

Norwegian Development Aid to Education. How is Evaluation Used to Improve?

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For decades education has been a key focus of Norwegian public development aid. During recent years heavy criticisms have been raised about its efficiency and the administration's professional competence has been questioned. It is suggested that lack of evaluation skills and knowledge cause many failures. Evaluation has both a learning aspect and is concerned with the extent program goals are achieved. An empirical study on Norwegian development aid to education is presented and discussed, and possible reasons for the criticism is analysed. A historical legacy of "practicism" being preferred to academic based competence, populist ideals, an affluent national economy and the fact that 'education' in itself is a diffuse field – are among the reasons for the present unfortunate situation. In order to increase relevant competence, and by consequence, more goal effective aid, certain structural and training means are suggested.

Introduction

Norwegian development assistance has been criticised by many, and for different reasons, for several years. Norwegian assistance in its first 25 years has been summed up thus: "Generally speaking one might say that Norwegian technical assistance has two characteristics: it is extremely well intended and extremely unreflected. It is well intended in the sense that we willingly undertake responsibilities and tasks in excess of our capacity and knowledge" (Øyhus 1989:121). Øyhus underlines that this unreflected attitude has a negative effect when

it also is found in the political and administrative establishment and thus implies basic lack of competence underpinning decision making. To cope with the problem of lack of competency, knowledge and skills, a new type of insight is needed, new methods and working attitudes that gives preference to fault-finding, analyses of mistakes and above all, to learn from them. In recent Norwegian policy documents the intention of taking this challenge seriously seems clear.

This article discusses problems concerning efficiency of education projects in Norwegian development aid. It will be investigated to which

degree the findings on the leadership's competence in evaluation and education can contribute to explain shortcomings in relation to education projects as strategies to reach over all aims of Norwegian development aid.

The article reflects on the findings of an empirical study on evaluation and education as development aid. The study was carried out in Norway and in eight southern African countries (Welle-Strand 1998). Focus was on Norwegian key actors' understanding of education and evaluation in development aid. Empirical findings, literature of the field, and new signals from the Norwegian aid administration triggered an interest to gain knowledge about how the administration really looked upon education as an aid strategy, and how key actors viewed educational evaluation as a tool to make the strategy goal-effective¹.

In what follows, a brief introduction to literature on evaluation, organisational learning and educational evaluation will be given. Then the scene of education and evaluation in Norwegian development will be generally described, prior to a discussion on learning from experience. The findings from the empirical study will concisely be presented, and finally there will be a discussion and reflection on the findings.

Key Concepts

The term *evaluation* has been used to refer to many different concepts and activities. Those who seek to understand its nature is forced to struggle through a confusing tangle of conceptual and semantic clutter. There is a wide agree-

ment that evaluation is an important professional specialisation, but it has been widely discussed whether evaluation is a profession or a discipline. (House 1993, Weiss 1998).

Evaluation can encompass the various stages of life cycles of a project, program and policy – from conception, through execution, through impact. Those who are responsible for policy making will have to address key questions at the stage of a policy formulation. When these key questions are answered with retrospective data, then evaluation occurs.

Internationally, *researchers* frequently have been asked to carry out evaluations of educational projects, not least in developing countries. When a researcher operates as such, and not for instance, as a consultant he will have the research community's criteria of quality and professional merit as his main frame of reference. The consultant, on the other hand, might have concerned himself more with the mandator's criteria than those of the research community might, in order to stay in business. Consequently – researchers' evaluation reports – although pretending to be professional have a tendency to become distant and vague, seen from the mandator's point of interest. Researchers' motivation tend to be more directed towards what may be regarded as genuine and new knowledge by the scientific community. The form and content of their reports may often be difficult to understand for non-researchers involved in the project. This implies that a traditional research study may be of limited use for those who would like to apply the results in practice. In addition, it has been argued that it takes a long time before a research report is published.

Scientific researchers do not carry out the great part of commissioned evaluations. The 'bulk' operating in the evaluation market does not seem to have a theory based orientation. One rather finds different versions of common

¹ Various investigation techniques were utilized; literature review, content analysis of recent policy documents in the area of education and development aid in Norway, informal discussions, 60 interviews with a selection of managers/administrators of Norwegian development aid, interviews with key officials in Ministries of Education in eight southern African countries, as well as with other donors to education.

sense 'means-ends' approach. Due to the increasing request for evaluations a *commercial consultancy market* has developed. Public and private institutions, as well as private consultants, with very different educational and professional backgrounds, have undertaken evaluation tasks in the field of education. Bearing in mind the economic rationality and motivation created by market survival, it seems fair to think that evaluators quite often may find it 'necessary' to meet the mandator's specific preconceptions and vested interests related to the evaluation. Evaluations conducted under these circumstances may frequently tend to be lip service, and, may substantially influence both the form and content of the evaluation, and not least, the conclusions.

There seems to be little agreement upon the understanding of the concept *organisational learning*. But if *learning* is defined as the ability to detect and correct errors and thereby to improve the functioning of an organisation, organisational learning then implies to identify, remember, and use structures and procedures that improve the problem-solving capacity of an organisation and make it better prepared for the future (Olsen & Peters 1996).

But, practice is different. Policy-makers and administrators do not necessarily search for lessons. Their ability and willingness to learn from experience is often limited. Especially in less dramatic circumstances, learning may be ignored, while in periods of critical historical change, people make serious, even desperate efforts to understand what is happening to them. However, ambiguity and uncertainty do not eliminate strong conviction in political life. Feedback about results may be of limited relevance, because behaviour is driven by normative convictions and basic principles, rather than by cost-benefit calculations and a hunt for improved efficiency and adaptability. 'Believers' are unlikely to modify beliefs, behaviour in

the light of new experiences. Believers tend to see what they expect to see and what they hope to see.

It has been great variations, even 'unnecessary' to document effects in public bureaucracies. A study of eight democracies (Olsen & Peters 1996) is concerned with how government organisations learn about themselves and their performances. One result of the comparative analysis was that it was a significant discrepancy between what is wished, expected and planned, and to the way learning from experience functions in practice. Democratic governments are expected to consult the past, they are assumed to modify their understandings, evaluations, and behaviour on the basis of experience. The learning aspirations in democratic polities are high.

In the comparative study by Olsen and Peters (1996), the case of Norway emerged as a surprise in the analysis. In the rhetoric and the conventional analysis of politics in the 1980s there should have been few better candidates for significant reforms than Norway. It had a large public sector in terms of both employment and expenditure and also had a tradition of large-scale intervention by the public sector in economy and society. Despite this, Norway changed slowly and cumulative very little during this period. This absence of significant reform appears in part a function of the acceptance of such a system of government by the average Norwegian, combined with the relative affluence of Norway. There was no feeling of crisis.

Further, the ways in which the past is consulted do not guarantee improved performance and increased adaptive value (Olsen & Peters 1996). In Norway, a new consensus developed during the 1980s on which forms of governance are most efficient. The consensus was so strong that few found it necessary to *study* the effects of alternative forms. For instance, in budgetary

reforms, governance by objectives and results was accepted without any systematic analysis of the conditions under which it would work. There is little documentation of actual achievements, and no thorough evaluation has been made (Olsen 1996). Compared with the other seven countries, Norway stands out as a reluctant reformer. It is held that Norwegian changes have been piecemeal and incremental rather than comprehensive and system transforming. It is argued that one reason could be that this partly was because Norway has been one of the most successful welfare states. The Norwegian case is summed up with reflections on reform patterns verify an image of a slow learner. The question is also raised whether slow learning processes can ever lead to better adaptation and improved adaptability, so that the public administration is able to do better and be better prepared for the future (Olsen 1996:205–208).

What is meant by *educational evaluation* and competence building? Among others Habermas states that “the critical role of the social scientist, is the responsibility to restore practitioners to a wider consciousness”. An interpretation of this statement goes well with the concept ‘educational evaluation’, in the sense that the social scientist (the researcher or the evaluator) should act as an agent of liberation to his contemporaries. Habermas states two types of rationality, the ‘System World’ (the cognitive rationality) and the ‘Life World’ (the irrationality or emotional world, in accordance with Weber). He interprets the historical development as moving towards increasing rationality, and he stresses the importance of logical reason. (Habermas 1969). To counteract the negative effects of a ‘cold’ rationality of the system world, Habermas also advocates the importance of ‘command freedom’ communication

It is here seen as paramount that to be optimally valid, reliable and credible, evaluations ought to be research based. This means that to

evaluate education projects credibly, competence in education as a discipline seems to be of crucial importance. Essential components of such competence are; knowledge about a country’s education policy, and how this is expressed in a nation’s curriculum and policy documents, knowledge about the country’s contextual framework, its culture, history and economy, and the frame factors for implementing the given policy. In addition to such knowledge, it is seen as crucial to have the skills in educational planning, in teaching, in supervising, and in evaluating. Earlier studies (Agapitus *et al.* 1991, Welle-Strand 1995) found that most of the Norwegian development assistance to education mainly has been managed mainly by practical experience based competence, or, on competence based on teaching experience in a certain subject. With all respect for the knowledge and skills acquired through practical experience, it is difficult to believe that this can *replace* comprehensive academic studies. It is difficult to think that only practical experience or only theoretical foundations would give sufficient competence to implement Norwegian policy in education and development aid. One could claim that theory without practice leads to an empty idealism, and action without philosophical reflection could lead to mindless activism.

Education as Development Aid

In Norway, education projects seem to have played a central role in development aid for decades. And it seems reasonable to ask for the expected outcomes, and what have been the actual results? What *competence* (the united content synthesis of specific knowledge and skills in a certain field) is presupposed by those in charge, to secure that education projects can be a good strategy in relation to the over-all aims for Norwegian development aid policy? The relevant competence will always depend

on what your task is, and what responsibilities you have. Here, special attention is been paid to the competence in education and evaluation of the actors in key positions of public and private Norwegian development aid.

In February 1993, for the first time in the Norwegian aid history, an independent commission of experts was appointed by Royal Decree, assigned to analyse the changed international context and to suggest how the main political goals of Norwegian North-South aid policies could best be realised, both by public authorities and by non-governmental organisations. The Commission was also asked to consider strategies and instruments for a coherent North-South aid policy and discuss methods of achieving the objectives in an efficient way. The report (Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995-1), a comprehensive review, looked at the experiences, and investigated whether aid had worked, and if not, why. The Commission was critical to the cost-efficiency of Norwegian development aid, and recommended improved quality assurance and emphasis on external evaluation. Among its several recommendations, the report emphasised education, competence-building and institutional development as key areas in future Norwegian development assistance. And, in a Report to Parliament, *A Changing World* it is emphasized that education will be increasingly more important in Norwegian development assistance. The recommendation to the Parliament from its Foreign Affairs Committee (Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1995-2)) also focused on education as the central issue in future Norwegian development aid. The decision of earmarking a minimum of 10 per cent of all aid money to education projects, was made in Parliament June 10th 1996, the share gradually to be increased to 15 per cent.

From the Commission's analysis of lack of competence, it seems fair to assume that most

of the Norwegian development assistance to education, either has been managed mainly by administrative experience-based competence, or, on competence based on just teaching experience in a certain subject. On these premises honorable contributions have often been made. The weaknesses, though, seem to have been the projects' lack of consistency with the recipient countries' education policy, lack of proper planning, lack of organization frame factor analysis in the recipient socio-cultural context, and lack of formative and summative evaluation of projects and schools as *organisations*.

Other empirical studies (Agapitus *et al.* 1991, Welle-Strand 1993, 1995) have confirmed the critique of much Norwegian development aid. These studies have concentrated on development aid and the evaluation function in education projects. The findings have been that evaluation had most often been incidental and not deliberately used as a tool to improve goal achievement in educational projects or programs. Neither had the function of evaluation been consciously related to the projects' rationales and plans, among other reasons due to the leadership's ideological orientation, with insufficient emphasis on rational planning and evaluation. Evaluation had come impressionistically afterwards, and only incidentally performed in a research-based, valid, and reliable manner.

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formative and summative evaluation of projects and schools as *organisations*.

Did the Aid Administration learn from Experience?

There has been a major shift in policy thinking about development aid in the last decades. The *enlightenment* approach was central for a long time, and still is to a certain extent in some circles. This idea was followed by the *diffusion* theories and the idea of spreading innovations. Then came the wave of *communication* and, *crosscultural* communication, in particular, stressing the principle of equal status between the parties. Paulo Freire's idea of critical conscientiation has also been important; and recently the notion *popular participation* is in focus, at least for Norwegian aid. Further, as a result of the downfall of communism/socialism, a new trend is noticeable: business orientation, market economy, liberalism and *accountability*, while at the same time most international funding and technical-assistance agencies advocate a local perspective (King & Buchert 1999).

In development assistance, a main purpose of planning and evaluation is to facilitate good choices of goals, strategies and methods. Most development organisations share the same basic aim, to make development assistance increasingly useful to the target groups. This importance of evaluation is clearly stated by the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD): "Necessary prerequisites for evaluation include clearly defined strategies and goals, and a project structure which facilitates the flow of adequate and up-to-date information to all levels. These conditions are essential both for project improvement through evaluation, and for appraisal of the overall effects of the project". (NORAD 1989: part I: 17) Even if the importance of evaluation is so clearly

stated, the impression from media, literature and research, is that the effectiveness of Norwegian development aid in most sectors is hardly debated.

Findings and Discussion

It has been attempted to investigate which problems concerning efficiency of education projects in Norwegian development aid have been found. And it has been asked: To which degree can the findings contribute to explain shortcomings in relation to education and evaluation of education projects as strategies to reach over all aims of Norwegian development aid?

Three main problem areas are identified in the use of education as a strategy in Norwegian development aid: (1) lack of clarity, and signs of contradictions, at the policy level's formulation of goals and strategies, (2) contradictions within the aid administration about understanding of the concepts of *education* and *evaluation* and the function of education projects, both due to the lack of clear signals from the political level, and due to the competence and attitudes towards education at the executive level, and (3) these problems manifested at political and administrative levels have possibly affected shortcomings in implementation of education projects.

Vague political aims and dysfunctional legacies

Since development aid was made a distinct government responsibility, the top level *political formulations* of aims and strategies involving education have been rather vague. The lack of clarity, and even contradictions seem to create serious problems for those expected to execute the policies, namely, the administration in governmental agencies and NGOs. What could be the possible root causes for these unclear and even contradictory policy aims?

One possible reason could be different interpretations of the concept of education by different groups of politicians and top bureaucrats. Missionaries played a central role in building up education systems in most of the present Norwegian programme countries. And Norwegian Missions still have a stronghold in Norwegian development aid. In the late 1960's and the 1970's, when Norwegian development aid in official terms was built up, the missionary background was still there, but new forces had appeared. The de-colonising decades when many were in favour of using education projects as support to liberation movements, built on the enlightenment theory and several versions of socialism and communism. In the Marxist tradition stress was put on subject knowledge that could contribute to get rid of «false consciousness». Both the old and the new understanding often stressed the practical work as important part of education. (Fägerlind and Saha 1983/91) Particular for Norway was the absence of visible proponents of liberal education, the 'elite education' still found very much alive in e.g. UK and France, and thereby a model for the élites in the former colonies.

Also, Norway differed from e.g. Sweden and England in the lack of interest by its universities of involving themselves in research and training in the field of education and development. Competence in the field of education and development meant understanding different education philosophies, educational policies formation, economics of education, educational leadership, educational evaluation – and different socio-cultural contexts.

It is a paradox that Norway for a long time being the “World Champion of development aid”, giving the highest per cent of its GNP for development aid, simultaneously is an 'under-developed' country in terms of academic institutions in the field of international and comparative education. Hence, the diffuse

understanding of the purpose of education among the political decision makers could not be compensated for by university trained professional education specialists recruited to the aid administration, like in the countries mentioned above². Until recently, there were no such opportunities in Norway.

In the founding decade of publicly organised Norwegian development aid, the 1970s, there was also considerable general reluctance to the principles of systematic goal formulations, rational planning and research. Rationalism and belief in experts were sometimes seen as opposed to qualities like democracy, equality and human good, seen from the viewpoint of solidarity movements. And there was a contradiction between recipient orientation and the earmarking of funds to education projects. When Norwegian development aid started in the 1970s, it was not proper for the political level to tell the administration what it ought to understand by 'education', and expected the aid administration itself to evaluate or 'control' effectiveness of its projects and programmes. Strict accountability measures might have been interpreted as an unpleasant and distrustful control orientation towards either the Norwegian programme officers or the people in the developing country that Norway intended to help.

The values and dangers of evaluation

The function of evaluation seems to be another field where contradictory signals are given from the political level to the administration. Internationally, evaluation of quality is frequently seen similar to scientific research. Trygve Lie, NORAD's first Chair (and first UN Secretary General) expressed strong reluctance to any

² SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation) had six employees with a Ph. D. in international education.

use of public money for research activities in relation to Norwegian development aid, saying that one NOK spent on research is one Norwegian Crown wasted for the aims of development aid. Hence, evaluation and research activities could be perceived both as important and dangerous. The attitude towards evaluation has changed over time, from reluctance in the 70s, to being politically correct in the 90s. However, over time there are signs of “double talk” in terms of the value of evaluation as expressed by the political level. On some occasions evaluation has been praised as important feedback for effective policy implementation. On the other hand these opinions have not been followed up sufficiently, neither in funding nor in monitoring and sanctions. Evaluation seems to have been much of an empty slogan from the political level, and to a fair degree met by ritual lip service from the administration. The function of evaluation is also hit by contradictory organisational dualism. Everybody does agree that evaluation is important in order to learn, and in order to become more efficient and accountable. But evaluation is also perceived as “anti- democratic”. Evaluation may imply distrust to certain groups or persons, since a professional external evaluation most often will show discrepancies between goals and achievement, as well as pointing out reasons for goals not having been met.

An affluent national economy creates problems

Norway's glorious legacy of missionaries' and later, governments' considerable aid to developing countries, have created a favourable opinion among the Norwegian people towards continued large grants for aid. When this positive opinion coincides with an affluent oil economy, the political level seems forced to act, in the sense of actually spending the money allocated

for aid. Projects and programmes are put into action without clearly questioning the capacity or the professional competence of the administration in the priority areas. Today there are increasing Norwegian budget allocations for aid, while other countries are decreasing theirs. Especially in the field of education and development aid, Norway is *the* donor, putting ‘fresh money’ into the education sector, while most other donor countries are withdrawing or decreasing their support. Hence, Norway tends to be ‘popular’ because of the money, but may also be seen as an ‘easy’ co-operation partner both for other donors and for recipient countries. (Lauglo 1995) It is not seen as likely that Norwegian grants to education projects or programmes will be monitored very closely. At the same time Norway's *education* assistance is met with caution by recipients. Norway has seldom been professionally visible in arenas where research on education and development aid have been presented and discussed.

The political levels' challenges to the administration

The end of the 1990s saw signals of an upcoming neo-rational ideological agenda. Norwegian tax payers are still in favour of development assistance, creating a positive normative pressure on the politicians. Although there is still an affluent national economy, there is also an increasing demand for accountability, as the reports about the level of costs and goal achievement by recipients are asked for by the Norwegian public. And, there are questions about the benefits for Norwegian foreign policies also in commercial terms. A clearer market consciousness is emerging. The Ministry of Finance, the Auditor General and the majority in Parliament are steadily and more loudly requesting accountability from the aid administration. Hence, the administration is now met with a new re-

quirement. It is asked to be more specific and accountable in their achievement of goals and their use of large budgets for these goals. Still the policy goals are unclear, and still the administration consists of roughly the same personnel as in previous decades. So, how do they meet the new situation? What do they think about the education goal-effective strategies and of professional external evaluation? And, how do they intend to meet the requests from a new ideological agenda at the political level?

The administration's attitudes, motivation and competence

The aid administration is the political level's *executive tool* established to implement the goals and strategies of Norwegian development aid. The primary target groups, the Norwegian opinion and the international donor community, see the attitudes, motivation and professional competence of those responsible for the implementation as decisive for the success level of Norwegian efforts. The empirical findings of this study have documented a limited level of professional competence in the field of education. What are the reasons for, and the consequences of, this situation? How capable are the public and private organisations to become more efficient and accountable? Are they able to become 'learning organisations'? These questions will be discussed briefly based on the empirical findings.

The troubled field of education as a professional field extending the classroom

Education is a troublesome concept. All Norwegians have "an education". They have all been students for many years. They *subjectively know* what education is. Only a few have graduated in "education as an academic field of study" at

university level, yet others have met education as the "subject of pedagogy" in their teacher training. Among aid administrators, three main understandings of the concept of *education* are found: (1) the common sense notion, namely, education is what you get from schooling, (2) education as the teaching techniques learned in teacher training and (3) education as the competence achieved through several years of study at the university. The last, and academically based understanding of education comprises the why's, what's and how's of organised learning at individual, organisational, state and international levels.

The aid administration's different opinions about education as aid strategy seem to be rooted in a different knowledge of aid history in general, and of Norwegian development aid's use of education in particular. Some background variables stick out. Those in favour of more academically based competence in education tend to have a higher education themselves. They tend to be managers and they are men. Those favouring practical experiences as the overall important aspect of valid competence in education tend to have a limited tertiary education themselves, some with experiences as schoolteachers. The great majority of them are women. Hence, the two main groups of opinions on education have significantly different frames of reference for their perceptions and interpretations of the education strategy.

'The anti-academics' in the administration seem to have an upper hand in the decision making process about the implementation of education projects. This may be explained by the hegemony of "the practice ideal" still being strong in the society at large at the time Norwegian development aid emerged as a Government responsibility. Key present administrators were recruited at that time. The ideological climate of the 70s may add to explain the strong position of the practical ideal at the cost of the

academic or “theoretical”. The practical based competence was seen as more democratic and less elitist than the academic was. At the level of educational philosophy, the “hegemony of the practical” can also be seen as a consequence of education progressivism and pragmatism, deriving not least from John Dewey and his slogan “learning by doing”. Today, both the ideological climate and the educational philosophy of the 1970s have changed internationally. The professional, the academic, the intellectual, and the buzzwords of efficiency and accountability dominate the agenda not only of private business, but also increasingly of public governance. The most recent ideology, after the downfall of socialist regimes all over the world in the beginning of the 90s, could be termed economic rationalism. Education systems all over the world have been through comprehensive changes. Most of the countries had to revise their education system and its function seriously, due to economic constraints. Norway is one of the countries that has undergone only minor changes, in contrast to most other countries. The strong oil economy has not made structural changes and strict accountability measures necessary. However, the practical ‘cadres’ of the 70s are still employed by the public aid administration. As public servants they are in lifelong appointments. They do not *have to* change their attitudes, and they continue to have the power to influence important decision-making. Hence the “hegemony of the practical” may well survive for an uncertain number of years.

Attitudes towards accountability

The general ideological climate of the 1970s included a reluctant attitude to ideas and actions seen as rooted in functional rationalism. The alternative was often a process-oriented humanism. In this climate, efforts of rational planning, evaluations and accountability could

risk being interpreted as authoritarian and non-democratic. The concepts of authoritarian and authority were often mixed up. Both were seen as in conflict with the ideologically correct humanist and solidarity attitudes of the time. Forss’ study (Forss 1985) lends support to the above interpretations. He found that even if UNDP had evaluation as a central engagement since its foundation in 1966, and could thus be expected to be highly professional in this field, serious criticisms were raised about the value of the evaluations carried out during the first 25 years of development assistance within the UN system.

The stress on evaluation from the political level in Norway recently, has had some visible effects. Evaluation manuals have been developed. (NORAD 1993) However, it has not been mandatory to apply them when developing programmes and plans. Nor has it been mandatory to evaluate projects or programmes. And, there has seldom been monitoring of the actual use of the manuals, most likely due to the “dual” perception of educational evaluation as a tool for improved goal achievements. There has hardly been an “organisation culture” of checking whether projects have been handled according to stated goals, neither in the recipient countries nor by the Norwegian administration. The traditional double-talk about evaluation, important and not important at the same time, may have relaxed attention to the political signals. Hence, the handbooks and manuals have been produced (because evaluation is important), and not applied (because evaluation is not important). There has hardly been a definite commitment to apply them, and there has hardly been any sanctioning from senior management level if not applied by programme officers.

Another reason for the administration’s lack of interest to apply evaluation may be that education is seen as a straightforward and simple

practical area to assess, mainly having to do with teaching in a classroom. Traditionally evaluation in connection with education questions in Norway, has until the late 1980s, been related to individual students' performance. Norwegian education research did not have the tradition of evaluating educational state reforms on national programmes as has been practised in for example Sweden. Hence, no particular evaluation of education projects in relation to development aid has caught the interest of academic research circles, or is given attention by the Norwegian Research Council³.

Even after the earmarking of funds to education within aid budgets, there are no signs of putting real emphasis on the evaluation of education. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Evaluation Office seems to have decreased in status within the Ministry as an organization, especially during the last decade. The Norwegian money to the international donor-business has become more important. Hence, the field operations have increasingly been left to multilateral organisations, thus limiting the Ministry's task mainly to be a money supplier. The Evaluation Office may foresee a renaissance, because of the recent governmental stress on evaluation. A more rational approach implying questions about accountability of Norwegian 'investments' may be coming up.

Concluding Remarks

Is it possible to change the current situation? Taking into consideration the attempts having been made in later years there are limited reasons

to give a positive answer. Challenged to make assumptions about the future, the most likely answer would be: Things will continue mostly like they have done up to now. All the money is there, all the 'old' people are there, and internal learning has not had a stronghold in Norwegian aid administration. (Olsen & Peters 1996, Scanteam International as 1993) The overall motivation for the study grew out of the conclusion of a previous piece of research (Welle-Strand 1993) which indicated that evaluation is often incidental, not research based and not deliberately used as an educational tool in development aid. This assumption was reinforced when reading NORAD's new strategy document, (NORAD 1993) finding that evaluation was now stated as overall important for the success of development aid. Along with that, however, arose some hesitations whether this was an authentic strategic shift or if the buzzword of evaluation had just become part of fashionable development slogans.

According to the analysis of the empirical data and assessments made by the key actors of the administration themselves, the main findings are:

- Norwegian aid policy's definition and use of education in development aid is diffuse and may be based on contradictory principles.
- Perception and assessment of the education strategy among the officers and managers of the administration is varying and contradictory.
- There is a critical lack of competence in the field of education and evaluation within the administration.
- The Norwegian organisation apparatus established for implementing education project, as part of the aid policies seems inadequate at present, and not likely to undergo significant organisational learning.

³ By July 1. 1999, The National Research Council did not support research within the field of education in developing countries nor on education and development aid, although this particular area was stressed by the Norwegian Research Council's Report *Strengthening of Research and Competence concerning Norway's relation to developing countries* (1997).

However, in principle changes could be made. The first condition then being that there was a *political will and responsibility* to identify the problem and dare to make the necessary decisions, the relevant actions and sanctions. Education has played a central role in Norwegian development for decades. From the founding activities of the missionaries, development aid has been

flagging Norway's dedication to universal values and basic human rights. Parts of the history are rather honourable. Upon the findings of this study, on competence in education and educational evaluation and the organisational learning within the Norwegian aid administration, the reasons for continuing the education aid strategy at present might be questioned.

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NORVEGIJOS PARAMA ŠVIETIMUI: KAIP PANAUDOTI ĮVERTINIMĄ TOBULINTI PARAMOS TEIKIMĄ?

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama paramos, teikiamos besivystančioms šalims, problema. Tačiau straipsnyje ši problema keliama iš paramą teikiančios šalies pozicijų. Autorė siekia išsiaiškinti, kiek šios paramos efektyvumui padidinti gali padėti įvairios švietimo sistemos vertinimo procedūros ir būdai, leidžiantys nustatyti teikiamos paramos poveikį. Autorė teigia, kad vienais atvejais įvairaus pobūdžio parama bei labdara efektyvi, kitais – mažiau efektyvi ar net apskritai

abejotinas jos efektyvumas. Kartu išreiškia viltį, kad ateityje įmanomi teigiami pokyčiai, jei tam bus palanki politinė valia. Galima sakyti, kad tai pirmas tokio pobūdžio straipsnis, aktualus kiek Lietuvos, tiek pasaulio švietimo darbuotojams, besidomintiems švietimo problemomis ir siekiantiems efektyviai panaudoti tiek gaunamą įvairaus pobūdžio paramą, tiek jų pačių teikiamą kitoms mažiau išsivysčiusioms šalims.

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