A stylized world map in white and light blue, overlaid with a network of white lines and dots representing global connectivity. The map is set against a dark green background with a subtle grid pattern. Below the map is a red horizontal bar with two overlapping white squares.

## The impact of sector-wide approaches: where from, where now and where to?

Erika Boak  
Susy Ndaruhutse



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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and may not necessarily reflect the views of CfBT Education Trust.



## Acronyms and abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRISE	Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (Oxford University)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESCBPF	Education Sector Capacity Building Pooled Fund (Rwanda)
ESIP	Education Strategic Investment Plan (Uganda)
ESP	Education Sector Plan (Sierra Leone)
ESSF	Education Sector Support Fund (Sierra Leone)
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan (Rwanda)
ESSP	Education Sector Support Programme (Zambia)
EU	European Union
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected State
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GBS	General Budget Support
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GNI	Gross National Income
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
IDS	Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex)
IHSD	Institute for Health Sector Development
IIEP	The International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO)
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
JCAS	Joint Country Assistance Strategy
JESS	Joint Education Sector Support (Rwanda)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JRES	Joint Review of the Education Sector
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENFP	Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (Haiti)
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Sierra Leone)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (The Netherlands)
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (former name of Ministry of Education in Rwanda)
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports (Uganda)
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Cambodia)
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAO	National Audit Office (United Kingdom)
NEP	NGO Education Partnership (Cambodia)
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBA	Programme-Based Approach
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme (Bangladesh)
PFM	Public Financial Management





PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RESSP	Rwanda Education Sector Support Programme
SBS	Sector Budget Support
SMC	School Management Committee
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Executive summary

This research reflects upon and reviews the global progress of education SWAps in developing countries since their introduction in the late 1990s. It seeks to provide an update on the effectiveness of SWAps since the Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) publication, commissioned by the United Kingdom's DFID entitled: *Sector Wide Approaches to Education: A Strategic Analysis*. The publication also looks forward to future trends for SWAps. The research analyses the evolution of SWAps and their relationship with (i) aid effectiveness; (ii) planning; (iii) financing; (iv) education outcomes; and (v) fragility.

The research is based on an analysis of the global literature, as well as the grey literature on SWAps since they were first launched. The research methodology was composed of (i) a desk review of existing international literature on SWAps, aid effectiveness, education planning, education financing, education outcomes and fragile contexts as well as relevant national, grey literature; and (ii) stakeholder interviews in the form of telephone interviews, written responses to questionnaires or in some cases face-to-face interviews. The informants were made up of experts within the field of SWAps who brought the perspectives of different donors, and independent consultants with national-level experience of implementing SWAps, as well as some non-traditional donors.

Chapter 2 focuses on SWAps and aid effectiveness, outlining the way in which SWAps have been inextricably linked to the aid effectiveness and good governance discourse since the early 1990s. It finds that due to a variety of factors, the expected harmonisation and alignment gains from SWAps have not always materialised. Building on this, it notes that there is a growing acknowledgement of the need to analyse the political economy before implementing a SWAp to ensure that formal and informal incentives are understood and factored into the design of a SWAp. The research finds evidence to show that without strong ownership and leadership by the national government, SWAps are largely ineffective, but that some donor practices undermine ownership. It also discovers that while SWAps have generally significantly improved both inter-governmental relationships as well as partnerships between national governments and donors, there has been more limited progress on meaningful engagement between the national government and civil society. In a number of countries, SWAps have included a strong focus on managing for results through annual joint sector reviews which have provided greater opportunity for monitoring sector performance and improving accountability. This has resulted in more opportunity for vertical accountability and a more balanced 'mutual' accountability between donors and the national government, although there is still a strong power dynamic between donors and the partner government.

Chapter 3 focuses on SWAps and planning, observing that SWAps have considered planning as a critical part of their approach. It finds that there is an ongoing debate about whether sub-





sectoral SWAps constitute true SWAps, but at the same time a recognition of the importance of including all sub-sectors in a sector plan to allow for sector-wide trade-offs and efficiencies to be made. It notes that in some countries, it is inappropriate to talk about SWAps *per se* as the underlying principles of a SWAp have been mainstreamed into the working practice of line ministries at national and sub-national levels. The research finds that in general, more mature SWAps promote effective and accountable decentralisation, strengthening planning processes at national and sub-national levels. The opposite is true of nascent SWAp-like approaches. The chapter concludes in its findings that significant positive impact has been documented in countries with established SWAps in relation to improved planning capacity, working ethic, governance and broader institutional development. By contrast, macro-level reforms, the broader working conditions, human resources policies and remuneration levels are found to reduce the effectiveness of SWAps and the sustainability of their results.

Chapter 4 focuses on SWAps and financing, observing that SWAps have mainly been used in aid-dependent low-income countries. Contrary to the original assumption that under SWAps donors would move away from projects to using more aligned aid modalities, the research finds that a range of aid modalities is being used to support SWAps and while several donors have moved towards more aligned modalities such as budget support, fragmented approaches are still being employed by some donors. The research notes that many countries introduced SWAps at a similar time to undertaking national public financial management reforms, pointing out that any weaknesses in the public financial management system will negatively impact upon the financial aspects and effectiveness of the SWAp. On a more positive note, the research finds that SWAps have helped donors to support the recurrent costs of service delivery but notes that where this is coupled with support for capacity building, this adds value. Finally, the chapter concludes that the promise of reduced transactions costs as a result of SWAps has certainly not been delivered in the short term, where they have actually increased. The evidence regarding whether such costs are reduced in the long term is mixed.

Chapter 5 focuses on SWAps and education outcomes, finding that SWAps have focused strongly on planning, coordination and improving national governance but have not given enough attention to education outcomes. The research notes that there is a dearth of data on the impact of SWAps. On a more positive note, the research finds that SWAps have had a strong association with the national expansion of fee-free basic education service delivery, and in some cases, post-basic education. This has contributed to the abolition of school fees in several countries, dramatically scaling up the reach of the formal education system. This increase has not yet resulted in universal access, which underlines the challenge that SWAps have had in addressing both the demand-side barriers to children's access and in engaging with non-formal education. In relation to inclusion, the research finds that SWAps have helped to mainstream approaches to targeting inequitable access, although there can be a perception by ministry of education officials that equity-related programmes drain resources from formal education. It also notes that the extent to which gender mainstreaming is taking place in the education system is strongly linked to the ways in which staff working on gender are embedded within the ministry of education at all levels of the education system. Under SWAps, within the context of the significant enrolment increases due to the abolition of school fees, children's learning achievements have generally reduced. While this is clearly not attributable to the SWAp, it does demonstrate that SWAps have not placed a sufficient emphasis on quality. The chapter concludes by noting the critical role of teachers in the design and implementation of SWAps in addressing education outcomes.

Chapter 6 focuses on SWAps and fragility, noting that in spite of the many challenges of supporting education in fragile and conflict-affected states, SWAps are particularly relevant as an approach to planning and financing in these contexts due to the need to improve the availability and quality of education service delivery at scale. This in turn will help to meet citizens' expectations, thus increasing confidence in the government. Despite these advantages, the research finds that there are very real difficulties in supporting SWAps in fragile and conflict-affected states. Some countries have nonetheless embarked on SWAp-like approaches through the adoption of 'low-level' approaches, which place more of the



burden on donors rather than on partner governments with a focus on coordination and sharing data. The research notes that mature SWAps have contributed to broader stabilisation and state-building initiatives in more-resilient countries along the fragility–conflict continuum. Where there is sufficient stability and will, the research finds that SWAps can build the legitimacy and capacity of the state. In relation to aid, the research notes that providing aid ‘on budget’ strengthens the political processes and policy trade-offs made regarding the allocation of resources through national systems, as well as broad state–citizen accountability. The chapter concludes by noting that processes of decentralisation can enhance or undermine state-building objectives.

Chapter 7 provides a conclusion and outlines three overarching key findings and associated recommendations to partner governments, donors and ministries of education.

**Key finding 1: Mature SWAps in stable low-income countries have had a strong impact on institutional development and new ways of working have been established within ministries of education. Nevertheless, SWAp effectiveness has at times been constrained due to the broader political economy.**

**Recommendation 1.1:** In light of the fact that a variety of financing modalities can be used to support a SWAp, donors should seek to be inclusive in their partnerships with one another rather than forming exclusive alliances to the detriment of long-term institutional development of the ministry of education.

**Recommendation 1.2:** Partner governments and donors need to ensure that the design and implementation of a SWAp draws upon comprehensive political economy analysis and is sensitive to existing formal and informal incentive structures and interests.

**Key finding 2: SWAps have played a pivotal role in enabling dramatic increases in the provision of and enrolment in fee-free primary education in low-income countries; nevertheless the track record is less positive in relation to improving the quality of education.**

**Recommendation 2.1:** Donors and ministries of education need to allow time during the SWAp preparation stage for national debates regarding the purpose and meaning of education. Donors should ensure that in-country staff have sufficient education expertise to participate meaningfully in discussions regarding effective strategies to improve quality at the classroom level.

**Recommendation 2.2:** Ministries of education need to involve key agents of change within the teaching and learning process in the SWAp preparation and design process – namely, teachers, teacher unions and school management committee members – in order to ensure that national reform agendas are strongly linked to school and community levels and their good will is secured and reforms envisaged are acceptable.

**Recommendation 2.3:** Ministries of education need to develop a long-term, phased plan for truly sector-wide implementation in order to reap the full benefits of a well-balanced, efficient and productive education sector from early childhood to tertiary level, including non-formal education.

**Recommendation 2.4:** Donors should finance longitudinal studies, supporting national systems to establish valid baseline data in order to measure educational progress and the impact of SWAps over time at national, sub-national and school levels. Plans for longitudinal



studies should be incorporated in the design phase of SWApS.

**Key finding 3: SWApS are relevant in FCAS and implementing well-designed SWApS contributes positively to state-building.**

**Recommendation 3.1:** Donors need to conduct political economy and conflict analyses in FCAS prior to designing SWAp-like approaches in order to ensure they address the underlying causes of conflict and are sensitive to the context of fragility particularly in relation to support for decentralisation.

**Recommendation 3.2:** Where political stability, government will and capacity allow, donors should support the preparation of SWAp-like approaches as early as possible in FCAS including targeted approaches to areas which have historically been denied access to education.

**Recommendation 3.3:** Donors need to work to strengthen the state's regulatory capacity through a SWAp within the context of improving the short route of accountability while identifying mechanisms to support the long route of accountability.

The chapter then emphasises the need for and provides a looser definition of a SWAp to replace the more purist definition that has been used since the late 1990s. It points out that in the future, SWApS might go 'up a level' to become social SWApS (incorporating several sectors) but that this would then require more complex planning and coordination among a larger group of stakeholders. It also projects that mature SWApS are likely to focus on embedding good practice in relation to coordination, planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting at sub-national levels. In terms of the geographical distribution of SWApS, the research predicts that it is likely that they will continue current trends and spread to additional lower-middle-income countries since considerable numbers of middle-income countries benefit from donor support.

The chapter concludes by stating that the most important task for SWApS in the future will be to focus more strongly on making an impact on educational quality, teaching and learning. The report posits that if SWApS can achieve this, then added to their legacy will be the outcome of the next generation of children being equipped with the appropriate values, knowledge, skills and training to contribute to achieving greater development in their countries.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Scope and limitations of the research

Education SWAs were introduced in developing countries, beginning in Uganda, in the late 1990s due to dissatisfaction with projects. SWAs sought to increase the overall effectiveness and efficiency of resources and ensure that the education sector was more responsive to national government policies and priorities, facilitating coherence between sector policies and human and financial resource allocations.

Just over a decade since the introduction of education SWAs, this research seeks to reflect on and review their global progress since the Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) publication, commissioned by the United Kingdom's DFID entitled, *Sector Wide Approaches to Education: A Strategic Analysis*. This important publication documented the rationale for and meaning of SWAs as well as their design and lessons learned. Nevertheless, since 1999 there has been a lack of rigorous, comprehensive, global analysis regarding the effectiveness of SWAs drawing on the national, international and thematically focused literature. Despite this, SWAs continue to be used as an approach to planning, prioritisation and resource mobilisation by national governments and bilateral and multilateral agencies internationally.

This publication seeks to fill this gap by highlighting key historical trends, presenting new findings from the global literature as well as emerging good practice from the field for the first time. It also looks at the implications of the research for the future of SWAs. The research is based on an analysis of the global literature, as well as the grey literature on SWAs since they were first launched. The impetus for this research came about due to the need to critically reflect on SWAs within the context of:

- the aid effectiveness agenda, around which there is growing momentum and support;
- the accelerating enrolment in education and the growing concern about learning outcomes in basic and post-basic education; and
- the increased focus on FCAS and the need to identify appropriate ways of supporting education in these contexts.

The research analyses the evolution of SWAs and their relationship with:

1. aid effectiveness;
2. planning;
3. financing;
4. education outcomes; and
5. fragility.

These five themes provide the structure for the report with a separate chapter dedicated to each area. The final chapter summarises conclusions reached and draws overarching conclusions regarding key trends and findings. Based on these findings, it examines the implications of the research for the future of SWAs. It then sets out recommendations to improve the design and implementation of SWAs for donors, partner governments and other agencies involved in implementing SWAs.

### 1.2 Research methodology

Due to the desire to analyse the reasons behind SWAp effectiveness or ineffectiveness, a qualitative approach was taken in relation to data collection and analysis. The research methodology was composed of (i) a desk review of existing international literature on SWAs, aid effectiveness, education planning, education financing, education outcomes and fragile contexts as well as relevant national, grey literature; and (ii) stakeholder interviews in the form of telephone interviews, written responses to questionnaires or in some cases face-to-face interviews. The informants were made up of experts within the field of SWAs who brought



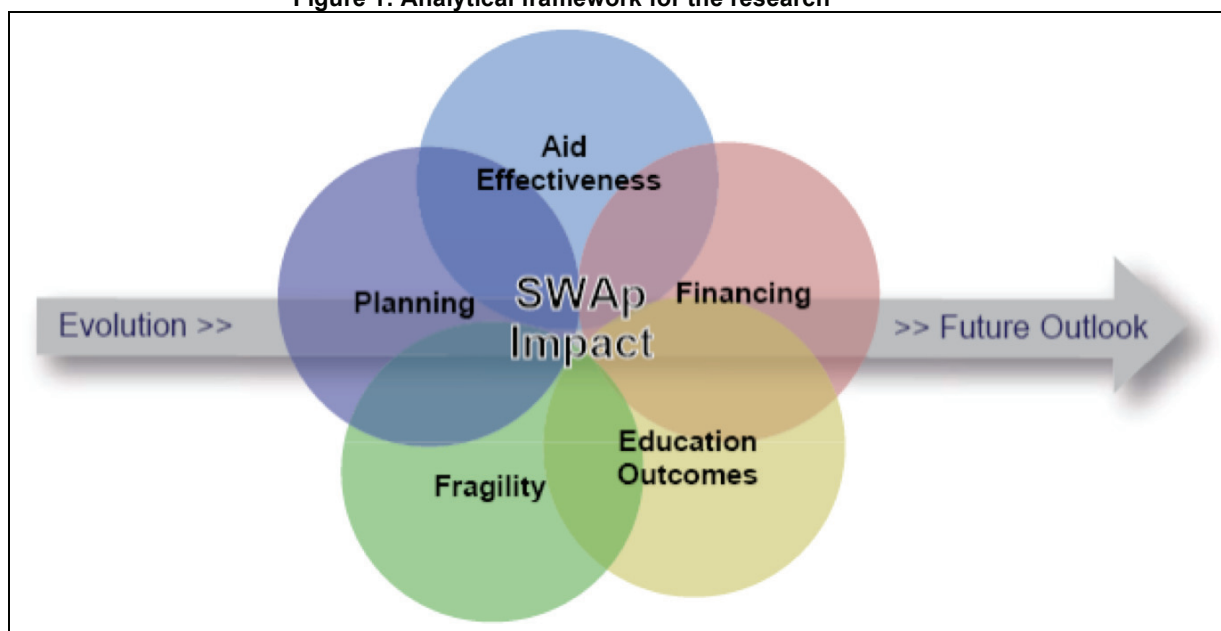
the perspectives of different donors, and independent consultants with national-level experience of implementing SWApS, as well as some non-traditional donors. Given that global expertise in SWApS is comparatively limited, the pool of respondents for this research was inevitably limited. This constraint is acknowledged. Owing to the fact that this is a desk study, it was more challenging to canvass the opinions of national ministry officials, although an interview was conducted with a former Commissioner for Planning in the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Uganda and the former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education in Rwanda. The interviews served to ensure that the latest good practice and learning from the field were documented. The direction, approach and content of the research were guided by a steering group made up of senior CfBT Education Trust staff and the Team Leader to the EC Sector Budget Support to Basic Education in Cambodia, David Quinn. The research also underwent internal and external peer review.

The methodology was informed by the thematic nature of the five different areas being researched, namely aid effectiveness, planning, financing, education outcomes and fragility and therefore a case study approach was not taken. As a result, no single country SWAp is explored in depth in relation to its objectives and the fulfilment of its objectives and lessons learned, although country-level experience obviously feeds into the thematic analysis in each of the chapters. An additional constraint in relation to the research is the serious absence of country-level evidence-based, empirical assessments and evaluations or longitudinal studies of SWApS. Consequently, findings and conclusions regarding the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of SWApS are much more difficult to draw and substantiate owing to the lack of robust country-level data. This renders the problem of attributing success or failure in relation to sector efficiencies or improved enrolment to the SWAp, particularly challenging.

### 1.3 Analytical framework for the research

Figure 1 illustrates the five areas through which SWApS are analysed. It also incorporates the themes of the evolution and future outlook of SWApS since the research seeks to understand where they have come from and the direction in which they appear to be heading.

Figure 1: Analytical framework for the research





### 1.4 The rationale for SWAps

Since this research seeks to analyse the evolution of SWAps since the 1990s, it is necessary to review the rationale for the design and introduction of SWAps. Table 1 sets out key weaknesses in the project approach in relation to aid effectiveness as well as education planning. The motivation to develop SWAps was driven by the need to improve the impact and sustainability of aid and to develop a new paradigm for education planning and institutional development.

**Table 1: The deficiencies of projects in relation to aid effectiveness and education planning**

Area	Aid effectiveness	Education planning
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate impact of education sector outcomes on poverty reduction (low correlation between per capita gross domestic product and education indicators) (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999);</li> <li>Inconsistent use and strengthening of government systems, which reduced sustainability and relevance of projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsustainable approaches to institutional development and insufficient preoccupation with the policy and institutional frameworks; inadequate reach of reform on government bureaucracies (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2007).</li> </ul>
<b>Alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Piecemeal approach adopted by donors through different projects which were poorly coordinated;</li> <li>Government leadership was undermined which led to duplication and distortion of spending priorities (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor alignment of education planning processes with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs);</li> <li>Inappropriate and irrelevant prioritisation of education sector objectives and programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High transaction costs for multiple donor projects and parallel project implementation units (PIUs) (Shepherd and Cabral, 2008) which poached national government capacity and reduced efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incoherent and inefficient planning process: education planners met individually with several donors regarding multiple projects or programmes that were not aligned in any way with a government-owned plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient accountability by partner government to national citizens on the use of donor funds and delivery of aid projects.</li> </ul>	
<b>Inclusive partnerships</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate engagement of central planning processes with demand-side financing of education and public-private partnerships.</li> </ul>

SWAps grew out of national and international dissatisfaction with project approaches, which were seen to be inefficient and in some cases inappropriate. They also emerged alongside debates regarding development effectiveness during the 1990s (UNESCO, 2007). SWAps were similarly grounded in the debates regarding governance in the 1990s. The following quote from the former Secretary of State for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) in Cambodia demonstrates the inadequate impact of multiple donor projects on system performance.

‘During the EFA [Education for All] mid-decade review conducted in 1999, we found out that despite the huge influx of aid [to Cambodia], we were unable to meet our goals in relation to enrolment, drop out and repetition...donors were working in separate ways without very much coordination.’

(His Excellency, Pok Than, former Secretary of State, MoEYS, Cambodia)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interview conducted by David Quinn, 2006.





As demonstrated in Table 1, SWApS were initiated due to the inherent weaknesses in the design and implementation of existing approaches to financing and planning rather than through a positive experience of a SWAp in a 'pilot country'.<sup>2</sup> This in itself may explain some of the practical deficiencies of SWApS, since there were very high expectations that they would serve as a panacea for the ineffectiveness of existing approaches and poor governance (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999). It is now widely recognised by SWAp experts that SWApS have not achieved everything that was hoped of them.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.5 Concepts of SWApS over time

Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) identified three main components or phases in a SWAp:

1. an agreement between government and donors around the direction of the sector and aid effectiveness (Statement of Intent);
2. a framework for cooperation around a common agenda for education reform; and
3. a structured operational programme, led and managed by governments and agreed by all parties (Memorandum of Understanding or Code of Practice).

They identify four common features of a SWAp:

1. a sustainable partnership, long-term vision and agreed targets for the reform of the education sector incorporating all stakeholders: government, donors, NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs);
2. a well-defined sector or sub-sector plan taking into account the macroeconomic environment, sector analysis and institutional and financial structures;
3. a forward-looking work programme such as a medium-term costed education sector strategy that fits within a wider public financial management (PFM) framework and incorporates common arrangements for government and donors with a capacity development programme;
4. strategic negotiation and annual sector performance review mechanisms that are agreed jointly between donors and the government.

#### Box 1: Components of a SWAp

A SWAp focuses on:

- policy objectives – rather than operational activity
- programme outcomes – rather than project inputs
- broad budgetary support – rather than project input accounting
- a national financing framework – rather than individual contracts
- sustained broad partnership – rather than individual 'deals'
- review of sector performance – rather than project performance
- common management arrangements – rather than disparate systems.

Former Ugandan Minister of Education and Sports, 1998 cited in Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999.

SWApS have been used extensively as an organising principle and operational framework for supporting partner governments during the 1990s and beyond (Forss, 2000; EC, 2007). The basic building block to move towards a SWAp is for a national government, in partnership with civil society, the non-state sector, NGOs and donors, to develop a comprehensive and realistically costed education sector strategic plan in support of an education sector policy, around which there is common ownership and consensus.

For many partner governments who are used to having control over the recurrent budget but leaving capital investment predominantly to donors, a SWAp brings a new perspective to planning as it attempts to include both recurrent activities (such as teachers' salaries) and capital activities (such as school buildings), leading to a more coherent approach to planning,

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Keith Lewin.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Mike Kiernan, Murray Macrae and Abby Riddell.





public expenditure management and budget allocation for the sector (UNESCO, 2007). This is broadly acknowledged to be a key characteristic of a SWAp, in the past and currently. Following such an approach should lead to a more efficient and effective use of resources for the sector.

More recently, planning and financing frameworks have been called 'SWAp-like', emphasising the intended 'direction of travel' towards increased alignment rather than listing a set of criteria which verifiably demonstrate that a country has a SWAp.<sup>4</sup> For example, a report assessing Indonesia's pre-feasibility for a SWAp identified and weighed up options for EC and AusAID support to basic education. Three SWAp 'typologies' were proposed:

1. A tightly harmonised SWAp, in which a specific programme would be jointly agreed by the government and all donors employing a single funding arrangement;
2. A loosely harmonised SWAp, in which a less detailed and more inclusive programme would be agreed with a mix of financing instruments; and
3. A very loosely harmonised SWAp, in which donors fund particular areas of the programme of work of the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which are negotiated individually (Fearnley-Sander, Nainggolan, Ratcliffe, Riddell, Seper and Taylor, 2008).

The extent to which this latter typology could be characterised as a veritable SWAp may be debated. The rationale for this typology was to ensure a degree of harmonisation among otherwise potentially disparate donors. Nevertheless, this report illustrates the fact that increasingly the term 'SWAp' can signify a broad range of different concepts. Many countries now refer to using SWAp-like approaches to indicate a commitment to the principles of a SWAp, rather than implementing a full SWAp.<sup>5</sup> For the sake of simplicity, in this report, the term 'SWAp' will be used to refer both to SWAps and the use of SWAp-like approaches.

Given the fact that different actors and writers interpret the term 'SWAp' in different ways, it is necessary to establish a clear definition which will be used in the report. A SWAp is where:

'...all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds.'

(Brown, Foster, Norton and Nachsold, 2001: 7)

This definition has been chosen since (i) it is referred to in the literature on SWAps; (ii) it is comprehensive; and (iii) nearly all of the informants concurred with it when describing their understanding of a SWAp. It focuses not on results already achieved, but on the intended direction of change towards government leadership and government procedures. In this report it is understood that a SWAp is an approach, therefore prescriptive blueprints are inappropriate. Nevertheless, the above definition does not encapsulate the notion of the efficiency savings made as a result of the ability to plan for the sector as a comprehensive 'whole'. Such sector-wide planning allows an analysis of the dynamic relationship between the sub-sectors rather than working in silos.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Eric Woods.

<sup>5</sup> A view supported in interviews with Peter Buckland, Steve Passingham and Eric Woods.

<sup>6</sup> Discussion with David Quinn.



## 1.6 Sector-wide versus sub-sectoral approaches

Since SWAp first emerged, there has been debate regarding what the approach constitutes. Purists argue that in order to reap the full benefits of a SWAp it needs to cover the whole sector, as suggested in the paragraph above. If there is only a costed plan for a particular sub-sector, it becomes ring-fenced in much the same way as a project. This serves to distort policy and resourcing priorities and the all-important trade-offs and negotiations which should take place within a SWAp (UNESCO, 2007). Since the 1990s, there has been an acceptance that a SWAp is unlikely to provide for implementation in all sub-sectors, however the plan should include all sub-sectors.

Ratcliffe argued that SWAp have become an implementation framework for EFA due to an inherent bias among donors for basic education due to its foundational role in pro-poor growth and development. Nevertheless, out of the 25 low-income countries with education SWAp, only five are sub-sector or partial SWAp, focusing only on primary or basic education (see Appendix 2 for more information). These data support the view that sub-sector SWAp are transitional arrangements which set the ground to move towards full SWAp, since many started as partial SWAp (Institute for Health Sector Development (IHSD), 2003).

## Chapter 2: SWApS and aid effectiveness

This chapter will analyse the relationship between SWApS and aid effectiveness with particular reference to the Paris Declaration (2005) as well as the Accra Agenda for Action (2008).<sup>7</sup>

The trajectory of SWApS over the past decade has been strongly influenced by the developments in the aid effectiveness discourse since 1999 (Molenaers and Renard, 2008). Indeed the principles upon which SWApS were established and those of the aid effectiveness agenda are interchangeable. As the aid effectiveness principles have evolved, they have become more ambitious and more demanding of both donors and partner governments. The same is true of the design and working arrangements of SWApS.

### 2.1 Harmonisation and alignment

From their outset, SWApS were supposed to provide a framework to enable international partners to align, or to move towards alignment, in relation to national plans, monitoring and financing. As discussed, under 1.4 The Rationale for SWApS, they were to address the weaknesses of projects in relation to using country systems and enabling donors to adopt collaborative and common approaches. As a result, harmonisation and alignment are considered key characteristics of SWApS. The principle of harmonisation is a key facet of the Paris Declaration, and although it is not reiterated in the Accra Agenda for Action, it still represents a major challenge to donors at country levels in practical and ideological terms. Nevertheless:

‘without effective coordination and harmonisation between donors and between donors and recipient governments, the SWAp is doomed to failure’

(The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), 2004: 18).

There are clear benefits of harmonising, as illustrated in the examples in Uganda and Mozambique outlined in the following two boxes.

#### Box 2: Benefits of harmonisation in Uganda and Mozambique

In 1996, there were 147 different donor projects in the education sector in **Uganda** and the ministry received 45 different missions from over 30 donors. Uganda’s SWAp was established within the framework of MoES’ Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP), 1998 to 2003. Following two years of preparation, budget support was introduced in 2002. By 2002, there were seven projects, eleven donors and two missions (UNICEF, 2004; Penny, Ward, Read and Bines, 2008).

Following the end of the war in **Mozambique** in 1992, there was a disconnection between the national fiscal and education policies and the support of donors. This heralded the need for a coherent strategy and effective coordination mechanisms for the reconstruction effort in the education sector. There was a consensus on the part of the government and donors alike regarding the inefficiency of existing modalities and the need for a SWAp. By the late 1990s, all 18 donors agreed to support the Education Sector Strategic Programme. Monitoring and evaluation, indicators and reporting and reviews were harmonised. Furthermore, as a result of the SWAp, the decision-making ‘hub’ had moved from various and discrete PIUs to the main departments of the Ministry of Education (World Bank, 2001).

Nevertheless, the promise of harmonisation has not been fulfilled in the experience of SWApS at country level, partly owing to the fact that there are greatly differing levels of risk aversion within the donor community. An initial barrier to harmonisation is the assessment by different donors of the readiness of a specific sector for a SWAp. Despite the fact that donors

<sup>7</sup> See OECD (2008a) for more information on these two agreements.



undertake evidence-based feasibility studies and reviews revealing whether a government is eligible for a SWAp (based on the extent to which the government has met particular criteria), the interpretation of the data can be subjective. This means donors reach different conclusions based on the same evidence. This is due to differing levels of political commitment to SWAp-like approaches within donor headquarters (UNESCO, 2007) and also to broader inter-donor political issues at national and regional levels related to visibility and impact. An example of this is that in Cambodia (at the time of writing), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) wanted to keep its support for the education sector very visible rather than supporting the SWAp through sector budget support (SBS). This may have been related implicitly to the increasing investment by the Chinese and Korean Governments.<sup>8</sup>

Molenaers and Renard confirm that ‘harmonising...is a huge challenge, not only because political agendas, priorities and assessments differ between donors, but also because the domestic pressure for visibility remains’ (2008: 17). The fact that certain donors have been unwilling or unable to harmonise their approaches through a SWAp has served to reduce the overall effectiveness of SWAps at national levels and their impact on improved efficiency and sustainability. At national level, it means that partner governments in certain countries, such as Cambodia, are still suffering from high transaction costs due to the need to coordinate donors ‘outside’ the education SWAp (Boak and Brannelly, 2009).

### Box 3: The Challenges of harmonisation and alignment in Zambia

Discussions regarding the SWAp in **Zambia** started under the leadership of the World Bank in the mid-1990s. This first effort failed for three main reasons: (i) the sector itself was spread over four ministries with little coordination; (ii) the donors were not sufficiently harmonised with too many discrete agendas; and (iii) there was a lack of political and/or ministerial ‘buy in’. The SWAp was over-ambitious as it sought to address the whole sector in an unrealistic time frame. It was decided that a sub-sectoral approach would be taken and, influenced by EFA, the basic education sub-sector was targeted through the sub-sector SWAp called the Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme. This encouraged policy dialogue regarding the other sub-sectors and led to the Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) 2003–2007, and the National Implementation Frameworks, as the planning tools for ESSP. In one sense then, the SWAp could be said to be a success as a result of greater donor harmonisation and pooled funding; on the other hand some claim that the continued separation of donor funds (through pooled or basket funds) from the government’s own financing have resulted in the SWAp being more of a mega-project rather than an integrated full sector approach to programming.<sup>9</sup>

Harmonisation is also problematic where donors have different understandings of a SWAp and what it entails. Some donors are ‘government-facing’ while others focus to a greater extent on partnerships with non-state actors including NGOs and private-sector organisations, thus influencing their interpretation of what a SWAp should involve. In addition, smaller agencies may feel their views are not being taken seriously, particularly those who are not pooling funding. There may be sub-groupings among donors based on the type of agency or historic closeness to the partner government. The skills and leadership of individual staff members working for development agencies have proven to be crucial to the success or failure of a SWAp (UNESCO, 2007). There is consensus among experts that much of a SWAp’s effectiveness lies with the personalities of key technical staff involved.<sup>10</sup> Linn (2009) points out that donors need to build trust and alliances among themselves while also bringing in the government as a full collaborator as soon as possible.

‘Non-traditional donors’ such as the Hewlett Foundation and Comic Relief have not engaged with SWAps. Their funding is provided outside government through projects implemented by non-state actors, although their support may be aligned to the national education sector

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Abby Riddell.

<sup>9</sup> Written correspondence from Mike Kiernan.

<sup>10</sup> Interviews with Richard Arden, Alberto Begué, Mike Kiernan, Keith Lewin, Steve Passingham and Eric Woods.



plan.<sup>11</sup> They often have a thematic focus or a particular issue that they are seeking to address. The literature regarding the approaches of ‘pragmatic donors’, such as the Chinese and Indian governments, indicates that they are not concerned with aid effectiveness (as understood in the Paris Declaration) or with the governance of partner governments but rather with ‘win–win’ partnerships which are strongly aligned with commercial and trading interests (Yuan, 2010). As a result, they have not engaged in SWApS to date.

Box 4 below outlines the challenges that the Cambodian education sector has faced in relation to harmonisation where a large number of projects and programmes are financed by a multitude of donors and NGOs which have not, with one exception, moved towards pooled funding or SBS.

**Box 4: Cambodia’s challenges with harmonisation and steps forward with alignment**

Despite the fact that a SWAp has been discussed in the MoEYS since 2000, in 2009 the EC was the only donor providing SBS in **Cambodia**, with all others providing projects and no noticeable decrease in the number of PIUs. Hattori (2009: 192) reports that:

‘According to the ODA [official development assistance] database (as of 31 March 2009), 22 bilateral and multilateral partners are currently active in the education sector, supporting 91 discrete projects and programmes. The NGO Report prepared by NEP [the NGO Education Partnership] also recorded a total of 250 education projects supported by 80 NGOs in 2008.’

Even if there is a tendency to overestimate the number of projects in these databases, Hattori argues that this underlines the fragmentation of donors’ support to education in Cambodia and the lack of progress on harmonisation resulting in high transactions costs on the MoEYS.

In 2009, most of the donors broadly aligned their support to the Education Sector Plan and the Education Sector Support Programme and were theoretically committed to fully align their reporting requirements with those of the MoEYS through the Education Congress. However, the reality is that this did not happen as the quality of the annual review report did not meet their requirements, meaning that in recent years they have all required additional reports and monitoring meetings as well as separate activity planning for their projects. During 2009, the MoEYS prepared its first comprehensive Annual Operational Plan, which is a significant step to help donors align with the MoEYS’ planning process. Also, seven key donors organised a joint monitoring mission for the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Education Sector Support Scale-Up Programme which shows another step forward (Hattori, 2009).

More recently a Capacity Development Partnership Fund has been established which will pool funds from the EU, Sida and UNICEF. This fund supports the implementation of MoEYS sector-wide Capacity Development Plan, 2011–2013. This is a major achievement in moving towards demand-driven capacity development and harmonisation of support by development partners.

By contrast, while several donors have provided pooled funding and some even SBS to the Kenyan education sector, there is still a lot further to go in terms of harmonisation as is outlined in Box 5.

<sup>11</sup> Interviews with Ward Henneveld and Kamela Usmani.



#### Box 5: Kenya's slow progress with harmonisation

Due to the difficulty faced by donors in relation to legislative constraints as well as issues of fiduciary risk, the Government of **Kenya** has had to concurrently manage a range of different aid modalities used by donors to support the education sector which all have different financial requirements and systems to follow. In 2007, several donors were supporting a pooled fund. One of the donors supporting the pooled fund also spent 50 per cent of its resources on its own activities. It required separate accounting procedures and a specialised bank account for its inputs. Another donor supported the education sector via an 'implementation letter' which gave the Ministry of Education authority to undertake different implementation activities but the donor retained responsibility for making payments. This same agency provided wheat, which the Government of Kenya sold and could then use to fund school construction (Woods, 2007). These and other examples of non-harmonised and non-aligned approaches led the joint review of the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme in October 2007 to conclude:

'...Government of Kenya has great difficulty managing and controlling the flow of funds from donors into the actual budgets of Ministries in a timely way so as to facilitate carrying out of work plans.' (Woods, 2007: 6)

Since then, the education sector in Kenya has faced some financial scandals, leading donors providing SBS to suspend their support.

In discussing the evolution of SWAPs within the context of harmonisation and alignment, it is necessary to address the emergence of programme-based approaches (PBAs). Some believe PBAs to be synonymous with SWAPs, while others feel very strongly that they are different due to their inherent exclusion of the government by focusing on how donors should provide aid. PBAs present donors with a menu of choices and the level of alignment to national systems is limited. Some contend that these have been developed in order to accommodate within SWAPs donors who find alignment more challenging, such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).<sup>12</sup> One way of distinguishing between PBAs and SWAPs is that the former promote greater harmonisation while the latter encourage or lead to greater alignment. A PBA does not require a sector policy while a SWAP is intrinsically sector-led. A PBA can be targeted for particular activities within the sector and can be implemented at sub-national levels in large countries (Koeberle and Stavreski, 2005).

In relation to alignment, the literature acknowledges that a SWAP develops over time and the speed towards and level of alignment depend on country-specific issues (IHSD, 2003). A country's 'SWAP trajectory' is unlikely to be linear, heading towards full alignment, since it will be highly dependent upon (i) the political situation and the country's stability; (ii) the leadership, buy-in and continuity of the minister of education and senior officials; and (iii) the diversity, capacity and commitment of external partners and their in-country representation.

#### 2.1.1 The political economy of harmonisation and alignment

It is important to note that the aid effectiveness principles are not the only forces at work guiding partner governments and donors in their engagement in SWAPs. Both sides are also influenced by wider political forces and governance concerns which may represent disincentives for them to move towards harmonisation and alignment (Molenaers and Nijs, 2008).

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Abby Riddell.





**Table 2: Rationale and incentives for and against harmonisation and alignment**

Rationale and incentives for...	Rationale and incentives against...
<b>Partner governments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good practice in line with international agreements which they have endorsed;</li> <li>▪ Enables more comprehensive and prioritised national and sectoral planning incorporating all funding sources;</li> <li>▪ Decreases transactions costs in the long-term;</li> <li>▪ Ministries of Finance are better able to record and track financing so transactions costs are thus reduced;</li> <li>▪ Easier financial reconciliation with fewer accounts to operate when funds are pooled or provided as SBS;</li> <li>▪ Increases national PFM capacity and builds national and sectoral financial systems;</li> <li>▪ Pooled funding or SBS usually requires one annual monitoring report at the joint review meeting for donors rather than separate reports for each donor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is reduced flexibility in off-plan spending or spending on areas that are political priorities but have minimal impact on poverty reduction (e.g. higher education, pet projects) or on unforeseen areas which are not on-plan (e.g. participation in regional conferences, emergency building repairs due to natural disasters, etc.);</li> <li>▪ Projects in addition to pooled funds or SBS enable ministries of education to access additional financing for education which may make them less keen on alignment than ministries of finance<sup>13</sup>;</li> <li>▪ In highly corrupt countries with weak PFM systems and weak internal financial control systems, there can be greater personal opportunity to mismanage and misuse funds where funding is not aligned;</li> <li>▪ Where donors only partially align and impose parallel internal control systems to address weaknesses in national systems, corrupt practices can be perpetuated and can create confusion for national staff regarding which internal control system to follow resulting in deliberate non-compliance for personal gain;</li> <li>▪ Individual ministry staff and departments are likely to have fewer opportunities to access enhanced salaries and conditions than when working in PIUs.</li> </ul>
<b>Donors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good practice in line with international agreements which they have endorsed;</li> <li>▪ Increases aid effectiveness;</li> <li>▪ Donors can gain influence on the policy dialogue when they align their interventions with government plans (Molenaers and Renard, 2008);</li> <li>▪ New donors may have a significant voice in policy dialogue even if they are contributing relatively little financially to support the plan;</li> <li>▪ Decreases transactions costs in the long-term – donors can save time, money and effort by using analyses/studies conducted by the partner government and/or ones jointly financed by donors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alignment is time-consuming as often requires significant reforms of partner governments' procedures and systems (Netherlands MFA, 2004);</li> <li>▪ Some donors may be unable to move towards more aligned aid modalities which use partner governments' financial systems (due to legal constraints, political considerations or risk aversion);</li> <li>▪ Where SWAps have been initiated by a donor which is not present at country level, harmonisation and alignment can be more challenging;</li> <li>▪ Donors may lack trust in partner governments' financial systems and lack confidence in their financial management capacity;</li> <li>▪ Newer aid modalities require different competencies and skills in donors, yet sector advisers may be junior with little experience and limited guidance from headquarters about how to implement Paris and Accra<sup>14</sup>;</li> <li>▪ Some agency staff may be more experienced in managing projects and may not have the skills to negotiate pooled funds or SBS;</li> <li>▪ May not meet reporting criteria to enable accountability to their own parliaments requiring greater visibility, targeting and tracing or earmarking of donor finances;</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> A view supported during interview with Mick Foster.

<sup>14</sup> A view supported during interview with Eric Woods.





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ If a donor's perspective is not taken on board in the policy dialogue, there is a temptation to fund 'pet' projects and priorities in addition to providing pooled support or SBS that is on-plan;</li><li>▪ High transactions costs in the short-term.</li></ul>
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These incentives are rarely formally recognised or discussed transparently. Nevertheless, they go some way in explaining the practical and political difficulties donors face in harmonising approaches despite their stated commitment to Paris and Accra.

## 2.2 Ownership and leadership

The increasing prominence accorded to national ownership in the aid effectiveness discourse has emerged from the learning regarding Structural Adjustment Programmes. It is now acknowledged that the failings of the programmes were partly due to the strong conditionality imposed on partner governments, thereby bypassing government ownership altogether (Molenaers and Renard, 2008; Shepherd and Cabral, 2008). Ownership, and now increasingly national leadership, are pivotal features of an effective SWAp and are particularly promoted by DFID, the EC and the World Bank. Without a comprehensive take up of the new approach by the political leadership, the SWAp is likely to fail. Uganda is a case in point:

'In the early stages of developing the Uganda Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP), Government ownership was relatively weak and the process was in danger of being driven by donor agendas. A new Minister was largely responsible for turning this around by leading a process of internalising the SWAp in the ministry and establishing a realistic and sustainable pace for reform.' (IHSD, 2003: 6).

Brown *et al.* (2001: 9–11) argued that during the early days of SWApS there were different levels of national ownership:

1. those with strong government leadership (for example the Uganda education SWAp after the appointment of a new minister, and Ethiopia SWApS in health, education and roads);
2. those with government change agents allied to donors (for example the Zambia and Ghana health SWApS);
3. those with strong donor leadership under the assumption that the approach can then be 'sold' to government (for example the Ghana education SWAp, Tanzania education SWAp, Vietnam health SWAp and Zambia agriculture SWAp).

Nevertheless, Booth (2008) argues that the aid effectiveness principles foster a reductionist view of ownership, demonstrated through the establishment of technical planning structures together with complex monitoring and information systems. He claims that real ownership is exemplified by recent successful development in East and South-East Asia involving '...political leadership, developmental vision and willingness to transform state structures' (2008: 2). The Government of Rwanda is also known for its strong leadership which has facilitated the development and embedding of the education SWAp. The Government regularly asserts its national sovereignty and duty to own and make key policy decisions while demanding more control over external financing and improved harmonisation (Hayman, 2006).

In the literature generated by donors regarding SWApS, there is a tendency to downplay the extent to which the lead donor steers and leads the SWAp, at least in the early stages. This may be done through donor staff or through international technical advisers contracted to develop capacity as part of the SWAp. Within the SWAp and governance discourse, it is necessary to recognise the power relations between the donor as financier and the partner



government as recipient<sup>15</sup> and the ways in which these relations can pose a barrier to national leadership and ownership. Indeed Robertson (2010) argues that there is a general move towards the re-bordering of politics; the nation state is no longer sovereign and governance takes places beyond the national state's borders. Lines and borders have been mystified and distinctions between public and private, national and international are blurred. Within this context, donors often have key thematic agendas or sub-sectoral priorities with which they seek to influence policy and resource decisions. A challenge faced by donors, for example, is the tension between supporting ownership and promoting a more ambitious reform programme delivering robust results (where the partner government may want a less challenging reform).<sup>16</sup>

In 1997, at a meeting of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Senegal's President, Abdou Diouf, stated that:

'The type of partnership we should promote cannot be founded on a vertical relationship based on authority, constraint, the imposition of power, substituted sovereignty and the transposition of models, or, on the other side of the coin, paternalism and condescension. Instead, it should be founded on conditions such as authentic dialogue in a horizontal relationship in which the actors recognise each other as equals and participate in an exchange considered mutually useful and enriching by both parties.' (ADEA, 1997)

**Box 6: Unequal power relations between the government and donors in Tanzania**

In her critique of international support to the education sector in **Tanzania**, Kuder (2005) argues that the SWAp and the push towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have railroaded any nationally led process of identifying and defining the very purpose of education in Tanzania and the subsequent development of policies and plans based on that vision. She claims that the international community has played an interfering role, distorting priorities and rewarding ministries which jump on the SWAp bandwagon. Kuder (2005: 173) asserts that:

'...terms such as "partnership" and "ownership" have been over-emphasised by Government and donors, perhaps to hide the sense that a great deal of governance power is shifting in favour of donors and international agendas. This practice obscures the hard fact that unelected non-Tanzanians are increasingly participating in the governance spaces and activities of making public sector policy decisions on behalf of Tanzanians.'

It is clear that certain donor practices are less conducive to fostering ownership than others, for example where donors (i) stipulate the procedures and time frames for their support; (ii) allocate financial support in areas which are not the partner government's priorities; and (iii) organise discrete sector reviews where data are collected independently of the partner government and at different times (UNESCO, 2007). Moreover, the degree to which donors value the partner government's endorsement and ownership of donor goals varies (Linn, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Keith Lewin.

<sup>16</sup> Written correspondence from David Quinn.

### Box 7: Increased ownership of planning in Bangladesh

In the first phase of **Bangladesh's** SWAp, the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) II, there has been better ownership of activities in contrast to project activities which were seen by the Government to be temporary and parallel. The capacity of officials within the Directorate of Primary Education has increased due to their strong involvement in the implementation of the SWAp. The Government has named PEDP II its flagship programme and the primary education sub-sector has been given great importance by both donors and the Government. Under the programme, one system was developed for donors following Bangla rules and procedures thereby increasing sustainability (Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2009).

Due to the greater national ownership over a SWAp compared to a project, one of the expected dividends from a SWAp was more appropriate and relevant prioritisation of sector objectives and programmes. Nevertheless, this requires national leadership to ensure that the national plan is not 'stretched' to encompass all donor projects and programmes but rather that the plan dictates the type of support which is relevant. Buckland claims that the acid test of government ownership is whether it rejects donor financing on the basis that the project or support does not align with its priorities.<sup>17</sup> This has implications for the relevance of SWAps in FCAS, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

#### 2.2.1 The political economy of ownership and leadership

In 1999, Ratcliffe and Macrae asserted the importance of the institutional environment and since then there has been an increasing focus on identifying key change agents as well as the actors and issues that will block reform. Recent thinking on political economy reveals that formal institutions and informal institutions are not only distinct but sometimes at odds with each other and informal rules of the game subvert formal ones. Formal institutions may in fact be purely façades masking the reality of the dealings behind them (Fritz, Kaiser and Levy, 2009). Roberts underlines that SWAp implementation can be 'frustrated by the passive resistance of vested interests in the bureaucracy' (2003: 71). There has been a growing body of evidence regarding the political economy of reform programmes and the way in which hidden interests and informal incentives shape development outcomes (Booth, Crook, Gyimah-Boadi, Killick, Luckham and Boateng, 2005; Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (IDS), 2010; DFID, 2010a).

An analysis of the political economy also has implications for securing ownership. There are often multiple and competing forces at work within a ministry with which donors need to engage.

'The assumption that the recipient government behaves like a strong, coordinated and united team is unwarranted.' (Molenaers and Renard, 2008: 21).

This makes fostering national ownership more complex since different actors have different interests and incentives in relation to a SWAp. Indeed, evidence from the field suggests that a more nuanced understanding of leadership and ownership is required; there may be an emerging reform process which is only supported by a minority view within the ministry of education at one point, but subsequently becomes the next key platform for reform if given enough political support.<sup>18</sup> Donors acknowledge that the governance debate needs to broaden to recognise the distribution of power and resources, and the influential and sometimes competing interests and incentives which exist between different actors and stakeholders (EC, 2008; DFID, 2009a). Furthermore, the Ugandan experience points to the fact that rational and logical decision making cannot be assured in highly politicised contexts where there are influential vertical links between patrons and clients (Penny *et al.*, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Peter Buckland.

<sup>18</sup> Written correspondence from David Quinn.



Penny *et al.* (2008) emphasise that implementing reform is done by individuals within institutions; people often place undue faith in the existence of a credible plan, assuming that action will necessarily follow.

### 2.3 Inclusive partnerships

The notion of partnership between donors and the ministry of education is a central tenet of SWAp. The links between the ministry of education and the ministry of finance are particularly important: 'SWAp cannot operate in sectoral isolation, and weaknesses in other key ministries are likely to undermine the effectiveness of reform' (IHSD, 2003: 6). Since 2000, the notion of ownership has extended beyond the central planning bodies of the relevant ministries to include the head of state, legislature, cabinet, ministry of finance, decentralised actors, civil society, NGOs and the private sector (DFID and Overseas Development Institute (ODI), 2001; UNESCO, 2007). The Netherlands Government emphasises the need to secure a common commitment to the goals and processes of a SWAp on the part of these different actors (Netherlands MFA, 2004). These bodies need to be involved from the start, setting the vision from the planning stages, through implementation (including preparing the budget and work plan) to monitoring and evaluation (Brown *et al.*, 2001). It should also include the education activities and financial inputs of all partners involved in the education sector – the Ministry of Education, donors, NGOs, CSOs, community groups and non-state actors – within the strategic plan. Cambodia is moving forward in this regard as illustrated in Box 8.

#### Box 8: The important role of civil society and NGOs in financing education

In **Cambodia**, NGO support accounts for over 20 percent of the development assistance to the education sector yet it is not captured in the MoEYS' budget or the ODA database (Hattori, 2009). Since 2009, the MoEYS has embarked on a sector-wide annual planning process resulting in an Annual Operational Plan. The plan captures financial data from donors and NGOs supporting education in Cambodia broken down to the activity level.

Experience shows that while SWAp have successfully fostered collaborative relationships between the Ministry of Education and donors, many of the remaining stakeholders have remained largely excluded from the SWAp; consultation has been the norm rather than active involvement (see Box 9 below). This is compounded where engagement is done through non-institutionalised routes and in response to donor demands rather than national agendas (UNESCO, 2007). Indeed, a four-country study (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia) undertaken by the Netherlands MFA (2003) found that teacher unions, parent organisations and representatives of indigenous groups were often excluded from policy and technical dialogues, particularly in Bolivia and Uganda. Many low-income countries may not have a culture of sharing information or of promoting government accountability to citizens. Moreover, the CSOs that do exist may themselves be poorly governed or prone to elite capture rather than representing a cross-section of classes and ethnicities (Molenaers and Renard, 2008). Box 9 below provides an overview of the levels of engagement of civil society representatives in SWAp in a variety of countries.



### Box 9: Engagement with non-state actors and civil society

In **Zambia**, while civil society played a limited role in review processes and committees before the SWAp, by 2003 civil society representatives participated actively in the preparation of the education strategic plan (IHSD, 2003).

Experience from **Uganda** has shown that NGO and CSO participation in the education sector dialogue in developing the ESIP were limited to consultation with the representative of the Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda. This is in contrast to the extensive participation by and consultation with civil society during the preparation of the Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan – its PRSP (IHSD, 2003).

In **Tanzania**, there was strong and formal involvement in the SWAp working groups from international NGOs and the Tanzania Teachers' Union but the former were largely in agreement with the international donor perspective, and the latter was receiving significant financial support from Sida who strongly advocated their involvement in the sector dialogue and planning process (Kuder, 2005).

In **Cambodia**, the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) was created in 2001 to ensure efficient dialogue between the MoEYS and NGOs and to involve civil society in the SWAp. By 2008, NEP had a membership of 78 organisations and a permanent seat on the Education Sector Working Group gaining the recognition by the MoEYS as the official partner representing education sector NGOs. This same year, NGO support exceeded 20 per cent of the total financing of the education sector. An impressive range of stakeholders (government officials from central and sub-national levels, donors, NGOs/CSOs, a selection of school directors and teachers) attends the Education Congress (the joint annual review) but a more limited group of central government officials usually take part in major strategic discussions and make key decisions leaving other stakeholders playing a more passive role (Hattori, 2009).

All of these examples show some level of engagement with NGOs and in the cases of Tanzania and Cambodia, the teachers' union, teachers and head teachers, but there is no specific mention of other civil society groups nor of the private sector, which often play a key role in the provision of post-primary education. This is all the more pertinent as SWAps move 'up' to incorporate secondary as well as primary education in light of the predominance of non-state involvement in secondary education. Indeed, Hattori (2009: 197) argues:

'These local level stakeholders are key agents in the delivery of actual education services and can provide unique perspectives on what is working well and where more effort is needed from the community's viewpoint.'

Experience in Cambodia shows the need for realism regarding participatory planning. Following inputs by NGOs and CSOs into planning processes, there is a technical and political appraisal of the content. Where the content has been rationalised this has wrongly given certain NGOs the incentive not to align with the formal plan. Foster points out that NGOs, in common with all of the stakeholders involved in planning and monitoring meetings, may have particular axes to grind and they may have mixed incentives to participate in relation to patronage or independence.<sup>19</sup> Broader inclusion in SWAp planning processes can bestow legitimacy on non-state actors, increasing their influence unduly. It can also fuel the political dimension of policy making in an unhelpful way, sometimes resulting in the paralysis of the reform programme.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.4 Managing for results and mutual accountability

Managing for results is an important component of the Paris Declaration as well as the Accra Agenda for Action since development outcomes are the ultimate aim of all aid. This principle

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Mick Foster.

<sup>20</sup> Written communication from David Quinn.



is underpinned by a commitment to share knowledge and data in order to improve national planning, monitoring, evaluation and ultimately results. Mutual accountability meanwhile reflects the importance of equal reporting lines between partner governments and donors and particularly the incorporation of downward accountability from the partner government to its citizens.

In mature SWAps, partner governments are in the driving seat of policy development and implementation (Latham, Ndaruhutse and Smith, 2006). Therefore, they are accountable to their own populations as well as to external partners for delivering progress in implementing this strategy. When projects were the *modus operandi*, the main route of accountability was between the country-based PIU, the donor and the donor's home government. This resulted in effectively bypassing the partner government and its citizens from an accountability framework and gave partner governments little incentive to 'own' donor interventions as they were not held accountable for results. Under a SWAp, the accountability structure has shifted significantly from a principal-agent model of accountability based on conditionality with power very much in favour of the donor, to a more balanced relationship resulting in the partner government having a much more equal role in accountability (Steer and Wathne, 2009). Ward claimed that:

'SWAps promote accountability...from service providers, elected officials, governments and citizens. Conversely, they reduce reliance on donors. Over-reliance on donors distorts relationship between citizens and government.' (UNICEF, 2004: 13)

Nevertheless, there is some debate regarding whether SWAps truly promote mutual accountability. It is clear that SWAps are more conducive for partner government accountability to its citizens than projects, which are likely to be off-budget and may be off-plan as well. However, owing to the weight accorded by the majority of donors to governance and reporting, strong horizontal accountability lines are established between the partner government and donors rather than vertically between the government and its citizens. Ideally there should be a single line of accountability: government reporting regularly on the results of its education policy to all stakeholders at the same time through annual reviews. The experience of Rwanda in Box 10 is a good example of this. Moreover, it has been challenging for partner governments to hold donors to account and for accountability to be truly 'mutual' as outlined in the Paris Declaration.

#### Box 10: National capacity to monitor sector performance in Rwanda

One example of the way in which the capacity of **Rwanda's** Ministry of Education was built through the SWAp relates to the annual Joint Review of the Education Sector (JRES). The planning and management of the first JRES, involving DFID, the World Bank and UNICEF, required a great deal of support from the DFID-funded Rwanda Education Sector Support Programme (RESSP) but by the end of the programme, the Ministry of Education organised and managed the review with minimal support. Indeed Latham, et al., (2006) affirm that the Ministry of Education's capacity to guide and manage the policy dialogue as well as its ability to monitor sectoral performance has increased considerably since 2000.

SWAps have generally resulted in common reporting at a joint annual review. This has produced greater transparency and accountability of education sector spending by governments to donors, NGOs and to civil society if all these stakeholders have been fully integrated into the annual review process. Steer and Wathne (2009) report that while the involvement of national stakeholders in monitoring and accountability is at its early stages and still needs strengthening, key findings from monitoring reports are being used by both donors and by domestic stakeholders (through submission of reports to cabinet and parliament) with CSOs becoming more actively involved in the review processes including undertaking independent monitoring missions. In Vietnam, civil society has created an Aid Management Group to carry out independent monitoring of aid implementation (Steer and Wathne, 2009). In Tanzania, the education budget is critically reviewed by the Social Services Parliamentary





Sub-Committee, which has more legitimacy and accountability than donors to raise policy issues and give constructive criticism during education sector reviews.<sup>21</sup>

Owing to the weak capacity of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in many countries, sector reviews do not always provide the necessary quality and range of data to meet donor requirements. Donors need up-to-date and accurate data sets in order to meet their own reporting requirements on the use of their funds. This can be challenging where there is a culture of secrecy (UNICEF, 2004). As a result, parallel reviews may be conducted by donors despite the fact that this is not in keeping with the principle of alignment and that it increases transactions costs (see section 4.5 Costs of Setting Up and Maintaining a SWAp for more discussion on this point and the example of Kenya in Box 20).

Moreover, with the increased scrutiny of Northern aid budgets, there is growing pressure to account for and attribute the impact of donor financing. Donors face a mounting tension between the need to provide strategic and sustainable financing to partner governments while also accounting clearly for their aid, measuring its impact in tangible terms, in order to report to their parliament and taxpayers (King, 1998; Schacter, 2001). This, together with the aid effectiveness principle of mutual accountability, has resulted in more attention being paid to the development of robust joint sector reviews in order to monitor and report on performance.

In some cases, donors are also required to provide disaggregated data regarding which education sub-sectors they support in order to analyse the extent to which they are pro-poor. This is easier when providing funding for an education project with tangible project outputs that are costed and where it is straightforward to measure progress. However, where donors have moved towards providing pooled funding or SBS in support of a SWAp, it is no longer possible to easily trace individual donor funds and identify what they have achieved. Since the pooled fund or SBS can support general running costs of the system, it is generally fungible (at least across the education sector) and it is not traceable to tangible outputs (e.g. x classrooms constructed with funding from donor y). Some donors have addressed this challenge by ensuring their SBS funds are traceable.<sup>22</sup> Williamson and Dom (2010a) in a multi-country study on SBS found that nearly 70 per cent of the SBS instruments examined were traceable. In Uganda, as detailed in Box 11 below, the development of a joint Fiduciary Assurance Framework for the education sector, helped reassure donors that their funds were being used for educational purposes.

#### Box 11: Strengthening accountability on the use of pooled resources

In **Uganda**, several donors made a transition from projects to budget support when supporting the education SWAp. To develop greater confidence in accountability and reporting, donors and the Government of Uganda worked together over three years to develop a Fiduciary Assurance Framework for education (later expanded beyond education). This framework included expenditure-tracking surveys, annual reports on budget use, and the monitoring of public expenditure management plans. Over the first three years of implementation, the tracking studies showed that the budgeted expenditure reaching schools had increased from 25 per cent to 90 per cent (IHSD, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Mike Kiernan.

<sup>22</sup> Funds are traceable when they are separately identifiable in the expenditure classification of a partner government's budget (e.g. donor x has given a sum of £1 million and this also happens to be the amount allocated for textbook provision in the partner government's budget. The donor can then claim that provided the £1 million has been spent on textbooks and audit trails confirm this, then their £1 million can be considered as having been spent on textbooks). Williamson and Dom (2010a: 2) report that 'Traceable SBS is also more commonly associated with further derogations – or approved departures – from standard recipient-government financial management procedures, such as the use of parallel cash management, reporting and audit arrangements.'





## 2.5 Summary

- The development of SWAps has been inextricably linked to the aid effectiveness and good governance discourse during the 1990s and 2000s.
- The expected improvements in harmonisation and alignment through the SWAp have not always been delivered at country level due to a range of factors including risk aversion, varying levels of political commitment to SWAps in donor headquarters and broader inter-donor political issues at national and regional levels related to visibility. There are also strong incentives against harmonisation and alignment on the part of national governments.
- Over time SWAps have become less prescriptive and more flexible with an acknowledgement that SWAp trajectories are country-specific. The emergence of PBAs place a greater focus on harmonisation, while SWAps, being sector-led, privilege alignment.
- SWAps are ineffective without strong ownership and leadership by the partner government although there is growing acknowledgement that ministries of education do not behave as coherent and unified units but have diverse interests and incentives. Moreover, certain donor practices can at best undermine, and at worst directly oppose, the principle of ownership.
- SWAps have greatly improved partnerships between partner governments and donors as well as inter-governmental relationships; the record however is less good in relation to systematic and meaningful engagement with CSOs.
- Through their design, SWAps have created the opportunity for vertical accountability to citizens rather than purely horizontal accountability to donors. However, in reality there continues to be a strong power dynamic between donors and partner governments.
- SWAps include a strong focus on managing for results through annual joint sector reviews which provide the opportunity to monitor performance across the sector and improve accountability. Parallel reviews continue however to be conducted by some development partners on the grounds that better-quality data and analysis are needed to meet donors' reporting requirements.



## Chapter 3: SWApS and planning

This chapter will analyse the effectiveness of SWApS within the context of education planning, education reform programmes and broader institutional development.

### 3.1 Education planning

The discipline of education planning emerged in high- and low-income countries as a result of the need to dramatically scale up education in order to be fit for purpose in relation to: (i) planning for the long term; (ii) the population size; (iii) the increasing complexity of education systems; and (iv) the alignment of education systems with economic needs (Coombs, 1970). Ruscoe (1969) includes the notions of the optimal use of human, material and financial resources to meet education objectives and the importance of education's alignment with national development. In 1970, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) defined education planning as:

‘...the application of rational, systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of its students and society.’ (Coombs, 1970: 14)

Within the term ‘SWAp’, there is an implicit understanding that international agencies and external funding are involved, which adds an additional and more complex dimension to education planning. Nevertheless, there are many commonalities between them; indeed the following definition of education planning could equally be applied to SWApS: ‘planning must use a wide-angle lens through which a great many interlocking variables can be put in focus and all of them seen as parts of a dynamic organic whole...’ (Coombs, 1970: 15). The discipline of education planning is several decades older than SWApS and it is important to note that the latest thinking on SWApS has informed approaches to education planning. Likewise, SWApS served to give the discipline of education planning a new lease of life in the 1990s as traditional forms of education planning were becoming less relevant in certain countries in the public sector in light of increasing privatisation (UNESCO, 2007).

A key difference between SWApS and education planning is that SWApS were conceived of by donors, while education planning in non-aid-dependent countries takes place at the national level in ministries of education or planning. Ward stated that ‘Most Education For All plans are just pieces of paper. SWApS can help make them a reality’ (UNICEF, 2004: 12). Nevertheless, while most low-income countries have developed or updated an education sector policy and some even have an accompanying costed strategy or plan, this is not necessarily synonymous with a SWAp, as discussed in section 3.1.1. Sub-Sectoral Planning.

It is generally acknowledged that the impact of SWApS can be seen most clearly in improved planning, policy development processes, institutional development, national-level governance and in the capacity of ministry staff (Shepherd and Cabral, 2008; Latham *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, Brown *et al.* (2001) note that where SWApS have built on existing government management structures, they have been more successful.



### Box 12: Institutional development, policy development and governance improvements in Rwanda

In **Rwanda** under the RESSP, which lasted from 2001 to 2006, important progress was made on policy development, planning capacity, the development of partnerships between the Ministry of Education and other key ministries and agencies (Wort and Kelly, 2006) as well as broader institutional development (Latham *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, education was recognised as the highest performing sector, thanks to the success of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and the introduction in 2003 of effective annual joint reviews.<sup>23</sup> The ESSP was strongly aligned with the PRSP, creating a clear link between education and poverty reduction. Furthermore, there was a key focus on equity and pro-poor concerns within the policies developed (Latham *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, the wide scope of the RESSP across the whole education sector, and its facilitation of the SWAp, was key to the coordination of capacity development and it significantly influenced the Ministry of Education's approaches to planning and financial planning.

DFID noted that as a result of experiences gained under RESSP, the Ministry of Education is now in a good position to 'demonstrate greater ownership of the SWAp process through a more confident and pro-active approach to the management of partner relationships' (DFID, 2004: 10). This in turn led to the donors, particularly DFID, demonstrating confidence in the Ministry of Education's capacity to plan and manage its budgets and finances for the implementation of the ESSP. As a result, future support to education was provided through pooled funding and SBS, with the decision making shifting from the donors to the Government. The fact that FTI funding for the ESSP (2006–2010) has been disbursed as SBS is a further testament to the success of the RESSP, and the confidence in national systems and the capacity of the Ministry of Education to manage funds efficiently.

The SWAp heralded a new way of working with partners to reach joint goals. The permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education between 2004 and 2008, stated that this new methodology had become part of the ministry's culture. He explained that the approach is not used only with donors, but also with district-level offices and faith-based organisations. The SWAp was also instrumental in addressing the high levels of mistrust within the Government in the early 2000s. It obliged greater openness and transparency within the Government and also between the Government and donors, promoting greater understanding, a spirit of partnership and the removal of hidden agendas.<sup>24</sup>

'The "MINEDUC [Ministry of Education, Science and Technology] concept" is now used by other ministries... MINEDUC was the first ministry to have a SWAp and is now seen as leading the SWAp approach to partnership...never having serious problems with the donors, meeting together and resolving issues when they arise...'<sup>25</sup>

The evidence from Rwanda, which has a well-embedded and mature SWAp, shows the importance of the legacy of SWAps, including a new way of working, purposeful partnerships and increased planning capacity. 'It has become a culture...there is no need to refer to the "SWAp" now, the word is not important.'<sup>26</sup>

The Netherlands MFA (2004) underlines two distinct phases in a SWAp: the formulation of a sector policy and its implementation. UNESCO (2007) points out that the role of the different bodies responsible for the plan's development needs to be established prior to its design. It is important that the bodies responsible for formulating policy within the SWAp have national legitimacy and authority rather than being parallel donor constructs. IHSD (2003) contends that developing a comprehensive sector policy and strategy is a complex and organic process requiring time. Indeed, the learning from The Gambia demonstrates the need to plan the SWAp preparation process in order for all actors to understand the overall direction and what it entails (World Bank, 2001). There has been a growing acknowledgement of the fact that SWAps make higher demands of the leadership, technical, managerial and financial capacity of the partner government, as well as that of in-country donors. As a result, SWAps have entailed a greater focus on 'systemic approaches to building capacity with...governments

<sup>23</sup> Written correspondence from Harvey Smith.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Narcisse Musabeyezu.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Narcisse Musabeyezu.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Narcisse Musabeyezu.



through institutional development and system-wide reform' (Steer and Wathne, 2009: xv). The EC for example, underlines the importance of SWAp within the context of sectoral reform programmes, known as sector policy support programmes.

#### Box 13: Equitable policy development through Ethiopia's SWAp

The advantages of **Ethiopia's** Education Sector Development Programme include that it has provided an overview of the developmental needs of the sector. In addition, the SWAp has made policy development possible that would otherwise have been unfeasible; for example, scaling up the establishment of Village Education Committees and the introduction of quotas for women's representation on the committees, the development of recruitment targets for female teachers, the policy to employ female paraprofessional teachers, and the policy to review textbooks and curricula to ensure they were gender sensitive (Lasonen, Kempainen and Raheem, 2005).

#### Box 14: Sector-wide planning and trade-offs in Rwanda

The provision of SBS by donors meant that they were well placed to engage with the Government of **Rwanda** on the prioritisation and share of the education budget across the different levels of education. The Government was keenly committed to the tertiary sector. The weighting of the Government's budget for tertiary was at odds with donor policies related to EFA (and international theories related to pro-poor growth). By including an adviser for higher education and providing financial modelling of policy options, the RESSP provided a forum for reassessing the proportion of funding to be invested in basic education. Through capacity-building inputs, RESSP was able to help the Ministry of Education to identify and cost the options rendering the difficult policy and strategic decisions more transparent (Latham *et al.*, 2006).

### 3.1.1 Sub-sectoral planning

As discussed earlier, some partner governments have chosen to initiate a SWAp with a sub-sector plan for primary or basic education. Nevertheless, critics contend that until the whole sector is incorporated into the planning process, the SWAp can only be considered a partial SWAp. A key challenge in making the transition from a sub-sector SWAp to a full SWAp is the likely need to work with more than one ministry depending on the in-country structure. The difficulties of establishing a SWAp under these circumstances should not be underestimated owing to the absence of incentives for inter-ministerial collaboration due to the fact that there are different 'patrons' and 'clients' in different ministries.<sup>27</sup>

Since the FTI was launched in 2002, the number of countries embarking on developing formal costed education plans has increased. Twenty-eight low-income countries have now been endorsed as well as certain lower middle-income countries (see Appendix 2 for more details). Countries develop a costed education plan in order to secure FTI endorsement and to attract additional resources from donors for basic education. The starting point is to calculate the costs of the current system. Projections are made based on the cost of expanding the system from its current size to a stage where all children are enrolled in primary school (by 2015) within certain parameters. This approach focuses strongly on the primary or basic sub-sector without clear frameworks within which to estimate other sub-sector financing gaps. Furthermore, the starting point for this planning process is the identification of the financing gap. This goes against the received wisdom on SWApS which states that planning should inform financing and not the reverse.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Peter Buckland.



### 3.2 Decentralisation

SWApS were initially criticised for their inability to engage meaningfully with decentralised education systems and for centralising planning and management frameworks in the capital (UNESCO, 2007). Due to their inherent focus on policy, planning and financing at national levels, the literature indicates that SWApS can have a *de facto* re-centralising influence (IHSD, 2003; Shepherd and Cabral, 2008). Brown *et al.* (2001) noted that in the early adoption of SWApS in Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, the focus was on involving senior government officials, with little dissemination of information about the SWApS to lower levels.

#### Box 15: The challenges of planning within a decentralised education system in Sierra Leone

**Sierra Leone's** experience demonstrates the difficulty of involving decentralised bodies in a meaningful way and with appropriate lead-in time frames. Following the development of the second discussion draft of the Education Sector Plan (ESP), 2007–2015 in early 2007, district consultative meetings were held in 10 out of the 14 districts involving: deputy directors, inspectors of schools and chairpersons of local council education committees, tribal chiefs, school management committees (SMCs), boards of governors, head teachers, teachers and students (and more) (Sierra Leone Development Partners, 2007). The meetings lasted only one day in each of the districts. On average 90 people participated in the one-day meetings. Therefore, real and broad participation would have been minimal. Following the finalisation of the plan in May 2007, there was a lack of provision for its roll-out to the districts and even three years later, district officials and councillors in Kailahun district in the east of the country seemed unaware of the ESP or its policies (Boak, 2010).

In 2008, district education offices and district councils were asked to merge or harmonise their district education plans in order to have one education work plan per district. These were subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) in Freetown. Following their submission there was no formal process of reconciling and rationalising the district plans in order to ensure they were aligned with the ESP. This demonstrates the challenges to harmonising district and national planning cycles as well as the inadequate upwards and downward information systems, making bottom-up and integrated planning difficult in Sierra Leone.

The experience in Cambodia shows that effective decentralisation requires the establishment of robust lines of accountability, agreed sector performance indicators, effective monitoring systems, clearly defined organisational mandates, and a shared vision for service delivery. The establishment of these processes has formed part of the SWAp. Therefore, in Cambodia the SWAp has promoted and enabled fiscal and administrative decentralisation. Likewise, in Rwanda district-level authorities have been incorporated into the SWAp planning process; thus the 'SWAp culture' has been successfully decentralised to district levels.<sup>28</sup>

### 3.3 Constraining factors on the impact of SWApS on institutional development

The effectiveness of sector reform is contingent on the enabling environment encompassing the broad culture in which people and organisations operate, as well as the rules, laws, policies, power relations and social norms which govern their interaction (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2009). Experience and evidence show that the enabling environment can undermine or promote the impact of a SWAp. Factors which have reduced the effectiveness of SWApS include under-developed links to wider civil service reforms, PFM reforms and sector management reviews (Brown *et al.*, 2001). Teskey (2005 in Penny *et al.*, 2008) concurs that widespread improvements are difficult to achieve solely through sector reform. IHSD (2003) also argues that continuity of key personnel within both governments and funding agencies is very important for ensuring commitment to reform.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Narcisse Musabeyezu.



#### Box 16: Undermining the SWAp in Rwanda

In **Rwanda**, the education SWAp was well planned and focused on building central capacity for implementation of the ESSP. As this was happening, the Government of Rwanda announced and then rapidly implemented a fairly radical decentralisation reform that did not just give greater powers to Provinces and Districts to plan budgets and deliver services, but also abolished the old Provinces and created new administrative Districts that were much larger geographical units than the previous ones. This was coupled with a civil service reform programme that resulted in the significant reduction of central Ministry of Education personnel to a fifth of its original size with much greater capacity needed in the newly created Districts (some of this was addressed by the relocation of central ministry staff to education posts in the Districts). The period of uncertainty when staff were waiting to know the status of their posts was very unsettling, making capacity development and consequently sectoral change more challenging. This highlights how sector reform can be impacted positively or negatively by wider reforms in the political landscape. While the decentralisation reforms are likely to have significant gains over time on many different levels, at least in the short-term, this reform had a negative impact on the Ministry of Education's capacity to implement the ESSP at District level (Latham *et al.*, 2006).

Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 2, the importance of the political economy in relation to the success or failure of the SWAp cannot be underestimated due to the growing acknowledgement of the political dimension of institutional development (Molenaers and Renard, 2008).

'Research...shows...that reforms often do not fail for lack of ownership or political will but because of the wrong starting assumption, that progressive change is only achieved through strengthening formal, rules-based institutions. The evidence instead underlines the complexity of sustainable governance reform' (DFID, 2010a: 92).

### 3.4 Summary

- SWAps put an important premium on planning as a crucial part of the approach.
- There continues to be debate regarding whether sub-sectoral SWAps constitute true SWAps. However, it is recognised that all sub-sectors need to be part of the plan in order to allow sector-wide trade-offs and efficiencies to be made.
- In certain countries it is no longer appropriate to talk about SWAps *per se* since the principles underlying SWAps have been embedded in the working practice of and between line ministries at national and sub-national levels.
- More mature SWAps promote effective and accountable decentralisation, strengthening the links between planning processes at national and sub-national levels while the reverse can be true when nascent SWAp-like approaches are implemented.
- Impressive impact has been documented in countries with mature SWAps in relation to improved planning capacity, working ethic, governance and broader institutional development. On the other hand, macro-level reforms, the broader working conditions, human resources policies and remuneration levels were found to reduce the effectiveness of SWAps and the sustainability of their results.





## Chapter 4: SWAPs and financing

This chapter will analyse how SWAPs have interacted with sectoral and national financing. It will begin with an outline of the types of country in which SWAPs have been implemented. It will explore which aid modalities have been used under SWAPs and the impact this has had on alignment and harmonisation. It will examine financial flows to the school level as well as accountability and reporting systems. It will also investigate the issue of transactions costs.

### 4.1 The scope and scale of SWAPs

The definition of a SWAP used in this research interprets a SWAP as an approach to planning that aims to have a common sector plan which encompasses all the different activities provided to the sector (public, private and donor- or NGO-funded) and captures an estimation of their budgets to assist with public expenditure management. SWAPs have largely been introduced in low-income countries that are aid dependent. Aid dependency<sup>29</sup> has been defined as a situation in which a country is unable to consistently deliver the core functions of government including the delivery of basic public services without foreign aid, or one in which the absence of aid would leave a country unable to meet its policy objectives (Bräutigam, 2000; Lensink and White, 1999).

Appendix 2 shows the extent to which education SWAPs have been implemented in low-income countries and also outlines these countries' degree of dependence on aid. It reveals that the majority of low-income countries have an education SWAP or a SWAP-like process in place. A few countries such as the Kyrgyz Republic and Mali, for which there is no conclusive evidence of yet having education SWAPs, have been pursuing SWAPs in the health sector. In addition, a variety of lower-middle-income countries such as Bolivia, Jordan, Kosovo, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, among others, have adopted SWAPs in the education sector and in other sectors (UNICEF, 2006a and key informant interviews). Low-income countries which have not adopted SWAPs are mainly those affected by conflict or fragility. The relevance and future of SWAPs in these contexts will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

### 4.2 Appropriate aid modalities to support a SWAP

SWAP experts agree that any aid modality – whether a project, SBS, general budget support (GBS) or earmarked or pooled funds – can potentially support a SWAP, provided donors give their support in a way that is harmonised and aligned as far as possible with government approaches around a government-led education plan. This goes against the surprisingly widely held opinion among certain donor personnel that a SWAP is synonymous with SBS. As UNESCO (2007: 23) has stated: ‘...a SWAP is an “approach” and not a funding modality...’ and the Netherlands MFA (2004: 8) further comments that a ‘sector-wide approach implies a partnership which involves the simultaneous deployment of different aid modalities’. UNICEF (2004: 12) also concurs that a ‘SWAP is an approach and can incorporate any number of mechanisms.’

However, given the fact that the development of a SWAP entails ‘progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds’ (Brown *et al.*, 2001: 7), some have interpreted SWAPs as being purely compatible with modalities which are more

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<sup>29</sup> ODA as a percentage of central government expenditure is the most appropriate proxy to indicate degree of aid dependency. However, as data is less readily available for government expenditure, aid dependence is also considered in terms of aid as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI). Countries can be considered as significantly aid dependent if aid constitutes more than 30 per cent of central government expenditure, and/or if aid as a percentage of GNI is greater than the average level for low-income countries (i.e. greater than 7.4 per cent of GNI).





aligned with country systems such as SBS or pooled funds rather than projects. This has meant that some donors have felt excluded from the SWAp, for example those unable to provide SBS due to legislative constraints (UNESCO, 2007).

**Table 3: The positions of key donors on SBS**

Donors Able to Provide SBS	Donors Unable to Provide SBS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ La Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo</li> <li>▪ Danida</li> <li>▪ DFID</li> <li>▪ European Union</li> <li>▪ Ireland Aid</li> <li>▪ Netherlands MFA</li> <li>▪ Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</li> <li>▪ Sida</li> <li>▪ World Bank</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ France</li> <li>▪ Italy</li> <li>▪ JICA<sup>30</sup></li> <li>▪ USAID</li> </ul>

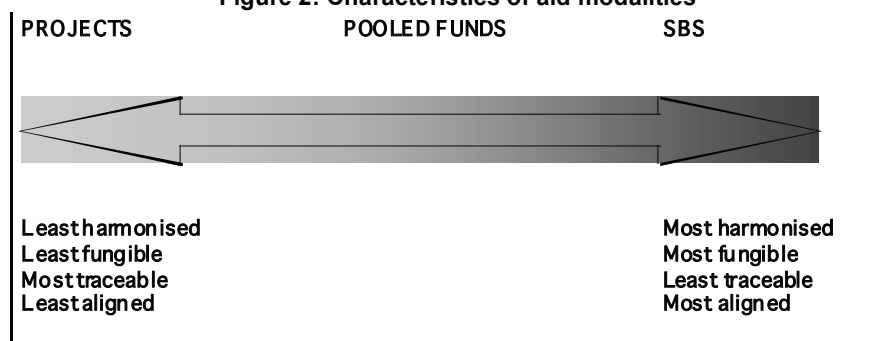
The EC (2007) argues that SBS, pooled funds and projects are all viable financing modalities to support a sector policy and strategic plan. The EC believes SBS to be the preferred modality as it is most in line with the aid-effectiveness principles, but states that it may not be appropriate in all contexts. The EC goes on to outline three broad conditions for SBS to be provided to a partner government:

1. The partner government is either in the process of developing or has developed a sector policy;
2. The partner government is either in the process of developing or implementing a programme to improve PFM; and
3. The partner government is either in the process of putting in place or has put in place a stability-oriented macroeconomic policy.

This reveals that the inherent assumption held by the initial ‘orchestrators’ of SWAps, that all donors would move to provide pooled funding and SBS, has not been realised since donors still use a mixture of funding modalities. This was a view highlighted by IHSD (2003: 12) who argued that SWAps ‘should be considered as a means to moving towards channelling all external assistance through government budgets’. However, the Netherlands Government takes a more nuanced approach and points out that while a move towards SBS or GBS is desirable, where there is a certain level of governance that is on a trajectory of improvement, this does not mean that SWAps equate to an end of project aid (Netherlands MFA, 2004). Shepherd and Cabral (2008: 7) underline the important role that projects can play:

‘If properly designed, projects can be nationally owned and can be suitable vehicles to support strategic thinking and innovation. They can also be a useful expression of policy. In fact, they have not gone away, even in the better policy environments...’

**Figure 2: Characteristics of aid modalities**



<sup>30</sup> Japan has been trying to provide SBS but to date has not succeeded due to the requirements at headquarters for detailed accounting of expenditure (Bartholomew, 2009).

**Table 4: Pros and cons of different aid modalities**

	Pros	Cons	Relevance/ appropriateness to SWAp
<b>Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can be a useful modality for supporting innovative ideas, pilots, non-state actors, CSOs and technical assistance, even in countries that are not aid dependent (Shepherd and Cabral, 2008)</li> <li>▪ Funds are fully traceable for those donors with concerns about accountability and fiduciary risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cannot easily be used to fund long-term service delivery</li> <li>▪ The least aligned modality</li> <li>▪ It is 'off budget'</li> <li>▪ Accountability is not to national government but to external partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allows donors to have some discretion over capacity development spending and their pet priorities</li> <li>▪ Enables the involvement of non-state actors in monitoring sector policy implementation and accountability</li> </ul>
<b>Pooled funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding is earmarked for the education sector so is additional</li> <li>▪ A step in the right direction along the continuum towards greater alignment and harmonisation when SBS is not an option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding may be earmarked for particular activities or sub-sectors giving less flexibility for the ministry of education to implement activities</li> <li>▪ It is 'off budget'<sup>31</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allows donors to move towards more harmonised and aligned approaches</li> </ul>
<b>SBS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is the most aligned and harmonised modality and fully 'on budget'</li> <li>▪ Encourages openness and transparency in the formulation of education sector budgets (UNICEF, 2004)</li> <li>▪ It is the only modality that is fully 'on-budget'<sup>32</sup></li> <li>▪ Reduces transactions costs</li> <li>▪ Should lead to more efficient use of resources and greater national ownership</li> <li>▪ It is the only modality which supports recurrent costs</li> <li>▪ Enables donors to disburse much larger volumes of aid more rapidly than designing and setting up a project</li> <li>▪ Increases support available for recurrent spending</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for dialogue on sector governance and PFM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are concerns among some donors about lack of accountability of funds (through funds not being easily traceable), fungibility, increased fiduciary risk and losing control of decision-making</li> <li>▪ It is not an option when credible PFM reform has not been undertaken and donors lack confidence in PFM systems</li> <li>▪ Links between budgets and activities/outcomes may be very poor, making accountability to donors more challenging</li> <li>▪ SBS results in aid fungibility so there is looser accountability and transparency over micro-level details and concern only with the overall picture which can be more challenging for meeting accountability requirements for donors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is the most aligned and harmonised approach often using a common monitoring system</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> Projects and pooled funds restrict parliament's ability to exercise its mandate of scrutiny and accountability as well as limiting government's direct ability to carry out its responsibilities. This is why they are referred to as 'off-budget' support.

<sup>32</sup> SBS and GBS are referred to as 'on-budget' support as these modalities line up with the partner government's existing legislation and procedures, and donor funds are transferred to a consolidated account that is managed and accounted for by the partner government.



Whilst SBS clearly has the advantage of being the most aligned and harmonised modality, Williamson and Dom (2010a) argue that different aid modalities can be used simultaneously and in a complementary way to assist the partner government to deliver services – which is important for an effective SWAp. SBS has the advantage of being able to support recurrent costs, but it may be that technical assistance or capacity building activities are better-supported using projects. Box 17 below shows a range of country experiences using different aid modalities.

#### Box 17: Country experience with different aid modalities

In **Zambia**, where there was a strong commitment to the education SWAp, donors recognised the need and value of keeping some technical-assistance funds off-budget to permit a flexibility and responsiveness to newly identified needs (Netherlands MFA, 2003).

In the early years of the education SWAp in **Rwanda**, the Government clearly saw the need for donors to move towards adopting common procedures and to support national and sectoral planning processes. However, it also recognised the need to accommodate support provided via the whole range of aid modalities, even if its preferred approach, as stated in the Government's 2006 Aid Policy was budget support. By 2009, donors were still providing support to the education sector through a mix of aid modalities including GBS, SBS, projects and a hybrid form of supporting aid through all three modalities (IHSD, 2003; Government of Rwanda, 2006; Obura and Bird, 2009).

In **Bolivia, Uganda and Zambia**, projects that were brought under the SWAp benefited from a closer working relationships with the ministries of education and in some cases have been scaled up at national level (Netherlands MFA, 2003).

In **Kenya**, the majority of donors are on-plan with the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme, but some finance activities that are off-budget, including one agency which disburses funds to a technical assistance agency which do not show up on the Government of Kenya budget (Woods, 2007).

### 4.3 SWAps and PFM reform

There was a strong feeling across many agencies that annual input-based budgets that were prepared according to functional departments within a ministry (e.g. planning, teacher training, textbooks, etc.) and were subject to an incremental annual inflationary increase were not strategic and did not help different sectors to prioritise how their spending contributed to a wider vision and strategy. There was also a lack of coherence and coordination between capital and recurrent budgets, resulting in the building of schools financed by donors with no forward planning regarding the implications on the recurrent budget in relation to teachers' salaries and school running costs for the partner government.

Many countries have introduced SWAps in one or more key sectors around the same time as embarking on national PFM reforms. An early document commissioned by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) recommended that:

'CIDA should, in parallel with its involvement in SWAps, encourage the development of PFM capacity in countries where SWAps are active. Lack of PFM capacity is seen by all donors as a major obstacle to full implementation of the SWAp model.' (Schacter, 2001: 18)

When discussing education sector reform and the SWAp in Uganda, Penny *et al.* (2008) concluded that a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) (known as the Medium Term Budget Framework in Uganda) coupled with an EMIS that has a clear baseline from which to measure progress and that is effective and reliable, are two critical tools for the development of a successful SWAp. Indeed, the links between SWAps and finance can only be as strong as the wider PFM system within which the SWAp is operating. If there are weaknesses in the

reporting and accountability side of PFM systems, then these will directly impact upon this aspect of the SWAp.

#### 4.4 Financial flows under SWAps

Within the context of limited national resources and the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE), a key challenge for partner governments is how to expand their national education systems in a sustainable way ensuring that donor finances are supporting prioritised activities in a targeted and efficient way.

Traditionally, projects have tended to support capital costs (e.g. classroom construction and the purchase of textbooks) or one-off pilots and system-change inputs (e.g. curriculum reform, establishing teacher training institutes and teacher training for a given discrete input). With the move towards more-aligned aid modalities, pooled funds and SBS have given partner governments greater flexibility to support a wider range of activities prioritised in their education sector plans, including the recurrent costs of service delivery.

‘A number of positive outcomes have accrued for Uganda’s education sector from developing SBS. The most obvious is the availability of increased financial support, especially for recurrent spending’ (Penny *et al.*, 2008: 270).

#### Box 18: Uganda’s efficiency savings

In **Uganda**, the move to develop a SWAp in 1998 was provoked by President Museveni’s election pledge to provide free primary education. As a result there was a need to calculate the total financial envelope available for primary education, including all donor funding. Knowing what different stakeholders’ financial contributions were made it much easier to plan and allocate money in a more efficient way. As donors moved towards providing pooled funding and SBS, thus using government financial systems, donors honoured government audit reports and did not require additional audits to audit their own funds.<sup>33</sup>

An important aspect of the SWAp was the advances made in the development and provision of basic learning materials. The ministry launched the Instructional Materials Reform Programme in 2000. As a result of its implementation and more competitive tendering, there was a 60 per cent reduction in the unit costs of primary textbooks. Consequently, schools were able to buy many more materials, which then increased the textbook–pupil ratio more quickly than was originally thought (Penny *et al.*, 2008).

Given that teachers’ salaries still constitute most of the overall education recurrent budget, and following the McKinsey report on high-performing education systems, which concludes that effective teachers are central to good-quality learning (Barber and Mourshed, 2007), ensuring that teachers are paid is critical. This is of even greater importance given that the recent abolition of school fees in many developing countries has resulted in a big increase in enrolments, resulting in a higher demand for both teachers and for quality inputs to support teachers.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Florence Malinga.



### Box 19: Financial flows in Rwanda under the SWAp

In **Rwanda**, the SWAp has developed since its conceptualisation in 1999/2000. As a result, by 2005 the African Development Bank, the Belgian Technical Cooperation, DFID, the FTI and the Netherlands MFA all agreed to provide SBS through the Joint Education Sector Support (JESS) programme. JESS was set up to support the implementation of the ESSP 2006–2010 through two components: an SBS programme and the Education Sector Capacity Building Pooled Fund (ESCBPF). The ESCBPF pools finances from DFID and UNICEF into a special account managed by the Ministry of Education to help build capacity for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the ESSP. The aim is for the ESCBPF to be integrated into the Ministry of Education's recurrent budget over time.

SBS contributed a quarter of the education budget in 2007 (increasing to 40 per cent if the theoretical attribution from GBS is included). Because SBS is supporting implementation costs of the ESSP under the SWAp, it has helped to finance teachers' salaries, capitation grants for basic education, construction and textbooks, thus providing comprehensive support to the school level. The SWAp helped to introduce a capitation grant when school fees were abolished in 2003, and with the provision of SBS has resulted in an increase in the amount given to each school under the capitation grant each year. This enabled schools to hire over 1,600 contract teachers during 2007 to meet the urgent demand for new teachers through increased access due to fee-free education, but issues do still remain over the quality, efficiency and sustainability of this approach (Uytersprot, 2008).

Several countries with education SWAps have also introduced capitation grants or school grants to ensure money reaches the school level in order to finance a range of recurrent costs such as building rehabilitation, employing additional teachers and purchasing teaching and learning materials. The World Bank and UNICEF (2009) report states that where school grants have been provided and school fees abolished, this has resulted in more local-level decision making and accountability as well as empowering schools and communities.

While these grants and other ways of supporting recurrent costs have been critical, the more effective SWAps have been those that have coupled support to recurrent costs with a capacity development fund controlled by the ministry of education to ensure sustainable development of the education system, such as in Cambodia. Capacity building is usually provided by donors via two routes: (i) directly by donor staff or through staff/agencies contracted by them in support of preparation and implementation of education programmes; and (ii) indirectly as part of donor funding for sector programmes provided by individuals, agencies and academic institutions contracted by recipient countries (Fredriksen, 2005). UNESCO is the designated United Nations (UN) technical agency for the education sector, yet it has a limited budget and capacity to provide large amounts of high-quality technical assistance. The technical capacity of donors varies significantly and the shift towards SBS has meant that some donors have chosen to have fewer education specialists and more governance specialists (Fredriksen, 2005).<sup>34</sup> Additionally, there may be staff managing programmes in several sectors at the same time who are clearly not able to be experts in all the sectors which results in low-quality policy dialogue.<sup>35</sup>

SBS or GBS has been advantageous for supporting recurrent costs and addressing high-level policy and strategy issues as well as reducing the administrative costs of providing aid and enabling donors to give significantly increased amounts of aid more quickly as SBS is less bureaucratic and time consuming for donors to set up compared to projects.<sup>36</sup> However, as Fredriksen (2005: 9) points out:

'what is gained in improved focus on macro- and inter-sectoral issues risks being lost by less focus on education-specific issues. In low-income Sub-Saharan African

<sup>34</sup> A view supported during interviews with Mick Foster.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Alberto Begué.

<sup>36</sup> A view supported during interviews with Mike Kiernan and Murray Macrae.



countries, *regardless of the funding instrument used*, aid agencies need to have the capacity to provide support in both areas.'

Under budget support, it has become more difficult for ministries of education to access financing for analytical work, technical advice and knowledge sharing than when they used to get money from projects. This is because it is difficult for the ministry of education to prioritise this for education if other sectors are not also prioritising it especially in light of constrained national resources and tight budgets. This has led Fredriksen to conclude:

'...if aid agencies want to give high priority to this type of capacity-building activities, they will need to find ways of financing them directly even within a context where most education aid is given as budget support.' (Fredriksen, 2005: 9)

This underlines the importance of SBS being accompanied by a separate pooled capacity development fund, as has taken place in Rwanda and Cambodia, among other countries.

#### **4.5 Costs of setting up and maintaining a SWAp**

One of the main rationales behind the adoption of SWAps was the reduced transactions costs where donors coordinated around a government-led and owned plan rather than demanding individual meetings with ministry officials to discuss different donor-funded projects and their diverse reporting requirements. In the early stages of developing SWAps, transactions costs do not reduce, as experience shows that the process of developing the SWAp and accompanying documents and agreements takes a lot of government and donor time, which has resulted in some donors increasing staffing or technical assistance to support the development of a SWAp (Brown *et al.*, 2001; EC, 2007; Netherlands MFA, 2003). This has meant that in the short term, transactions costs have actually increased. While this may be a surprise to some, it is logical given that doing things better often requires more effort. IHSD (2003) argued that transactions costs are likely to increase initially under a SWAp until the new arrangements have been agreed and a new way of operating slowly replaces the old way. However, in the case of Zambia, the Netherlands MFA (2003: 78) did note that 'the semi-annual review process has helped to save administrative costs for government and external agencies alike.'

The theory is that at least over the longer-term, transactions costs should fall. Even if they do not, Brown *et al.* (2001: 29) argue that at minimum there will be net benefits given that an 'increased proportion of government donor contacts are now aimed at supporting the effectiveness of government systems rather than parallel project ones.' However, they also argue that for transactions costs to be reduced, there is a need for governments to convince donors that the information provided in the annual or biannual joint review is both robust and sufficient and will not require additional reporting and field visits (Brown *et al.*, 2001: 27). Box 20 below gives an overview of the review processes in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Kenya, outlining whether and how they have reduced transactions costs.



### Box 20: The joint review process and transactions costs

A 2007 report mapping the progress in implementing the Paris Declaration in the **Kenyan** education sector found that while, for a small number of donors, the monitoring and evaluation process adopted for the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme through the annual JRES was sufficient, for several other agencies, additional mid-term and terminal evaluations; monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports; and regular (in some cases several times a month) project visits and supervisions were required in addition to the annual JRES which showed that transactions costs were not necessarily falling over time (Woods, 2007).

By contrast, in **Cambodia**, education sector reviews have taken place since 2002 and usually three separate reports were prepared for these meetings:

1. a Sector Performance Report prepared by the MoEYS;
2. a Donor Performance Report prepared by the Education Sector Working Group; and
3. an NGO Report prepared by NEP.

In 2006, the MoEYS decided to merge the annual Education Congress (the joint annual review) with its annual sector review in order to reduce transaction costs. Two years later, it decided to prepare one report for the joint annual review, which included information and analysis on the performance of the education sector as well as donor support to the sector. All of this has resulted in reduced transactions costs.

However, the performance report presented at the annual review meeting remains largely descriptive rather than analytical and linked to progress in achieving high-level policy objectives. Strengthening this report will give donors more confidence in using it as their main or sole reporting requirement, resulting in greater harmonisation and alignment on monitoring and reporting, and a further decrease in transactions costs (Hattori, 2009).

In **Bangladesh**, under the SWAp in PEDP II, donor harmonisation has resulted in reduced transactions costs, in terms of both time inputs and finances (Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2009).

Linn (2009) in his analysis of joint country assistance strategies (JCAS), which can be seen as SWAps at a national or macroeconomic level, found that it took two to three years to set up these strategies in Tanzania, Uganda and Cambodia and that there was a high level of input and cost related to staff and consultant time especially on the side of donors. In Cambodia, he found that donors spent nearly double the amount on the preparation of the JCAS than they would have done on an individual country assistance strategy (CAS). An ADB assessment found that an average JCAS required an additional 25 percent investment of time and money compared to an individual CAS (ADB, 2006 cited in Linn, 2009). However, on a positive note, this same assessment noted that over time, both donors and government reported lower transactions costs. By contrast, the perception of donors in Tanzania was that transactions costs had increased for the donor but decreased for the government; a view that was also held by government stakeholders.

Linn (2009) went on to conclude that there is mixed evidence on costs and to question whether the increase in costs outweighs the benefits. This may have led some donors to stay outside the joint strategy process, and has resulted in some operational managers in the World Bank being sceptical about the usefulness of such processes.

#### 4.6 Summary

- SWAps have mainly been used in aid-dependent low-income countries although they have been implemented in some lower-middle-income countries.



- A range of aid modalities can support a SWAp and while several donors have moved towards more aligned modalities such as budget support, fragmented approaches are still being employed by some donors.
- Many countries have introduced SWAps around the same time as embarking on national PFM reforms. Weaknesses in the PFM system will directly impact upon the financial aspects and effectiveness of the SWAp.
- SWAps have enabled donors to support the recurrent costs of service delivery but this needs to be coupled with capacity building.
- There are high transactions costs in the short term and mixed evidence regarding reduced costs in the long term.



## Chapter 5: SWAPs and education outcomes

This chapter will analyse some of the challenges of measuring the impact of SWAPs. It will document evidence of the impact of SWAPs to date from national education systems, including an overview of the impact of health SWAPs in selected countries. The chapter will examine the association between: (i) SWAPs and access, focusing on gross enrolment rates (GERs), and (ii) SWAPs and quality, focusing on learning outcomes, completion rates, pupil-teacher ratios and other proxy indicators of quality. It will also analyse strategies employed to address equity, gender and quality through a SWAP. It will not address the broader impact of education SWAPs on transition to work or on other human development outcomes.

### 5.1 Challenges in measuring the impact of SWAPs

It is acknowledged that SWAPs have been more concerned with planning, management and financing arrangements than with their impact on children's access, completion and learning outcomes (Latham *et al.*, 2006; Shepherd and Cabral, 2008). In her analysis of the SWAP in Tanzania, Kuder (2005) points out that 'paper planning' does not necessarily translate into feasible strategies for improving education at district and school levels. In discussing health SWAPs, Skolnik, Jensen and Johnson claim that 'Donors have made the coordination of SWAPs an inadvertent end in itself rather than a means by which to achieve better health outcomes' (2010: 12). This is partly due to the fact that they were designed to address the weaknesses of projects in relation to the principles of aid effectiveness. Where projects can be designed for tailored interventions, targeting specific population groups and particular districts through well-staffed and well-resourced NGOs or PIUs, SWAPs take a much broader approach with a greater focus on institutional governance alongside improved aid coordination and financing arrangements. Indeed, Shepherd and Cabral (2008) claim that service delivery outcomes have been subordinate concerns which are considered following improvements to the functioning of the sector. In a review of Rwanda's first education SWAP, for example, it was noted that the programme was not fit for purpose to improve quality issues. The authors highlighted that policy formulation successes had not yet translated into improvements in relation to quality, access or equity of education (Wort and Kelly, 2006). Nevertheless, questions are increasingly being posed of outcomes in relation to SWAPs, particularly regarding quality.<sup>37</sup> Foster emphasises the counterfactual – it is not obvious that alternative approaches would necessarily have done any better on quality, and quality issues are now, if somewhat belatedly, receiving more attention in SWAP dialogue and in related global processes such as the FTI.<sup>38</sup> When discussing the experience of Uganda, Penny *et al.* (2008: 21) urge a note of caution in tempering expectations regarding the impact of SWAPs:

'Uganda also demonstrates even with a largely effective state, a SWAP and generous education financing, and despite the provision of more learning materials and improvements in school provision and facilities, the quality of teaching and learning may continue to be low and inequities in access and outcomes remain.'

As discussed in 2.4 Managing for Results and Mutual Accountability, there is a potential incompatibility between donors' commitment to greater aid effectiveness and the pressure exerted on them by their parliaments, national media and taxpayers to account very clearly for outcomes in easily quantifiable terms. Indeed there is a danger that donors will come under pressure from their governments to move back to projects which can be more easily assessed in terms of impact and results.

'Statistical impact evaluation methods are designed for "projects", where the intervention...is homogeneous: it is well-defined, and identical for all members of the

<sup>37</sup> A view supported during interviews with Richard Arden, Abby Riddell and Mick Foster.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mick Foster.



“treatment group”. This makes it feasible, and sensible to infer the impact of the intervention from a comparison of a treatment, and a control group...Donors have started to move away from project finance in favour of sector aid, and GBS...their evaluation demands have shifted, making these existing techniques less suitable.’ (Elbers, Gunning and de Hoop, 2008: 513).

Nevertheless, Haddad (2010) argues that the elements of donor support which bring about sustainable change in partner countries are not always the easiest to measure. By their very nature, SWApS make the realisation of impact assessments or evaluations challenging due to the need for a strong and accurate baseline and a control group. This reduces the ability to draw conclusions regarding attribution. As with any comprehensive education reform, longitudinal studies are needed. Nevertheless, few of such studies have been conducted in the education sector in low-income countries (Penny *et al.*, 2008). In the meantime, donors are placing greater emphasis on the strengthening of national sector review mechanisms. However, these systems are unlikely to be strengthened within the required time frames to placate the loud demands for proof of value of money for donor support (National Audit Office, United Kingdom, (NAO), 2010; Lewis and Christensen, 2010).

The absence of clearly attributable data on education outcomes needs to be considered when reading this chapter since it strongly limits the conclusions that can be drawn regarding the impact of the SWAp. The situation is compounded by the weakness of national EMIS upon which any impact assessments would be dependent. Moreover, educational change is a slow process and reform programmes take several years to implement and a number of years more before impact can be measured or indeed attributed.

## 5.2 SWApS and UPE

SWApS emerged during the post-structural adjustment policy period as stable partner governments were responding to the demand for fee-free primary education. Policy decisions to abolish and subsidise primary school fees were taken by several Sub-Saharan African governments during the 1990s and early 2000s coinciding with the emergence of SWApS. Through their design and by consolidating financing from various different sources towards the government’s priority policy initiatives, SWApS have made the provision of fee-free primary education and, in some countries, post-basic education, possible. There is compelling evidence of increased access to primary, lower-secondary and in some cases upper-secondary education following the introduction of SWApS in many low-income countries which will be illustrated below. Indeed, evidence from Ethiopia reveals that school fee abolition would not have been effective if it had not been part of a wider reform agenda (World Bank and UNICEF, 2009).

### 5.2.1 SWApS and education access indicators

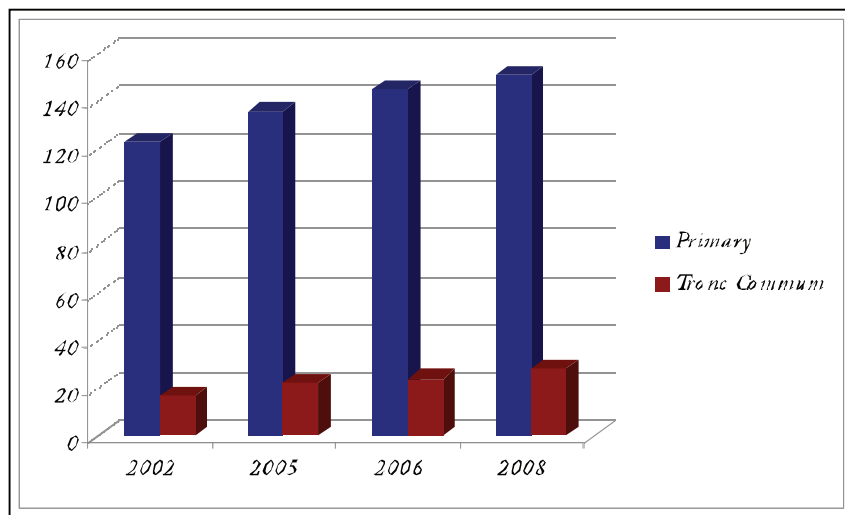
Uganda’s SWAp was implemented in 1998 and following the implementation of fee-free UPE, primary enrolments doubled (Penny *et al.*, 2008). In 2005, the primary GER was approximately 108 per cent (Netherlands MFA, 2008). The education SWAp in Ghana was first established in 1997. Following the introduction of capitation grants for basic education in 2005 (worth 30,000 cedis per pupil), there was a 17 per cent increase in primary enrolments in 2005/2006 (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008).

Bangladesh’s second primary sub-sector SWAp started in 2004 and has been extended until 2011. As a consequence of the SWAp and the subsequent allocation of longer-term and more flexible funding, there have been improved financial flows to school levels as well as the provision of stipends for disadvantaged students throughout the primary cycle (Seel, 2007). The primary GER was targeted to improve from 93.7 per cent in 2005 to 98 per cent with gender parity in 2009. In 2008, this had almost been achieved, with a rate of 97.9 per cent (although some of this improvement was due to the decrease in the estimated primary school-age population). The GER for boys was lower than for girls by 10.1 per centage points and



there was variation in the rates across different districts; urban areas had higher GERs than rural areas (Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2009). Rwanda's SWAp was implemented in 2001. Figure 3 reveals an increase of 28 percentage points in Rwanda's primary GER between 2002 and 2008. Nevertheless, the high GER points to the existence of over-aged children due to many repeating the year reducing the efficiency of the system.

**Figure 3: GERs in primary and the Tronc Commun in Rwanda, 2002 to 2008**



Source: World Bank, 2011

Impressive gains have been made since the introduction of the SWAp in Cambodia in 2001. Net Enrolment Rates (NERs) at the primary and upper-secondary school levels have improved significantly. The primary NER increased from 91.3 per cent in 2005/2006 to 95.8 per cent in 2009/2010; the lower-secondary NER increased from 31.3 per cent to 31.9 per cent over the same period; and the upper-secondary NER from 11.3 per cent to 19.3 per cent. The GERs at the lower- and upper-secondary school levels have all improved significantly. The lower-secondary GER increased from 27.0 per cent to 61.6 per cent; and the upper-secondary GER from 10.9 per cent to 28.2 per cent over the same period (MoEYS 2001; MoEYS 2009).

### 5.2.2 SWApS and inclusive access

The literature suggests that while access to primary education has increased, the hardest to reach children remain marginalised owing to pervasive demand-side barriers (Shepherd and Cabral, 2008). This may be compounded by the limited engagement of SWApS with non-state actors who are better placed to provide tailored and flexible services to children and youth for whom formal education is not an option. The general focus of SWApS has been on formal education, perhaps due to the fact that it is seen to be more efficient within the context of resource-constrained environments. In Cambodia, for example, the abolition of school enrolment fees and the expansion of primary education meant that there was very limited recurrent funding left for non-formal education. Formal education was cheaper per capita and it was envisaged that its expansion would reduce the demand for non-formal education over the medium term.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, evidence from Nepal shows that government-run non-formal primary education, which did form part of the SWAp, was one of the first areas to undergo funding cuts and suffered from a lack of strategic planning (Seel, 2007).

Nevertheless, SWApS have provided a clear opportunity to mainstream equitable access, gender equality, and approaches to reaching marginalised groups by ensuring these

<sup>39</sup> Written communication from David Quinn.

concerns are embedded within education plans and reflected in the budget (UNICEF, 2006b). UNICEF (2006b) argues that this process should be preceded by careful analysis and prioritisation. In discussing the SWAp in Rwanda, the former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education confirmed that 'The SWAp is inclusive, there is nothing you don't talk about. It put gender and orphans and vulnerable children on the agenda.'<sup>40</sup> SWApS have also enabled the adoption of sound policies regarding language in education within the context of improving equity. In Ethiopia, the introduction of local languages as the medium of instruction, as part of the education policy reform, helped to increase the impact of the abolition of school fees on access in 1994 (World Bank and UNICEF, 2009).

#### Box 21: Developing an inclusive language policy in Bangladesh

Despite PEDP II's focus on inclusion in **Bangladesh**, there was no provision for children whose mother tongue was different from the language of instruction.<sup>41</sup> The Government had not recognised school language as an inclusion issue since it stated that Bangladesh was a monolingual country (Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2003). Nevertheless, there was evidence that approximately 55 per cent of minority ethnic children were out of school and there was a drop-out rate of 60 per cent in early years education in indigenous areas (ADB, 2001; Titumir and Hossain, 2004). More recently, the Government has produced plans highlighting language issues in minority children's education.

The Draft National Education Policy 2009 (Government of Bangladesh and Development Partners, 2010: 11) recognises children's need to learn in a familiar language. It includes a policy regarding 'multilingual education for instruction in mother tongue in early grades with a strategy to transition to the main national language'. It also includes a performance indicator related to the number of children receiving mother-tongue instruction.

UNICEF (2006b) points out that approaches to improving equity through SWApS need to be planned and budgeted while recognising that long-term time frames are needed for system and behaviour change. It notes that there is evidence that policy commitments to gender equality undergo 'policy evaporation' (UNICEF, 2006b: 18).

#### Box 22: Equitable approaches to reducing educational disparity in Ghana

In 2001/2002, **Ghana's** regional GERs and NERs were strongly correlated to the poverty incidence of the region. Since 2005/2006, this trend has started to change. This may be linked to the development of deprivation criteria by the then Ministry of Education, in order to increase investment in poor districts. The ministry ranked all 138 districts and selected the 40 districts with the worst indicators to benefit from weighted financial flows. The grant formula considered the following three aspects:

1. disadvantaged criteria, worth 60 per cent and calculated according to the pupil-teacher ratio, pupil-seating ratio, pupil-core textbook ratio, the percentage of qualified teachers and the per capita budget at primary level;
2. enrolment data, worth 30 per cent and made up of the GER and the percentage of girls enrolled in school; and
3. the number of schools, worth 10 per cent.

Achievement data are also used from the results of the Basic Education Certificate Examination in English and Maths.

The initiative of weighting financial flows to poorer regions has meant that equitable approaches have been mainstreamed (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008).

Evidence from Nepal suggests that there is a need to critically review the structures, roles, responsibilities and incentives to address equity programmes within the Ministry of Education.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Narcisse Musabeyezu.

<sup>41</sup> Written correspondence from Saima Anwer and Helen Pinnock.





Where equity initiatives are seen as draining resources from standard programmes, there may be little incentive to engage in them. Furthermore, Seel (2007) points out the need to promote equality of opportunity within the ministry of education itself. This is likely to be a crucial strategy for promoting improved equity and gender parity at sub-national and service delivery levels (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2002).

#### Box 23: Shortcomings in identifying marginalisation in Bangladesh

**Bangladesh's** PEDP II (2004 to 2009) was informed by work undertaken in PEDP I as well as its final evaluation. No additional analysis of educational disparity was conducted. The data from the first programme were incomplete and particular groups and issues were omitted. There was a lack of analysis of the type and level of marginalisation. Nevertheless, an Access and Inclusive Education Framework was developed with various accompanying Action Plans in which a variety of stakeholders engaged (Seel, 2007).

Any association between SWApS and increased inclusion is contingent upon the existence of data sets and whether the current EMIS has sufficiently advanced tools to collect data regarding 'marginalising factors' such as children's membership of minority language groups, rural locations, disability, poverty incidence and gender, and also whether it captures children who attend school irregularly, drop out or have never enrolled. In Bangladesh, there was a target to increase the number of children with special needs in schools by 5 per cent every year, which is likely to be achieved. Nevertheless, this only captures children with mild physical disabilities. The extent of the challenge of inclusive education had been underestimated (Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2009). Where data collection tools and classification systems are concerned with ethnicity, caste or minority language groups, they become very political issues (Pinnock, 2009). Nevertheless, one of the recommendations of the *2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report* is to develop data collection systems which allow for disaggregated data regarding marginalised groups (UNESCO, 2010).

#### Box 24: Improvements in monitoring and addressing marginalisation in Nepal

**Nepal** has seen an improvement in its capacity and in the existence of mechanisms, to monitor marginalisation during the life of EFA Nepal from 2004 to 2009. There was provision for strengthening the EMIS and the Training Management Information System; biannual Flash Reports provided a cross section of data and trends, including analysis of ethnicity and caste issues; and the Technical Review of School Education analysed access and quality which were linked to six-monthly joint review meetings between the Government and donors. As a consequence of the findings of formative research undertaken on scholarships, the amount of funds allocated to girls and Dalits increased, and scholarships were also linked to a minimum attendance rate of 80 per cent. Another positive development is the creation of the Gender and Equity Development Section which merges two previously separate sections and will enable a more strategic and mainstreamed approach (Seel, 2007).

**Table 5: Selected examples of mechanisms for improving equity in access and completion in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka**

Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of incentives for female teachers in rural areas</li> <li>▪ Relaxation of qualification levels for indigenous teachers</li> <li>▪ Provision of ramps, separate latrines for girls and boys in schools, and water</li> <li>▪ Provision of pre-primary classes targeting poor areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In addition to fee-free primary education, provision of scholarships to cover direct schooling costs for girls, Dalits, disabled children and children from disadvantaged ethnic groups</li> <li>▪ Provision of schemes to train, support and deploy Dalit, Janajati and female teachers</li> <li>▪ Provision of a range of non-formal education programmes targeting street children, rural girls and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of midday meals for grades 1 to 3 in primary schools in disadvantaged communities</li> <li>▪ Expansion of adult literacy and basic education opportunities/community learning centres</li> <li>▪ In addition to free secondary education, provision of stipends for secondary students from disadvantaged backgrounds and for senior secondary students of science and information technology from poor backgrounds (Seel, 2007)</li> </ul>

### 5.2.3 SWApS and gender

There are particular challenges in addressing gender equity and equality during the policy formulation stage of a SWAp as well as during implementation. Donors may be poorly harmonised in their stance on gender and equity and may not have a shared position on either a mainstreaming approach or the need for targeted interventions (ODI and Cambridge Education Consultants, 2000). There is still an unhelpful dichotomy in the debate between promoting gender parity (in relation to enrolment and completion data) and gender equality within the teaching and learning process (UNICEF, 2006b). Thus there is a need to clarify gender concepts and approaches during the policy dialogue (OECD, 2002).

In addition, evidence shows that efforts made to increase girls' enrolment in basic education in various countries have not taken account of the broader factors which contributed to low attendance in the first place (DAC, 2003 cited in Shepherd and Cabral, 2008). Other evidence shows that there has been a 'lack of strategic gender analysis and mainstreaming in sector planning, management and institutional processes' (IHSD, 2003: 11). It has been well documented that where gender specialists sit in particular units, either in donors or partner governments, they become isolated and gender issues fail to be embedded or mainstreamed in plans and institutions (OECD, 2002; Seel, 2007). OECD (2002) recommends either making department heads accountable for ensuring that particular positions on gender mainstreaming are promoted, or alternatively developing a cadre of gender specialists who are embedded throughout the institution.

### 5.3 SWApS and quality

It is fair to say that donors have been disappointed by the absence of marked improvements on children's learning outcomes and on proxy indicators of quality within the context of education reform programmes (Ratcliffe, 2007; Penny *et al.*, 2008). This is largely unsurprising given the introduction of fee-free primary education through the SWAp in several low-income countries and the subsequent mushrooming of enrolments. Indeed, the shortcomings of the preparation and implementation of fee-free primary education and its ensuing negative impact on quality in low-income countries has already been well documented (World Bank and UNICEF, 2009). Nevertheless, this conundrum points to the well-known challenges of improving the quality of education in a systemic and sustainable way and the constraints of SWApS within this regard. Roberts argues that 'low standards of quality and efficiency in countries with poorly performing schooling systems have become institutionalised and persistent' (2003: 22). Likewise, there is evidence that national politicians and leaders have failed to prioritise quality concerns, preferring to focus on extending the



supply of education in order to gain political capital (Ratcliffe, 2007; Williamson and Dom, 2010b).

Wrong assumptions have been made by policy makers regarding the fact that teaching and learning would ameliorate following improvements to national governance, institutional development and sector planning. Evidence from low-income countries shows that changes at the service delivery level are 'an outcome of the co-operative and hierarchical management of political aims' (OECD, 2008b: 13).

'Policies that simply provide more resources within the current incentive structure of schools within most countries are unlikely to produce substantial systematic gains in student outcomes...countries demonstrate...[a] tangible disconnect between simple resource solutions and student achievement.' (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007: 74)

It is problematic to attribute improvements or deteriorations in the quality of education to SWAps due to the plethora of different issues which impact education. The shortcomings of national assessment systems of learning achievements present particular challenges. Indeed, where curricula and examinations are outdated, poorly aligned or irrelevant to local contexts, using national examination results may not be a useful indicator for measuring quality education. This situation is compounded by the absence of an internationally recognised definition of quality which goes beyond the simplistic model of inputs, processes and outputs. Furthermore, national assessment systems do not lend themselves to cross-country comparison which would make it difficult to draw conclusions regarding the impact of SWAps on children's learning outcomes from a regional or international perspective. Moreover, national assessment systems may not allow comparison of exam results across a range of years.

### 5.3.1 SWAps and indicators of education quality

Latham *et al.* (2006) noted a lack of documentation regarding the impact of Rwanda's SWAps on children's literacy and numeracy. Meanwhile, Wort and Kelly (2006) pointed out that indicators of quality at primary level, including exam results, had worsened. Perhaps unsurprisingly, following the introduction of the SWAp in Uganda and fee-free primary education which resulted in large increases in enrolment, there was a downward trend in students' test results in the National Assessment of Progress in Education (Penny *et al.*, 2008). Kuder (2005) noted a lack of progress on learning outcomes in Tanzania within the context of the SWAp, namely on improving the Standard VII pass rate. She argued that this could reduce the demand for education as a valuable investment. Improvements in learning achievements have been minimal following the introduction of the SWAp in Ghana in 1997. Data from the Criteria Reference Testing reveal that between 1992 and 2000, mean scores only improved from 30 per cent to 36 per cent. Data from the National Education Assessment in 2005/2006 showed that 49 per cent of pupils reached the minimum competency level in primary 3, and 64 per cent in primary 6 (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008). In Bangladesh, it was targeted that 75 per cent and 65 per cent of students should achieve acceptable levels of literacy and numeracy respectively by 2009. In 2006, it was only 66 per cent and 44 per cent respectively (Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2009). Although, the baseline is not known nor whether the targets were realistic, this indicates how challenging it is to plan and implement improvements to the teaching and learning experience.

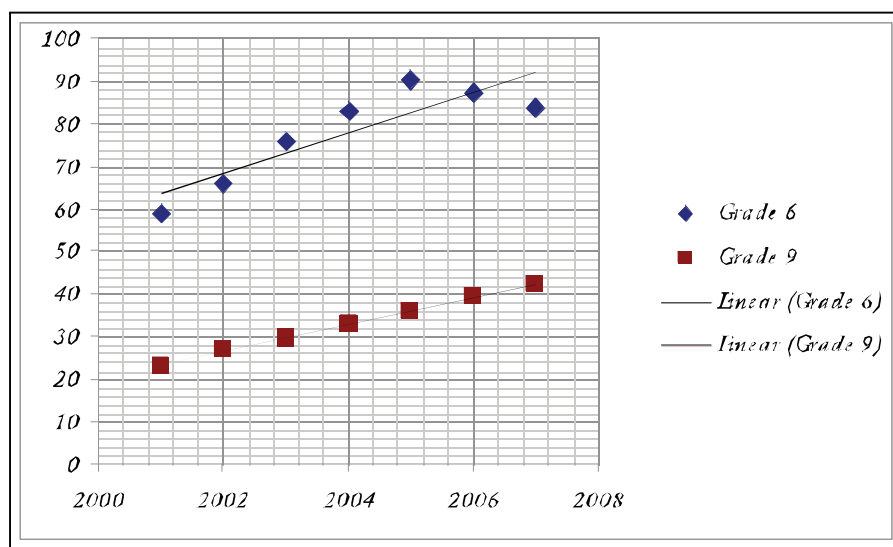
In Bangladesh the student completion rate for primary was due to increase from 52 per cent in 2005, to 55 per cent with gender parity, in 2009. Available data in 2009 actually showed a negative trend. The pupil-teacher ratio however was more positive. It was targeted to reduce from 54:1 in 2005 to 48:1 in 2009. By 2008, the ratio was 50:1 (Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2009). In Ghana meanwhile, the primary completion rates have improved marginally, from 79 per cent in 2001/2002 to 80 per cent in 2005/2006 but the completion rates in junior secondary schools decreased between 2001/2002 and 2005/2006.



This may have been due to the high opportunity cost of education in rural savannah, rural coastal and rural forest areas (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008).

The story in Cambodia however is more positive. The number of Grade 9 graduates (the end of compulsory education) increased from less than 10,000 in 2001 to 120,000 in 2009 (Quinn, 2010). The graph below reveals steady growth in the gross survival rate in Grade 9, while survival rates for primary peaked in 2005/2006 at 90.3 per cent although the overall trend since 2000 is still positive.

**Figure 4: Gross survival rates, grade 6 and grade 9, Cambodia, 2000–2008**



Source: Quinn, 2008.

High repetition rates are an ongoing policy concern which threaten to reduce the efficiency of Cambodia's education system. In 2005/2006, the repetition rate for primary was 11 per cent and in 2008/2009 it had only reduced by 1.2 percentage points. In lower secondary, the repetition rate was 2.5 per cent and increased to 3.1 per cent over the same period. Nevertheless, dropout rates have reduced for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary by an average of almost 4 percentage points over the same period. The pupil–teacher ratio has decreased for primary from 50.8 to 49.2, and lower secondary from 31.7 to 24.4, between 2005/2006 and 2009/2010 (MoEYS, 2006; MoEYS, 2010).

Some examples of the evidence of the relationship between SWAp and health outcomes are presented below for selected low-income countries. It is generally thought that there is more evidence of the impact of health SWAp than for other sectors; however Table 6 illustrates there are still significant data gaps. There is evidence of the positive influence of the health SWAp on one or more areas of the population's health in all countries except for Mauritania, Niger and Uganda. Six countries experienced improvements in vaccination rates as a result of the SWAp while seven had higher levels of successful treatment of tuberculosis. It was only known whether there had been a reduction in infant and child mortality in four countries. This is surprising given it is an MDG.

**Table 6: Selected examples of the impact of health SWApS on health outcomes by country<sup>42</sup>**

	Improvements in vaccination rates	Improvements in antenatal care	Reduction in infant and child mortality	Tuberculosis case detection	Tuberculosis treatment success
<b>Mauritania</b>	Not known	Not known	Not known	No	No
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Not known	Not known	Not known	No	Yes
<b>Ghana</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Niger</b>	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
<b>Cameroon</b>	Not known	Not known	Not known	Yes	Yes
<b>Mozambique</b>	Yes	Yes	Not known	Not known	Not known
<b>Malawi</b>	Yes	Not known	Not known	Yes	Yes
<b>Tanzania</b>	Yes	Not known	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Uganda</b>	No	No	No (the opposite)	Not known	Not known
<b>Nepal</b>	Yes	Yes	Not known	Yes	Yes
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not known	Not known

Sources: Shepherd and Cabral, 2008 for Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda; Vaillancourt, 2009 for Bangladesh, Tanzania, Malawi and Nepal; Skolnik, Jensen and Johnson, 2010 for the other countries.

### 5.3.2 Addressing education quality within SWApS

Penny *et al.* (2008: 281) emphasise the need for open and frank dialogue about the very meaning and purpose of education, led by the partner government:

‘educational policymaking inevitably reflects conflict and incoherence within a state as well as ideological disputes over and struggles for control of the meaning and definition of education.’

This view is supported by Kuder (2005) of education in Tanzania, who argued that the broader philosophical questions regarding the *raison d’être* of education were not addressed due to donor-led priorities on primary education. The nationally led formulation of a vision for education in relation to its economic and social purposes would inevitably have implications for the way in which quality is perceived and addressed within the context of a SWAp.

On a practical note, Uganda’s MoES sought to address the issue of quality by focusing on both materials development and procurement and teacher development. The Primary Teacher Development and Management Plan, introduced in 2004 had evolved from a USAID-funded project to become a central tenet of the Education Sector Investment Plan (Penny *et al.*, 2008). Nevertheless in 2007, there were ongoing challenges with the pre- and in-service teacher training programmes. Penny *et al.*, (2008) point to the need for coherence across all aspects of the education system as well as between policy and administrative reform in order to raise the standard of teaching and learning. As key agents in any sector-wide improvements to the quality of education, Seel (2007) advocates a more consistent and continued engagement of teachers and teacher unions in the SWAp process. This is a key message in international and national literature regarding SWApS. Penny *et al.* (2008: 282) likewise argue for the need to involve teachers in a meaningful way in the design and implementation of SWApS:

‘...the language of SWApS... tend[s] to function primarily in the formal sphere and not at the level of the experience of most teachers and pupils, let alone directly in their families, [therefore] it should not be surprising that change is slow and that the reforms may generate a high degree of suspicion, if not scepticism.’

Roberts (2003) concurs that teachers, who may be directly affected by the implementation of the SWAp, may resist reform, particularly where they have not been consulted on its design.

<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that the data is collated from three different sources using different methodologies and different data sets which limits its comparability.



Obura and Bird (2009) argue that there has been an inadequate focus on capacity building and implementation at all levels in Rwanda, such as curriculum revision, teacher education and the teaching and learning processes in schools. Whilst the RESSP did provide international technical advisers on curriculum development and teacher training via distance education between 2002 and 2005, donor-funded technical assistance is now focused on building institutional capacity rather than on conventional areas for strengthening quality.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Latham *et al.* (2006) question whether capacity development support is appropriately directed in order to effect change at the school level. Smith argues that:

‘change needs to be bottom up as well as top down, this means facilitating participation and grass root changes, and developing mechanisms for bringing policy and grass root movements together...Sector-wide planning has not replaced the need for school-level planning, and the need for change champions at every level of the sector’ (2005: 454).

In many ways, SWAps are better placed to adopt a strategic and sustainable approach to improving quality than other approaches. Due to the interconnected nature of the education sector, students’ transition through the education system can be supported in a comprehensive way through a SWAp.

#### 5.4 Summary

- Owing to the complexity of SWAps, much focus to date has been on coordination and improving national governance. This has distracted both donor and partner government attention from service delivery outcomes particularly related to quality, although this focus is increasingly being redressed.
- There is a lack of longitudinal studies assessing the impact of SWAps. This is troubling given that donors are under increasing pressure from their parliaments to demonstrate the tangible results of their aid in quantitative terms. Moreover, it may take five years or more before education outcomes could be attributed to the implementation of the SWAp.
- SWAps have been strongly associated with the national expansion of fee-free basic education service delivery, and in some cases, post-basic education. SWAps and the ensuing increased financing have enabled the abolition of school fees in several countries, dramatically scaling up the reach of the formal education system.
- The fact that universal access has not yet been achieved in low-income countries with education SWAps points to the inability of SWAps to address the entrenched demand-side barriers to children’s access as well as their inadequate engagement with non state-actors and resourcing for the non-formal sub-sector.
- SWAps have provided the opportunity and framework for mainstreaming approaches to target inequitable access and participation in education although ministry of education officials may perceive equity initiatives as draining resources from the ‘real work’ of formal education. Poorly harmonised approaches among donors to mainstreaming or targeted interventions for gender have led to fragmented policy advice.
- The extent to which gender mainstreaming is successful is strongly linked to the ways in which relevant staff are institutionalised and embedded (or not) within the ministry of education at national, sub-national and school levels.

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Richard Arden.





- There has been a disappointing outworking of improvements in national level governance on quality indicators. In fact, children’s learning achievements have generally reduced, although this is clearly not attributable to the SWAp and is to be expected given the massive increases in enrolment following the introduction of fee-free primary or basic education. Nevertheless, countries with mature SWAps have seen reductions in the pupil–teacher ratio and dropout rates.
- The role of teachers in the design and implementation of SWAps was found to be critical. The focus of technical assistance and SWAps has often been on building institutional capacity rather than on areas which are likely to have a positive short- and long-term impact on quality.



## Chapter 6: SWAPs and fragility

As discussed in Chapter 4, SWAPs have mainly been implemented in stable low-income and in some lower-middle-income countries. This chapter will examine the challenges of supporting education in FCAS.<sup>44</sup> It will analyse the relevance of SWAPs in FCAS as well as the challenges to implementing them. It will identify ways of adopting SWAP-like approaches in FCAS. It will also analyse the contribution SWAPs can make towards state-building objectives. Given that this chapter deals with a typology of country, the structure and analysis differ from the previous chapters.

### 6.1 The challenges of supporting education in FCAS

Supporting education in a strategic and sustainable way in FCAS presents a series of challenges to donors. Over the past decade a wealth of literature has been generated on service delivery in FCAS, with particular emphasis on the challenges in relation to the numerous demand-side barriers as well as difficulties regarding governments' will, incentives and institutional capacity. These challenges are summarised below.

The legitimacy deficit of the state in certain FCAS poses a major challenge. This may be due to the fact that the current government has not been elected and came to power through a military coup, such as the former Pakistani Government under Pervez Musharraf; it may be a secessionist territory which is seeking full independence and sovereignty, such as Somaliland; or else it is possible that elections were held which were not free and fair and therefore not recognised by its citizens, such as Afghanistan, or internationally, such as Kenya. Alternatively it may be that democratic elections were held which were broadly free and fair but that the government still lacks legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens due to the state's minimal role in the provision of basic services, such as in Haiti or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The absence of national and international legitimacy makes it particularly challenging for donors to support a ministry of education to embark on policy development in order to set out national policy priorities with which donors can align.

#### Box 25: Challenges for policy development within the context of minimal state provision in Haiti

In 2007, **Haiti's** *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle* (Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training or MENFP) developed a National Action Strategy for EFA. Nevertheless, owing to the fact that in 2002/2003, a mere 19 per cent of primary-school-going children attended public schools (World Bank, 2008a) and in light of MENFP's limited role in regulating the large share of non-public schools, it lacked credibility to develop and enforce a plan in the eyes of children and parents as well as non-state providers (Boak 2009a).

Linked to the legitimacy deficit is the absence of government capacity at national or sub-national levels. This may be in relation to the government's ability to provide education, due to a dearth of financing, personnel, infrastructure and systems; or in light of the government's lack of willingness and incentives to provide education at scale. Donors are faced with the dual challenge of rapidly addressing service provision – in order to redress historical inequalities which may have contributed to provoking or stoking the conflict – while also working in partnership with and building the capacity of what may be a fledgling state with limited authority or legitimacy (Pavanello and Darcy, 2008; Welle, 2008; Pearson, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> It is important to note that within the term FCAS, there is a broad spectrum of countries representing strongly differing levels of conflict, capacity, political stability and democracy. As a result, some of the analysis will be true of certain FCAS and less true of others depending on their level of fragility.



Classic characteristic of FCAS are the high levels of private financing and non-state provision of basic services (OECD, 2008b). In the absence of state provision, community members build and run their own schools, paying teacher stipends through the collection of school fees. In Somaliland, public schools only provide education for 33 per cent of the school-age population (Deweese, 2007). In DRC, community members play a pivotal role in financing the education system. School fees currently support school running costs, the administration of provincial school networks, the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of education offices, the training of teachers and inspectors and the organisation of exams (UNICEF, 2008). The tenacity and creativity of local initiatives have salvaged education provision, within the context of a predatory and poorly governed central administration (Boak, 2009b). Alternatively faith-based groups may step into the vacuum developing their own systems of management and monitoring which are parallel to government systems. This is the case in Haiti where the Episcopal Commission for Catholic Education and the Federation of Haiti's Protestant Schools are two important education providers with well-developed systems and strong leadership.

The non-functional nature of PFM systems outside the capital or major towns is another challenge making it very difficult for national governments and donors to effectively support recurrent costs such as teachers' salaries and funding flows to schools. This situation increases the risk of mismanagement and corruption, making it very difficult for donors to provide financial support in an aligned way due to the high fiduciary risk and the weak or non-existent government systems through which funds can be channelled. The state's lack of sovereignty or territorial control also poses a challenge for donors. In regions or districts where the government has no public services due to insecurity, donors must work with non-state providers such as NGOs or faith-based organisations. The existence of areas with ongoing conflicts often has a direct impact on the total envelope available for pro-poor expenditure since in many cases a large proportion of the government's revenue will be spent on defence and security as is the case in DRC (Boak, 2009b).

Finally, there are powerful pressures on donors to generate quick results and demonstrate the impact of their work in FCAS (Polman, 2010). These pressures are heightened due to the fact that particular FCAS are in the limelight. This, together with the prospect of political instability as well as the challenges listed above may make donors more likely to fund NGO projects due to the increased control this offers and the improved likelihood of short-term tangible impact which they can report to parliament in a timely way.

## 6.2 The relevance of SWAps in FCAS

There is a widely held assumption that SWAps are primarily implemented in aid-dependent countries (Ratcliffe, 2007; Welle, 2008).<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the research has revealed that this is not always the case. Although not all FCAS are aid-dependent, Appendix 2 shows that SWAps are most common in low- and lower middle-income countries. Some of the low-income countries include countries which have emerged from fragility, such as Rwanda and Cambodia. Despite the challenges of supporting a SWAp in FCAS, the very nature of education provision and the imperative of institutional strengthening, make SWAps and SWAp-like approaches particularly relevant in FCAS. The key ways in which SWAps are relevant in FCAS are discussed here.

Country experience suggests that the cessation of formal hostilities can offer an opportunity to reform public services and move towards recovery (Pigozzi, 1999; OECD, 2008b; Ghani and Lockhart, 2008). Nevertheless, this window of opportunity is comparatively brief and the 'open moment' when society is ready for change should be seized (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008). The end of conflict signals the entrance of new actors and approaches into the policy sphere and a change from the formerly narrow group of stakeholders (OECD, 2008b). SWAps are in many cases synonymous with education reform programmes and therefore can herald a new

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<sup>45</sup> A view supported during interviews with Abby Riddell and Mick Foster.



approach to broad-based planning and inclusive service delivery following a conflict. This can demonstrate a clear break from the past, particularly where provision has been linked to membership of a particular ethnicity, language group, political party, location or class.

Education provision is a key component of the public services which symbolise the fulfilment of the social contract between the state and citizens. Citizens often have high expectations of the state's delivery of these services following a conflict (DFID, 2010*b*; OECD, 2010). Evidence suggests that service provision can build the partner government's technical capacity, facilitating improved governance (OECD, 2010). Indeed, the supply and quality of education services are key indicators of governance (OECD, 2008*b*). Improving the governance of FCAS is also a crucial priority for donors (USAID, 2006; DFID, 2009*b*; Blitz, 2010). This is due to the recognition that a fundamental cause of conflict is 'weak governance institutions characterised by a lack of predictable and sustainable systems and by leaders who use public office to benefit themselves and their affiliates...[resulting in] divisive politics based on the monopolisation of power and the exclusion of major social and political groups' (UN, 2010: ix). Therefore where SWAps improve the availability and quality of education service delivery, this can increase citizens' confidence in the government and positively influence their perception of its capacity to provide basic services (Eldon and Gunby, 2009; Pearson, 2010).

In FCAS, there is a clear need to support the delivery of inclusive education services at scale and in the most efficient and sustainable way. This will help to address exclusion and 'real or perceived discrimination [which is] associated with fragility and conflict' (OECD, 2007: 2). Indeed, inclusive service delivery has a particularly important role to play in overcoming entrenched political, economic and social horizontal inequalities and in contributing to national social cohesion and national identity (Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Oxford University, (CRISE), 2010). Research has shown that where groups feel there is inequality, conflict is more probable (DFID, 2010*a*). Due to the national reach of SWAps, they are much better placed than project support, for example, to facilitate the dramatic scaling up of education provision. Nepal is an example of a country which has successfully embarked on a SWAp-like approach to begin to address issues of exclusion and marginalisation (Rose and Greeley, 2006).

Within the context of equitable service delivery, there is also a clear case to be made for the provision of sector-wide education. Ghani and Lockhart (2008) advocate for a complementary focus on technical and vocational education as well as higher education, rather than purely on primary education. They argue that sector-wide investments are needed in order to promote human capital development, giving citizens the opportunity to change their situation. The need for post-primary education is also identified by OECD (2008*b*) in order to stimulate employment and economic growth. Greeley and Rose (2008) concur that sustainable development can be damaged by the absence of post-primary provision, while fragility can be accentuated by a lack of vocational training coupled with job opportunities for out-of-school youth.

In FCAS, school fees or informal school charges collected are usually used for teacher salaries or stipends. As a result, identifying a sustainable way of financing teacher salaries is often a priority in FCAS due to teachers' pivotal role in providing quality and protective education (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), 2009). Furthermore, ODI (2007) equates the payment and training of teachers with core state functions. Greeley and Rose (2008) likewise argue for a focus on teacher training, in particular for female teachers. Designed well, a SWAp is likely to offer the best opportunity to address the governance and management of the teacher payroll in a sustainable way, reducing the burden of financing teachers' salaries on community members and transferring the responsibility to the state in a phased way.

The potentially positive or negative role that education, and in particular the curriculum, can play in fostering social cohesion or accentuating fractionalisation has been well documented (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Obura, 2003; INEE, 2010). Particular opportunities to reform the



curriculum have also been identified in FCAS and this is often seen as an educational priority despite the political tensions that surround curriculum reform (Tawil and Harley, 2004; Greeley and Rose, 2008; DFID, 2010*b*). Some of the challenges of SWAps' engagement with the essence of the teaching and learning process have been discussed in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, given the need for system-wide reform, securing consensus across a broad range of stakeholders with diverse interests around a new, inclusive and appropriate curriculum which fosters social cohesion and develops relevant knowledge and skills, SWAps are well placed to address this complex area.

As discussed above, the plethora and diversity of non-state providers are characteristic of FCAS. This is a challenging environment for the eventual introduction of more equitable and sustainable national service provision. The development of nationally applicable and widely accepted regulatory frameworks through a SWAp provides the basis for increasing the visibility and legitimacy of the state, both in the eyes of non-state providers and community members and children. As a result, there is a need for the partner government or authorities to develop and enforce regulation across the system in a phased way (Pearson, 2010). SWAps offer a clear opportunity to put the government in the driving seat in this regard. However there is still a lack of evidence regarding ways in which this has happened at country level. Pavanello and Darcy claim that '[donors] need to...work and partner with non-state providers while including state agencies and national systems' (2008: 24).

The World Bank's (2003) Report on *Making Services Work for Poor People*, with its short and long routes to accountability, continues to influence development thinking and programming in low-income countries as well as in FCAS. Therefore strengthening the state's regulatory capacity through a SWAp needs to be done within the context of improving the short route of accountability while identifying mechanisms to support the long route of accountability (Pavanello and Darcy, 2008). There is a general acknowledgement of the need to strengthen school-level accountability in FCAS (ODI, 2007). Pearson (2010) also advocates the need to link support for building local accountability with local level administrations in order to simultaneously strengthen the long route of accountability.

The inherent focus of SWAps on partnership and building government capacity makes them particularly pertinent in FCAS. Indeed, Welle (2008) argues that donor approaches which bypass the state entirely have reached their sell-by date. OECD (2008*b*: 9) further argues that:

'donor programming for service delivery, state capacity and governance needs to be integrated...Engagement with the state is not so much a question of either/or but rather of degree.'

In working directly with the partner government or authorities, the broader objectives of state-building can begin to be tackled. State-building is the third principle of *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations* (OECD, 2007). Although there is currently a lack of evidence on the impact of public service delivery on state-building, governments' ability to capitalise on securing the peace and to respond to citizens' expectations of public services are key to their political survival (DFID, 2010*b*). This will be discussed further under 6.3 SWAps as an Approach to State-building.

Finally, in light of the numerous donors and NGOs supporting education in FCAS, SWAps are extremely relevant as a principle for organising bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

'A SWAp is a loose fitting garment that is used to cover a multitude of activities and approaches, but what it really brings is a rhetoric for operationalising the principles of good practice in donor support.'<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Written correspondence from Peter Buckland.



### 6.2.1 The challenges of designing and implementing SWAp in FCAS

Although SWAp are relevant in FCAS, there are also a series of redoubtable challenges in designing and implementing SWAp in FCAS. Owing to the pervasive mentality of aid dependence and the skeletal capacity of partner governments in FCAS, there is a strong likelihood that donors will control the objectives and timeframes for the SWAp by default (IHSD, 2003). This can have a detrimental impact on the level of government ownership as well as the SWAp's longer-term sustainability.

As discussed in Chapter 5, SWAp have often been designed to make UPE and large-scale public provision a reality. In FCAS, the marginal share of public provision and poor regulation of non-state provision make providing aligned support through country systems problematic. Working through national systems is also challenging in countries where the government is not sovereign in all areas or where it has no representatives or public services.

#### Box 26: Constraints in addressing Uganda's conflict-affected North through the SWAp

The early experience of **Uganda's** SWAp showed an inability to engage with and address the conflict-affected situation in the North. Due to rigid financing modalities, it was not possible to have the degree of flexibility needed. Money flowed in the normal way to the Local Governments. However, those in conflict-affected areas were unable to spend the money on building schools due to the rigid procedures associated with the financing modalities, or alternatively those that were, built them in areas from which people had fled (and remained displaced for a long time).<sup>47</sup>

The possibility of alignment by donors is limited due to the absence of robust national or sub-national policies and plans. Harmonisation and coordination also take on new proportions in FCAS where there can be more than five major donors as well as a multitude of NGOs with strong in-country presence and large budgets. There is the potential for partner governments to play 'donor] governments off against each other' (UNICEF, 2006b: 38). Donors may disagree on approaches and policies and offer competing advice (IHSD, 2003). With increasing support in certain FCAS from non-traditional donors such as Brazil, China, India and Saudi Arabia, there is a risk that aid fragmentation increases.<sup>48</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of the political economy which is seen to be even more pervasive in FCAS (Greeley and Rose, 2008; DFID, 2009a). As a result, Pavanello and Darcy (2008) recommend a comprehensive analysis of the specific political realities within the sector and more broadly. The politicisation of all levels of decision making in the education sector can present a formidable challenge to the stable delivery of education in FCAS, as demonstrated by Haiti's experience (Boak, 2009a). This has implications for the design of SWAp in contexts where there are high levels of political polarisation within and between line ministries responsible for education, such as in Zimbabwe.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Florence Malinga.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Steve Passingham.



#### Box 27: Challenges of applying the aid effectiveness agenda in Somalia

**Somalia** is made up three zones of South/Central, Puntland and Somaliland. The latter declared itself independent in 1991 although it has not been recognised by the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu. Puntland is seeking autonomy and is engaged in a border conflict with Somaliland. South/Central Somalia is the most politically unstable zone with the highest levels of conflict. As a result, donor support is mainly channelled via NGO projects. Nonetheless, there is consensus among donors that the principles of a SWAp should be applied wherever possible. The administrations have been consulted in the three zones and full consent secured to this end (Winnefeld, 2010).

The very high and fast turnover of government staff renders any meaningful dialogue between donors and ministry personnel particularly challenging. Somaliland has the most developed systems and plans, having established the following: The Somaliland National Policy of Education, 2005; The Education Act, 2007 (not yet passed); and The Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2007–2011. Nevertheless, the extent to which donors can engage formally with the Government is limited given that it is not an internationally recognised country (Smith, 2009).

### 6.2.2 The opportunities for designing and implementing SWAps in FCAS

As discussed in Chapter 4, the majority of low-income countries have some form of SWAp already; however, this is not the case in all FCAS. In mapping the implementation of SWAps, it was found that only FCAS with a minimum level of political stability and sufficient internal capacity have embarked on a SWAp-like approach. The growth of the FTI and its expansion into FCAS has meant that more of these countries have developed either a sector-wide plan (as in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire) or a sub-sector plan (as in Haiti and DRC). Nevertheless, this has by no means always translated into a SWAp-like approach, partly due to the fact that donors do not always align their interventions with the plan or harmonise their approaches.

#### Box 28: Implementation of a SWAp-like approach in Sierra Leone

**Sierra Leone's** 11-year conflict ended in 2002 and although it has enjoyed enviable political stability and peace since then, capacity remains extremely weak. The country's ESP was endorsed in 2007 and US\$13.9 million was approved from the FTI Partnership for the period 2007 to 2009. An Education Sector Support Fund (ESSF) was established to:

1. pool funds for the implementation of the ESP Action Plan;
2. increase sector dialogue between MEYS and donors;
3. strengthen steps towards a SWAp; and
4. develop the capacity of national systems (World Bank, 2008b).

The ESSF is managed by a Special Pooled Account Monitoring Officer within MEYS, overseen by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with support from UNICEF; the World Bank is the Supervising Entity. The ESSF will enable the Government to address immediate priorities; in fact additional funding to support the Action Plan has already been leveraged. To date, UNICEF and DFID have channelled funds through the ESSF for the teacher verification exercise in 2008 and Sida transferred funding to the ESSF at the end of 2009 for basic education.

Now that the ESSF is established and operational, the long deliberations over its establishment are paying dividends and it is likely that more donors will replenish the fund as they gain confidence in it as an effective instrument for education financing. Sida's commitment to the ESSF is a very promising sign of a new bilateral donor committing strategically to the education sector, aligning with the ESP and harmonising with existing financing modalities. Furthermore, the main education donors show strong willingness to work closely together, harmonising approaches to supporting MEYS. The priority now is to continue attracting more donors to provide much needed technical and financial support to the education sector in a harmonised way (Boak, 2010).



In analysing aid effectiveness in Somalia, Smith (2009) argues for the need to:

- work closely with the authorities that exist rather than bypassing them, building on the legitimacy they have through their management of the education system;
- support the administration to put the building blocks of a SWAp-like approach in place, thereby facilitating alignment;
- share, coordinate and update data collected and held by local organisations, NGOs and donors to help decision-making processes; and
- develop mechanisms to engage with local administrations through direct dialogue.

These lessons, together with the experience of Sierra Leone and below of Côte d'Ivoire point to the fact that it is possible to embark on SWAp-like approaches in FCAS, no matter how simple or 'low level' the approaches are (Welle, 2008). Rather than developing an over-ambitious SWAp, FCAS and donors can start to establish the necessary conditions for a SWAp (IHSD, 2003). Shadow alignment is a potential way forward where there is no legitimate government in place or where there is profound lack of capacity or inadequate public financial management systems that can be used.<sup>49</sup>

#### Box 29: Shadow aligned project support in South Sudan

DFID has developed a Basic Services Fund which funds NGOs to provide education, health and water services in **Southern Sudan**. It is managed by a private contractor, Mott MacDonald, and reports to a Government-chaired committee. It is a pooled fund managed by DFID but with contributions from Canada, The Netherlands and Norway. The focus of the activities is on recovery and development and it also provides capacity development support to the Government of Southern Sudan. Nevertheless, there are concerns regarding the sustainability of the fund due to the fact that it is entirely donor-financed. The priority is to align the fund and its activities with forthcoming strategies and priorities developed by the Government through the Budget Sector Working Groups. Some NGOs are represented on these working groups and this may pave the way for the future establishment of a SWAp (Foster, Bennett, Brusset, Kluyskens, 2010).

In order to re-start or continue service delivery in conflict-affected areas, it may be necessary to provide project support within the SWAp to target marginalised groups where there may be no political will to reach them through the formal system.

The imperative of coordination in FCAS and its related challenges are well documented. Greeley and Rose (2008) argue that coordination and alignment are even more important where donors are providing cross-sectoral support. They advocate the involvement of NGOs and UN agencies in the early stages of planning to ensure that the SWAp-like approach takes due consideration of local needs. The early SWAp in Nepal demonstrated the feasibility of donor harmonisation within a context of heavy aid dependence (Rose and Greeley, 2006).

Even in conditions of worsening fragility, donors can secure some form of state involvement (OECD, 2008b). Indeed, part of the preparation for a SWAp-like approach should be a strong commitment on the part of donors and NGOs to building the capacity of the existing authorities in strategy development, coordination and planning (IHSD, 2003). In fact, appropriately targeted and flexible technical assistance is almost more important than financial assistance in FCAS (Sylla, 2009). In more stable FCAS, support for non-state providers should include provision for the future transition of functions and responsibilities to the partner government (OECD, 2008b).

<sup>49</sup> A view supported during interview with Mick Foster.



### Box 30: Sector-wide planning in Côte d'Ivoire

In 2009, **Côte d'Ivoire** was recovering from violent civil conflict and embarked on an ambitious SWAp-like planning process with the elaboration of sector wide education policies running until 2020 (following on from an interim education policy). The plans involved the Ministry of National Education – responsible for all stages of the basic education cycle, pre-school and non-formal education; the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training – responsible for technical and vocational education and training during the secondary cycle; and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Nevertheless, higher education has been less well embedded in the SWAp process despite sizeable increases in enrolments over the past ten years.

An Education Sector Medium Term Action Plan was also developed as well as policy documents for each of the sub-sectors from early childhood development through to higher education. The Action Plan was aligned with the overall education policy framework. This hailed a new approach to education planning in Côte d'Ivoire and as a result there were teething problems and political tensions between the different ministries along the way (Boak, 2009c).

In order to avoid short-term and *ad hoc* project approaches, where possible, programmes should be designed which are longer-term and larger in scope; a SWAp-like approach should encourage donors and implementing partners, to apply as far as is feasible, professional standards (such as the OECD's *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*) in the design and implementation of programmes.<sup>50</sup> Ghani (2010) asserts that the national budget should be the central policy instrument to move from project to programme-based or SWAp-like approaches. He also recommends the development of platforms to create national programmes which build inter-sectoral synergies, promoting a whole-of-government approach.

### 6.3 SWAps as an approach to state-building in FCAS

State-building in FCAS is a comparatively new discipline and donors lack consensus in terms of approaches to supporting it. The debate is further muddled as the concept is sometimes confused with stabilisation and peace-building. State-building is a national process which takes place over a long time frame in all governments whether fragile or stable, as they improve their ability to function (Commins, Rocha Menocal, and Othieno, 2009). States never achieve 'state-building completion'; it is an ongoing process involving change and adaptation, shaped by elite interaction and state–society relations. It is important to note that state-building is more about coercion and conflict than peaceful or technocratic processes (Van de Walle and Scott, 2009).

'rather than being pigeon-holed as successful or failed, state effectiveness exists along a continuum in which conflict and violence – far from an aberration of state formation and development – are an integral reality of these processes' (DiJohn, 2008 in DFID, 2010a: 22).

Donors are increasingly recognising the importance of linking their sector-specific support in FCAS to broader state-building and peace-building initiatives (OECD, 2008c; DFID, 2010b). Indeed, the development of 'effective and accountable government institutions to facilitate service delivery' is the fourth principle of the recent Dili Declaration on peace-building and state-building (Governments, Bilateral and Multilateral Partners, Civil Society, 2010: 1). Approaches to state-building within the context of donors' sectoral work need to take consideration of the fact that FCAS often contain informal elite networks based on patronage in which state resources are used to gain the loyalty of clients and of the general population. Indeed, powerful elites may have a perverse incentive to weaken state effectiveness so that citizens are forced to seek patronage and protection (IDS, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Manfred Winnefeld.



Within this context and in light of the preceding analysis in this chapter, SWAp-like approaches may prove to be the most appropriate ‘method’ for building the legitimacy and capacity of the state while also strengthening state society relations. This is due to the fact that by their very nature, SWAps ensure a strong partnership between donors and partner governments and when designed well, can result in:

1. the strengthening of national systems and capacity, including regulation;
2. improved governance, accountability and monitoring by civil society;
3. enhanced inter- and intra-ministerial working relationships; and
4. greater efficiency in the allocation and channelling of national and international resources.

All of these are essential, although not sufficient conditions for broader state-building. OECD asserts that donor support to SWAps have contributed positively to: ‘the creation of capacity within the state to articulate and implement policy and have had a positive impact on political processes and state–society relations’ (2010: 15). SWAp-like approaches can provide the framework for enabling the development of inclusive policies as well as targeted approaches to geographic areas or linguistic groups which have historically been denied political representation or equal access to public services which is a key component of state-building. As discussed under 6.2 The Relevance of SWAps in FCAS, citizens often have high expectations of state delivery of public services, the fulfilment of which can determine short- and long-term stabilisation. The state’s ability to meet these expectations is vital to its own credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of community members (DFID, 2010*b*; OECD, 2010). As a result, in this regard, donors can play a key role in shaping the future legitimacy of the state through effective support to a well-designed SWAp.

#### Box 31: The role of the SWAp in building the Rwandan state

The decision to implement a SWAp in **Rwanda** in 2001 proved key to building on the impressive gains made by the Ministry of Education in reconstructing education following the genocide. Through the SWAp: policy, planning and financial flows to the school level were strengthened; a closer relationship was established between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning; and the implementation of fee-free primary education was supported in planning and financial terms by donors resulting in near universal access to primary education. The SWAp also coincided with radical decentralisation reforms and PFM reforms, which together created greater transparency of expenditure flows and use at all levels of the system as well as an increased need to work with the newly created districts who now implement the ESSP.

The SWAp combined with these wider Government reforms enabled the Government of Rwanda to show itself not only to be politically committed to providing education to all children but also to finding technical and financial measures to make this a reality across the country, thus strengthening the perception of citizens of the Government’s legitimacy within the context of education service provision.

Obura and Bird (2009) contrast Rwanda’s post-conflict reconstruction with Burundi’s, claiming that the latter suffered due to the absence of a SWAp in the country or of a lead donor who advocated a SWAp.

While there are grave fiduciary risks in providing SBS and GBS in support of a SWAp in FCAS, the short and long-term detrimental impact of continually providing project support also needs to be acknowledged. Project support which is not reported on the national budget hampers the improvement of national PFM systems.

‘The design and bargains made over budget spending are at the heart of political processes in any state and the failure to get more aid on budget weakens this heart line of state-building. The delivery of aid to line agencies within the state without central co-ordination further disrupts the building of capacity and budgetary systems, with huge transaction costs. Continued flows of aid to PIUs create sites of power outside the state, which has a deleterious impact on political processes. Keeping aid off budget



weakens the development of public accountability and therefore state legitimacy” (OECD, 2010: 14 - 15).

GBS, which by definition is on-budget and centrally managed by the ministry of finance, has the best potential for contributing to state-building. However, it does not guarantee a focus on education sector progress. Thus, a mixture of GBS and SBS provided in support of a SWAp may contribute positively to both state-building and to coherent education sector development and service delivery.

### 6.3.1 SWAps, decentralisation and state-building

As discussed in Chapter 3, mature SWAps in stable low-income countries have had a positive impact on planning and accountability at decentralised levels. However, owing to the highly complex political economy of decentralisation in FCAS, there is a lack of evidence on the most appropriate approaches for addressing centre periphery relations within the context of state-building. The importance of centre–periphery relations take on new proportions in FCAS given that sub-national authorities may have secessionist roots or aspirations. As a result, finding the appropriate balance in engaging with national and sub-national authorities is a challenge for donors (Pavanello and Darcy, 2008).

‘During conflict, previously highly centralised systems tend to fragment...Consequently post-conflict systems frequently have some of the features of decentralised systems, including high levels of community participation, stronger sense of ownership at local level, and greater responsiveness to local conditions’ (World Bank, 2005: 42).

During the conflict, rebel groups may have taken over state capacities and provided formal services. As a result, community members may have had more contact with rebel groups and non-state actors than with formal, national authorities thereby bestowing informal legitimacy on the former. In DRC for example, an Independent Ministry of Education was established in North Kivu in the early 1990s by Jean-Pierre Bemba of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (Boak, 2009b). Likewise, in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front’s headquarters were in Kailahun district and it took over the running of the education system.

‘For many fragile states (for example, DRC, Chad, Somalia) the increased provision of local services is not a decentralisation process because the central state never provided the services in the first place.’ (Pearson, 2010: 23)

Evidence from the health sector points to the fact that state–society relations improve more rapidly at decentralised levels where there is robust national-level support for decentralisation. There is the opportunity for greater engagement by civil society and increased accountability; however there is also a risk of capture of public services by elites (Pearson, 2010). Nevertheless, state-building has traditionally focused on the centralisation of the state (DFID, 2010b). Indeed, the effectiveness of state-building has historically been judged against the strength of state representation at sub-national and local levels and its effectiveness as a protector and service provider (OECD, 2010).

‘Processes of decentralisation...can profoundly affect relations between the central state and the periphery. However, whether such processes will serve to enhance state-building or impede it remains an open question.’ (OECD, 2010: 42)

#### Box 32: The contribution of the SWAp in Nepal to decentralisation

The early SWAp in **Nepal** included provision for decentralisation despite the Government’s unwillingness to relinquish power to particular areas of the country for political reasons. Decentralisation in Nepal was particularly important due to the need to clearly demonstrate the national Government’s desire to address entrenched inequalities in service provision (Rose and Greeley, 2006).



## 6.4 Summary

- Despite the multifarious challenges of supporting education in FCAS, SWAps are relevant as an approach to planning and financing education.
- SWAps are relevant in FCAS due to the need to seize the window of opportunity afforded by the cessation of conflict, making a definitive break with historical patterns of exclusion and discrimination and supporting the delivery of inclusive education services at scale and in the most efficient and sustainable ways.
- Despite the very real difficulties in supporting SWAps in FCAS, some countries have embarked on SWAp-like approaches through the adoption of 'low-level' approaches which place a greater burden on donors with a focus on coordination, sharing data and involvement of local authorities wherever possible.
- In countries which have emerged from fragility, SWAps have contributed to broader stabilisation and state-building initiatives. Under the right political conditions, SWAps can help governments meet citizens' expectations of education service delivery, building the legitimacy of the state.
- SWAp support to decentralisation has implications for state-building in FCAS since the management of centre–periphery relations has the potential to either enhance or undermine state-building objectives.
- The provision of financial aid 'on budget' strengthens the political processes and policy trade-offs made regarding the allocation of resources through national systems, as well as broad state–citizen accountability.





## Chapter 7: Conclusions, future outlook and recommendations

This research has sought to analyse trends in the design and implementation of SWAps since they were first launched in the 1990s due to the need to reflect critically on SWAps within the context of (i) aid effectiveness; (ii) accelerating enrolment in education and the need to improve quality; and (iii) the increased focus on FCAS.

The research has analysed the evolution of SWAps and their relationship with:

1. aid effectiveness;
2. planning;
3. financing;
4. education outcomes; and
5. fragility.

It has presented new findings based on an analysis of the global and grey literature on SWAps as well as emerging good practice from the field. This chapter will summarise conclusions drawn under each chapter and will then identify overarching key findings across the four areas of planning, financing, education outcomes and fragility. The chapter will also predict the future outlook of SWAps in low-income countries and FCAS.

### 7.1 Conclusions regarding the evolution of SWAps by chapter

#### SWAps and aid effectiveness

- The development of SWAps has been inextricably linked to the aid effectiveness and good governance discourse during the 1990s and 2000s.
- The expected improvements in harmonisation and alignment through the SWAp have not always been delivered at country level due to a range of factors including risk aversion, varying levels of political commitment to SWAps in donor headquarters and broader inter-donor political issues at national and regional levels related to visibility. There are also strong incentives against harmonisation and alignment on the part of national governments.
- Over time SWAps have become less prescriptive and more flexible with an acknowledgement that SWAp trajectories are country-specific. The emergence of PBAs place a greater focus on harmonisation, while SWAps, being sector-led, privilege alignment.
- SWAps are ineffective without strong ownership and leadership by the partner government although there is growing acknowledgement that ministries of education do not behave as coherent and unified units but have diverse interests and incentives. Moreover, certain donor practices can at best undermine, and at worst directly oppose, the principle of ownership.
- SWAps have greatly improved partnerships between partner governments and donors as well as inter-governmental relationships; the record however is less good in relation to systematic and meaningful engagement with CSOs.
- Through their design, SWAps have created the opportunity for vertical accountability to citizens rather than purely horizontal accountability to donors. However, in reality there continues to be a strong power dynamic between donors and partner governments.
- SWAps include a strong focus on managing for results through annual joint sector reviews which provide the opportunity to monitor performance across the sector and improve accountability. Parallel reviews continue however to be conducted by some development partners on the grounds that better-quality data and analysis are needed to meet donors' reporting requirements.



### SWAps and planning

- SWAps put an important premium on planning as a crucial part of the approach.
- There continues to be debate regarding whether sub-sectoral SWAps constitute true SWAps. However, it is recognised that all sub-sectors need to be part of the plan in order to allow sector-wide trade-offs and efficiencies to be made.
- In certain countries it is no longer appropriate to talk about SWAps *per se* since the principles underlying SWAps have been embedded in the working practice of and between line ministries at national and sub-national levels.
- More mature SWAps promote effective and accountable decentralisation, strengthening the links between planning processes at national and sub-national levels while the reverse can be true when nascent SWAp-like approaches are implemented.
- Impressive impact has been documented in countries with mature SWAps in relation to improved planning capacity, working ethic, governance and broader institutional development. On the other hand, macro-level reforms, the broader working conditions, human resources policies and remuneration levels were found to reduce the effectiveness of SWAps and the sustainability of their results.

### SWAps and financing

- SWAps have mainly been used in aid-dependent low-income countries although they have been implemented in some lower-middle-income countries.
- A range of aid modalities can support a SWAp and while several donors have moved towards more aligned modalities such as budget support, fragmented approaches are still being employed by some donors.
- Many countries have introduced SWAps around the same time as embarking on national PFM reforms. Weaknesses in the PFM system will directly impact upon the financial aspects and effectiveness of the SWAp.
- SWAps have enabled donors to support the recurrent costs of service delivery but this needs to be coupled with capacity building.
- There are high transactions costs in the short term and mixed evidence regarding reduced costs in the long term.

### SWAps and education outcomes

- Owing to the complexity of SWAps, much focus to date has been on coordination and improving national governance. This has distracted both donor and partner government attention from service delivery outcomes particularly related to quality, although this focus is increasingly being redressed.
- There is a lack of longitudinal studies assessing the impact of SWAps. This is troubling given that donors are under increasing pressure from their parliaments to demonstrate the tangible results of their aid in quantitative terms. Moreover, it may take five years or more before education outcomes could be attributed to the implementation of the SWAp.
- SWAps have been strongly associated with the national expansion of fee-free basic education service delivery, and in some cases, post-basic education. SWAps and the ensuing increased financing have enabled the abolition of school fees in several countries, dramatically scaling up the reach of the formal education system.
- The fact that universal access has not yet been achieved in low-income countries with education SWAps points to the inability of SWAps to address the entrenched demand-side barriers to children's access as well as their inadequate engagement with non state-actors and resourcing for the non-formal sub-sector.
- SWAps have provided the opportunity and framework for mainstreaming approaches to target inequitable access and participation in education although ministry of education officials may perceive equity initiatives as draining resources from the 'real work' of formal education. Poorly harmonised approaches among donors to



mainstreaming or targeted interventions for gender have led to fragmented policy advice.

- The extent to which gender mainstreaming is successful is strongly linked to the ways in which relevant staff are institutionalised and embedded (or not) within the ministry of education at national, sub-national and school levels.
- There has been a disappointing outworking of improvements in national level governance on quality indicators. In fact, children's learning achievements have generally reduced, although this is clearly not attributable to the SWAp and is to be expected given the massive increases in enrolment following the introduction of fee-free primary or basic education. Nevertheless, countries with mature SWAps have seen reductions in the pupil–teacher ratio and dropout rates.
- The role of teachers in the design and implementation of SWAps was found to be critical. The focus of technical assistance and SWAps has often been on building institutional capacity rather than on areas which are likely to have a positive short- and long-term impact on quality.

### SWAps and fragility

- Despite the multifarious challenges of supporting education in FCAS, SWAps are relevant as an approach to planning and financing education.
- SWAps are relevant in FCAS due to the need to seize the window of opportunity afforded by the cessation of conflict, making a definitive break with historical patterns of exclusion and discrimination and supporting the delivery of inclusive education services at scale and in the most efficient and sustainable ways.
- Despite the very real difficulties in supporting SWAps in FCAS, some countries have embarked on SWAp-like approaches through the adoption of 'low-level' approaches which place a greater burden on donors with a focus on coordination, sharing data and involvement of local authorities wherever possible.
- In countries which have emerged from fragility, SWAps have contributed to broader stabilisation and state-building initiatives. Under the right political conditions, SWAps can help governments meet citizens' expectations of education service delivery, building the legitimacy of the state.
- SWAp support to decentralisation has implications for state-building in FCAS since the management of centre–periphery relations has the potential to either enhance or undermine state-building objectives.
- The provision of financial aid 'on budget' strengthens the political processes and policy trade-offs made regarding the allocation of resources through national systems, as well as broad state–citizen accountability.

## 7.2 Overarching key findings and recommendations

**Key finding 1: Mature SWAps in stable low-income countries have had a strong impact on institutional development and new ways of working have been established within ministries of education. Nevertheless, SWAp effectiveness has at times been constrained due to the broader political economy.**

Where SWAps have been implemented in stable low-income countries for more than five years, the SWAp 'methodology' becomes institutionalised and develops into normal practice in partner ministries of education at national level. The partner government is in the driving seat and there is much less dependence on donors.

In Ratcliffe and Macrae's (1999) seminal report on SWAps as well as other early literature on SWAps and aid modalities, there was a great optimism in outlining the theoretical win–win situation for both donors and partner governments who chose to adopt SWAps. However, the early proponents of SWAps did not acknowledge the extent to which the formal and informal incentives and interests, clientelism and power dynamics within and between partner governments and donors would impact on planning and financing arrangements.



**Recommendation 1.1:** In light of the fact that a variety of financing modalities can be used to support a SWAp, donors should seek to be inclusive in their partnerships with one another rather than forming exclusive alliances to the detriment of long-term institutional development of the ministry of education.

**Recommendation 1.2:** Partner governments and donors need to ensure that the design and implementation of a SWAp draws on comprehensive political economy analysis and is sensitive to existing formal and informal incentive structures and interests.

In practical terms, this will mean the institutionalisation of political economy analyses by donors and the dissemination of findings in order to foster a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities.

**Key finding 2: SWAps have played a pivotal role in enabling dramatic increases in the provision of and enrolment in fee-free primary education in low-income countries; nevertheless the track record is less positive in relation to improving the quality of education.**

As a result of the fact that through a SWAp, partner governments were in a better position to consolidate information on the total financing for the sector, it allowed them to plan UPE in a way that had not been feasible in the past. SWAps have provided the overarching policy reform framework and financial backing to enable implementation of fee-free basic, and sometimes post-basic education. Nevertheless, the trends on quality indicators are concerning. This may be largely due to difficulties in measuring quality in an easily quantifiable and comparative way. Given the complexity of designing and implementing strategies to strengthen systems to improve teaching and learning, this finding is not surprising.

Improvements in quality will be the critical measure of whether or not education SWAps have made a lasting impact on the learning and broader development of the country in equipping children with the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and training for their future.

Through a sector-wide plan and accompanying MTEF, SWAps offer a much better opportunity to address the strong interdependencies between the different sub-sectors than any equivalent approach, thereby potentially addressing quality in a comprehensive and systemic way.

**Recommendation 2.1:** Donors and ministries of education need to allow time during the SWAp preparation stage for national debates regarding the purpose and meaning of education. Donors should ensure that in-country staff have sufficient education expertise to participate meaningfully in discussions regarding effective strategies to improve quality at the classroom level.

**Recommendation 2.2:** Ministries of education need to involve key agents of change within the teaching and learning process in the SWAp preparation and design process – namely, teachers, teacher unions and school management committee members – in order to ensure that national reform agendas are strongly linked to school and community levels and their good will is secured and reforms envisaged are acceptable.

This will help SWAps begin to address education process issues which are not purely linked to national governance systems but look more broadly at capacities and incentive structures at school and community levels.



**Recommendation 2.3:** Ministries of education need to develop a long-term, phased plan for truly sector-wide implementation in order to reap the full benefits of a well-balanced, efficient and productive education sector from early childhood to tertiary levels, including non-formal education.

While acknowledging that each country moves in different ways across 'SWAp trajectories', a full sector-wide plan would help establish the sustainable production of a quality teaching force for primary and secondary schools, ensure students are promoted through primary and secondary cycles efficiently and have a strong start and firm foundations laid for effective learning outcomes through the provision of early childhood development services. The provision of holistic early childhood development would also address some of the demand-side barriers at primary levels and beyond and would serve to reduce the inherent inequities between children at the point of access to primary.

**Recommendation 2.4:** Donors should finance longitudinal studies, supporting national systems to establish valid baseline data in order to measure educational progress and the impact of SWAps over time at national, sub-national and school levels. Plans for longitudinal studies should be incorporated in the design phase of SWAps.

The challenges of measuring the impact of SWAps should not provoke a return to project support since measurability does not equate to appropriateness and sustainability. Time and resources will need to be spent in conducting summative evaluations or longitudinal studies with appropriate methodologies in order to demonstrate value for money.

**Key finding 3: SWAps are relevant in FCAS and implementing well-designed SWAps contributes positively to state-building.**

SWAp-like approaches have been adopted in their simplest forms to improve coordination and harmonisation in FCAS. More stable FCAS have also developed sector-wide education plans.

There are many different factors that contribute either directly or indirectly to state-building in FCAS and SWAps can play a stabilising role in post-conflict settings, building the legitimacy of the government by responding to citizens' expectations of public service delivery. Furthermore, if there is a strong lead donor championing a SWAp, this can also play a significant role in leveraging additional funds for the education sector from other donors.

**Recommendation 3.1:** Donors need to conduct political economy and conflict analyses in FCAS prior to designing SWAp-like approaches in order to ensure they address the underlying causes of conflict and are sensitive to the context of fragility particularly in relation to support for decentralisation.

The analysis of a country's fragility should focus to a greater extent on historical sectoral performance (in terms of both government and non-state provision) in order to build on pockets of resilience and strong capacity.

**Recommendation 3.2:** Where political stability, government will and capacity allow, donors should support the preparation of SWAp-like approaches as early as possible in FCAS including targeted approaches to areas which have historically been denied access to education.

This would involve:

- sharing data and information across organisations to ensure planning and decision-making is based on results ensuring transaction costs are borne by the lead donor not the partner government;



- strong coordination of projects in relation to geographical areas, sub-sectoral focus and thematic areas (provision of materials, teacher training etc.);
- where security allows, planning for programmes which are longer term and have a broader scope than projects;
- a strong commitment to capacity development at national and sub-national levels; and
- the development of a sub-sector education plan including provision for transferring the burden of support for teacher salaries from community members to the state.

**Recommendation 3.3:** Donors need to work to strengthen the state's regulatory capacity through a SWAp within the context of improving the short route of accountability while identifying mechanisms to support the long route of accountability.

Moving towards a SWAp-like approach in countries with high levels of non-state provision would involve developing politically appropriate fora to gather key providers and actors together with the ministry of education to secure consensus on the role of the state as regulator and to build its mandate to provide education at scale. This will require leadership from government in setting policy direction.

### 7.3 Where next for SWAps?

SWAps have moved away from the initial purist view which assumed that all donors would move towards budget support and projects would cease over time. As discussed in this report, the SWAp concept has become more inclusive in light of national and international constraints to supporting full alignment. In light of this evolution away from a tight understanding of SWAps, the following definition is proposed to reflect the changes in the literature and country experiences since 2001:

*A SWAp entails government leadership of a sub-sector plan or a comprehensive, single-sector policy, supported by the majority of significant funding through a variety of modalities, securing consensus from education stakeholders on shared approaches to planning, financing, implementing, regulating, monitoring and reporting, where the lead donor bears the main transaction costs and where accountability moves increasingly downwards to citizens.*

Based on the analysis of the literature which reveals the complexity and ambition of SWAps, it is possible that mature SWAps in countries with more developed governance might go 'up a level' to become social SWAps incorporating the main social sector ministries such as education, health, social welfare, women, etc. This would allow much more meaningful and holistic policy dialogue across all the pro-poor sectors and enable a greater potential for cross-sectoral working and linkages. However, this would also require much more complex planning and coordination among a larger and more diverse group of ministries and other stakeholders with differing priorities, clients and incentives. In addition to moving 'upwards', the literature shows that mature SWAps will also increasingly focus on embedding good practice in relation to coordination, planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting at sub-national levels.

Given the current geographical distribution of SWAps, it is likely that they will continue current trends and spread to additional lower-middle-income countries since considerable numbers of middle-income countries benefit from donor support.

Going forward, given the trajectory of improvement that education SWAps have generally brought about in relation to planning and financing in the sector, an important task for SWAps is to focus more strongly on making an impact on educational quality, teaching and learning. If SWAps can achieve this, then added to their legacy will be the outcome of the next generation of children being equipped with the appropriate values, knowledge, skills and training to contribute to achieving greater development in their countries.





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## Appendix 1: List of informants

These informants were selected as they represented donors, NGOs and/or ministries of education constituencies in a range of countries in Sub-Saharan African and Asia that have implemented education SWAps or other sector SWAps.

Name	Title and organisation (at time of interview)	Date interviewed
Saima Anwer	Head of Education and Deputy Country Director, Save the Children, Bangladesh	August 2010
Richard Arden	Senior Human Development Adviser (Rwanda/Burundi), DFID	June 2010
Alberto Begué	Education Specialist, FTI Secretariat	August 2010
Peter Buckland	Independent Consultant, Former World Bank Education Specialist	July 2010
Mick Foster	Independent Consultant, Former DFID/ODI Economist	June 2010
Ward Henneveld	Programme Officer, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	June 2010
Mike Kiernan	Independent Consultant, Former Education Sector Donor Coordinator in Tanzania	July 2010
James Lee	Independent Consultant	June 2010
Keith Lewin	Professor of Education, University of Sussex	June 2010
Murray Macrae	Independent Consultant	July 2010
Florence Malinga	Education Adviser, Commonwealth Secretariat and former Commissioner for Education Planning, Ministry of Education and Sport, Uganda (1996–2006)	June 2010
Narcisse Musabeyezu	Inspector General of Education, Ministry of Education, Rwanda and former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education (2004–2008)	July 2010
Steve Passingham	Principal Education Adviser, AusAID	June 2010
Helen Pinnock	Education Adviser, Save the Children	August 2010
Abby Riddell	Independent Consultant	June 2010
Maylis Souque	Expert National Detaché, Gouvernance Economique et Appui Budgétaire, EC	March 2010
George Taylor	Independent Consultant	August 2010
Kamela Usmani	International Grants Programme Manager, Comic Relief	June 2010
Manfred Winnefeld	Independent Consultant, Former Technical Adviser, Support for the Education Sector in Somalia, European Union	July 2010
Eric Woods	Independent Consultant, Former DFID Senior Education Adviser	June 2010

## Appendix 2: Low-income countries, aid dependency and education SWAp

Country	Net ODA as % of GNI	Net ODA as % of central government expenditure	FTI endorsed? <sup>a</sup>	Education SWAp <sup>b</sup>
Afghanistan	45.8	196.1	x	
Bangladesh	2.4	23.9	x	Yes
Benin	9.6	64.3	✓ (2007)	Yes†
Burkina Faso	12.6	98.2	✓ (2002)	Yes
Burundi	43.9	n/a	x	
Cambodia	7.5	84.7*	✓ (2006)	Yes
Central African Republic	13.0	89.4*	✓ (2008)	
Chad	6.2	n/a	x	
Comoros	7.0	n/a	x	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	15.5	44.0*	x	Yes†
Eritrea	8.7	n/a	x	Yes†
Ethiopia	13.0	n/a	✓ (2004)	Yes
Gambia, The	12.3	n/a	✓ (2003)	Yes
Ghana	8.6	26.1*	✓ (2004)	Yes
Guinea	9.1	n/a	✓ (2002)	
Guinea-Bissau	31.6	n/a	x	
Haiti	n/a	n/a	✓ (2009)	No
Kenya	4.5	20.9	✓ (2005)	Yes
Korea, Democratic Republic	n/a	n/a	x	
Kyrgyz Republic	7.2**	41.8	✓ (2006)	Planned for 2010
Lao PDR	9.3	89.7*	✓ (2009)	Under preparation
Liberia	185.8	n/a	✓ (2007)	Yes
Madagascar	8.9	108.4*	✓ (2005)	Yes†
Malawi	21.2	n/a	✓ (2009)	Yes
Mali	11.4	97.7*	✓ (2006)	
Mauritania	12.4*	n/a	✓ (2002)	
Mozambique	22.0	n/a	✓ (2003)	Yes
Myanmar	n/a	n/a	x	
Nepal	5.6	34.1*	✓ (2009)	Yes
Niger	11.3	108.4*	✓ (2002)	
Rwanda	19.3	n/a	✓ (2006)	Yes
Senegal	8.0	n/a	✓ (2006)	Yes
Sierra Leone	19.2	147.7*	✓ (2007)	Yes
Solomon Islands	40.8	n/a	x	Yes†
Somalia	n/a	n/a	x	No
Tajikistan	5.8**	87.0*	✓ (2005)	Yes
Tanzania	11.7	n/a	x	Yes
Togo	11.4	75.3	✓ (2010)	Yes
Uganda	11.8	76.3	x	Yes
Uzbekistan	0.7	n/a	x	
Vietnam	2.9	n/a	✓ (2003)	Yes
Yemen	1.3	n/a	✓ (2003)	
Zambia	8.4	38.1*	✓ (2008)	Yes
Zimbabwe	11.6*	n/a	x	

**General note:** the designation of 'low-income country' is dependent on a country's per capita gross national income (GNI). For this reason, the annual grouping of low-income countries may change slightly from one year to another. The table includes all countries that have been included as low-income countries in the few years around 2008 so is slightly larger than the 40 identified countries in the 2009 low-income country list.



Source: World Bank Database (<http://databank.worldbank.org/ddp/home/do>)

- n/a Denotes no data available in the database.
- \* Data for the latest possible year was used if no data was available for 2008.
- \*\* Official development assistance (ODA) as a percentage of GNI is lower than the low-income country average of 7.4 percent, but ODA as a percentage of government expenditure is above the 30 percent threshold.
- † Denotes countries with sub-sector or partial SWAp (some occurring at sub-national level).  
Information on FTI endorsement has been taken from FTI Secretariat, 2010.
- a Where information could be found referring to an education SWAp or SWAp-like process either from the literature reviewed (especially UNICEF, 2006a) or from interviewed experts, a definitive yes or no has been given. Where there is no comment, insufficient evidence was found to conclude one way or another. We have not assumed that just because a country has received FTI endorsement, that it automatically has a SWAp or SWAp-like process under way.
- b



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