilities in education in emergencies is a particularly tough nut to crack. However, Finland actively influenced ECD's new strategy. It now places strong emphasis on issues such as disability inclusion.
- While increases in access to education is well documented, few programmes (only 38 of the 112 active programmes in 2021) reported on **continuity of education** (with a focus on transition and/or completion) than on access to education.
- Although ECW supported a range of actions to protect children and keep them safe, including safe transport to and from school communities, the share of ECW budget allocated to **safety and protection** interventions has declined – from 21 per cent in 2019, to 15 per cent in 2020, and 13 per cent in 2021. This is despite an overall increase in ECW's budget overall.

The **World Food Programme (WFP)** is “a good example of an organisation where long-term and consistent advocacy work achieves good results” (KII: MFA). A critical but neglected dimension of the global learning crisis is children's nutrition. While low- and lower-middle income countries ‘invest some USD 210 billion annually in providing basic education for their children (infrastructure, teachers, curriculum), they only invest about USD 1.4 billion to 5.5 billion in ensuring the children have the health and nutrition to allow them to learn (WFP, 2020). Yet, for many children in fragile countries, schools meals is the only source of nutrition for the day, providing an incentive for families to send their children to school, as well as reducing the risk of early drop out and child marriage and, when done right, such programmes make communities more resilient; and promote peace and social stability (WFP, 2020). In Ethiopia, Finland's support has been “a great contribution; school feeding means more access, better quality, better equity ... it is everything” (KII: MYRP).

In 2018, MFA entered into a strategic partnership agreement with WFP to strengthen the implementation of the WFP's strategic plan (2018-2021) as well as its country programmes and activities throughout the world.⁹⁰ During this period Finland's he multilateral support amounted to 32 MEUR (8 MEUR annually) including to country-specific funding (e.g., Ethiopia, Kenya, Central African Republic, Madagascar and Somalia) selected on the basis of their food security contexts. Notably, Finland's support of WFP is classified as humanitarian funding and is therefore not reported under the OECD-DAC system.

Finland is one of the founding chairs (together with France) of the School Meals Coalition, an initiative launched in 2021 as a global partnership between governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and education experts with more than 83 partners (including UN agencies, think tanks and academic partners). (WFP, 2022). Minister Ville Skinnari is Global Champion of the School Meals Coalition and Finland also financially supports the Coalition Secretariat, as well as providing a JPO for the Secretariat in 2022. “Minister Skinnari has advocated strongly for Finland

90 Strategic Partnership Agreement between MFA Finland and WFP 2018-2021.



as a front runner in free school meals, not to force any model but to give the example set by Finland in the 1940s, which can be followed by others” (KII: MFA)

In 2020, WFP launched its 2020-2030 School Feeding Strategy: A Chance for Every Schoolchild which reinforces the relationship between health, nutrition and education to support development and learning of children. In 2021, Finland’s support enabled the WFP Country Programme in **Ethiopia** to increase the number of school feeding beneficiaries from 120 000 to 140,000 and to provide school meals to 275,514 children (46% females) in regions affected by conflict, and recurrent drought, while scaling up the national school feeding programme in four out of eleven regions in the country. (WFP, 2022a) The 2022 annual country report on WFP’s Country Strategic Plan for **Kenya** 2018-2023, now in its final year, reports on progress and performance in the implementation of the strategy: over 100,493 boys and girls enjoyed a school meal every day, particularly in schools for refugees from Somalia and South Sudan. A digital application for the Home-Grown School Meals Programme integrated into the national EMIS was successfully rolled out in three counties in Kenya to enhance the efficiency and accountability of the government-led school meal programme (see **Box 2**). In addition, documentation of Kenya’s experience in transitioning school meals to the government lays a foundation for South-South knowledge transfer in response to requests from countries to learn from Kenya’s experience (WFP, 2022b).

Box 4. ‘We invest in learning, but not in the learner’: WFPs’ strategy for Home-Grown School Feeding

The World Food Programme (WFP) seeks to address a fundamental mismatch: sick children cannot attend school and hungry children cannot learn. The WFP does this by working with other agencies to shed light on the issue of school health and nutrition and by convening different actors to find solutions to the challenges identified. The WFP’s new strategy for school feeding is thus presented as a ‘pillar of an integrated school health and nutrition response’.

The strategy describes four workstreams: (1) acting in partnership to improve and advocate for school health and nutrition; (2) generating and sharing knowledge and best practice globally; (3) increasing the investment in school feeding through a new funding model, differentiating between low-income and fragile countries which rely on operational support from WFP, which in turn relies on a limited set of donors; and more stable and developed countries where governments financed their own national programmes; and (4) strengthening programmatic approaches in key areas, including gender-sensitive school feeding, Nutrition-sensitive school-feeding; and school feeding in the triple nexus context.

A further key programmatic area is linking school feeding, food systems and value chains through **Home-Grown School Feeding** programmes. In Ethiopia, for example, school feeding is operated in two models: (a) the conventional school feeding whereby WFP mobilise funds from external donors procure nutritious school meals; and (b) The Home-Grown School Feeding model where food commodities are procured locally and provide locally preferred food to school children. Through the new model, locally sourced commodities produced by small holder farmers are used to gradually transition from donor funded school feeding, to ensure sustainability. A growing sense of ownership encourages communities to invest a significant amount of resources and time to ensure implementation of complementary activities not funded by WFP, such as food preparation (cooking), building kitchens and storage units, and supplying water and firewood to cook the school meals.

Source: WFP, 2020



Nevertheless, as in the case of ECW, the implementation, at both global and country levels, of the **WFP programmes have encountered several challenges.**

Global food and nutrition insecurity has been on the rise in the past several years, due in large part to extreme weather events and, more recently, supply chain bottlenecks lingering from the pandemic as well as the war in Ukraine which has driven food prices even higher (UNICEF, 2023). In general, WFPs programmes have suffered from a budget deficit and this has impacted on, for example, WFP's activities related to school feeding in Kenya (WFP, 2022a). In Ethiopia, the school feeding programme has experienced several systemic constraints, including:

- The need for data systems to **generate the evidence required to leverage the political will** of the government at national and regional levels in order to increase government investment in school meals (WFP, 2022b).
- Where school feeding activities are linked to the ECW MYRP, the **planning and financing across three education-related architectures** (the decentralized national education development sector, the education in emergency architecture, and the refugee education system) presents significant coordination challenges (UNICEF, 2019).
- Local partners to implement joint projects that **integrate school feeding with school water, hygiene, and sanitation** (SWASH) (WFP, 2022b).



Annex 9. Finnfund and Finnpartnership engagement in EDC

Private Sector Instruments at work in EDC

Reflecting on the pros and cons. During the period under review, the debate on the role of the private sector in EDC has been lively. While there is a potential market for private sector actors in developing countries and non-state actors can, and have, delivered in countries where the public education system is dysfunctional, there is also ‘no denying that while governments are bound by their public commitments to education equity, the private sector is not’ (UNESCO, 2021b). In Finland, the public broadcasting service, YLE, has raised questions about whether the government’s ‘commercialisation of development aid’ was for the good of developing countries or for the benefit of Finnish business interests.⁹¹ However, the debate is also a global one; as **Figure 1** illustrates private sector engagement in EDC has pros and cons.

Figure 1. The pros and cons of private sector involvement in public education



Source: UNESCO, 2021b

⁹¹ In 2015, citing the need for austerity in light of a prolonged economic downturn, Juha Sipilä’s fledgling government increased backing for the state-owned private sector development finance agency Finnfund by some 1,200% while also slashing ODA funding to Finnish NGOs by 43 %. This move, arguably motivated by ‘the desire to help Finnish companies find their place in thriving markets in Africa’, led stakeholders in Finland to ask: “Are we talking about the interests of developing countries? Or are we talking about Finland’s interests here?” (YLE, 1 June 2018)



Some donors (e.g., USAID and FCDO) have a proactive strategy for private sector engagement in education, premised on the view that non-state schools fill a gap in provision; but other donors view for-profit providers with caution. For example, as a result of CSO pressure about commercial operations such as Bridge International Academies, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) froze investment in private, fee-charging pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in 2019. (Oxfam, 2022)

Similarly opposition during negotiation of GPE's private sector strategy led to a clause prohibiting use of GPE funds to support for-profit provision of core education services (KII: GPE) and in 2018, a European Parliament Resolution instructed the European Commission to not fund for-profit education actors.⁹² Former proponents now concede that private partners are unlikely to support activities with a potential poverty-reducing impact unless offered substantial incentives by governments and donors; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) acknowledged in 2018 that public-private partnerships suffered from the same management challenges as traditional public investment (UNESCO, 2021b).

FINNFUND: Addressing basic education teacher shortages and increasing access to tertiary education in East and Southern Africa.

Finnfund (together with French and Danish development finance institutions) invested USD 7 million in the Maarifa Education Group, a private tertiary education company based in Kenya. Maarifa Education offers high quality programmes in labour market relevant studies of medicine, business, IT, law, and social-sciences, complementing public universities which can educate only a third of all applicants. The Group owns and operates two universities: Cavendish University Uganda and Cavendish University Zambia. With Finnfund support, has transformed these universities by investing in employees, campus facilities, student services, and the quality of academic programs, increasing student enrolment and enhancing the efficiency of business and academic operations.

“Maarifa’s vision is to be the premier pan-African tertiary education company that provides high quality, market-relevant education that equips students to succeed in today’s labour market. Maarifa is committed to increasing access to high quality education by offering scholarships and reaching students in underserved countries” (CEO of Maarifa Education, Peter Kagunye). As the evaluation team’s request for an interview with the CEO of Maarifa received no response, we were unable to verify or further explore these claims. *“Increasing access to tertiary education offers the students market relevant skills, bridging the gap of young graduates and labour market demands”* (Finnfund’s Investment Manager Eero Pekkanen).

In addition to Finnfund’s investment, and with support from the Team Finland Knowledge (TKF) network, Maarifa Education has partnered with a Finnish EdTech company Claned and uses its distance-learning platform for teachers and students. Claned combines the theory of learning with a machine learning algorithm that starts to understand how a person learns. The combination of Claned’s innovative platform and Maarifa’s academic model, enable Maarifa’s universities to offer transformative academic programs and expand access to thousands of students in Africa.

⁹² Resolution of 13 November 2018 on EU Development Assistance in the Field of Education. Strasbourg, France, European Parliament. (2018/2081(INI).)



Finland's Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Ville Skinnari has welcomed the investment. *“Developing countries, especially in Africa, are faced with a serious learning crisis. Public and private forces can together provide solutions to it, to students of all ages”*.

Finnfund, together with philanthropic investment firms Creadev and Imaginable Futures, have also invested in SPARK Schools, a network of K-12 (pre-primary, primary and secondary education, from kindergarten through to Grade 12) schools in South Africa. SPARK (an acronym for Service, Persistence, Achievement, Responsibility and Kindness) offers an innovative and scalable private schooling model for child-centred learning which relies on blended learning to address the pressing issue of teacher scarcity in Sub-Saharan Africa. Finnfund's co-financing of the SPARK during the global COVID-19 pandemic, enabled the network of schools to adapt quickly, in anticipation of an expansion plan. (Finnfund, 2019; Maarifa Education (undated); SPARK Schools (undated))



Annex 10. Delphi report

1. General Overview on the Delphi Method

The Delphi Method constitutes an **iterative approach of data collection and analysis addressing a pool of experts** (i.e., the Delphi panel) **on future-related topics**. The Delphi Method is grounded in the idea that the **appropriateness and feasibility of individual reflections of experts can be best assessed in a series of blind reviews by other experts**. Thus, it is based on several rounds of data collection and different steps of data analysis.

In a **first round** of data collection, experts will be asked in **individual semi-structured key informant interviews** to reflect on a future-related topic. The goal of the first Delphi round is to **obtain specific theses** (i.e., statements of their views/expectations) **by each expert** on the chosen future-related topic. It is important to understand that theses mentioned by a majority and theses mentioned by an individual are treated similar. This facilitates the **consideration of innovative thoughts** which are not (yet) state-of-the-art in the consecutive Delphi rounds.

In the **second round** of data collection, identified theses are anonymously presented to experts in an (online) survey to **rate aspects like appropriateness, feasibility, and importance of each thesis** on Likert scales. Beyond their standardised assessments, qualitative elaborations can be collected.

The goal of the second Delphi round is the **identification of most adequate theses** (i.e., theses which are deemed as most important and feasible in response to the future-related topic by most experts). If deemed necessary by the experts, they can provide **further specification of selected theses** during the survey which may cumulate in scenarios on the future-related topic. Depending on the level of saturation, insights from this round may inform consecutive rounds facilitating **assessment on most promising and further specified theses to attain consensus** on the future-related topic/scenarios.

Taken this together it can be summarised that “the Delphi technique typically seeks to (i) shed light on alternatives; (ii) correlate expert insight on a specific subject; (iii) provide background information for decision-making; and (iv) reveal consensus in expert opinion” (Watkins, West Meiers, and Visser 2012).

2. Application of the Delphi Method in this evaluation

In this evaluation, Delphi was applied to shed light on EQ3: ‘In the next 8 years, what kind of multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups would yield the best results, in order to maintain and strengthen Finland’s role in the specific areas of expertise and added value unique to Finland (3.1), to allow the response to the global learning crisis and quality education to stay relevant to different contextual settings (3.2), and to establish a size and set-up that is realistic for sustained level of development cooperation funding yet securing Finland as a credible actor in resolving the global learning crisis?’



In the **first Delphi round** individual semi-structured **key informant interviews** were conducted to collect panellists' perspectives on how Finland can position itself best in the future. Therefore, we developed an interview guideline based on (i) the guiding evaluation questions (EQ3.1, EQ3.2 and EQ3.3) and (ii) on future-related insights drawn from a first series of key informant interviews for summative EQ1. Results of the desk review and the evaluation teams' expertise set the boundaries for the data collection instrument. Particular attention was given to changing framework conditions in Finland's partner country contexts which are increasingly characterised by multiple dimensions and various degrees of crisis. 'Hot topics' expected to be relevant for Finland's future response to the global education crisis like the role of education export (including EdTech) in development cooperation, education in emergencies in development cooperation, and adaptive programming in fragile contexts were taken into consideration. The Delphi instrument was structured as follows:

- Panellists' perspectives on Finland's unique value-addition against adaptation needs
- Panellists' perspectives on multi-actor collaboration
- Panellists' perspectives on responses to learning in crisis and education in emergency (EIE)
- Panellists' perspectives on the role of education export (including EdTech) in building resilience
- Panellists' perspectives on Finland and its multilateral engagement
- Panellists' perspectives on MFA's strategic choices (overall EDC set-up and cooperation instruments)

In a first analysis step, the evaluation team reviewed and coded the empirical material from the expert interviews by employing the **qualitative data analysis** software MAXQDA. Out of a total of 680 codes, similar theses on the same subject matter were synthesised. Together with individual theses only mentioned by a single expert they were summarised in a longlist. Based on the expert judgment of the evaluation team members, we selected the 34 most relevant and/or innovative theses for this assignment from the longlist and developed a semi-standardised data collection instrument for the second Delphi round.

In the **second Delphi round**, identified theses were anonymously presented to the experts in an **online survey** which was implemented with the software OFB SoSci Survey. Delphi experts were invited:

- to indicate on a scale from 0 (i.e., not agree at all) to 10 (i.e., fully agree) the extent to which they agree with a thesis,
- to select the five most important items from a list and rank them according to their importance, or
- to choose an appropriate scale point expressing whether they (rather) agree with one of two contrasting statements or whether they are indifferent, against their knowledge-ability in specific domains. Beyond their standardised assessments, open text boxes allowed panellists to share further reflections. An alternative answer option allowed experts to refrain from providing assessments when they did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable. Responses were **descriptively analysed** with the software package SPSS and Excel.



3. The Delphi Panel – Categorical Composition and Identification Strategy

For the generation of meaningful theses on Finland's future response to the global education crisis, it was of utmost importance to select experts who are (i) knowledgeable on development cooperation in the education sector, (ii) who possess insights on context conditions of Finnish Development Cooperation, and (iii) who are aware of current international debates. Selected experts should for methodological reasons participate in both Delphi rounds, thus (iv) willingness and availability to participate in the given timeframe was an additional selection criterion.

To ensure that different perspectives and expertise were represented on the panel, we **recruited Finnish and international panellists from the following four categories:**

- **(Former) directors and staff of governmental bodies** with experience on supporting Finnish Development Cooperation in Education and sound understanding on Finland's scope for action;
- **Experts from multilateral agencies** (e.g., UNICEF, UNESCO etc.) with international expertise able to assess potential linkages or gaps to Finnish Development Cooperation instruments (in particular persons who have worked in MFA and made career progress to work in UN agencies);
- **Academics from Finland** possessing in-depth insights on the Finn system and scientific distance to Finnish Development Cooperation in Education **and from abroad** having the capacity to identify potential disconnects between Finnish concepts and theories, and international debates in the field of education-related Development Cooperation;
- **Practitioners** (i.e., **consultancies** delivering Finn ODA, **private sector** actors and **NGOs** as well as their associations) with expertise in delivering services on-ground and/or coordinating partnership/collaboration, knowing what works or what does not, with expertise in handling crises acknowledging that contextual change is a critical factor in influencing development cooperation.

A total of 40 panellists enables meaningful quantitative assessment of the second survey round while anticipating that the ambitious Delphi schedule (emanating from the strict timeline of the overall assignment) and other commitments were likely to cause some dropouts throughout the process. Thus, about ten experts per category were envisaged (i) to ensure a balanced composition of the categories allowing equal representation of different stakeholder groups and avoiding biased results, (ii) to gain the main lines of thinking of a particular expert group while at the same time allowing convergency inside a category and (iii) to take care for a sufficiently large overall panel ensuring meaningful quantitative analysis of survey responses.

For the **identification of panellists**, the evaluation team members used their (inter-)national **networks** as well as their knowledge and understanding of MFA and other government agencies, the domains of education export (including EdTech), civil society, academia, and financing partners in development cooperation. Beyond the four categories and the selection criteria mentioned-above, we applied a **two-stage purposive sampling strategy**. In a first step, we identified a longlist of knowledgeable international and Finnish experts under the different categories. In a second step we ensured that key actors are fairly represented on the panel. By doing so we identified 40



experts from a total of 32 organisations and several replacement candidates to cope immediately with non-availability or unwillingness to participate by potential panellists.

Finally, **34 panellists** from the following organisations⁹³ were recruited for the **first Delphi round**:

- Staff from governmental bodies (total 9): MFA (2), MEC (2), EDUFI (2), FinCEED, FinEEC, SITRA
- Experts from multilateral agencies (total 8): UNICEF (2), UNESCO (2), GPE, World Bank, EC, ADB
- Academics (total 7): University of Oulu, Alto University, University of Helsinki, University of Turku, University of Oxford, World Bank Research Group, RTI International
- Practitioners (total 10): Omnia Education Partnerships, Edu Excellence Ltd., EdTech Finland, Felm, FCR, FCG (2), NIRAS, Education Outcomes Fund, Tsunagu Network

Out of them **27 participated in the second Delphi round**, resulting in a survey response rate of 79% (see table 1). While all panellists from multilateral agencies attended the second round, four staff from national government bodies dropped out resulting in slight shifts in overall panel composition. Nevertheless, we regard all stakeholder groups as reasonably well represented with shares ranging from 19% up to 30%. To the best of our knowledge, the panel ensures representation of key stakeholders, and covers sufficiently different thematic expertise (e.g., in VET, EdTech etc.).

Table 1: Composition of Delphi Panel

COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL	1ST ROUND	%	2ND ROUND	%
National Government Bodies	9	26.47%	5	18.52%
Multilateral Agencies	8	23.53%	8	29.63%
Academia	7	20.59%	6	22.22%
Practitioners	10	29.41%	8	29.63%
Total	34		27 (79%)	

⁹³ A total of 54 individuals were contacted. From the following organisations no panellists could be recruited: FINNFUND, Team Finland, ECW, RISE, FINGO.



4. The Delphi Timeline

The main steps of the Delphi timeline and time requirements for the panellists are summarised in table 2.

Table 2: Delphi process in a nutshell

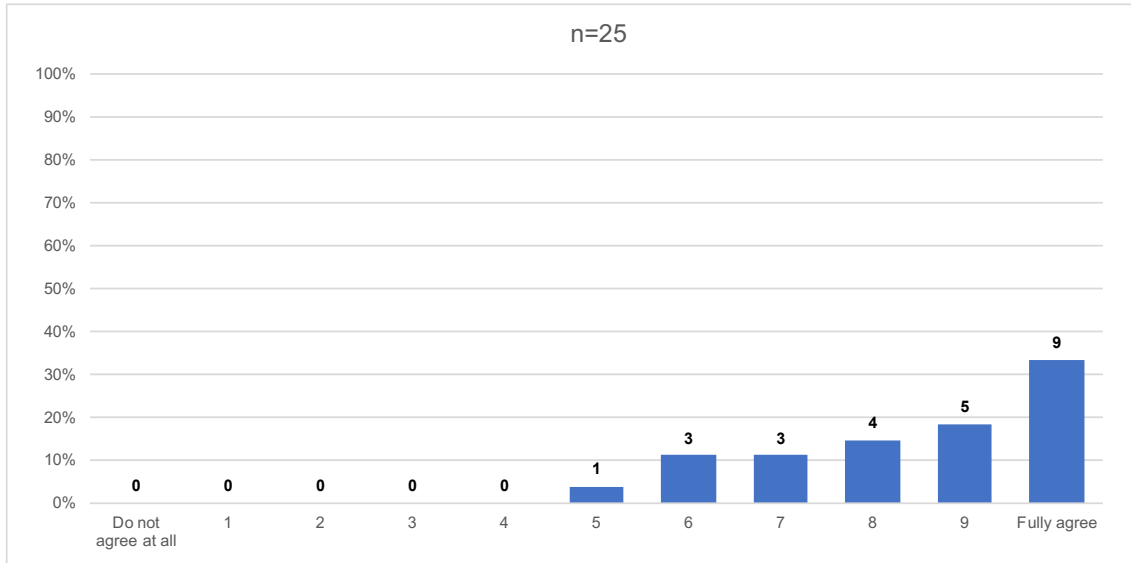
TIME FRAME	STEP	DURATION FOR PANELLISTS
January 14 – March 10	Identification of panellists (on-going from inception phase) Preparation of 1st round of data collection (development of interview guidelines, recruitment of panellists, scheduling of interviews) Revision after Quality assurance and upon MFA's feedback	
March 13 – April 3	1st round data collection: conduction of interviews	60-90 min
April 3 – April 14	Analysis and synthesis of interview data Identification and consolidation of theses Development of survey instrument Programming and pre-testing the survey	
April 17 – May 3	2nd round of data collection: implementation of online survey (response time of 3 weeks)	30min
May 4 – May 26	Data analysis of online survey outcomes Synthesis of Delphi results Triangulation after team internal synthesis and FCR workshop Results reporting	



5. The Delphi Findings

Supplementary to the findings presented (see section 6 in the main report). Figures 1 to 24 show experts' assessment on all 34 theses developed. Please note that the alternative answer option "I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess this statement", allowed panellists to opt out from specific assessments. Therefore, the n varies from statement to statement.

Figure 1: Finland's Unique Value Addition: Thesis 1



Statement [1]: Finland's own education reform process is of interest to partner countries. Rather than focusing on a specific area of the education system (e.g. teaching practices or non-standardised continuous assessment), **Finnish experts should share their experience and support partner countries in prioritising and implementing reforms, organising political support for a reform process, and institutionalising innovations.** The message must be: "don't copy our system, understand how we developed our system to become effective".



Table 3. Finland's Unique Value Addition: Thesis 2 – Ranking of 5 intervention fields of particular importance and to be further exploited by MFA

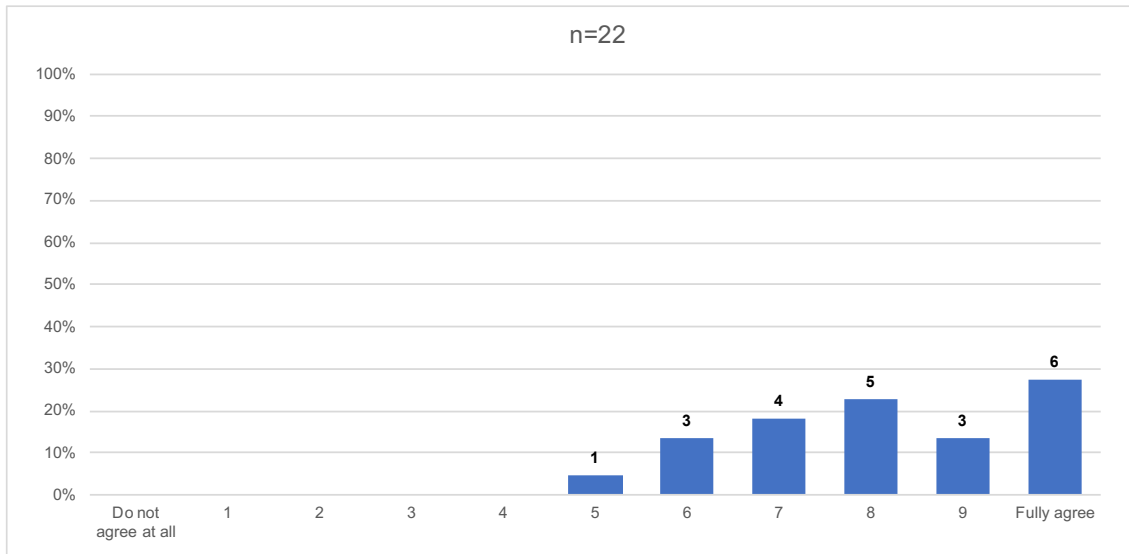
	RANK 1	RANK 2	RANK 3	RANK 4	RANK 5	TOTAL
Teacher education and professional development (n=20)	13	2	3	4	1	20
Inclusive education (n=15)	3	2	4	5	1	15
Early childhood education (n=14)	1	2	6	3	2	14
Well-being services in schools (school meals, school-based health, and psycho-social support services) (n=12)	2	3	0	2	5	12
Learner-centred evaluation of learning outcomes and continuous classroom-based assessment (n=11)	2	7	1	0	1	11
TVET (n=7)	0	4	0	1	2	7
Developing digital literacy of teachers (n=6)	0	0	3	1	2	6
Sufficient breaks and space to play within the curriculum (n=5)	0	0	1	1	3	5
Climate education (n=4)	0	1	1	1	2	5
Integration of arts, crafts, physical education, and music in curricula (n=4)	0	0	3	1	0	4
Integration of EdTech in school lessons (n=4)	0	0	0	4	0	4
Global citizenship and peace education (n=2)	0	0	0	1	1	2

Table 4: Finland's Unique Value Addition: Thesis 3 – Ranking of 5 most important measures for MFA to strengthen and expand the pool of Finnish expertise in future

	RANK 1	RANK 2	RANK 3	RANK 4	RANK 5	TOTAL
Scale up secondment of Finnish EDC experts to multilateral organisations.	5	3	6	4	1	19
Promote mobility between Finland's education and development cooperation sectors.	3	6	1	3	3	16
Scale up programmes for collaboration of higher education institutions in Finland with partner institutes abroad.	3	2	4	3	3	15
Build the international experience of Finnish teachers through supporting exchange programmes in partner countries.	5	2	4	2	0	13
Facilitate south-south partnerships between Finland's partner countries, with the active involvement of embassy-based experts in the respective countries, to facilitate mutual learning.	3	5	1	0	1	10
Developing and providing EdTEch solutions to partner countries with the involvement of Finnish EdTech companies.	0	1	4	1	4	10
Promote internships in relevant organisations (beyond UN organisations) for students interested in pursuing a career in EDC.	3	2	1	2	1	9
Diversify Finland's expert pool by developing a graduate programme in Finland's development policy and EDC, targeting international students.	2	3	2	0	1	8
Develop graduate scheme (entry-level jobs) for Finnish graduates to launch a career in EDC without the need for previous experience.	1	1	0	2	1	5

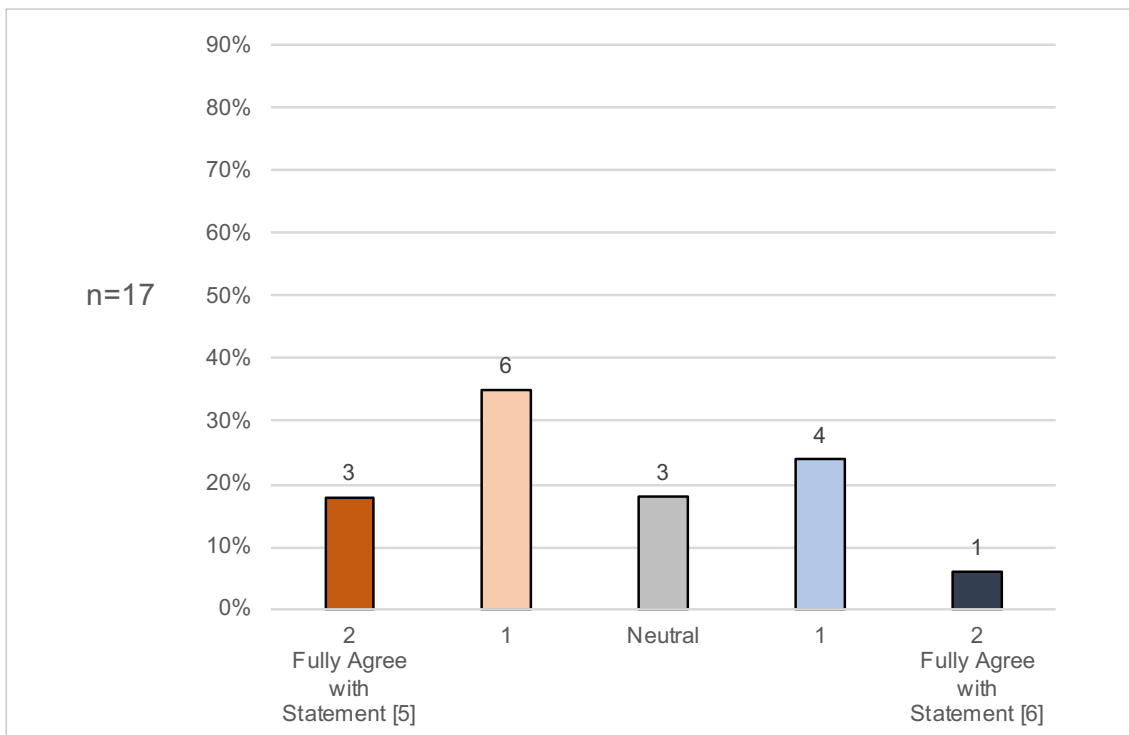


Figure 2: Multi-actor Approaches: Thesis 4



Statement [4]: The concept of a 'multi-actor approach' is not very clear to all stakeholders involved. Finnish CSOs, companies and HEI are uncertain about how MFA wants to involve them in multi-actor approaches. **MFA must provide coherent strategy and guidance on multi-actor collaboration**, which includes clarifying actors, their roles, and their responsibilities in the partnership, defining fields of action, and stating their partnership objectives.

Figure 3: Multi-actor approaches: Contrary Theses 5 and 6

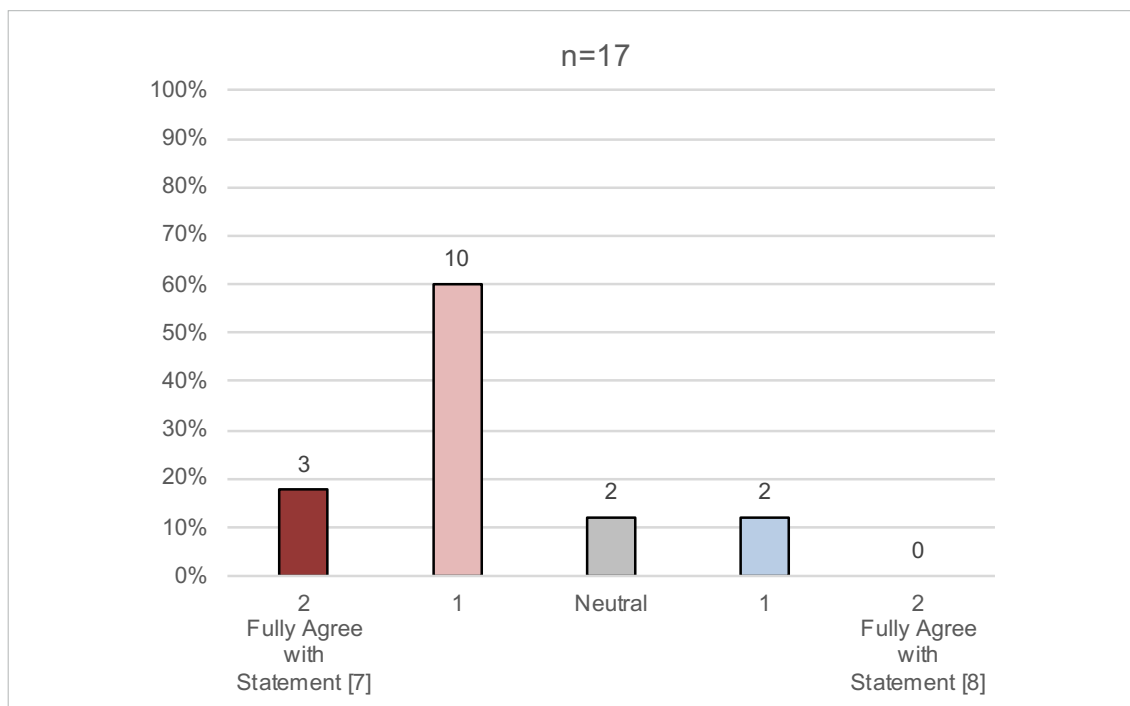


Statement [5]: There is still a lack of coordination among Finnish state and non-state actors, and for CSOs and companies it is difficult to see what other groups of stakeholders are doing and who they could potentially partner with. There is **an urgent need for MFA to ensure better coordination and facilitate partnerships between the actors.**

Statement [6]: MFA, though FinCEED is doing a good job in bringing multiple actors together and EDUFI provides the link to companies and education export. **There is a high degree of coordination and no further action by MFA is required.**



Figure 4: Multi-actor approaches: Contrary Theses 7 and 8

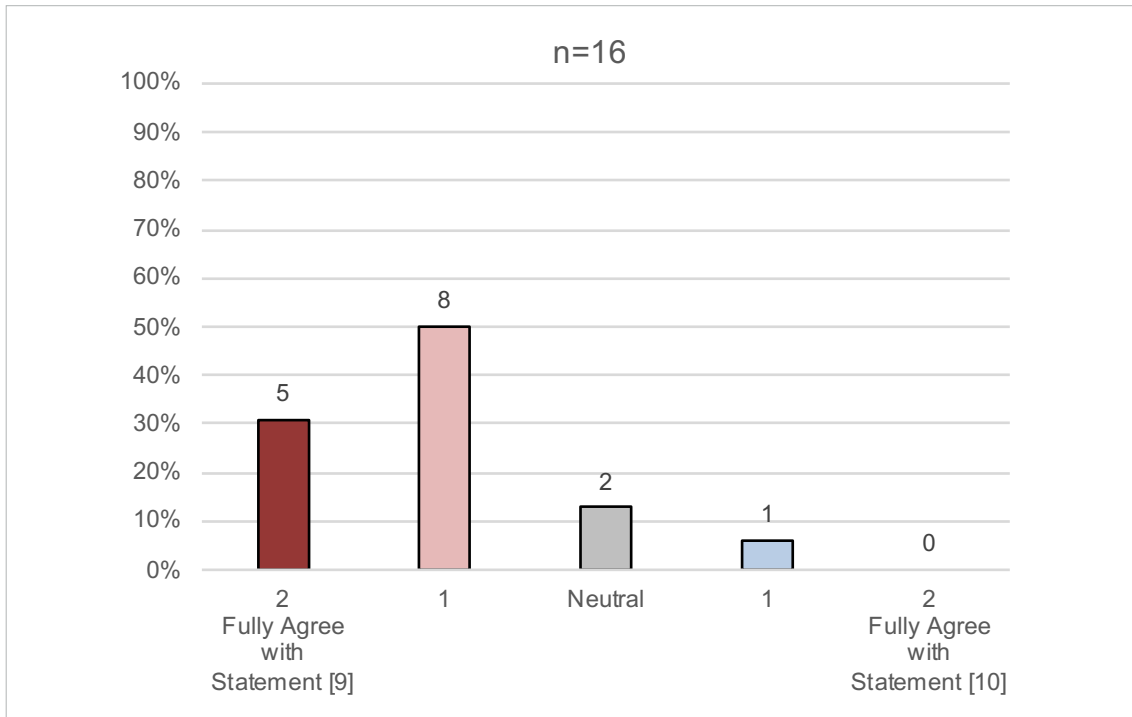


Statement [7]: There are currently no MFA funding instruments that encourage or even allow multi-actor partners to apply for joint projects (e.g., CSO and a company, HEI and a CSO). If MFA wants to engage with multi-actor partnerships, they **must offer funding for such multi-actor partnerships and integrate it as a requirement for project proposals into the tendering process.**

Statement [8]: Finnish actors focus on ODA/MFA funding to engage in multi-actor partnerships, but in addition, there are many opportunities of multilateral and EU funding for such partnerships, such as the Global Gateway - Team Europe initiatives. **New funding instruments from MFA are not required.**



Figure 5: Multi-actor approaches: Contrary Theses 9 and 10

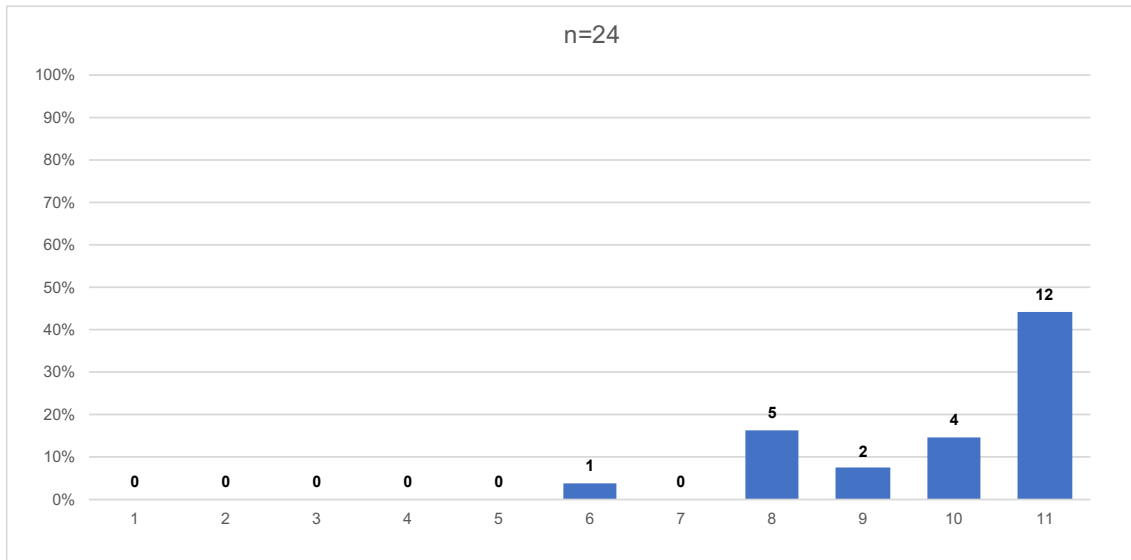


Statement [9]: **Finnish stakeholders need coherent guidance on participation in Team Europe Initiatives. MFA should provide more information** on the funding opportunities, identify potential Finnish actors for partnerships and support them throughout the tendering process.

Statement [10]: The EU pillar assessment Finfund is currently going through will open the door for the involvement of multiple actors from Finland in EU-funded programmes. **No further action of MFA is required.**

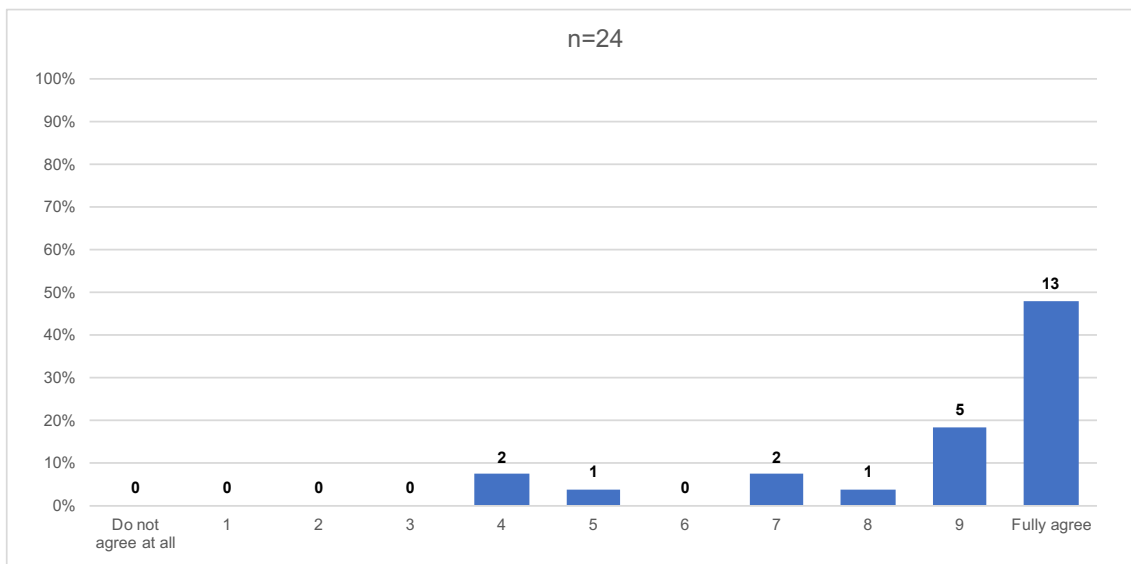


Figure 6: Building Education System Resilience: Thesis 11



Statement [11]: Finland's long-term bilateral cooperation is often in countries that are vulnerable to violent conflict and/or natural disasters. Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises is becoming increasingly important (sometimes explicitly but also implicitly) in such countries. This calls for **new and transformative strategies for education development in the context of triple nexus (humanitarian-development-peace-building) programming.**

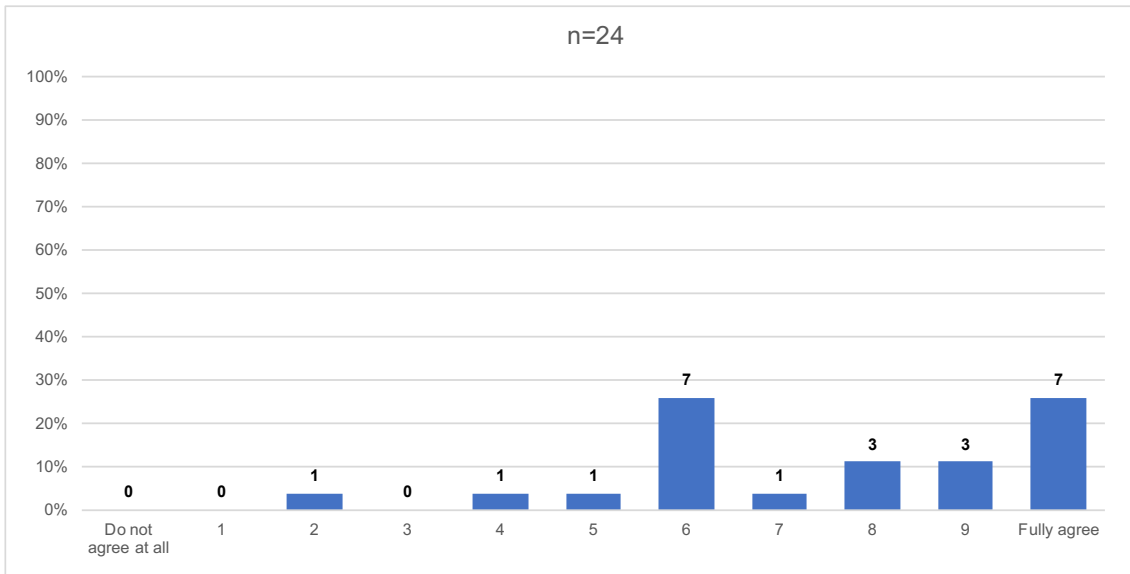
Figure 7: Building Education System Resilience: Thesis 12



Statement [12]: Isolated emergency support, provided by means of short-term humanitarian assistance, is often not the best solution for EDC. Continuity of learning and improved learning outcomes in fragile settings need a **holistic approach** (rebuilding/repairing infrastructure; training teachers; involving parents in learning; providing remote learning opportunities, but also hybrid and low-tech solutions; pro-poor interventions such as feeding/school meals and cash support to families and so on). **Long-term funding across sectors, drawing on various development and humanitarian funding sources, is required for crisis response, recovery and resilience building in fragile countries.**

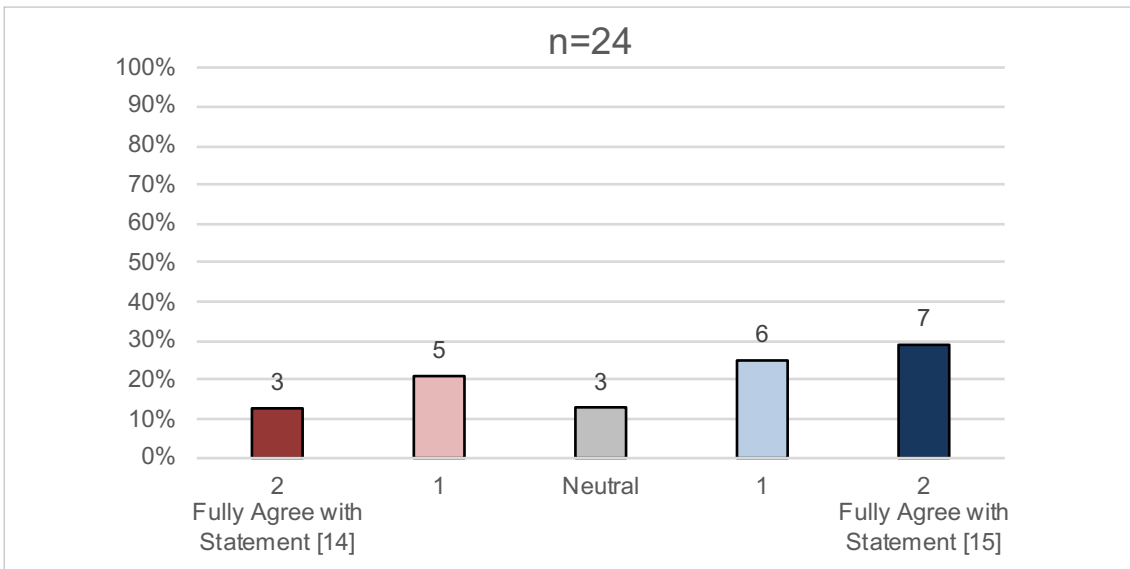


Figure 8: Building Education System Resilience: Thesis 13



Statement [13]: Centralised education governance systems hamper rapid and flexible crisis response. Finland has experience in developing and strengthening a highly decentralised education governance system *and should reflect on how best to share that experience with partner countries engaged or interested in decentralised education planning and delivery and related systems-level reforms.*

Figure 9: Strategic choices on distribution of ODA: Contrary Theses 14 and 15

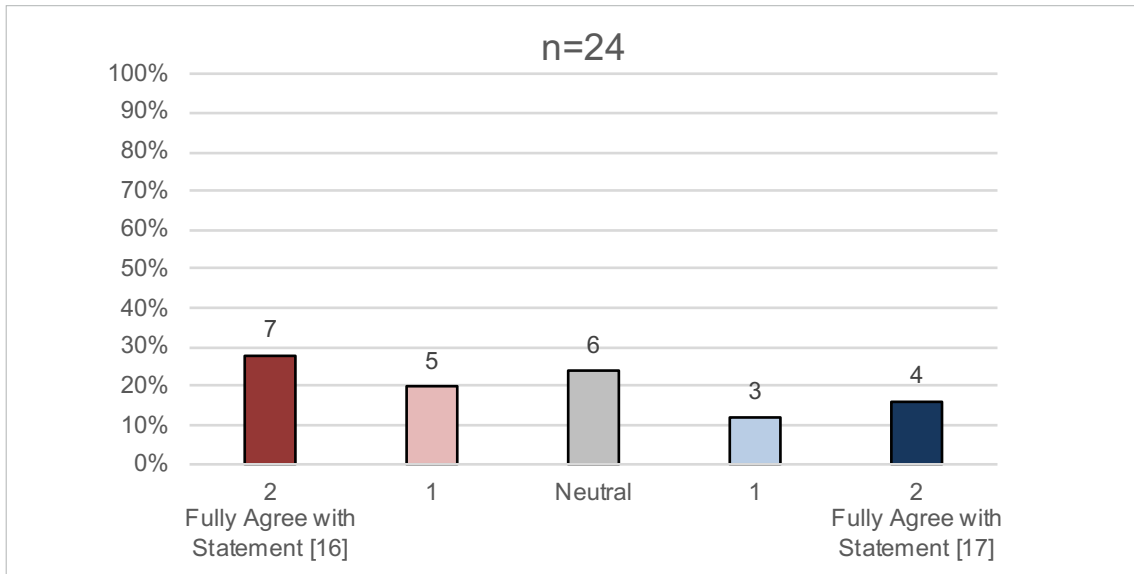


Statement [14]: Finland's ODA is currently distributed across 7 instruments (multilateral cooperation, bilateral cooperation, CSO project and programme support, engagement with higher education and VET institutes and engagement with the private sector). **MFA should continue to distribute ODA among all these instruments, finding the right balance and supporting complementarity among them.**

Statement [15]: Instead of distributing funds using many instruments, MFA should set priorities and **invest in fewer instruments with larger volumes of funds for each.**



Figure 10: Strategic choices on distribution of ODA: Contrary Theses 16 and 17

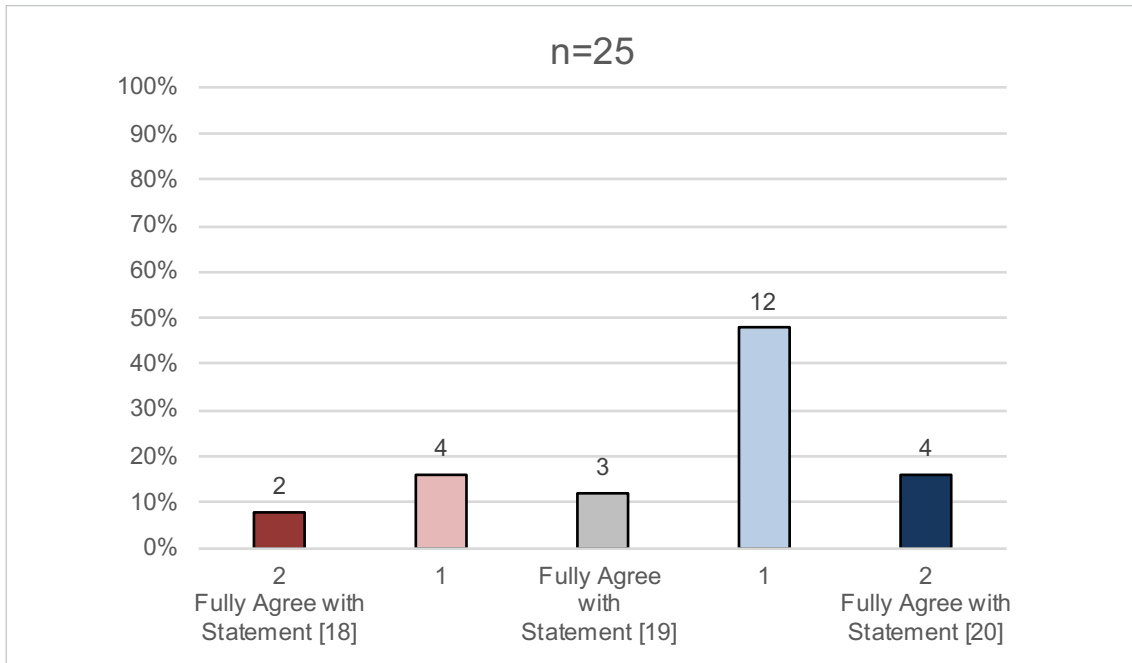


Statement [16]: To better influence policy and bring its unique strength and expertise into multilateral organisations, Finland should **bind/earmark funds provided to multilateral organisations** (for instance, in terms of a thematic area(s) coherent with the Finnish objectives or in terms of the involvement of Finnish actors).

Statement [17]: Finland's objectives in EDC do not differ from the agendas of large UN organisations. Instead of emphasising its own agenda, Finland should provide **un-earmarked long-term funding to UN agencies and let the experts of those organisations make the strategic choices.**



Figure 11: Strategic choices on distribution of ODA: Contrary Theses 18, 19 and 20



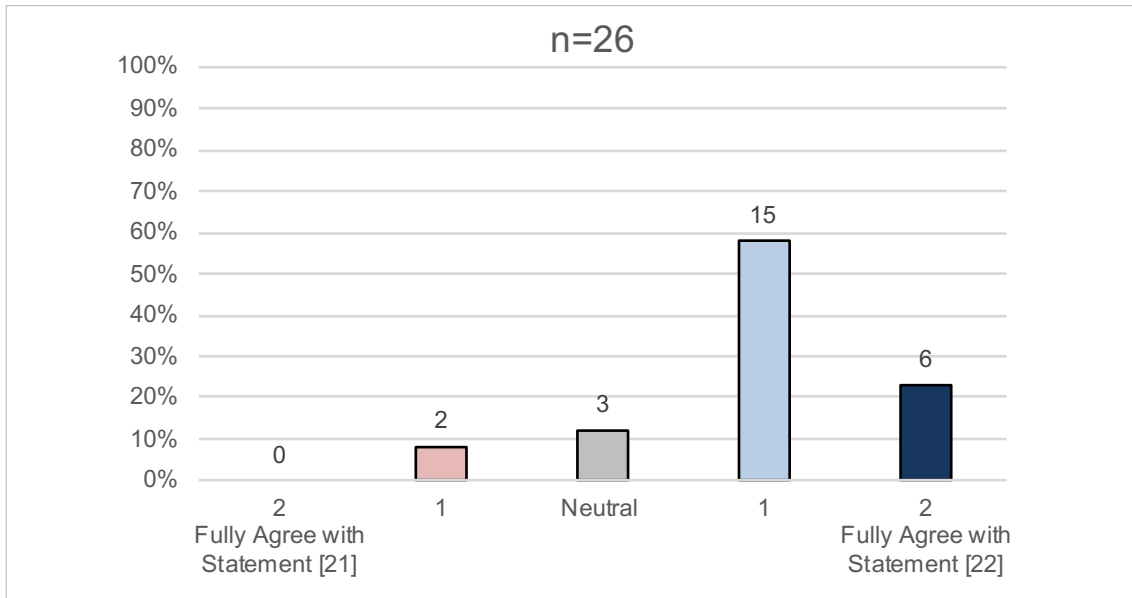
Statement [18]: Country programmes are at the 'heart' of Finland's EDC. At the same time, bilateral engagement brings many possibilities to involve Finnish actors and harness Finnish expertise. **MFA should increase the share of ODA for bilateral cooperation in the education sector.**

Statement [19]: **MFA should ensure an adequate share of ODA for both.**

Statement 20: As a small country, the standalone impact of Finland's funds is limited. The capacity of MFA to manage bilateral projects is also limited. Against this backdrop, Finland's ODA can leverage more impact by combining forces with other countries through multilateral organisations. **MFA should direct the majority of ODA to multilateral organisations.**



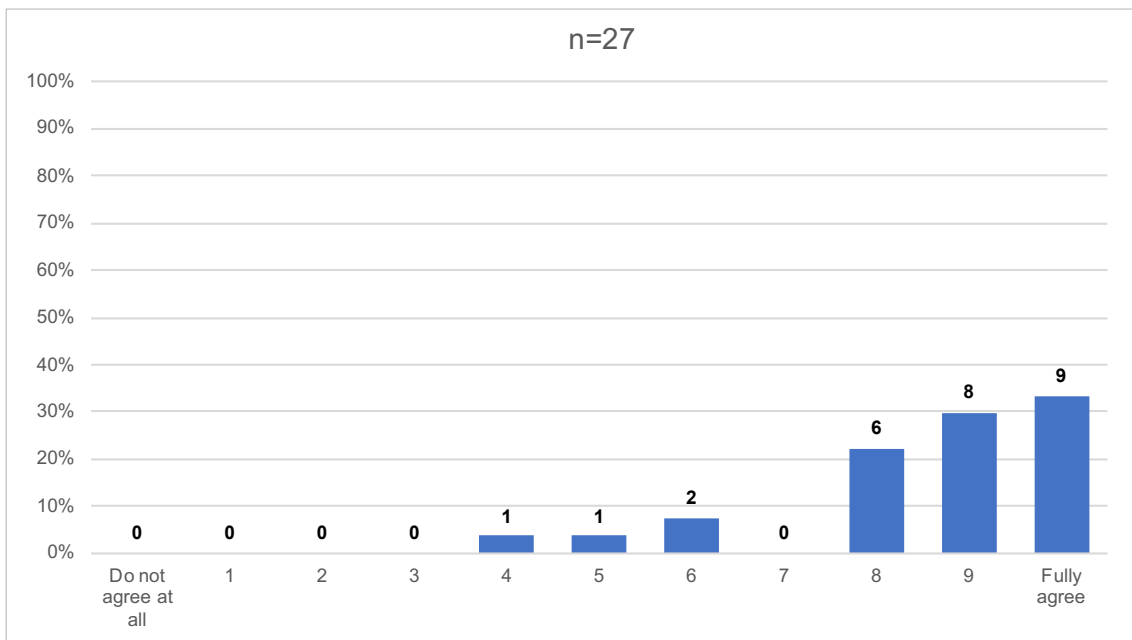
Figure 12: Education export and EdTech: Contrary Theses 21 and 22



Statement [21]: The risk of deepening the digital divide is a 'knock-out argument' against introducing EdTech in developing countries. **MFA should refrain from supporting EdTech.**

Statement [22]: If can potentially reach even only half of the population with a technology that has a positive impact on learning outcomes, MFA should not miss that chance to support EdTech.

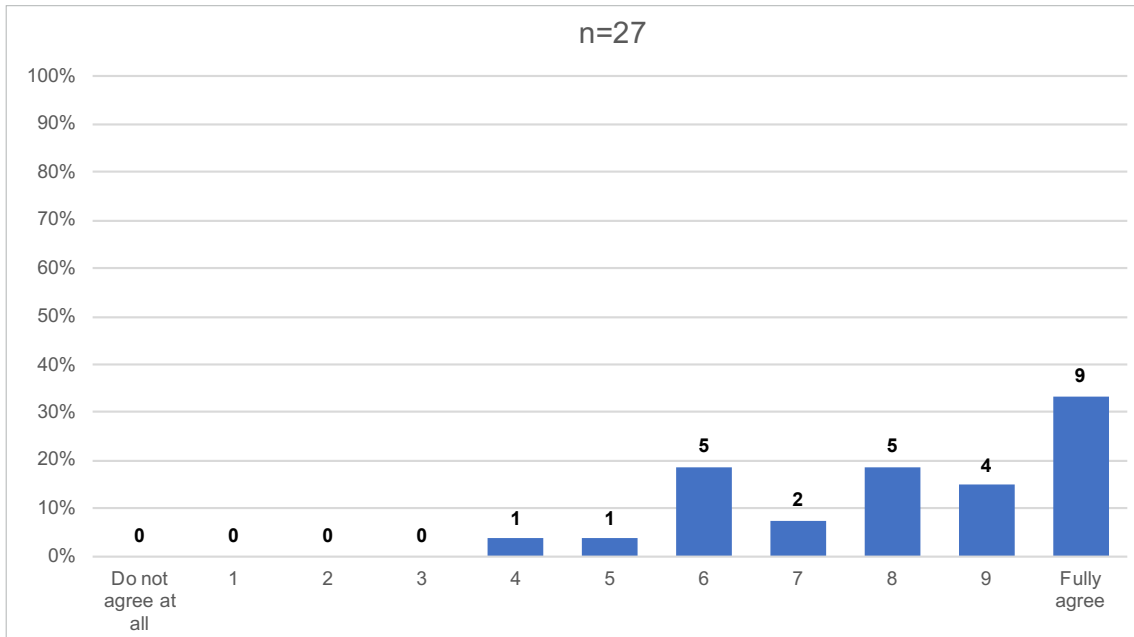
Figure 13: Education export and EdTech: Thesis 23



Statement [23]: EdTech cannot replace teachers, particularly at the primary level, it can only support the work of teachers. **MFA should focus on teacher education and professional development, prioritising teachers' own digital literacy** rather than engaging EdTech companies in developing e-learning apps.



Figure 14: Education export and EdTech: Thesis 24



Statement [24]: EdTech can empower children because every child is able to work at her/his own pace. But investments in digital learning are a long-term commitment, requiring a strong evidence base. **Digital learning solutions should be tested**, building careful mapping to match solutions to needs as well as process evaluations and impact assessment into the pilot design.



Table 5: Education export and EdTech: Thesis 25 – Ranking of 5 most important measures to bridge the digital divide and adapt digital learning solutions

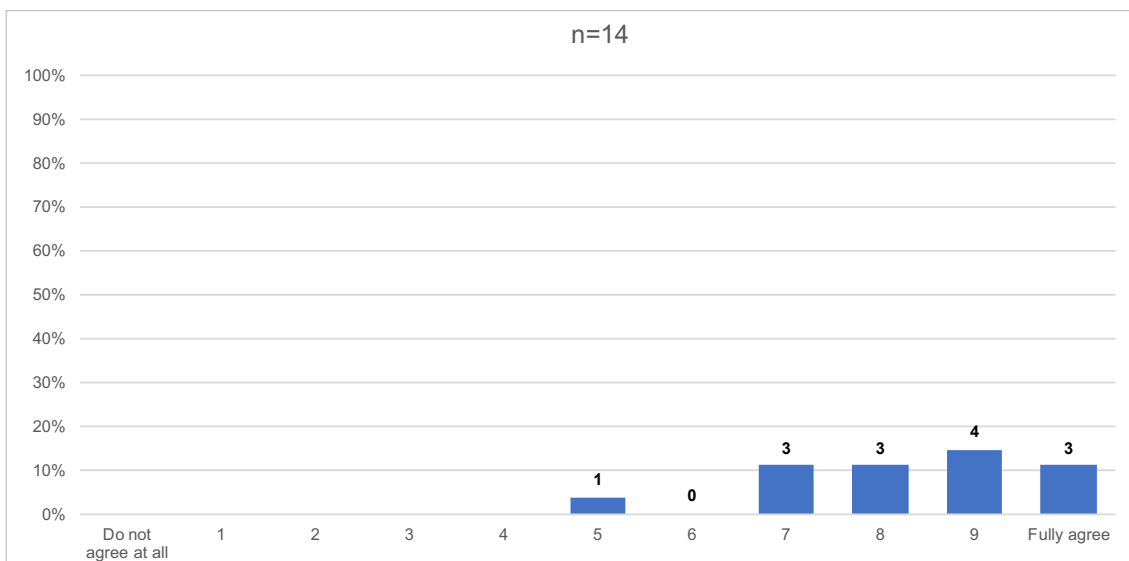
	RANK 1	RANK 2	RANK 3	RANK 4	RANK 5	TOTAL
Take a holistic approach, combining infrastructure development (connectivity, electricity), software development, and teacher training (on digital literacy learner-centred pedagogies).	12	4	3	1	2	22
Involve local actors to localise technology, engaging CSOs in the development of solutions that fit specific contexts within a country and meet the needs of learners in those contexts.	2	6	5	3	2	18
Combine 'high-tech' and low-tech analogue solutions, such as radio, TV, and print media.	1	6	5	2	3	17
Invest in local entrepreneurs and CSOs in LDCs who know the local terrain and can help to assess the need for Finnish companies to provide technical support, if required.	0	3	4	4	1	12
Introduce better quality checks and selection criteria for companies before engaging with them..., to avoid engaging with companies unable to implement the concepts they have proposed, due to a lack of capacity and/or experience in LDC contexts.	5	1	2	1	1	10
Establish a platform at country level to bring together EDC practitioners or local CSOs (who often lack knowledge and information on available technologies) with Finnish companies/ entrepreneurs (who often lack an understanding of local contexts).	2	1	0	4	2	9
Engage in large infrastructure programmes, providing electricity, broad band, and maintenance networks to LDCs to increase access to basic technology.	1	1	3	0	0	5
Support diaspora entrepreneurs in Finland who want to develop EdTech solutions for their country of origin.	0	0	0	2	3	5
All of them are so important that I do not want to prioritise.	1	1	0	0	0	2
None of them are important for MFA.	1	0	0	0	0	1
I don't have sufficient knowledge to answer this question.	1	0	0	0	0	1



Table 6: Education export and EdTech: Thesis 26 – Ranking of 5 most important relevant EdTech solutions which will become more significant in the near future

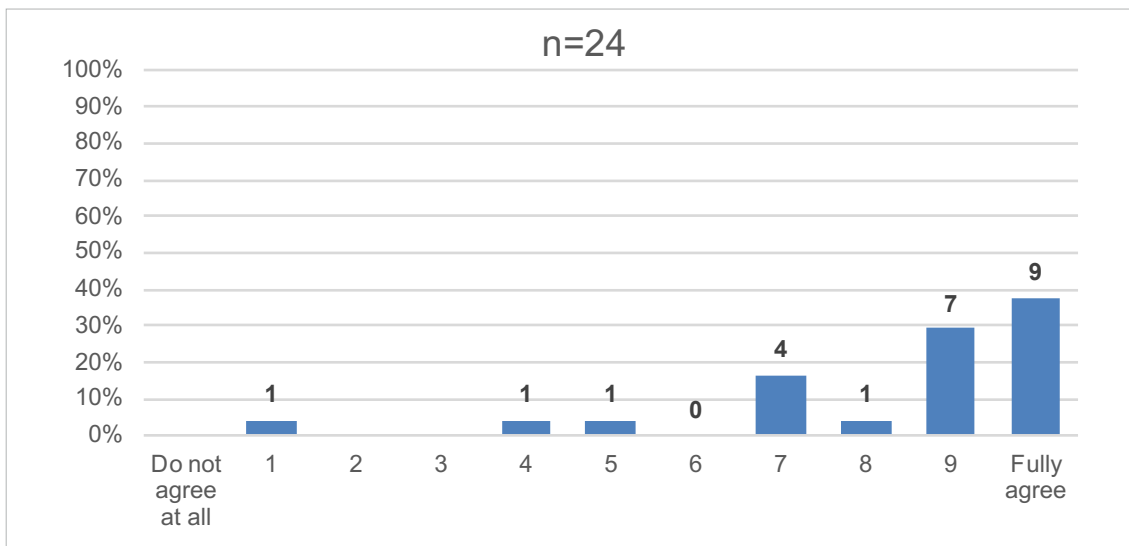
	RANK 1	RANK 2	RANK 3	RANK 4	RANK 5	TOTAL
Solutions to improve teacher training/professional development.	5	6	2	2	0	15
Distance/remote teaching and learning support (basic education, TVET, ad higher education)	3	3	6	0	1	13
Strengthened Education Management Information Systems (EMIS: data capture, management, analysis, visualisation, and use)	7	0	0	3	1	11
Support for classroom-based teaching and learning (pre-primary and secondary levels).	1	3	2	3	2	11
Solutions to measure learning outcomes in and out of school	0	2	2	3	0	7
Targeted disability- and gender-inclusive solutions for children at risk of dropping out.	0	2	1	3	1	7
Big data analysis.	1	0	1	3	1	6
Targeted solutions for out of school children.	2	0	1	1	2	6
Digitized continuous assessment and examinations (basic education, higher education).	1	1	1	0	2	5
All of them will become so significant that I do not want to prioritise.	3	0	1	0	0	4
Teacher management systems (recruitment and deployment).	1	1	0	1	1	4
Targeted solutions for VET and career mentoring/development.	0	2	0	1	1	4
Digitized quality assurance/school inspection (n=2).	0	0	1	1	0	2

Figure 15: Engaging the private sector in EDC: Thesis 27



Statement [27]: **MFA lacks a coherent strategy for engaging with the private sector.** It is, to date, unclear where (in which priority thematic areas/programmes) companies are supposed to contribute to EDC, how they are supposed to be integrated into EDC programmes, what they are supposed to deliver and what objectives MFA has with respect to private sector engagement. **Developing such a strategy is a prerequisite for the participation of the private sector in EDC.**

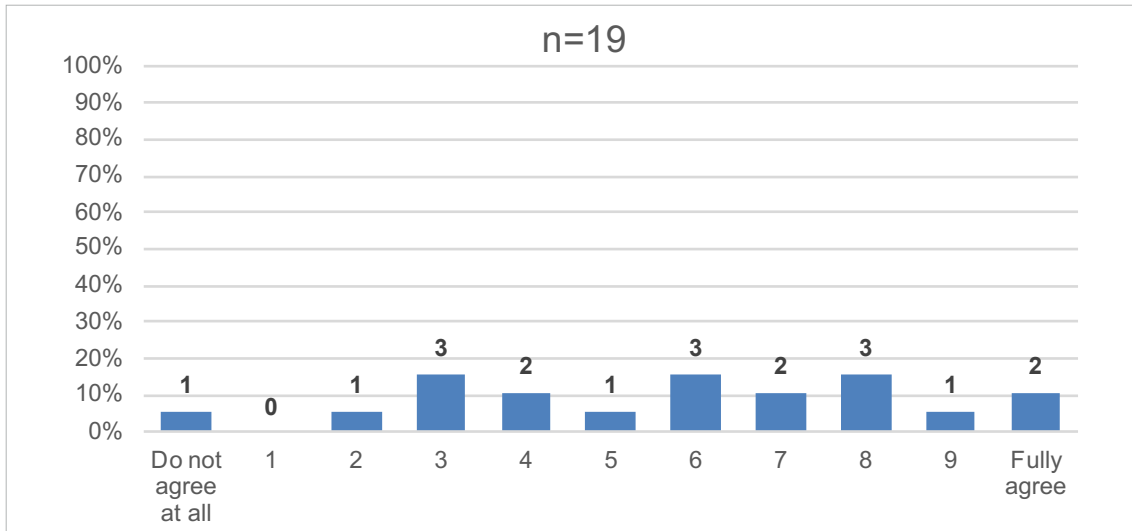
Figure 16: Engaging the private sector in EDC: Thesis 28



Statement [28]: **The private sector can play a crucial role in TVET, career and skill development,** e.g., by providing apprenticeships, internship, and career mentoring programmes.

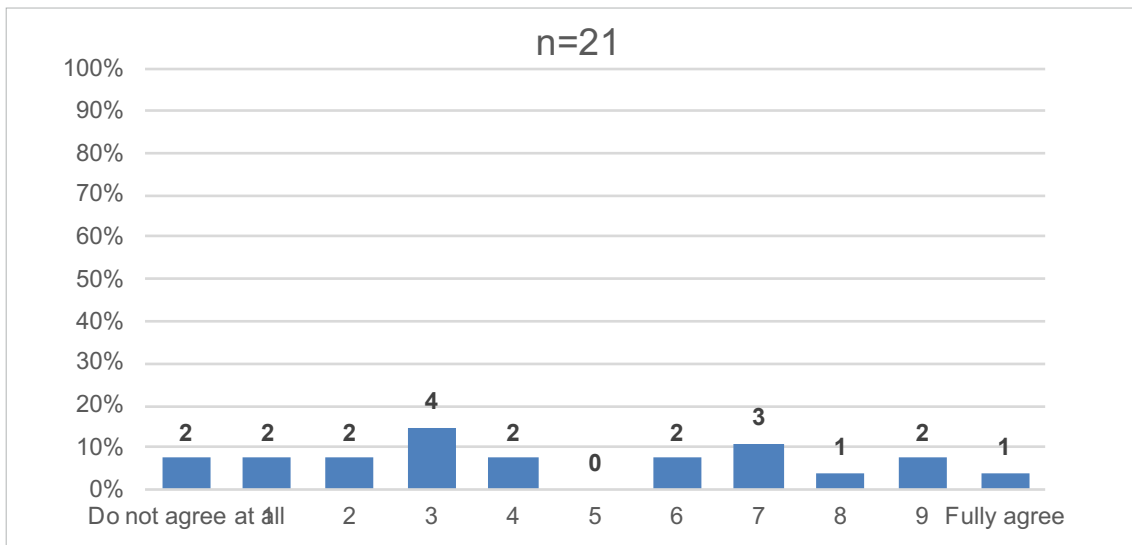


Figure 17: Engaging the private sector in EDC: Thesis 29



Statement [29]: Large Finnish CSOs and local CSOs are always the first to respond to a crisis and the last to leave; Finland should engage in the direct funding of local actors on the ground before a crisis occurs. This can be done through, for instance, a country-specific Grant Programme managed by an established Finnish CSO/ INGO, with a portfolio of sub-grants that complement Finland's multi-bilateral programming in a given country.

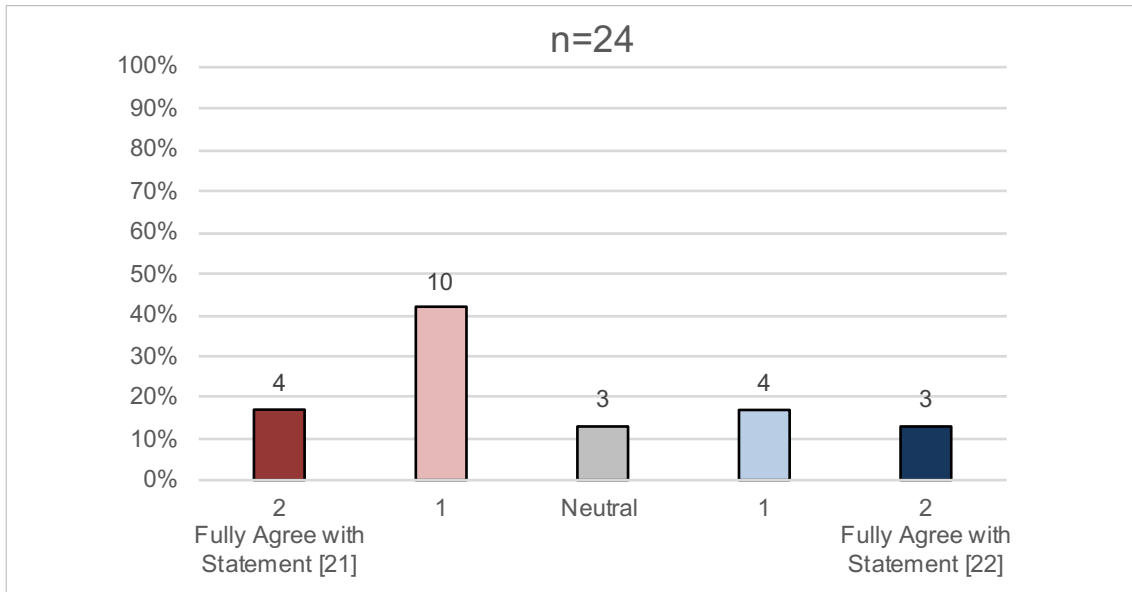
Figure 18: Engaging the private sector in EDC: Thesis 30



Statement [30]: There is no commercial market for education export/EdTech companies in crisis context and **opportunities for engaging the private sector in building resilient education systems are very limited.**



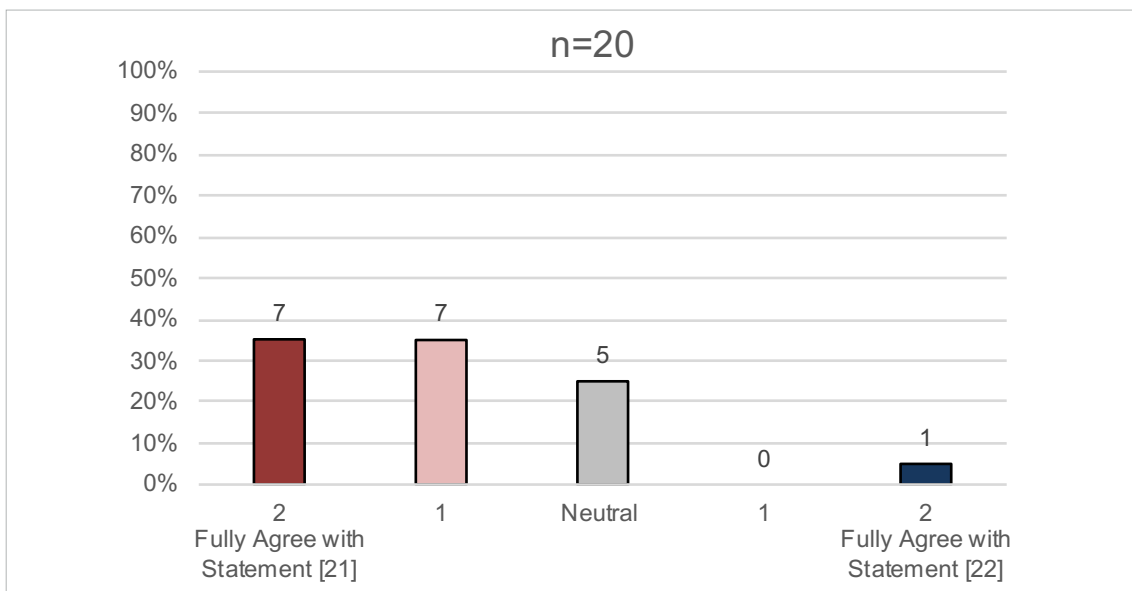
Figure 19: Engaging the private sector in EDC: Contrary Theses 31 and 32



Statement [31]: Global ODA will decrease in the future, as donor countries and partners alike are impacted by various crises. we **need the private sector to engage in EDC**, stepping in to help fill financing gaps.

Statement [32]: Universal access and public schooling for all are the foundation of a successful Finnish education system. **Exporting services in private primary and/or secondary schooling is against Finnish principles and can fail**, as commercial pressures compromise the quality of education.

Figure 20: Engaging the private sector in EDC: Contrary Theses 33 and 34



Statement [33]: **There is an urgent need for new innovative public funding instruments** for companies interested in investing in EDC and/or providing technical support for EDC innovations.

Statement [34]: The current funding provided to companies and SMEs through existing private sector instruments (e.g., Finnfund and Finnpartnership), as well as opportunities to participate in EU tenders, suit Finnish companies well. **No new instruments are required.**



Delphi interview guideline (round 1)

Good morning/afternoon/evening,

my name is ... I am part of the evaluation team conducting the **strategic evaluation “Right to education, right to learn – Finland’s development cooperation in the education sector”** which was commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). First of all, I would like to thank you for joining the Delphi panel of experts for this evaluation.

The Delphi survey has the objective to collect expert opinion on **multi-actor approach(es) and other set-ups that are promising for the future of Finland’s development cooperation in education**. The Delphi panel is composed of renowned experts from Finnish governmental bodies, multilateral agencies, academia, and practitioners.

I will take notes during the interview, and we will treat your personal **data confidentially**. Your opinions will be processed anonymously. However, you can decide whether you **would like to be acknowledged by name and with your institutional affiliation** in the evaluation report. Would you like to be personally mentioned in the evaluation report or do you prefer to stay anonymous?

In the course of this interview, we will approach three so-called hot topics with different thematic zoom-ins. The hot topics are structured in a way that I will **first provide a teaser** and then **raise a couple of sub-questions for your consideration**. The teaser is giving some **background information and may feature a particular perspective or opinion** but is not supposed to lead your answer in a certain direction. Please feel free to **challenge or move away from the teaser** in your answer. The hot topics and teasers were developed by the evaluation team and do **not represent the Ministry’s positions**. Are you ready to start?

Hot topic (1): Panellists’ perspectives Finland’s unique value-addition against adaptation needs

*Let’s start with the first teaser: When asked about **Finland’s unique strengths** with respect to its education system, Interviewees have mentioned **strong investment in public schooling, decentralised decision-making** for education provision and an emphasis on **equality, equity, and social cohesion** as important factors. In the context of EDC, it is expected that Finland’s unique strength are of high **value within the global response to the learning crisis** in countries across the globe. This is interrelated with, a **general premise**: That Finnish actors who are highly **competent at home** will also be highly **competent in fragile country contexts** (MFA, 2021e). However, this premise is **not unchallenged**. It implies that Finnish expertise needs to be **adapted to meet the learners’ needs** in specific country contexts. And it is **not yet clear how Finland’s unique value-addition can best be realised in bilateral cooperation**.*

- What **specific elements/fields of Finnish expertise** will be **relevant** in different contextual settings in least developed countries in the upcoming years? Can Finnish expertise which stems from a **highly stable HIC environment** contribute to this regard? (EQ 3.1)



- How can **Finnish expertise and Finnish experts be harnessed/optimised** in EDC, particularly in terms of strengthening Finland's bilateral cooperation? How can Finnish expertise be adapted to different contextual settings in partner countries and thus **maintain/strengthen Finland's role** in specific areas of expertise in future? (EQ 3.1)
- To what extent should Finland's **bilateral ODA be prioritised**, and why? **What size/share** of total Finnish EDC do you suggest being allocated to bilateral ODA funding? (EQ3.3)

Zooming-in: Panellists' perspectives on multi-actor collaboration

*Teaser: There is a strong voice in favour of multi-actor collaboration. Involving actors from **different spheres of Finnish society** (i.e., the public sector, national and international NGOs, education institutions and the private sector) is **expected to be crucial** in stepping-up education in Finnish development cooperation and to harness Finnish expertise in EDC.*

- How do you assess the potential of **CSO engagement** in Finland's future bilateral cooperation, particularly **engagement with NGOs, international NGOs and higher education and vocational education and training (VET) institutions**? What set-ups would **allow better coordination**, avoid duplications, or focus on isolated activities, and thus promote synergies between these actors; **who are promising actors**? **What size/share** of total Finnish EDC do you suggest being allocated to such actors and why? (EQ3.3)
- What role, if any, can the **private sector play in Finland's EDC**, particularly in collaboration with NGOs, higher education and VET institutions in country partner contexts? Which innovative financing instruments are suitable to promote private sector engagement in Finland's bilateral cooperation? (EQ3.3)
- Taking a step and looking at all actors again: Based on our discussion, what would you regard as the **most promising multi-actor approach** for Finland's EDC? What would be a **combination of suitable EDC instruments to realise the potential of the promising multi-actor collaboration** you have mentioned? (EQ 3.3)

Hot topic (2): Panellists' perspectives on responses to learning in crisis and education in emergency (EIE)

*There is consensus that building the **resilience of education systems** and securing the **continuity of learning in crisis situations** is super important. **Digital learning solutions** and the provision of **school meals** are, for example, two measures at the forefront of Finnish EDC to strengthen resilience. However, it **is not yet clear how Finland can best meet its objectives in EDC against the background of crisis and fragility.***

- In which ways can **Finnish EDC be refined to better address the need to build resilient education systems** in contexts of multiple crises and fragility? How can **education in emergencies (EIE)** be promoted as a core feature of humanitarian-development-peacebuilding (HDP)/triple nexus programming? (EQ 3.2 and 3.3)



- With which **funding set-ups** and which collaboration partners could Finland's ODA be **more flexible and adaptive** enabling immediate response to crisis and uncertain future changes? If yes, please specify. (EQ3.3)
- Should the **same cooperation instruments and funding channels** be used in **every context**, e.g., fragile states vs. less fragile? If not, what would be the most **appropriate mix/combination of EDC instruments in different contexts?** (EQ 3.3.)

Zooming-in: Panellists' perspectives on the role of education export (including EdTech) in building resilience

*Teaser: The advancement of EdTech solutions raised hopes to contribute to more resilient education systems. Yet, **concerns to leave many children behind** are huge.*

- What will be the **role of education export in building resilient** education systems in future? How do you assess the **risks associated with education export**, particularly EdTech solutions, in terms of improving the quality of education and learning outcomes?
- Which **EdTech innovations** are going to become **most significant** for addressing the global learning crisis in the upcoming years? (EQ 3.3) **How can Finland support** the development and proliferation of these innovations?
- What are best **ways to collaborate with private education export companies** that are not receiving any funding? (EQ 3.3)

Zooming-in: Panellists' perspectives on Finland and its multilateral engagement

*Teaser: Some interviewees participating in this evaluation **raised the question** whether the **benefits of investing in multilateral cooperation** as a means of effective policy influencing **actual** outweigh the **high costs** (incurred, for example, by positioning/deploying Finnish experts in multilateral organizations). They pointed out, the **accountability pathways, structures, and processes** for the results of policy influencing within these multilateral structures are by no means clear.*

- How **important is multilateral engagement** for Finland in order to reach its policy objectives; and why? (EQ 3.3)
- With **which multilateral organizations and/or multilateral programmes/initiatives** should Finland engage in the future; how, by which means and to what extent? In which organizations/programmes/ initiatives should it reduce/withdraw its engagement and why? (EQ 3.3)
- Do you think Finland should **increase or decrease the share** of ODA which is allocated to multilateral organisation? What size/share of total Finnish EDC do you suggest being allocated to multilateral ODA funding and why? (EQ3.3)



Hot topic (3): Panellists' perspectives on MFA's strategic choices (overall EDC set-up and cooperation instruments)

*Teaser: One of the four key objectives of Finland's development cooperation in education is that **multilateral partners and partner countries strengthen their commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education** (MFA, 2020). However, there is a **lack of consensus** on the relative **importance of investing in multilateral engagement** by Finland in relation to other instruments of Finnish EDC, i.e., bilateral cooperation (sector programme support), CSO programme and project support, engagement with higher education and vocational education and training (VET) institutions in EDC, and engagement with private sector instruments.*

- What would be the **most effective way for Finland to allocate and/or use ODA** in future responses to the global learning crisis and to enhance the quality of education? (EQ 3.3)
- Which **cooperation instruments and funding channels should be prioritised** in future responses; and why? Do you see a need for **compromise** in terms of investing more in one instrument rather than another? If yes, which instruments should be invested in more and which, less? (EQ3.3.)
- What would be the most **appropriate mix/combination of EDC instruments** in future? (If possible, please allocate shares to instruments.) (EQ 3.2 and 3.3).

We have reached the end of the interview and would like to thank you very much for participation in the Delphi panel. After completing the first Delphi round we will synthesise your reflections and develop theses on future options for Finnish EDC. They will be presented anonymously to all Delphi panellist in an online survey for triangulation, prioritisation, and further assessment. We are looking forward to your participation in the second Delphi round but do want to close without giving you the opportunity to add any missing aspects which you would like to see captured in our analysis of promising multi-actor approach(es) and set-ups for future Finnish EDC. Once again, thank you for participating in this evaluation.



Delphi survey (round 2)

Introduction and data protection agreement

Dear Delphi Experts,

We thank you again for participating in the first round of individual interviews and we are thrilled to have you participate in the second round. Building upon the results of the first round, we have compiled a list of theses that were anonymously consolidated from the interviews. We now invite you to rate and reflect on the importance, appropriateness, and likelihood of these theses.

Your contributions will be anonymized and treated with the utmost confidentiality, and your responses will be aggregated and analyzed along with those of other experts to generate meaningful and actionable recommendations.

You can pause the survey at any time and continue later. Your answers will be saved temporarily. To complete the survey, please click “Submit” at the end.

If you have any questions about the Delphi survey, please feel free to contact Nicolle Comafay-Heinrich (n.comafay@ceval.de) or Janis Wicke (j.wicke@ceval.de).

Once again, thank you for joining us in this exciting endeavor. Your participation in the Delphi Survey is critical to the success of this evaluation, and we greatly appreciate your time and expertise.

Note on data protection:

Your participation in the survey is voluntary. You may abort the survey at any time. Should you refuse to participate, restrict your consent or withdraw it, there will not be any negative consequences. All data will be handled and stored in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU-GDPR) and will only be analyzed anonymously for the purpose of this evaluation.

I consent to the collection and processing of the information which I provide in this questionnaire as part of the aforementioned Delphi survey.

Institutional affiliation

Please choose one that would best describe your sectorial affiliation

- a. National government body
- b. Multilateral Organisation (including former/retired employee)
- c. Academe
- d. Finnish NGO
- e. Finnish private consultancy/company
- f. International NGO



Finland's unique value addition

Please indicate on a scale from 0 (i.e., not agree at all) to 10 (i.e., fully agree) the extent to which you agree with the following statement. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess this statement.]

→ [1] Finland's own education reform process is of interest to partner countries. Rather than focusing on a specific area of the education system (e.g., teaching practices or non-standardised continuous assessment), Finnish experts should share their experience and **support partner countries in prioritising and implementing reforms, organising political support for a reform process, and institutionalising innovations**. The message must be: "don't copy our system, understand how we developed our system to become effective".

[2] The following is a list of thematic areas where Finnish experts have a high level of expertise and/or areas of potential interest for global education development cooperation (EDC). Which of these items are of particular value in the global EDC context and should be further exploited by MFA? Please select up to five areas, aspects or elements and rank them according to their importance.

- ✓ Well-being services in schools (school meals, school-based health, and psycho-social support services)
- ✓ Teacher education and professional development
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes and continuous classroom-based assessment
- ✓ Integration of EdTech in school lessons
- ✓ Climate education
- ✓ Inclusive education
- ✓ Integration of arts, crafts, physical education, and music in curricula
- ✓ TVET
- ✓ Sufficient breaks and space to play within the curriculum
- ✓ Developing digital literacy of teachers
- ✓ Global citizenship and peace education
- ✓ Early childhood education
- ✓ None of them are important in an EDC context.
- ✓ All of them are so important that I do not want to prioritise.
- ✓ I don't have enough knowledge to answer this question.

[3] The following is a list of measures MFA could implement to strengthen and expand the pool of Finnish expertise. Which of these measures do you assess as most important for MFA in the future? Please select up to five measures and rank them according to their importance.

- ✓ Build the international experience of Finnish teachers through supporting exchange programmes in partner countries.



- ✓ Promote mobility between Finland's education and development cooperation sectors, by encouraging, for instance, experts in development cooperation to work in Finnish education agencies for up to 3 years before returning to the development cooperation sector.
- ✓ Promote internships in relevant organizations (beyond UN organizations) for students interested in pursuing a career in EDC.
- ✓ Scale up secondment of Finnish EDC experts to multilateral organizations.
- ✓ Facilitate south-south partnerships between Finland's partner countries with the active involvement of embassy-based experts in the respective countries, to facilitate mutual learning.
- ✓ Diversify Finland's expert pool by developing a graduate programme in Finland's development policy and EDC, targeting international students.
- ✓ Scale up programmes for collaboration of higher education institutions in Finland with partner institutes abroad.
- ✓ Develop graduate scheme (entry-level jobs) for Finnish graduates to launch a career in EDC without the need for previous experience.
- ✓ Developing and providing EdTech solutions to partner countries with the involvement of Finnish companies.
- ✓ None of them are important for MFA.
- ✓ All of them are so important that I do not want to prioritise.
- ✓ I don't have enough knowledge to answer this question.

Multi-actor approaches

Please indicate on a scale from 0 (i.e., not agree at all) to 10 (i.e., fully agree) the extent to which you agree with the following statement. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess this statement.]

- [4] The concept of a 'multi-actor approach' is not yet clear to all stakeholders involved. Finnish CSOs, companies and HEI are uncertain how MFA wants to involve them in multi-actor approaches. MFA must **provide a coherent strategy and guidance on multi-actor collaboration**, which includes clarifying actors, their roles, and their responsibilities in the partnership; defining fields of action/engagement; and stating the partnership objectives.

Below, you can read two contrary statements. Please select the appropriate scale point to which you agree to the first statement (left side) or the second statement (right side). The extreme left/right represents full agreement while points in between the two poles allow expressing more nuanced opinion or indifference. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess these statements.]

- [5] There is still a lack of coordination among Finnish state and non-state actors, and for CSOs and companies it is difficult to see what other groups of stakeholders are doing and who they could potentially partner with. There is **an urgent need for MFA ensure better coordination and facilitate partnerships between the actors**.



VS.

[6] MFA, through FINCEED, is doing a good job in bringing multiple actors together and EDUFI provides the link to companies and education export. **There is a high degree of coordination and no further action by MFA is required.**

- [7] There are currently no MFA funding instruments or programmes that encourage or even allow multi-actor partners to apply for joint projects (e.g., CSO and a company, HEI and a CSO). If MFA wants to engage with multi-actor partnerships, they must **offer funding for such multi-actor partnerships** and integrate it as a requirement for project proposals into the tendering process.

VS.

[8] Finnish actors focus on ODA/MFA funding to engage in multi-actor partnerships, but in addition there are many opportunities of multilateral and EU funding for such partnerships, such as the Global Gateway -Team Europe Initiatives. **New funding instruments from MFA are not required.**

- [9] Finnish stakeholders need **coherent guidance on participation in Team Europe Initiatives**. MFA should provide more information on the funding opportunities, identify potential Finnish actors for partnerships and support them throughout the tendering process.

VS.

[10] The EU pillar assessment Finnfund is currently going through will open the door for involvement of multiple actors from Finland in EU-funded programmes. **No further action of MFA is required.**

Building Education System Resilience

Please indicate on a scale from 0 (i.e., not agree at all) to 10 (i.e., fully agree) the extent to which you agree with the following statements. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess this statement.]

- [11] Finland's long-term bilateral cooperation is often in countries that are vulnerable to violent conflict and/or natural disasters. Education and Emergencies and Protracted Crises is becoming increasingly important (sometimes explicitly but also implicitly) in such countries. This calls for **new and transformative strategies for education development in the context of triple nexus (humanitarian-development-peacebuilding) programming.**
- [12] Isolated emergency support, provided by means of short-term humanitarian assistance, is often not the best solution for EDC. Continuity of learning and improved learning outcomes in fragile settings needs a **holistic approach** (rebuilding/repairing infrastructure; training teachers; involving parents in learning; providing remote learning opportunities, but also hybrid and low-tech solutions; pro-poor interventions such as feeding/school meals and cash support to families and so on). **Long-term funding across sectors, drawing on various development and humanitarian funding sources**, is required for crisis response, recovery and resilience building in fragile countries.



- [13] Centralised education governance systems hamper rapid and flexible crisis response. Finland has experience in developing and strengthening a highly decentralised education governance system and should reflect on **how best to share that experience with partner countries engaged or interested in decentralized education planning and delivery and related systems-level reforms.**

Strategic choices regarding distribution of ODA

Below, you can read two contrary statements. Please select the appropriate scale point to which you agree to the first statement (left side) or the second statement (right side). The extreme left/ right represents full agreement while points in between the two poles allow expressing more nuanced opinion or indifference. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess these statements.]

- [14] Finland's ODA is currently distributed across 7 instruments (multilateral cooperation, bilateral cooperation, CSO project and programme support, engagement with higher education and VET institutes and engagement with the private sector). **MFA should continue to distribute ODA among all these instruments, finding a right balance and supporting complementarity among them.**

VS.

- [15] Instead of distributing funds using many instruments, MFA should set priorities and **invest in fewer instruments with larger volumes of funds for each.**
- [16] To better influence policy and bring its unique strength and expertise into multilateral organisations, Finland should **bind/earmark funds provided to multilateral organisations** (for instance, in terms of a thematic area(s) coherent with the Finnish objectives, or in terms of the involvement of Finnish actors).

VS.

- [17] Finland's objectives in EDC do not differ from the agendas of large UN organisations. Instead of emphasising its own agenda, Finland should provide **un-earmarked long-term funding to UN agencies and let the experts of those organisations make the strategic choices.**
- [18] Country programmes are the 'heart' of Finland's EDC. At the same time, bilateral engagement brings many more possibilities to involve Finnish actors and harness Finnish expertise. **MFA should increase the share of ODA for bilateral cooperation in the education sector.**

VS.

- [19] MFA should ensure an adequate share of ODA for both.

VS.

- [20] As a small country, the standalone impact of Finland's funds is limited. The capacity of MFA to manage bilateral projects is also limited. Against this backdrop, Finland's ODA can leverage more impact by combining forces with other countries through multilateral organisations. **MFA should direct the majority of ODA to multilateral organisations.**



Education export and EdTech

Below, you can read two contrary statements. Please select the appropriate scale point to which you agree to the first statement (left side) or the second statement (right side). The extreme left/right represents full agreement while points in between the two poles allow expressing more nuanced opinion or indifference. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess these statements.]

- [21] The **risk of deepening the digital divide** is a 'knock-out argument' against introducing EdTech in developing countries. MFA should refrain from supporting EdTech.

VS.

- [22] If it can potentially **reach even only half of the population with a technology that has a positive impact on learning outcomes**, MFA should not miss that chance and support EdTech.

Please indicate on a scale from 0 (i.e., not agree at all) to 10 (i.e., fully agree) the extent to which you agree with the following statement. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess this statement.]

- [23] EdTech cannot replace teachers, particularly at the primary level, it can only support the work of teachers. MFA should **focus on teacher education and professional development, prioritising teachers' own digital literacy** rather than engaging EdTech companies in developing e-learning apps.
- [24] EdTech can empower children because every child is able to work at her/his own pace. But investments in digital learning are a long-term commitment, requiring a strong evidence base. **Digital learning solutions should be tested**, building careful mappings to match solutions to needs as well as process evaluations and impact assessments into the pilot design.

[25] *Experts have proposed a number of measures to bridge the digital divide and adapt digital learning solutions to the needs of least developed countries (LDCs). Which of these measures are most important for MFA? Please select up to five measures and rank them according to their importance.*

- ✓ Engage in **large infrastructure programmes**, providing electricity, broad band, and maintenance networks to LDCs to increase access to basic technology.
- ✓ Take a **holistic approach**, combining infrastructure development (connectivity, electricity), software development, and teacher training (on digital literacy and learner-centred pedagogies)
- ✓ Combine '**high-tech' and low-tech or analogue solutions**, such as radio, TV, and print media.
- ✓ Involve **local actors to localise technology**, engaging CSOs in the development of solutions that fit specific contexts within a country and meet the needs of learners in those contexts.



- ✓ Invest in **local entrepreneurs and CSOs in LDCs** who know the local terrain and can help to assess the need for Finnish companies to provide technical support, if required.
- ✓ Support **diaspora entrepreneurs** in Finland who want to develop EdTech solutions for their country of origin.
- ✓ Establish a **platform at country level to bring together** EDC practitioners or local CSOs (who often lack knowledge and information on available technologies), with Finnish companies/entrepreneurs (who often lack an understanding of local contexts).
- ✓ Introduce better **quality checks and selection criteria for companies** before engaging with them in EDC interventions, to avoid engaging with companies unable to implement the concepts they have proposed, due to a lack of capacity and/or experience in LDC contexts.
- ✓ None of them are important for MFA.
- ✓ All of them are so important that I do not want to prioritise.
- ✓ I don't have enough knowledge to answer this question.

[26] *In which of the following areas will EdTech solutions become more significant in the near future? Please select up to five areas and rank them according to their importance.*

- ✓ Solutions to improve teacher training/professional development
- ✓ Digitized quality assurance/school inspection
- ✓ Strengthened Education Management Information Systems (EMIS: data capture, management, analysis, visualization, and use)
- ✓ Solutions to measure learning outcomes in and out of school
- ✓ Digitized continuous assessment and examinations (basic education, higher education)
- ✓ Big data analytics
- ✓ Support for classroom-based teaching and learning (pre-/primary and secondary levels)
- ✓ Distance/remote teaching and learning support (basic education, TVET, and higher education)
- ✓ Targeted disability- and gender-inclusive solutions for children at risk of dropping out.
- ✓ Targeted solutions for out of school children
- ✓ Targeted solutions for VET and career mentoring/development
- ✓ Teacher management systems (recruitment and deployment)
- ✓ None of them will become significant for MFA in the future.
- ✓ All of them will become so significant that I do not want to prioritise.
- ✓ I don't have enough knowledge to answer this question.



Engaging the private sector in EDC

Please indicate on a scale from 0 (i.e., not agree at all) to 10 (i.e., fully agree) the extent to which you agree with the following statement. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess this statement.]

- [27] **MFA lacks a coherent strategy for engaging with the private sector.** It is, to date, unclear where (in which priority thematic areas/programmes) companies are supposed to contribute to EDC, how they are supposed to be integrated in EDC programmes, what they are supposed to deliver and what objectives MFA has with respect to private sector engagement. Developing such a strategy is a prerequisite for the participation of the private sector in EDC.
- [28] **The private sector can play a crucial role in TVET, career and skill development,** e.g., by providing apprenticeship, internship, and career mentoring programmes.
- [29] Large Finnish CSOs and local CSOs are always the first to respond to a crisis and the last to leave; Finland should engage in the direct funding of local actors on the ground before a crisis occurs. This can be done through, for instance, **a country-specific Grant Programme managed by an established Finnish CSO/INGO,** with a portfolio of sub-grants that complement Finland's multi-bilateral programming in a given country.
- [30] There is **no commercial market for education export/ ed-tech companies in crisis contexts** and opportunities for engaging the private sector in building resilient education systems are very limited.

Below, you can read two contrary statements. Please select the appropriate scale point to which you agree to the first statement (left side) or the second statement (right side). The extreme left/ right represents full agreement while points in between the two poles allow expressing more nuanced opinion or indifference. [Alternative option: I don't have sufficient knowledge to assess these statements.]

- [31] Global ODA will decrease in the future, as donor countries and partner countries alike are impacted by various crises. We **need the private sector to engage in EDC,** stepping in to help fill financing gaps.

VS.

- [32] Universal access and public schooling for all are the foundation of a successful Finnish education system. **Exporting services in private primary and/or secondary schooling is against Finnish principles and can fail,** as commercial pressures compromise the quality of education.
- [33] There is an urgent need for **new innovative public funding instruments for companies** interested in investing in EDC and/or providing technical support for EDC interventions.

VS.

- [34] The current funding provided to companies and SME through existing private sector instruments (e.g., Finnfund and Finnpartnership), as well as opportunities to participate in EU tenders, suit Finnish companies well. **No new instruments are required.**

Thank you very much for your participation.



Annex 11. Complementary and added-value planned actions in MEC's Africa Action Plan

COMPLEMENTARY PLANNED ACTIONS	MEC-SPECIFIC PLANNED ACTIONS: VALUE ADDITION
Objective 1: Finland builds closer ties with African countries, the African Union, and regional organisations.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote reciprocal meetings between ministers and expert (physical and remote) visits with African countries; Support the political consultations between Finland and African countries, under the auspices of the MFA, by highlighting questions related to human capital, skills, and knowledge, including by clarifying how they connect to other policy segments. 	
Objective 2: Finland intensifies cooperation with African countries on regional and global issues.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance dialogue with African countries through engagement with UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, GPE and ECW. Support Finland's participation in the work of the international School Meals Coalition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take advantage of Nordic initiatives, such as the Nordic Development Fund (NDF) located in Helsinki, which funds projects that support the green transition. Prepare a report on Finland's impact and how to increase it in multilateral education sector cooperation. Engage with relevant African cooperation forums, such as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).
Objective 3. Finland promotes conflict prevention and resolution by strengthening of crisis resilience.	
<p>Increase the expertise of Finnish actors on the theme of "education in emergencies" through FinCEED.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise the importance of the quality of education, teacher training, working life skills, equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion in all efforts to prevent violent radicalisation and conflicts in dialogue with African countries and actors. Highlight good practices related to media literacy and democracy and human rights education. and opportunities for cooperation and influencing offered by Finland's contribution to the ECW fund. Utilise the expertise of Finnish peace and conflict research institutes on peace mediation and peacebuilding; e.g., MFA's Centre for Mediation. Utilise the instruments of the EU (e.g., the EC Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, AMIF), to strengthen education as part of promoting peace and security in the context of fragile countries/ post-conflict.



COMPLEMENTARY PLANNED ACTIONS	MEC-SPECIFIC PLANNED ACTIONS: VALUE ADDITION
<p>Objective 4. Measures are taken to combine Finnish expertise with the promotion of job-creating green growth and sustainable transition in African countries.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise the Team Finland Knowledge expert network (in South Africa) and education advisors for development policy (in Mozambique, Kenya, and Ethiopia) in building connections between operators in the education and research sector. • Make use of Finnish education sector experts placed in international organisations that operate in African countries, including seconded experts to the European Commission (Nigeria and Ethiopia). • <i>Map sources of funding for supporting multi-stakeholder cooperation and commercial cooperation.</i> • Utilise multi-stakeholder cooperation models, business cooperation, and local networks to create sustainable partnerships (e.g., Education Finland, Team Finland, and Team Finland Knowledge networks) to identify and facilitate new, locally functional solutions for example in education exports. • Exploit any opportunities offered by the UNICEF innovative learning hub for the participation of Finnish operators in identifying and scaling digital learning solutions relevant for African countries. • Promote open, network-based and digital cooperation between higher education institutions in Finland and African countries to create new businesses, innovations, and jobs in Finland and Africa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the need to potentially develop national instruments to support the implementation of Finland's Africa Strategy.
<p>Objectives 5 and 6: Finland promotes relations between the EU and African countries based on reciprocity and common interests; and promotes the participation of Finnish actors in the implementation of the EU-AU partnership.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPH pillar assessment to allow it to indirectly manage the EC's education sector development cooperation projects and to make better use of Finnish expertise in EU projects. • <i>Use the seconded experts assigned through FinCEED to support EU development policy implementation in Africa and enhance opportunities for Finland and Finnish operators to participate in the EU's joint programming in Africa.</i> • Cooperate with Team Finland and Team Finland Knowledge networks to include Finnish operators in the education sector's EU Team Europe initiatives in Africa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase communication between education and youth sector operators in Finnish embassies in Africa to help build cooperation with partner countries and international fund providers. • Promote cooperation between the European Commission's DG- INTPA and EAC to increase the EU's effectiveness in addressing the global learning crisis in African countries.



COMPLEMENTARY PLANNED ACTIONS	MEC-SPECIFIC PLANNED ACTIONS: VALUE ADDITION
5. Relations between peoples and communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop FinCEED operations to: Reinforce the development cooperation of Finland's education sector, especially in African countries, in order to strengthen the capacities of partner countries for developing high-quality and inclusive education; and Increase the use of Finnish expertise in efforts to solve the global learning crisis. • The "education in developing countries coordination group" co-chaired by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture prepares a roadmap for improving Finland's international impact in solving the learning crisis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a "round table" of higher education institutions for developing the research and teaching cooperation, tasked with promoting cooperation between Finnish and African HEIs. • Consider the opportunities offered by the EU Erasmus+ programme for promoting education, research, and youth cooperation. Support the active participation of civil society, especially in light of the significant budget increase for sub-Saharan African countries. • Use the experiences gained from the strategic funding of the MEC and the higher education institutions' pilot projects on Africa, including opportunities created for commercial cooperation. • For developing research cooperation, use the Nordic Africa Institute, UNU-WIDER, UniPID network (including the reports commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs), and the new higher education institution partnership programme (under preparation), all funded by MFA, the DEVELOP programme, co-funded by the Academy of Finland and the MFA, and Aalto University Department of Economics. Also exploit forms of funding that enable international cooperation (instruments of the Academy of Finland, Business Finland, foundations, etc.) to reinforce cooperation with Africa.

Source: MEC, 2022



Annex 12. Examples of education sector results by selected programme-based CSOs

This Annex illustrates some examples of the education sector by selected Programme-Based CSOs (in alphabetical order).

Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Felm)

Felm's work in the education sector focuses on inclusion and improving access to quality education among marginalised groups, including girls, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities.

During Felm's Development Cooperation Programme 2018-2021, **opportunities for minorities to access education, receive education in their mother tongue, and improve their standard of living were strengthened**. Nearly 8,000 children attended mother-tongue preschool education during the program. Of these children, 56% transitioned to the first grade, and over 7,300 completed the first grade, with 46% moving on to the second grade. The number of children participating in education and their commitment to learning increased.

Felm supported improving the **quality of basic education for minority children in Nepal and Laos**. In **Senegal**, the status of minority languages in communities and society was strengthened through Sereer-language preschool classes and Pulaar-language literacy classes. Advocacy efforts raised awareness of the importance of **mother-tongue education** and appreciation for minority languages. Sereer-language preschool education was provided in 22 preschool classes, benefiting nearly 700 children, and providing them with better prerequisites for transitioning to French-language primary education. A Sereer-French dictionary was created and shared as part of the education project.

In **Tanzania**, the Participatory and Integrative Teaching Approach project improved **girls' chances of attending high school**, nearly doubling their opportunities from 2018 to 2021. Twenty-four project secondary schools in the Meru area adopted **tools and teaching methods that promoted girls' learning and active classroom participation**, significantly improving the performance of initially disadvantaged low-performing community schools with limited resources in remote rural areas. In 2017, 19.7% of girls in project schools reached the level (Divisions 1-3) that qualifies candidates to enter Advanced Level studies (Finnish lukio). By 2021, this figure had risen to 37%.

In **Cambodia**, the livelihoods of ethnic minority village communities improved, and **literacy education in children's mother tongue** was provided in 23 villages in Ratanakiri province. **Teachers received training in indigenous language literacy**, and support was provided for the education of secondary school-aged children. The project also supported the operation of **mobile libraries for indigenous languages and the development of Jarai language alphabets**. During the



COVID-19 pandemic, **education** was delivered **through radio broadcasts**, and communication with students and villages was maintained through **social media**.

In **Ethiopia**, awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities was raised among national and local government officials across various sectors of society, leading to improved employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in various fields. The project collaborated with the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education to **enhance inclusive education at the university level**, becoming a local reference project consulted by organizations to advance various initiatives. This collaboration was **integrated with the Finnish government's support for the development of the education sector in Ethiopia**. (Felm, 2018; 2019 & 2020)

Fida International

Results are comprised of two Fida's programs, namely, 'Children Hold the Future', Development Cooperation Programme 2018-2021 and 'Towards the Future', Development Cooperation Programme 2022-2025.

During 2019 – 2022, 156 800 children, including 78 600 girls and over 10,000 children with disabilities benefitted from **improved access to education**. Access was improved by, for instance, the **construction of schools** closer to population centres, improving the **physical accessibility** of schools, improvements to **toilets and washing facilities** (including the construction of sanitary pad disposal facilities) and raising awareness of the educational rights of children, especially girls and children with disabilities.

During 2019 – 2022, the **quality of education** provided to 151,000 children was improved. This number included 69,700 girls and 4000 children with disabilities. Educational quality was strengthened through, among others, **in-service training for teachers on the use of modern, inclusive teaching methods**. Follow-up monitoring found that almost 9000 teachers were actively using new skills acquired through the Fida Programme. In addition, children's education was supported through informal classes and Kids Clubs, which covered, among other topics, children's rights, sexual and reproductive health, sports, self-expression and music. Kids Clubs were attended by 44 400 children, including 14 100 girls and 1900 children with disabilities.

During 2019 – 2022, the number of **schools in target countries providing individual support to children with learning difficulties** increased from 54 to 344. The **capacity of parents to support the education of their children was also strengthened**, leading to strong attendance of parents in groups that support children's education, such as School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations. During 2022, 11,100 parents (women: 8 900, persons with disabilities: 200) regularly attended such groups.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 and 2021, when schools in Nepal were closed and the country was in a state of lockdown, **Fida worked with the Nepalese authorities to deliver home-learning materials to school children**. In this way, 27,700 children were able to continue their education at home during 2020 and 28,300 in 2021.

Following the **military coup in Myanmar in 2021**, the **security situation has been difficult** and armed conflict has spread to multiple areas, including several in which Fida operates. The tense security situation led to school closures which threatened children's education. Fida's Myanmar



Country Programme responded to the challenging situation by **transitioning its 17 Learning Centres to teaching the Myanmar national curriculum** rather than providing informal education as originally planned. In this way, the Country Programme was able to ensure that 1400 pupils (f: 730) could remain in education. (Fida 2018; 2019; 2020 & 2021)

Finnish Refugee Council (FRC)

Development cooperation program (KEO-30), additionally results from humanitarian projects funded by KEO-70, projects funded by World Food Program and other donors.

FRC results are realised in the **non-formal sector** in the field of Education in Emergencies in refugee contexts. FRC's work in the education sector focuses on 1) **basic functional literacy and language training**, and 2) **vocational, business skills and financial literacy training for youth and adults**. Education in its various forms is the key factor in achieving FRC's objective to strengthen the resilience of refugees.

FRC provides **functional literacy and language courses with thematic topics** (e.g., health, handling money, conflict solving, women's rights, gardening) to young adults and adults who have lost education opportunities and have additional difficulties in managing their livelihood and family responsibilities due to their illiteracy. In some areas, even 80% of women are illiterate. The most important changes in daily lives reported are 1) **the ability to support children's education** (raise from baseline 22 % to 65%); 2) **improvement of managing money** (at baseline only 19% of learners showed signs of economic resilience whereas at the end of the course, the percentage had increased to 74%); 3) **health practices** (at baseline 40% of the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) learners are following some hygiene practises in household and the end of training 85% are putting in practice the health-related knowledge they have acquired); 4) **conflict-solving skills and practices related to adjusting to climate change**. Overall performance in the aspect of life skills (measuring the change in the above-mentioned behaviour patterns) improved from 21% at baseline to 80% (94% of the sampled learners reported that they had created jobs for themselves and others through the small business enterprise, IGAs and adoption of better farming methods).

From 2019 to 2022 a total of 46 281 learners reached literacy or English skills with the support of 1701 active and trained refugee facilitators. Most of the work was in 12 refugee areas in **Uganda**, and additionally with a smaller volume in **Ethiopia**. Around 70% of students were women, 30% were young people, 5% were persons with disabilities, 80% were refugees and 20% were members of host communities. In Ethiopia FRC is part of the livelihood consortium where it provides literacy skills for the participants before the start of livelihood activities, as it is found out that illiteracy hinders to benefit properly from other interventions.

Vocational skills are provided for young and adult refugees and internally displaced people in **Myanmar** and **Ethiopia**. Trainings are based on market surveys and include apprenticeships, linking with job opportunities as well as small business skills and life skills. In **Uganda**, business skills training for refugees and host community members contributes to the self-reliance of refugees. The ability to widen their income-generating sources after the business course was remarkable (94% of the sampled learners reported that they had created jobs for themselves and others through the small business enterprise, IGAs and adoption of better farming methods). There were in total 8779 students (F65%, youth 44%) in vocational and business skills training with an 85% graduation rate.



There is a shift from food aid to cash-based aid in many refugee settings. As a response in Uganda FRC provided a financial literacy course for 359 633 refugees to improve their money management skills with WFP funding.

The total beneficiary number in the education sector in FRC in 2019-22 was 56,698 in Uganda, Myanmar and Ethiopia. Additionally, 359 5633 refugees participated in the financial literacy short course in Uganda. (FRC 2021; 2022 & 2023)

Taksvärkki ry

Through a holistic participatory approach to meaningful youth participation in community development, Taksvärkki ry's development cooperation programs (2018–2021, and 2022–) have increased dialogue, coordination and joint efforts to **improve school environments**, especially in **Nepal** and **Malawi**. These improvements include e.g., hardware and WASH facilities with contributions from local communities, a clean environment, safeguarding of children, and more appreciative attitudes of school stakeholders and community members towards the education of girls and young women. In 2018–2021, altogether 31 schools (34 schools in 2022) were included in **Guatemala**, Malawi and Nepal. Most schools were the same from year to year.

In **Nepal**, Taksvärkki ry works in cooperation with ECCA Nepal (Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness). School Improvement Plans (SIP) to **meet the criteria for child and environmentally-friendly inclusive learning environments** (indicators developed with ECCA Nepal, including equity, safe drinking water, girl-friendly accessible sanitation, greenery, nature club management and school stakeholders' relationships) are now being implemented in all 15 project schools (in Morang, Dhankuta and Jhapa Districts). Most of them are situated in hard-to-access rural locations where school stakeholders often lack information on available public mechanisms for school improvement, while the education sector officials have very little or no contact with the reality of these schools. The SIP processes were facilitated by ECCA, in dialogue with community and school stakeholders, including child clubs established or revamped by the project.

Project schools have made noteworthy progress in promoting child-friendly local governance e.g., by introducing Child-Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) indicators like “one school one child club,” and “one school one garden,” and enhanced access to participation, information, and social justice programs for youth rights. Graduates from these child clubs are now playing a mentoring role for younger students and acting as focal points for ECCA in their communities. Project schools are awarded as model schools by the local government due to the good level of the school environment, enrollment and retention of students, and education success results. (Taksvärkki, 2022 & 2023).

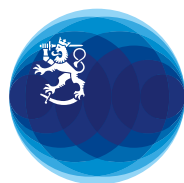
World Vision Finland

The World Vision Programme was implemented in seven countries in Africa and Asia (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, Cambodia, and India) mainly through multisectoral projects (so-called Area Development Programmes). They aim at sustainable development and empowerment of vulnerable children and communities. They included also **two thematic projects** focusing on promoting the **employment of vulnerable youth through TVET**.



During the programme period, the two projects implemented in the rural Buliza area in **Rwanda** and Roysambu informal settlement in Nairobi, **Kenya** provided approximately 1200 youth **access to skills training enabling them to get employment or start their own businesses**. The implementation strategies had a strong **focus on disability inclusion** with a 10% target for participation of people living with disabilities (which however proved to be somewhat difficult to achieve), gender equality, and cooperation with local authorities and the private sector. According to the final project evaluations done in 2021 both projects have had positive results, even with the COVID-19 affecting both. The evaluation done in Buliza confirmed the relevance of the intervention by providing access to demand-driven skill training, work-based learning, and apprenticeship. The evaluation revealed that 55% of the participants had their income increased due to the project (compared with the baseline data in 2017, the project-derived increase of income was 25%). The project's final evaluation results also indicate that 94% of respondents were satisfied with their current work, compared to 62% who were satisfied with their work during the baseline survey. In Roysambu, the evaluation showed that the proportion of youth who were ready for employment had risen from 13 % (2018) to 76 % in 2021 among the youth who had gained training through the project. The evaluation also emphasized the positive changes in the youth's attitudes, confidence, and aspirations as one of the main impacts of the project. (World Vision, 2022).

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