Evaluation 2016/1

Evaluation of SDC's Performance in Basic Education 2007 – 2014

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SDC's Performance in Basic Education 2007 – 2014

Commissioned by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division
of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

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Annexes and Case Studies can be downloaded at
https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/studies.html

Bern, March 2016

Evaluation Process

Evaluations commissioned by SDC's Board of Directors were introduced in SDC in 2002 with the aim of providing a more critical and independent assessment of SDC activities. These Evaluations are conducted according to the OECD DAC Evaluation Standards and are part of SDC's concept for implementing Article 170 of the Swiss Constitution which requires Swiss Federal Offices to analyse the effectiveness of their activities. SDC's **Senior Management** (consisting of the Director General and the heads of SDC's departments) approves the Evaluation Program. The **Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division**, which is outside of line management and reports directly to the Director General, commissions the evaluation, taking care to recruit evaluators with a critical distance from SDC.

The Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division identified the primary intended users of the evaluation and invites them to participate in a **Core Learning Partnership (CLP)**. The CLP actively accompanies the evaluation process. It commented on the evaluation design (Approach Paper). It provided feedback to the evaluation team on their preliminary findings and on the draft report. During a Synthesis Workshop, the CLP validated the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The focal point of the Education Network supported the evaluation process, in order to ensure the dissemination of evaluation results within SDC domains.

The evaluation was carried out according to the evaluation standards specified in the Terms of Reference.

Based on the **Final Evaluator's Report**, one member of SDC's Senior Management assumed the responsibility of drafting a **Senior Management Response (SMR)**. The SMR was subsequently approved by SDC's Board of Directors and signed by SDC Director-General.

The SMR is published together with the Final Evaluators' Report. For further details regarding the evaluation process see the Terms of Reference (Annex 1)

Timetable

Step	When
Approach Paper finalized	January 2015
Implementation of the evaluation	January - August 2015
Senior Management Response in SDC	March 2016

I   Executive Summary

Donor	SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Report title	Independent Evaluation of SDC's Performance in Basic Education 2007 – 2014
Geographic area	Global, Burkina Faso, West Balkan, Romania, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania, Afghanistan, Haiti, Mongolia, Niger
Sector	Basic Education
Language	English
Date	September 2015
Author	Columbia University in the City of New York: Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Fenot Aklog, Arushi Terway

Subject Description

This report summarizes the findings and conclusions of an independent evaluation of SDC's Performance in Basic Education (BE) 2007 – 2014.It addresses the following four key evaluation areas:

- Alignment with strategic objectives of SDC in education
- Relevance and effectiveness of the BE projects and programs
- Appropriateness and efficiency of SDC's implementation modalities
- Correspondence with international agendas, standards and "best practices"

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to render accountability, generate knowledge, learning and improve SDC's performance in BE. In particular, the purpose of the independent evaluation is to provide SDC with a valid, accurate, useful, and differentiated assessment of the performance of its BE projects.

Evaluation Methodology

In line with the methodological approach of Michael Q. Patton,[1] the evaluation was utilization-focused. The Evaluation and Corporate Controlling (E+C) Division and the Core Learning Partnership (CLP) ensured that the evaluation team focused on key evaluation questions that are useful for SDC's strategic decisions and further operational planning in Basic Education.

The evaluation produced a portfolio analysis of SDC's BE programs and used it as a foundation for drawing a representative sample of nine cases or programs for in-depth evaluation.

Two field-based case studies took place in Burkina Faso and on the Roma Education Programs in the West Balkans with visits to Romania, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania. Additionally, document analysis with selected interviews was conducted for following cases:

- BE in country programs: Afghanistan, Haiti, Mongolia, Niger
- SDC's collaboration with key international organizations in education
- United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)
- Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC).

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[1] See, in particular, Michael Q. Patton (2011). *Developmental Evaluation. Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use.* New York: Guilford. In addition, see Michael Q. Patton (1997). *Utilization-Focused Evaluation.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, 3rd edition.

The data collection was comprehensive: the evaluation is based on a total of 108 interviews and meetings.

Major Findings and Conclusions

The **portfolio analysis** shows that SDC disburses annually more than CHF 100 million for programs in BE. It estimates that SDC spent CHF 112.5 million in 2014 for BE programs, using the three main funding modalities:

- Bilateral aid: CHF 57.7 million
- Multi/bilateral aid to key partners in education ("multi-bi"): CHF 13.7 million
- Multilateral aid through global partners: CHF 41.1 million for education (estimate).

Basic education in West Africa is a priority followed by Europe as well as Asia and Oceania; Latin America is semi-orphaned.

The comparison over the period 2007 to 2014 yields a few interesting trends on SDC's priorities and aid selectivity:

- There is a discrepancy between perception and actual allocation in education. In documents of SDC, there is more talk of non-formal education and vocational skills-development than of formal basic education. SDC actual disbursement over the period 2007 to 2014, however, has moved towards formal basic education and support for education policy, that is, towards systemic educational reform. Almost half of SDC spending in education is for formal basic education (23%) and education policy (23%).

- SDC's BE bilateral contribution in fragile and conflict-affected areas increased considerably from 2007-2014. The evaluation estimates that BE support to fragile states and regions increased from CHF 7.4 million in 2007 to CHF 13.5 million in 2014, with a peak of CHF 18.8 million in 2012. Clearly, the decision of the Swiss Government in 2012 to increase aid to fragile and conflict-affected states is reflected in this visible increase of BE spending.

- SDC's contribution to multi/bilateral aid to key partners that specifically work in education is with an annual disbursement of CHF 13.7 million relatively small. More than half of these funds were assigned to the most important global player in education: the Global Partnership for Education.

Main **best practices** identified by SDC staff and partners are as follows

- Bilingual education, community participation, and/or education for sustainable development are comparative advantages of Switzerland in BE. The commonality between these three areas of Swiss expertise is its salutary effects on the inclusion of the hard to reach and most excluded.

- SDC has successfully increased its impact and voice by participating in governance structures of SDC partners, by coalition-building with like-minded donors as well as multilateral organizations, and by supporting advocacy work in regional and international organizations.

- SDC's preferred contractual arrangements (notably institutional partners that contract local partners for program implementation) works well for diffusion of innovation - but might prevent scaling up of innovation at large scale.

The report also discusses **five areas in need of improvement**:

- Educational programming is currently not systematically driven by SDC's comparative advantages, but essentially determined by consideration of the funding source (frame credit) or by political considerations that are reflected in Cooperation strategies.

- There is widespread data skepticism at all levels and manifest itself in disbelief that the collected data is reliable and valid and that data analysis could possibly yield meaningful and useful findings.

- The evaluation identifies a lack of professional expertise in international educational development. This has a negative impact in at least two regards: low recognition and profile of SDC and low quality of education components in non-education programs.

- Like others SDC is experiencing one of the greatest challenges of development and cooperation: innovation and pilot project are rarely scaled-up or institutionalized, and often discontinued after project funding dried up.

- There is a risk that SDC does inadvertently become the sole or largest donor in programs or organizations that other donors left behind.

Main recommendations

A total of **twenty recommendations** are presented in the report. They were reduced to **eight key recommendations** and grouped into two categories:

- *Strategic Level*

1. Design a SDC education sector strategy that is (a) unified, (b) comprehensive and (c) lifelong, that is, a strategy that
   a) addresses all levels of education (pre-primary, primary, secondary, vocational-technical education, higher education)
   b) considers all types of contributions (bilateral aid, multi-bilateral aid to key international partners in education, multilateral aid) and specifies the various contexts (developing countries, fragile states, migration countries, EU enlargement and other countries)
   c) adheres to SDC's unique conception of lifelong learning and relevant skill development. The evaluation recommends in particular to avoid using the outdated and ambiguous term "non-formal education" and to replace it with a contemporary terminology that best captures SDC's vision of education, such as, for example "education in and out the classroom and across the lifespan."
   d) continues building alliances with like-minded partners, invest in coalition-building and communicate these partnerships more clearly.

2. Prioritize areas of intervention and clearly and widely communicate the Swiss comparative advantage in bilingual education, community participation, education for sustainable development, and in general in inclusive education for the most excluded.

3. Enhance inter-sectoral collaboration in SDC to improve the effectiveness and quality of programs, in particular in areas that are proven to benefit from an integrated approach (e.g., adult literacy, education for sustainable development) and in non-education programs that contain educational components.

4. Determine which innovations in basic education should be systematically scaled up and which ones should be phased out, respectively.

5. Enhance expertise in SDC's education programs by cooperating with (Swiss) universities and institutions in the field of international educational development. Eventually, define technical expertise as one of the key qualifications for new recruitments.

6. Require that all entry proposals include a detailed institutionalization and handover plan. This will increase the chances that the innovations or pilot projects are sustained beyond the duration of SDC funding

- *Operational Level*

7. Correct the glitches in the SAP system and make it more user-friendly so that the staff uses it for planning, monitoring, and evaluation as well as for strategic steering

8. Share knowledge and experiences on effective models of policy support to enhance government ownership (both at local and national level) in SDC-funded programs and projects

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II   Senior Management Response

Senior Management Response of SDC's Directorate (strategic level)

Bern, March 2016

Signature: Manuel Sager, Director SDC

Introduction

The Independent Evaluation of SDC's Performance in Basic Education was conducted on the basis of the Approach Paper approved by the Board of Directors on February 2, 2015. Ms. Gita Steiner-Khamsi from the Teachers College, Columbia University in the City of New York was the evaluation team leader. The main evaluation report identified five best practices and five areas of improvement for SDC's basic education program. The separate document of the report (Annex) summarizes the results of the two field-based cases (Burkina Faso and Roma Education Programs in the West Balkans) and the seven case studies consisting of document analysis complemented with interviews.

The evaluation team proposed 20 recommendations. The recommendations were discussed at the 4th and last CLP (Core Learning Partnership with representatives of all departments) meeting. Of the twenty recommendations, eight key recommendations were formulated - grouped into the two categories (i) strategic, (ii) operational recommendations.

Management response to strategic recommendations: The Board of Directors is requested to respond to **six key recommendations at strategic level**. SDC senior management declares if it agrees (fully or partially) or not with the recommendation and justifies its position. Measures to be taken, including responsibility and time horizon for their implementation are elaborated for each of the recommendation and should be integrated, if needed, in an action plan. The management response to strategic recommendations is approved by the Board of Directors and signed by SDC's Director.

Management response to operational recommendations: The management response at strategic level is completed and followed by a **management response at the operational level**. This includes position and measures on 2 additional recommendations. The management response to operational recommendations is approved and signed by the Head of the Regional Cooperation.

Appreciation of the Evaluation by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division (E+C)

The *overall assessment* of the evaluation process is very satisfactory. The implementation process ran smoothly on the basis of a detailed inception report. The deadlines of the evaluation process were extended due to the complexity of the evaluation. The report is of high quality and its "5+5" format (5 best practices, 5 areas to improve) proved to be innovative and attractive. The work deployed for elaborating volume 2 (300 pages) of the evaluation report was impressive. This part of the report provides useful and detailed information on the nine case studies.

Credibility of the evaluation team: The lead evaluator is highly credible and dedicated. She has an excellent understanding of the topic and the contexts and proved to be an

experienced evaluator. The other 6 evaluation team members provided the skills mix necessary for conducting this evaluation.

Implementation: The consultants prepared well and communicated efficiently with the E+C evaluation manager. The consultants proved to be very responsive, dedicated and flexible.

The various SDC desk officers concerned substantially supported the evaluation process (e.g., providing key documents, logistical support). Communication and collaboration between E+C and the involved SCOs was in general very satisfactory.

Four CLP meetings were held during the evaluation process. The CLP members participated actively in the evaluation and the meetings. They provided helpful feedbacks on the inception report, the draft and final reports and they discussed in detail the formulation of the recommendations.

Appreciation by the SDC's Domains on the Evaluation

General Considerations

➢ Some recommendations of the evaluation on Basic Education involve both SDC sub-thematic: Basic education and Vocational skills development, even if the present evaluation was limited to the SDC's basic education portfolio. SDC's vocational skills development activities have themselves been object of an independent evaluation in 2011.

Most Important Findings

➢ SDC's expenses in basic education have been evolving considerably, **shifting from alternative basic education programs towards basic education systems**, covering **both formal schools and alternative education and including lifelong learning activities**. This evolution shows that SDC is now more aligned to both national and global education policies, in supporting the education system and not only innovative basic education projects. This systemic approach also recalls the relevance and the necessity of linking basic education to vocational skills development support in certain contexts.

➢ The evaluation highlights that *there is far greater number of educational programs at SDC than meets the eye*. During the period 2007-2014, SDC's cooperation to basic education, both in development and in humanitarian aid, **is not restricted to West African countries** and region but covers also Eastern Europe countries and region (Serbia, Roma Education Fund), South Asia (Bangladesh, Afghanistan), Middle East (Jordan, Palestine) and, in a smaller proportion, Latin America (Haiti).

➢ According to the evaluators, **the most visible increase in expenses during the period 2007-2014 was for education as a medium for empowerment and awareness building in non-education sector** such as agriculture, food security, civil participation and local governance and water. Basic education as a priority focus of SDC initiatives is further revealed in the steady growth of the agency's expenditures on initiatives in which basic education is classified as a second and/or third priority within the non-education sectors (e.g. health, agriculture). This situation is also visible in humanitarian aid (Jordan, Lebanon, and Haiti). Yet, expertise and knowledge sharing within SDC around these expenses are lacking.

Management Response by the SDC Board of Directors (strategic level)

The Board of Directors is requested to respond to **five key recommendations at strategic level**. SDC senior management declares if it agrees (fully or partially) or not with the recommendation and justifies its position. Measures to be taken, including responsibility and time horizon for their implementation are elaborated for each of the recommendation and should be integrated, if needed, in an action plan.

Recommendation 1

Design a SDC education sector strategy that is (a) unified, (b) comprehensive and (c) lifelong, that is, a strategy that

e) addresses all levels of education (pre-primary, primary, secondary, vocational-technical education, higher education)

f) considers all types of contributions (bilateral aid, multi-bilateral aid to key international partners in education, multilateral aid) and specifies the various contexts (developing countries, fragile states, migration countries, EU enlargement and other countries)

g) adheres to SDC's unique conception of lifelong learning and relevant skill development. The evaluation recommends in particular to avoid using the outdated and ambiguous term "non-formal education" and to replace it with a contemporary terminology that best captures SDC's vision of education, such as, for example "education in and out the classroom and across the lifespan."

h) continues building alliances with like-minded partners, invest in coalition-building and communicate these partnerships more clearly.

Management Response		
Fully agree	**Partially agree**	Not agree

Justification:

The Board of Directors welcomes the formulation of a new Education strategy. It recognizes the need for a strategy which sets clear goals, provides thematic orientations and attributes human and financial resources. The Education strategy will clarify how SDC is going to spend the additional resources (+ 50%) for education, focusing on both basic education and vocational skills development, which have been agreed upon by the Board of Directors in the Message 2017-2020. A tool will be developed that allows monitoring the progress towards the goals defined in the strategy and keeping track of the use of financial resources in SDC's activities in the Education sector. Yet, the Board of Directors partially agrees with this recommendation as the Education strategy should not address all levels of education as stated above, such as higher education, but should focus on both basic education and vocational skills development in order to ensure the coherence and the continuity of SDC's support in this area. The education strategy should reflect SDC's modular way of providing support which is context specific.

SDC Education strategy shall serve as a reference document for the Cooperation offices which are supporting education (basic education and/or VSD) projects and/or programs. But not only. It shall also serve as a reference for specific education interventions and for "non-education" programs which include education as a second or third priority sector especially within global programs and Humanitarian aid. Therefore, the concerned operational SDC units need to be involved in the drafting and validation process of the new strategy.

Following a sectoral approach, SDC Education strategy will be aligned to the recently adopted global education goal (SDG n° 4 and SDG n 8) and to the related Education Agenda 2030 which includes basic education and vocational skills development. For VSD, alignment with relevant international debate on vocational education and training such as the Shanghai consensus is key. Being aligned to the global agenda, SDC Education strategy will enhance Swiss visibility and profile and its recognition at the international

level. By encompassing basic education and vocational skills development, SDC Education strategy will better respond to the national education policies of SDC's partner countries which cover the entire education system.

SDC education strategy shall help SDC to better communicate and create new alliances at national, regional and international levels. Like-minded partners can differ from one context to another and from one education sub-sector to the other. Therefore, it is important to communicate clearly about SDC strategic orientations, priorities and goals, in order to create and widen like-minded partnerships in different contexts. These alliances are crucial with regard to scaling up of SDC's programs and in order to initiate systemic changes.

In order to improve and formalize close collaboration between the Education network and the e+i sub-network on Vocational Skills Development (VSD), regular bilateral meetings between the Education Focal Point and the VSD Focal Point will be put in place. These meetings will aim at agreeing on common planned activities involving both E network and VSD sub-network throughout the year and on defining common positions.

Finally, the Board of Directors expects the new Education strategy to take into account the following points:

- The strategy will consider Vocational skill development (VSD) in its different forms across education system and not as a specific level of education as stated in the present recommendation. VSD can be part of post-primary, post-secondary and can also be part of literacy programs or second-chance education programs for youth.

- The role and responsibilities of the private sector in the Education sector and the link to private sector development will be part of the Education strategy. As SDC's vocational skills development activities aim at improving the employability of trainees and enhancing access to gainful (self-)employment, its close relationship with the private sector, employment and labor market interventions and policies needs to be reflected in the Education strategy. Furthermore, the embeddedness of VSD in the thematic field of employment and income at large as well as the role of the private sector in education will be considered.

- Like-minded partners and coalition-building should be enhanced taking into consideration SDC's comparative advantages (see below). This will give SDC and Switzerland more voice and impact.

- The role of multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the Global Partnership for Education, has to be considered and highlighted in the new strategy. Potential multi-stakeholder partnerships for education, including vocational skills development, within the multilateral system, such as the ECOSOC Partnership Forum and the UN Global compact, should be identified. The role and responsibilities as well as the incentives and disincentives of these potential new multi-stakeholder partnerships should be analyzed. Besides, education should be actively included in the priorities of the Swiss policy dialogue with priority multilateral organizations such as UNICEF and UNRWA.

Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon

1.1. Design a new SDC Education strategy involving SDC's intern Division and some external offices/ Under the lead and coordination of the West African Division responsible for Education in close collaboration with Latin America Division responsible for Vocational Skills Development[2] / End of 2016

1.2. Adopt SDC new Education Strategy / Board of Directors / End of 2016

1.3. Define common positions on Education (BE + VSD) and common planned activities involving both Education network and sub-network on VSD / West African and Latin America Divisions and Focal Points for Education and VSD/ 2016 ongoing

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[2] The management response of the external evaluation on Vocational skills development activities approved in 2011 shall be duly considered

Recommendation 2
Prioritize areas of intervention and clearly and widely communicate the Swiss comparative advantage in bilingual education, community participation, education for sustainable development, and in general in inclusive education for the most excluded

Management Response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree

Justification:
The Board of Directors agrees with this recommendation. SDC has a long-lasting experience and well-recognized expertise in education. So far, SDC has been supporting basic education projects, programs and systems that address the needs of the poorest populations. Doing so, it has been focusing on innovative education programs which provide access to basic education to the excluded (out-of-school children and youth and illiterate adults), on bilingual education which particularly matches the demand of the local communities and on decentralized education systems which promote community participation. Yet, SDC's experiences in international cooperation have never been directly referring to the Swiss expertise on basic education systems.
The Board of Directors welcomes the idea of referring more systematically, as it does for the Swiss dual model on VSD, to the Swiss basic education system and its comparative advantages such as inclusiveness, multilingual, decentralized governance, and bridges ("passerelles") in order to ensure access to basic education, vocational training and higher education in a lifelong learning perspective. These best practices and Swiss comparative advantages in basic education shall help prioritizing SDC's activities in this sector and therefore enhance its visibility and recognition towards SDC's main strategic partners like the Global partnership for Education.

Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon
2.1. The Education strategy prioritizes areas of interventions based on SDC's best practices and Swiss expertise in the domain of basic education / West African Division / ongoing
2.2. New continuing education programs in this field of expertise are developed and supported/ West African Division / ongoing
2.3. Communication based on Swiss comparative advantages in basic education is strengthened / Board of Directors, West African Division responsible for Education, Education network members / ongoing.

Recommendation 3
Enhance inter-sectoral collaboration in SDC to improve the effectiveness and quality of programs, in particular in areas that are proven to benefit from an integrated approach (e.g., adult literacy, education for sustainable development) and in non-education programs that contain educational components

Management Response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree

Justification:
Non-education programs that contain educational components are usually not supported by thematic expertise in SDC. This situation has negative impact on the quality and the sustainability of these programs. Inter-sectoral collaboration using SDC's thematic expertise in education should be enhanced.
This can be done in two ways: 1) by involving the Education focal point and education team and/or the Vocational skills development Focal point or network in strategic moments (design/evaluation of programs, design of cooperation strategy, policy dialogue

for multilateral cooperation (UNRWA, UNICEF) 2) by participating as a member to the education and e+i networks.

Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon
3.1. Involve SDC's Departments who do support programs with educational components (priority 2 and 3 in SAP) in the formulation of the new Education strategy/ West African Division responsible for Education on close collaboration with Latin America Division responsible for Vocational skills development
3.2. Identify possible actions and support, upon demand, on how educational components including basic education and /or vocational skills development (priority 2 and 3) could be better designed in non-education projects or programs / West African Division responsible for Education, Education network & Latin America Division, e+i network on VSD/ ongoing

Recommendation 4

Determine which innovations in basic education should be systematically scaled up and which ones should be phased out, respectively

Management Response

Fully agree	**Partially agree**	Not agree

Justification:
A successful scaling-up of innovations in basic education needs time and depends on various factors. A crucial one however is the implication of the government/concerned ministries at an early stage of the innovation. This means that policy dialogue should be at the core of each innovative project. In order to do so, SDC needs strong thematic expertise and needs also to have a shared understanding of the importance of policy dialogue in this sector since basic education is a common public good.
In order to promote scaling-up processes on the field, policy dialogue needs to be done not only at national level, but also at regional and international levels.
Senior management partially agrees with this recommendation as SDC's PCM tool does not differentiate innovations which should be scaled-up from those which shouldn't. For each project, an exit strategy, which contains a scaling-up process, is designed. Now, a better and more systematic monitoring of the exit strategy should be put in place regarding innovations projects which last too long. Moreover, SDC's support in the field of basic education, including innovative projects, should be done, whenever it is possible, within the education system.

Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon
4.1. Improve monitoring systems (project, program and Cooperation strategy) on the basis of practical guidelines which have been elaborated by the Education network/ BUCOs and SDC Departments/ ongoing
4.2. Conduct reviews covering both Basic Education and - where applicable - Vocational skills Development programs in selected countries. Conduct impact evaluation to better understand which interventions in Basic Education work, which don't – and why / Cooperation offices & Integrated embassies + Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division/ ongoing

Recommendation 5

Enhance expertise in SDC's education programs by cooperating with (Swiss) universities and institutions in the field of international educational development. Eventually, define technical expertise as one of the key qualifications for new recruitments

Management Response

Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree

Justification:

The Board of Directors recognizes the importance to strengthen expertise in SDC's education programs. In order to do so, SDC shall strengthen its thematic networks and focal points, Education network and e+i sub-network on Vocational Skills Development.

The Board of Directors agrees that technical expertise in education shall be required for new recruitments but not only. This thematic expertise should also be promoted and recognized within SDC's careers.

The Board of Directors supports the recommendation to better collaborate with other relevant institutions, especially universities. Yet, Swiss academies and institutions basically lack of professional expertise in international educational development, especially in basic education. This should be taken into consideration in SDC's policy dialogue with these institutions, in prioritizing research in education within SDC's program to support research called "Research for development" (R4D).

Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon

5.1. Develop new partnerships and cooperation with universities and other institutions which might offer BE and/or VSD training programs/ West African Division responsible for Education and Latin America Division responsible for Vocational skills development / Mid – 2017

Recommendation 6

Require that all entry proposals include a detailed institutionalization and handover plan. This will increase the chances that the innovations or pilot projects are sustained beyond the duration of SDC funding

Management Response

Fully agree	**Partially agree**	Not agree

Justification:

This recommendation has also been acknowledged by the previous independent evaluation on VSD (2011). The management response highlighted that a detailed institutionalization at the stage of an entry proposal is in fact difficult to do.

The Board of Directors recognizes though the importance of defining roughly the handover plan right at the beginning of the project, so at the stage of the Entry proposal. The handover plan shall contain a scaling-up strategy including a cost-benefit analysis when possible.

Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon

6.1. Ensure that a handover plan is defined in the entry proposal / Direction of Regional Cooperation and of Eastern Europe / ongoing

Senior Management Response by SDC's Head of the Regional Cooperation (operational level)

Bern, March 2016

Signature: Thomas Greminger, Direction Regional Cooperation

Introduction

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The evaluation team proposed 20 recommendations. The recommendations were discussed at the 4th and last CLP (Core Learning Partnership with representatives of all departments) meeting. Of the twenty recommendations, height key recommendations were formulated - grouped into the two categories (i) strategic, (ii) operational recommendations.

Management response to strategic recommendations: The Board of Directors is requested to respond to **six key recommendations at strategic level**. SDC senior management declares if it agrees (fully or partially) or not with the recommendation and justifies its position. Measures to be taken, including responsibility and time horizon for their implementation are elaborated for each of the recommendation and should be integrated, if needed, in an action plan. The management response to strategic recommendations is approved by the Board of Directors and signed by SDC's Director.

Management response to operational recommendations: The management response at strategic level is completed and followed by a **management response at the operational level**. This includes position and measures on 2 additional recommendations. The management response to operational recommendations is approved and signed by the Head of the Regional Cooperation.

Appreciation of the Evaluation by the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division (E+C)

The *overall assessment* of the evaluation process is very satisfactory. The implementation process ran smoothly on the basis of a detailed inception report. The deadlines of the evaluation process were extended due to the complexity of the evaluation. The report is of high quality and its "5+5" format (5 best practices, 5 areas to improve) proved to be innovative and attractive. The work deployed for elaborating volume 2 (300 pages) of the evaluation report was impressive. This part of the report provides useful and detailed information on the nine case studies.

Credibility of the evaluation team: The lead evaluator is highly credible and dedicated. She has an excellent understanding of the topic and the contexts and proved to be an experienced evaluator. The other 6 evaluation team members provided the skills mix necessary for conducting this evaluation.

Implementation: The consultants prepared well and communicated efficiently with the E+C evaluation manager. The consultants proved to be very responsive, dedicated and flexible.

The various SDC desk officers concerned substantially supported the evaluation process (e.g., providing key documents, logistical support). Communication and collaboration between E+C and the involved SCOs was in general very satisfactory.

Four CLP meetings were held during the evaluation process. The CLP members participated actively in the evaluation and the meetings. They provided helpful feedbacks on the inception report, the draft and final reports and they discussed in detail the formulation of the recommendations.

Appreciation by the SDC's Domains on the Evaluation

General Considerations

➢ Some recommendations of the evaluation on Basic Education involve both SDC sub-thematic: Basic education and Vocational skills development, even if the present evaluation was limited to the SDC's basic education portfolio. SDC's vocational skills development activities have themselves been object of an independent evaluation in 2011.

Most Important Findings

➢ SDC's expenses in basic education have been evolving considerably, **shifting from alternative basic education programs towards basic education systems**, covering **both formal schools and alternative education and including lifelong learning activities**. This evolution shows that SDC is now more aligned to both national and global education policies, in supporting the education system and not only innovative basic education projects. This systemic approach also recalls the relevance and the necessity of linking basic education to vocational skills development support in certain contexts.

➢ The evaluation highlights that *there is far greater number of educational programs at SDC than meets the eye*. During the period 2007-2014, SDC's cooperation to basic education, both in development and in humanitarian aid, **is not restricted to West African countries** and region but covers also Eastern Europe countries and region (Serbia, Roma Education Fund), South Asia (Bangladesh, Afghanistan), Middle East (Jordan, Palestine) and, in a smaller proportion, Latin America (Haiti).

➢ According to the evaluators, **the most visible increase in expenses during the period 2007-2014 was for education as a medium for empowerment and awareness building in non-education sector** such as agriculture, food security, civil participation and local governance and water. Basic education as a priority focus of SDC initiatives is further revealed in the steady growth of the agency's expenditures on initiatives in which basic education is classified as a second and/or third priority within the non-education sectors (e.g. health, agriculture). This situation is also visible in humanitarian aid (Jordan, Lebanon, and Haiti). Yet, expertise and knowledge sharing within SDC around these expenses are lacking.

Management Response by the Head of the Regional Cooperation (operational level)

Recommendation 7		
Correct the glitches in the SAP system and make it more user-friendly so that the staff uses it for planning, monitoring, and evaluation as well as for strategic steering		
Management Response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree
Justification:		
The Direction of Regional cooperation fully endorses this recommendation. The recommendation is valid for both Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development data (as stated in the independent evaluation of VSD, 2011). These corrections should be based on the new Message 2017-2020 with reference to the new Education strategy which will define the strategic orientations and the coverage of the two thematic within SDC's programs.		
Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon		
7.1. Education and Vocational Skills Development Focal points work with the Evaluation and Controlling division in order to make the necessary corrections / Evaluation and Controlling division in collaboration with BE and VSD focal points / Q1, 2017		

Recommendation 8		
Share knowledge and experiences on effective models of policy support to enhance government ownership (both at local and national level) in SDC-funded programs and projects		
Management Response		
Fully agree	**Partially agree**	Not agree
Justification:		
Knowledge sharing is the main responsibility of SDC's thematic networks. Yet, the current Basic Education network is relatively small and has therefore limited capacities. Common activities involving networks, the education network and the sub-network on VSD will be organized.		
Measures / Responsibility / Time horizon		
8.1. Define common positions on Education (BE + VSD) and common planned activities involving both Education network and sub-network on VSD / West African and Latin America Divisions and Focal Points for Education and VSD/ 2016 ongoing		

III Evaluators' Final Report

Independent Evaluation of SDC's Performance in Basic Education 2007 – 2014

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEPO	Afghan Education Project Organization
AfDB	African Development Bank
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
APENF	Association pour la Promotion de L'Éducation Non-Formelle
APESS	Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage au Sahel et en Savanne
BACK-UP	Building Alliances, Creating Knowledge and Updating Partners
BE	Basic Education
BEPA	Basic Education Program Afghanistan
BMZ	Bundesamt für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
CAST	Compte d'Affectation Spéciale du Trésor
CCM	Core-Contribution Management
CCR	Centre de Compétences à la Reconstruction
CHF	Swiss Franc
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CLP	Core Learning Partnership
CONFEMEN	Conférence des Ministres de l'Education des États et Gouvernments de la Francophonie
CS	Case Study
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCEM	Direction du Continuum d'Éducation Multilingue
DDC	Direction du Développement et de la Coopération
DFID	UK Department of International Development
EC	European Commission
E+C	Evaluation and Corporate Controlling
EHO	Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization
ERIO	European Roma Information Office
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
EU	European Union
FONAENF	Fonds National pour l'Éducation Non-Formelle
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNI	Gross National Income
GSSP	Government School Support Program
HEKS	Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
IDA	International Development Association
ICREST	International Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching

IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
MENA	Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Alphabétisation
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NFE	Nonformal Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NORRAG	Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSEO	L'Oeuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière
PARIS	Program d'Appui à la Reconstruction des Infrastructures Scolaires
PDSEB	Programme de Développement Stratégique de l'Éducation de Base
PdT	Pédagogie du Texte
REF	Roma Education Fund
SAP	Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing
SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office, Swiss Contribution Office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPRU	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit
RECI	Réseau Suisse pour l'Education et la Coopération Internationale
TdH	Terre des Hommes
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United National High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YEP	Youth Education Program
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VoRAE	Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian
VSD	Vocational Skills Development
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

1 Evaluation Methodology and Portfolio Analysis

Basic Education (BE) is one of the nine priority areas of the *Parliamentary Message on International Cooperation 2013-2016* and complements vocational skills development (VSD). The timing of this evaluation—January to August 2015—matters: the evaluation was carried out during the second half of Switzerland's international cooperation strategy 2013-2016 and shortly before the international agreement on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, it is an opportune moment to reflect on past achievements and shortcomings in light of the Swiss Federal Government's forthcoming Message on International Cooperation (2017-2020) and its contribution to the post-2015 sustainable development goals.

The evaluation is carried out by the International Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (ICREST), affiliated with Columbia University's graduate school of education (Teachers College) based in New York.[1] The team leader is Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Professor of Comparative and International Education at Columbia University (dual citizen of Switzerland and USA). The team members were selected based on the need for a triple expertise in basic education, aid effectiveness, and/or the geographic regions of the selected case and desk studies. This evaluation report is supplemented by a document (annex) which contains the Inception Report as well as all the reports of the nine case studies. This section of the evaluation report presents indicative key questions, design and methodology used for the independent evaluation.

1.1 Evaluation Methodology

In line with the methodological approach of Michael Q. Patton,[2] the evaluation is utilization-focused. The Evaluation and Corporate Controlling (E+C) Division and the Core Learning Partnership (CLP) ensured that the evaluation team focused on key evaluation questions that are useful for SDC's strategic decisions and further operational planning in BE.[3] They also provided input to the evaluation team as to whether the findings were interpreted in context, the conclusions were useful, and the recommendations concrete and feasible. The purpose is to document and learn from lessons on how BE projects were designed, funded, and implemented over the period 2007–2014 for future strategies and operations.

The key questions were discussed and finalized at the first meeting of CLP on January 15, 2015 and are listed in the Inception Report. They address the following evaluation areas:

- Alignment with strategic objectives of SDC in education
- Relevance and effectiveness of the BE projects and programs
- Appropriateness and efficiency of SDC's implementation modalities
- Correspondence with international agendas, standards and "best practices"

During the first and second CLP meeting, sampling criteria and case selection were discussed and determined. The objective was to draw a sample of cases (countries/regions/type of projects) that represent the larger universe of SDC BE programs. Table 1 presents the five sampling criteria and lists how they were measured. The last column shows the conclusions that were drawn and used for the case selection.

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[1] The biographical notes of the team members are listed at the end of the report.
[2] See, in particular, Michael Q. Patton (2011). *Developmental Evaluation. Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use.* New York: Guilford. In addition, see Michael Q. Patton (1997). *Utilization-Focused Evaluation.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, 3rd edition.
[3] Annex 2 lists the members of the E+C Division and the Core Learning Partnership group (CLP) that accompanied the evaluation.

Table 1: Sampling Criteria, Indicators, and Selection of Cases		
Criterion	**Indicator**	**Conclusions for Selection**
Scope	Location of project within the organizational unit of SDC	Projects from all 4 domains of SDC: • Global Cooperation • Regional Cooperation • Cooperation with Eastern Europe/CIS • Humanitarian Aid and SHA
Size	Financial volume of the project ("actuals")	Large projects are main target
Relevance	Focus on basic education	• Mainly projects with BE as first priority (according to SAP) • A few projects with BE as second or third component (according to SAP)
Diversity	Representing different types of BE projects, different types of support, funding modalities	To be determined at project/case level
Access	Data availability	Projects/cases for which documentation exist and/or informants are available for field-visits

Based on the sampling criteria, presented in Table 1, and based on discussions with the CLP and other SDC staff, the cases listed in Table 2 were selected. It is important to point out that the case study reports of the two field-based evaluations (Burkina Faso, Roma Education) also included sections on the regional programs.

On purpose, the four organizational domains of SDC are each represented either with a field-based case or a desk study:

- Global Cooperation Domain: Global Institutions Division (SDC's collaboration with global partners)
- Regional Cooperation Domain: West Africa Division (Burkina Faso)
- Cooperation with Eastern Europe Domain: Western Balkans Division (Roma Education Programs)
- Humanitarian Aid and SHA Domain: Europe and Mediterranean Division (Education for Palestine Refugees).

Table 2: List of Selected Cases by Evaluation Type		
Type	**Cases**	
Field-Based Case Study	1. Burkina Faso (March 11 – 26, 2015)	
	2. Roma Education Programs in the West Balkans in Romania, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania (April 26 – May 16)	
Desk-Study Plus	3. SDC's Collaboration with Key International Partners in BE	
Desk Study	4. UNRWA	7. Afghanistan
	5. Niger	8. Mongolia
	6. Haiti	9. WSSCC (water project with education as $2^{nd}/3^{rd}$ component)

1.1.1 Information Sources, Data Collection and Analyses Methods

Table 3 shows the data sources, collection and analyses methods utilized for the three evaluation types.

For the two **field-based case studies** (Burkina Faso and Roma Education programs) the following methods were use:

A. Review of relevant credit proposals, project documentation, evaluations, annual reports, etc. and content analysis in terms of select key evaluation questions

B. Portfolio analysis of all BE projects (with BE as first, second, and third priority) over the period 2007 – 2014 by funding level, type of support, and implementation modality (see template in Annex 5) based on the SAP database

C. Communication with SDC staff and partners for clarifying questions on project documentation and portfolio analysis

D. Semi-structured interviews with SDC staff in Bern and in the Swiss Cooperation Offices as well as with SDC's institutional, regional and global partners

E. Site visits and in-depth analysis of 2-3 select projects (that reflect different types of support or implementation modalities); interviews with project partners, implementers, international development community including institutional partners, regional partners, global partners, and local NGOs/civil society leaders

F. If possible, other methods (e.g., short surveys/fact sheets, social network analysis) that enable to understand SDC's comparative advantage (as perceived by SDC and by others) and SDC's intervention modality as compared to other international donors.

The **desk study +** (key international organizations in basic education) drew on the first three types of information (i.e. review of documents, portfolio analysis, meetings with staff/partners for clarification). Individual phone interviews were carried out with the senior management of the following multilateral partners of SDC: Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (GMR), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), and Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training (NORRAG). In addition, the evaluation team reviewed available evaluations carried out by others on these multilateral partners of SDC.

The **six regular desk reviews**, utilized methods A, B, and C from Table 3: review of relevant documents, portfolio analysis, and email/phone communication with SDC staff and partners for clarifying questions on project documentation and portfolio analysis. Initially, it included the analysis of one "typical" project in the context, identified as such by the SDC staff in the SCO office and in the headquarters in Bern. However, ultimately more than one project had to be reviewed because there was a hesitation to point out only one

Table 3: Information Sources, Data Collection and Analyses Methods, by Evaluation Type	Field	Desk+	Desk
A. Review of relevant documents	✔	✔	✔
B. Portfolio analysis using SAP database and credit proposals	✔	✔	✔
C. Communication with SDC staff/partners for clarification	✔	✔	✔
D. Semi-structured interviews in person or over phone	✔	✔	
E. In-depth analysis of the largest projects with site-visits	✔		
F. Social network analysis	✔		
G. Analysis of a sample of partner organizations (without visit)		✔	
H. Portfolio analysis of projects (without site-visit)			✔

project for evaluation. In the Afghanistan case study (CS), 9 projects were reviewed, in the Haiti CS the PARIS and CCR programs, in the Mongolia CS the VET, VSD, Eco-Schools, and ESD programs, and in Niger two sector-wide programs in BE and VSD.

A copy of the semi-structured interview guide is in Annex 2 of the Inception Report. In addition to general program and organizational questions, the evaluation focused on the following criteria:

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability
- Aid effectiveness criteria: ownership, alignment, harmonization, results, and mutual accountability
- Network analysis criteria: collaboration with other organizations (three closest collaboration) and reputation of organizations in terms of reliability, innovation, efficiency, sustainable impact, responsive to local needs, gender sensitivity, good governance.

It is important to bear in mind the strategy orientation of this evaluation. For this reason, the effectiveness and the impact of projects were only indirectly assessed by reviewing project-level evaluations, whenever they were available.

The data collection was comprehensive: the evaluation is based on a total of 108 interviews and meetings (see section 11 of annex), numerous visits of SDC-funded BE projects in Albania, Burkina Faso, Kosovo, Serbia, and Romania, a review of 113 SDC documents such as credit proposals, annual reports (country and regional level), entry proposals, CCM data sheets, CCM reports, cooperation or contribution strategies (country and regional level), project documentation and other relevant SDC texts, as well as an analysis of information collected from the relevant SDC partners, such as, for example, annual reports of SDC partners, evaluations on the SDC partners, or education sector strategies of recipient governments

1.2 Portfolio Analysis

During the Inception Report phase a portfolio analysis of SDC's spending (actual disbursement) during the period 2007-2014 was conducted. The analysis was carried out using the SAP database, which is SDC's main available source of data on the financial, thematic and geographic characteristics of SDC's portfolio. The portfolio analysis helps to identify priorities and trends in the agency's basic education initiatives as revealed through its actual expenditures. For the purposes of this evaluation, BE is considered to be all of SDC's initiatives that are classified as focusing on the following three subsectors in education: (1) formal basic education; (2) nonformal education; and (3) education policy. Detailed methodology and findings of the portfolio analysis can be found in Section 4 of the Inception Report. The following sections present a summary of the findings.

1.2.1 General Trends in SDC Bilateral Contribution to Basic Education, 2007-2014

In the definition of SDC, basic education comprises all programs that cater to the basic learning needs of persons regardless of age – child, youth or adult. BE thus encompasses more than just primary schooling. Although the scope of BE varies with individuals and countries, it usually covers the levels of formal pre-primary, primary and, increasingly, the first level of secondary education. It also includes various forms of "nonformal" education, such as adult literacy, "second-chance" education for children and youth who have never attended school or who dropped out early, education for working children, etc. These education programs frequently include aspects of Vocational Skills Development – VSD (SDC 2010: 5).

From 2007-2014 SDC's total education bilateral spending was CHF 529.4 million, of which CHF 302.5 million (57%) comprised the agency's expenditures in basic education (identified as the three education subsectors formal basic education, nonformal education and education policy). Figure 1 shows the distribution of SDC's bilateral spending in education from 2007 to 2014 by education subthemes. Spending in formal and non-formal BE comprised 34% of education expenditures and education policy- initiatives comprised 23% of spending. The following are summaries of general trends in SDC expenditures in basic education.

Figure 1: Distribution of SDC Spending in Education 2007-2014

Teacher training, sec. educ. 1%

Tertiary education 13%

Formal & nonformal basic education** 34%

Vocational training/skills dev 29%

Education policy 23%

Bilateral education spending for 2007-14 = CHF 529.4 million
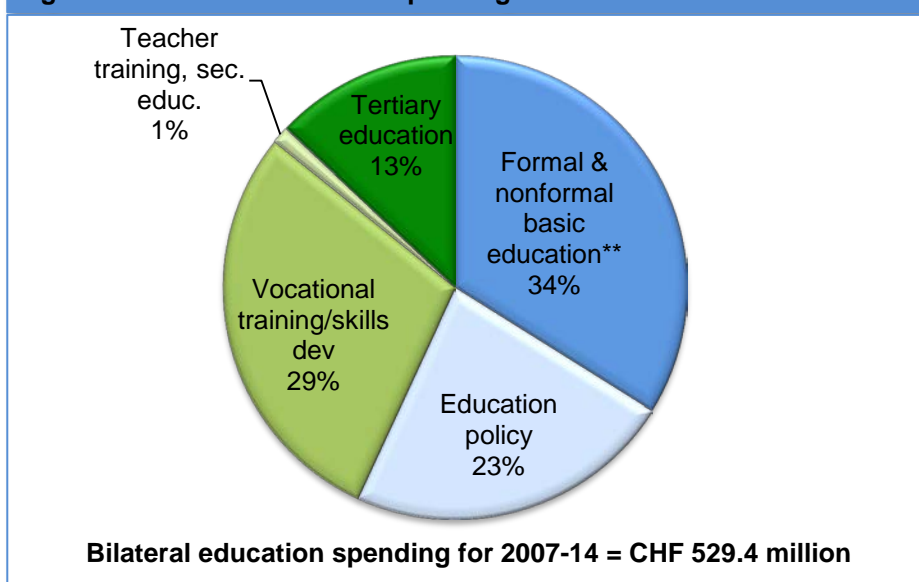
**Prior to 2012 these categories were "primary and secondary education."
Source: SDC SAP Database

- SDC basic education bilateral contributions to Africa was the highest (CHF 122.6 million). Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and Benin were the top four recipients of SDC bilateral aid for basic education. SDC disbursements to regional basic education initiatives totaled CHF 18.3 million during this period, and saw an increase in spending from CHF 0.7 million to 5.1 million in 2014.
- Asia and Oceania received CHF 58.7 million in SDC bilateral aid for basic education during the 2007-2014 period. Bangladesh, the Occupied Palestine Territories, Afghanistan and Myanmar were the top four individual recipient countries/territories. Regional aid to basic education totaled CHF 2.3 million for 2007-2014.
- SDC bilateral basic education contributions to Latin America totaled CHF 11.1 million from 2007 to 2014. The individual countries that received the largest amount of BE support were Haiti (CHF 7 million), Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador during this period.

1.2.2 Estimated SDC BE Spending in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

Following the 2012 approval of the *Parliamentary Message on International Cooperation 2013–2016*, Switzerland's overall aid for fragile and conflict-affected states was increased by 15 to 20 percent.[4] SDC estimates that about half of the countries and regions in which it is active are considered fragile and conflict-affected.[5] To estimate SDC's bilateral BE contribution to fragile and conflict-affected states, for the period 2007-2014, the evaluation analyzed expenditures in basic education (initiatives classified as having basic education

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[4] Source: SDC website: https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/fragile-contexts-and-prevention/engagement-fragile-contexts.html
[5] Source: SDC website: https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/fragile-contexts-and-prevention/sdc-work-fragile-contexts.html

as first, second and/or third priority focus) that operate under SDC's Humanitarian Aid organizational domain for key fragile and conflict affected states and regions, as well as basic education initiatives across other organizational domains, such as SDC's Regional Cooperation and Global Cooperation Domains for those states and regions.[6]

As detailed in Section 4 of the Inception Report, bilateral BE spending in fragile and conflict affected states and regions for 2007-2014 totaled CHF 89.0 million. Furthermore, BE spending in fragile and conflict affected states and regions increased from CHF 7.4 million in 2007 to CHF 13.5 million in 2014, with a high of CHF 18.8 million in 2012.

1.2.3 Estimated SDC Education Contributions to Key Multi-Sector Multilaterals

Multilateral cooperation is an important element of SDC's aid assistance in BE. SDC works primarily with 18 multilateral organizations, 13 of which are multilateral development organizations and 5 of which are multilateral humanitarian aid organizations. About 37% of all SDC funds are disbursed to multilateral organizations in the form of core contributions. Bilateral cooperation accounts for 63% of SDC funds, of which 20% are used for projects and programs implemented directly by multilateral organizations.[7]

Table 4 shows SDC's total core contribution to 8 of the 13 key multilateral organizations that engaged in education sector activities as identified by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC).[8] SDC's total contribution from 2007 to 2014 to these multilaterals totaled CHF 3.3 billion, with the World Bank's International Development Association and the African Development Bank receiving the largest share of SDC's core multilateral contributions (CHF 1.9 billion and 560 million, respectively).

Table 4 also shows the eight key multilateral organization's allocations *to education* as a percentage of their total spending. UNRWA has the highest share of allocated spending (58.6%) to education, followed by Asian Development Bank (9.7%). The evaluation estimated SDC's education contributions over the seven-year period to be CHF 253.3 million, with the highest estimated contribution to IDA (CHF 184.8 million) and UNRWA (CHF 52.3 million).

A central aim of Switzerland's/SDC's partnerships with multilateral organizations (as well as other partners such as Swiss and international NGOs that receive non-earmarked contributions) is to strengthen their operational systems by assessing the results and effectiveness of these institutional partnerships against the strategic goals and objectives defined for Swiss humanitarian and development aid in the *Parliamentary Message on International Cooperation 2013-16*. Towards this end, the Core Contribution Management (CCM) is an instrument to support and strengthen SDC's (1) results-oriented management and dialogue with partner organisations and to increase their organizational and development effectiveness; (2) results-based project cycle management; (3) evidence-based decision-making; (4) profile and predictability vis-à-vis the partner organization; (5) harmonization of results-orientated communication/dialogue within the concerned offices in the Federal Administration.

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[6] We also included expenditures classified under SDC's now defunct "E-Department" in order to accurately capture actual disbursements to basic education fragile states during the years 2007 and 2008.

[7] Source: SDC website:
https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/activities-projects/activities/multilateral-cooperation.html

[8] The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) was not included in this analysis because SCD contributions to GPE are considered by the agency, state accounting and OECD/DAC to be bilateral support.

Table 4: SDC Total and Estimated Education Contribution to Key Multilaterals, 2007-14			
Multilateral Organization	**Total SDC Contribution (CHF million)**	**Multilateral Education Spending as % of Total Spending**	**Estimated SDC Education Contribution, (CHF million)**
African Development Bank Fund (AfDB-Fund)	559.9	3.9%	21.9
Asian Development Bank Fund (AsDB-Fund)	101.7	9.7%	9.8
World Bank, International Development Association (IDA)	1,916.3	9.6%	184.8
Inter-American Development Bank Fund for Special Operations (IDB-FSO)	2.6	4.6%	0.1
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	75.1	0.8%	0.6
UN Development Programme (UNDP)	442.0	0.6%	2.6
UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)	161.0	6.6%	10.6
UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)	89.3	58.6%	52.3
Total	**3,347.9**		**282.7**

Source: SDC SAP Database

SDC conducted analyses of the 18 key multilaterals' 2014 CCM reports for this evaluation. Two questions guided the analysis: (1) What is <u>basic</u> education in the general theme of "education"? and (2) How broadly do we understand the <u>holistic</u> view of education?

The results of the CCM report analyses revealed that four multilaterals had focus areas (and in some instance concrete achievements) that were directly linked to the focus of this BE evaluation. These institutions were: UNRWA, UNICEF, Asia Development Bank, and IDA. The detailed analyses are in the Inception Report (see annex, section 1).

An additional analysis of SDC's education contribution to key international partners was conducted as part of the evaluation's desk study using data from credit information (rather than SAP). As Table 5 shows, SDC disbursed CHF 13.7 million in 2014 to ten key international partners in education of which over half (53%) was allocated to the Global Partnership for Education and one-third to UNESCO-affiliated institutions. The remaining funds were assigned to civil society organizations based in Switzerland and abroad as well as to two intergovernmental organizations that support activities in Francophone countries. It is important to bear in mind that the list also includes the organization RECI which strictly speaking does not constitute an international civil society but rather is a Swiss CSO. However, the moderate amount with which RECI is supported (CHF 108,774 in year 2014) does not significantly affect the findings on SDC's funding pattern. For this reason, RECI is kept in the list of SDC's key international partners in basic education.

Table 5: SDC's International Partners in Basic Education, 2014

Group	Organization	SDC Contribution (in CHF)	% Total Contribution	Group Total (in CHF)	% of Total
UNESCO	EFA GMR - Global Monitoring Report	600,000	4.4		
	IIEP - International Institute for Educational Planning	1,674,418	12.1	4,514,635	32.7
	UIL – Institute for Lifelong Learning	1,565,217	11.4		
	IBE – International Bureau of Education	675,000	4.9		
Civil Society	NORRAG – Network for policy research, review and advice on education and training	800,000	5.8		
	ICAE – International Council for Adult Education	337,500	2.5	1,246,274	9.0
	RECI – Réseau Suisse Education Coopération Internationale	108,774	0.8		
Fund	GPE – Global Partnership for Education	7,312,500	53.1	7,312,500	53.1
Intergovernmental (Francophonie)	CONFEMEN- Conférence des Ministres de l'Education des États et Gouvernments de la Francophonie	225,000	1.6	698,684	5.1
	MOOCS- Massive Open Online Course	473,684	3.4		
	Total	**13,772,093**	**100.0**	**13,772,093**	

Source: SDC, July 2015

1.2.4 Conclusions

The analysis of the SDC portfolio in BE over the period 2007 to 2014 yields a few interesting findings on SDC's priorities and aid selectivity.[9]

There has been a steady growth in SDC's annual contribution to basic education over the period 2007 to 2014. The majority of SDC education sector funding (57%) is allocated to BE projects, that is, to education projects that address formal basic education, nonformal basic education, and education policy.

There is a discrepancy between perception and actual allocation in education. In documents of the government and SDC, there is more talk of nonformal education and vocational skills-development project than of formal basic education. SDC's actual disbursements over the period 2007 to 2014, however, have moved towards formal basic education and support for education policy, that is, towards systemic educational reform. Almost half of SDC spending in education is for formal basic education (23%) and

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[9] See studies by Alberto Alesina (Harvard, Department of Economics) and David Dollar (World Bank, now Brookings Institution) who established the research field on aid selectivity; for example, A. Alesina & D. Dollar (2000). Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why? *Journal of Economic Growth, 5,* 33-63; D. Dollar & V. Levin (2006). The Increasing Selectivity of Foreign Aid, 1984-2003, *World Development, 34 (12),* 2034-2046. See also William Easterly & Tobias Pfutze (2008). Where does the money go? Best and worst practices in foreign aid. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 22 (2), 29–52.

education policy (23%). This too may positively comply with the international agreement, as formulated in the 2005 Paris Declaration, and confirmed in subsequent high-level international meetings, of aligning aid with countries' education sector strategies. Typically, these education sector strategies are developed—or to be more precise signed—by Ministries of Education alone (rather than in conjunction with Ministries of Labor, Social Affairs, or others) and therefore, for the better or worse, focus on formal education.

Education has remained a medium-range priority for SDC <u>but</u> basic education as medium for training and awareness building in non-education sectors increased visibly. The main funding priorities for SDC are agriculture and food security, civil participation and local governance, and water.[10] Nevertheless, education as a medium for training and awareness building has significantly increased. Starting in 2007, the classification system of SAP enabled projects to be listed in several sectors. Thus, a project could be entered exclusively in one of the six sub-sectors of education, or it could be entered, for example, as a health project with one of the educational sub-sectors as a second or third priority focus. Clearly, there is an increase of projects in non-education sectors in which basic education is used merely as a second or third priority focus (see Inception Report in the annex).

Basic education in West Africa is a priority followed by Europe as well as Asia and Oceania; Latin America is semi-orphaned. Most of SDC's bilateral aid is channeled to projects in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Benin). A distant second are countries in Europe, in particular Serbia, followed by Asia and Oceania, notably Bangladesh, Palestine (Occupied Territories), and Afghanistan. Even though Latin America is second in terms of overall bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA), the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean receive, with the exception of Haiti, much lower funding levels from SDC for their BE programs. The aid selectivity in BE reflects a dual commitment to fund low-income and lower-middle income countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East as well as countries that have close social ties to Switzerland due to migration. It is noticeable that in West Africa is prioritized and, in contrast, the continent of Latin America is a semi-orphan in terms of overall SDC contribution for BE to this part of the world.

SDC's core contribution to multilateral partners, in particular IDA increased significantly, and the contribution to the African Development Bank Fund has remained constant after a peak in 2009 and 2010. SDC's core contribution to multilateral aid in education has increased considerably, in particular to IDA. Over the period 2007-2014, close to 60% of total core contributions were allocated to IDA. The third-largest recipient, the African Development Bank experienced a decline in SDC funding since 2011. Switzerland is, despite its relatively small population size and its medium-range aid ratio (0.47% of the Gross National Income (GNI) as opposed to the UN target of 0.7%), an important international partner due to its actual aid volume.

SDC's BE bilateral contribution in fragile and conflict-affected areas increased considerably from 2007-2014. We estimated, BE support to fragile states and regions increased from CHF 7.4 million in 2007 to CHF 13.5 million in 2014, with a peak of CHF 18.8 million in 2012*.* Clearly, the Swiss Federal Government's decision in 2012 to increase aid to fragile and conflict-affected states is reflected in this visible increase of BE spending.

SDC's contribution to international organizations that specifically work in education is with an annual disbursement of CHF 13.7 million relatively small. More than half of these funds were assigned to the most important multilateral actor in education: the Global Partnership for Education. One-third of the funds were spent for four UNESCO affiliated institutions: Global Monitoring Report, IIEP, IBE, and UIL.

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[10] Source: Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit und Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft (2014). *Statistik 2013. Internationale Zusammenarbeit der Schweiz.* Bern: DEZA und SECO; see Grafik 8 on page 23.

1.3 Limitations of the Evaluation

There are four limitations that the evaluation study is facing.

1. ***Sampling related biases.*** The nine cases were chosen using purposive sampling criteria, which were discussed and agreed upon during the first CLP meeting, rather than at random.

2. ***Over-reporting of more recent projects, under-reporting of older projects.*** Inevitably, the current SDC staff and SDC's partners had more to say about ongoing projects than on projects that had already been completed. It was difficult to accurately reconstruct details of past projects given the periodical turnover of Swiss staff and changes in the local staff at the SCO. Nevertheless, the portfolio analysis covers the period 2007 to 2014 and the qualitative analyses address as much as possible also projects that have been completed.

3. ***Limited access to country and contextual knowledge.*** In the case of the field-based case studies, the evaluation team consisted of international evaluators as well as one local researcher. Local researchers ensured that the data were collected in a culture-sensitive manner and that the findings were interpreted contextually. In the absence of local counterparts for the regular and desk plus studies, the evaluation team relied on SDC program officers and CLP members for assistance with interpretation of findings.

4. ***Interpreting SAP data accurately.*** SDC works with a comprehensive data management system that is continuously being adjusted and is detailed to the extent that it often requires insider knowledge to accurately interpret the data. There are, however, glitches in the system that are addressed later in the report (see section 3.2 of this report).

1.4 Organization of the Evaluation Report

The evaluation team presented the preliminary findings at the third meeting of the CLP. It was agreed that the evaluation report should focus on lessons learned and recommendations rather than on a detailed presentations of findings related to the indicative key questions. The next section presents *existing best practices* within SDC that could be shared better within SDC (section 2). Section 3 consists of general recommendations that apply to programs, referred to as *proposed areas of improvement*.

2 Five Best Practices

This section presents a few practices that SDC staff and partners have unequivocally identified as good practices that are implemented in some but not in all of SDC's BE programs. The report lists five such "best practices" in detail because they represent areas where SDC is able to learn from positive experiences that already have been made within the organization.

Best Practice 1

2.1 The Triple Comparative Advantage of Switzerland in Basic Education

What the Swiss dual vocational training system *currently is* for SDC's VET programs, bilingual education, community participation, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) *could be* for SDC's BE programs: a Swiss comparative advantage that comes with Swiss know-how, institutional capacity, and shared understanding. The commonality between these three areas of Swiss expertise is its salutary effects on the inclusion of the hard to reach and most excluded. In several countries, SDC already is the lead donor in these areas where Switzerland has a great deal to offer.

2.1.1   Bilingual Education in Burkina Faso

For more than two decades, SDC successfully supported bilingual education in francophone West Africa; first in alphabetization courses for adults and then for adolescents (9 – 15 year olds) who either never enrolled or dropped out of school. Study after study confirm that, regardless of age, students learn more effectively if they *first* acquire literacy and numeracy in their mother tongue and then at a later stage immerse themselves into the second language. In fact, the studies carried out in West Africa show that adolescents in the SDC supported bilingual programs achieve the learning goals in a much shorter time period than those who were exclusively taught in French. Especially in rural areas, there is neither an interest of parents nor a supply of teachers for French monolingual schooling. Without any doubt, bilingual education accounts not only for more effective learning, but also increases access to education in rural areas and is one of the best dropout prevention measures.

Given the promising results in alphabetization programs for adults and adolescents, SDC also increased its support for bilingual education in regular government schools. In Burkina Faso, for example, the first attempt to introduce bilingual education was with the education reform of 1979-1984 but it was interrupted in 1983. In 1994, a joint cooperation between l'Œuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière (OSEO; renamed SOLIDAR) and the Ministry of Education, experimented a new formula of accelerated bilingual education for primary students (using the country's three most spoken languages, Mooré, Dioula, and Fulfulde) inspired by the methods first used in adult alphabetization centers.[11] Legally, parents are given the right to choose the language of instruction for their children, but in practice there is a scarcity of bilingual primary schools in Burkina Faso. For this reason, SDC and its institutional partner SOLIDAR have actively supported the establishment and expansion of bilingual primary schools.

As Table 6 shows, the number of students enrolled in bilingual primary schools increased exponentially since the beginning of the millennium. In 2001, there were nationwide only 3,278 students (of which 1,492 girls) enrolled in such schools. There were ten times as many students enrolled in such schools twelve years later: in 2013, a total of 30,524 primary students (of which 15,111 girls) benefited from having their mother tongue as language of instruction. SDC and its partner SOLIDAR helped establish a special department within MENA, Direction du Continuum d'Education Multilingue (DCEM), that oversees bilingual and multilingual schools. In most cases, these schools used to be monolingual (referred to in Burkina Faso as *"classique"*) and chose, driven by community demand, to transform into bilingual or multillingual schools using innovative pedagogical approaches. The bilingual primary schools are funded from the government budget and are thus financially sustainable.

Table 6: Bilingual Primary Schools in Burkina Faso, 2001 - 2013			Enrollments		
Year	Schools	Classes	*Boys*	*Girls*	*TOTAL*
2001	40	78	1,786	1,492	3,278
2006	114	374	7,578	6,684	14,262
2010	118	N/A	11,560	10,748	22,308
2013	167	677	15,413	15,111	30,524

Source: SOLIDAR (19 May, 2015).

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[11]   Kaboré, A.(2012). *Disparités de l'enseignement primaire et innovation pédagogique au Burkina Faso*. Revue International d'éducation de Sévres. Avril 2012. P 71-82

Internationally, the territorial principle of multilingualism in Switzerland is the rule rather than the exception. The only difference is, however, that many educational systems in other parts of the world cannot rely on the political will, the financial resources, or the capacity to actually offer education in the languages of its population.

2.1.2 Community Participation in Roma Inclusion Programs in the Western Balkans Region

"Proximity" is a term that is frequently used at SDC. Indeed, it is a key feature of the basic education programs observed in this independent evaluation. Each and every basic education program was culturally sensitive or "close" to the community and had put measures in place to enhance community participation. Two examples from the Roma inclusion programs in the Western Balkans region illustrate how SDC defines proximity and community participation: the housing component in Serbia and the employment of community liaison staff in Serbia and Albania.[12]

First, within the housing component of the migration program in Serbia, the HEKS/EHO consortium utilizes a "Dweller-Driven" approach to upgrading houses in Roma settlements. The project promotes active participation from the Roma families in the decision-making process for rehabilitating the housing structures in place of being passive receivers of development funding. Families work with project staff to plan renovation and building of new housing structures and are encouraged to mobilize their own resources to supplement funds provided by the project for further upgrading. In many cases after reaching initial planning agreement families receive funding and specifications on building standards from the program, but manage the actual construction process on their own. Between 2008-2012, HEKS/EHO successfully improved living conditions of approximately 3,000 Roma in 13 settlements. HEKS/EHO have also mobilized Roma communities to elect community leaders to participate in advocacy for social service provision with the local government institutions. This has supported the linkages between the needs of the Roma communities and relevant service provision by government agencies.

The second example deals with the employment of pedagogue assistants that are from the minority community. Most Roma inclusion programs in the Western Balkans region work very closely with the Roma community to help them address relevant issues of discrimination and exclusion. The education components in all programs work with Roma staff members to liaise between government services and Roma families. For example, in Serbia, pedagogue assistants, typically individuals belonging to the Roma community, are placed within the school to work with school directors and teachers to help them understand the needs of the Roma children and best support the educational activities of the students. These pedagogue assistants also work with the families of the Roma children to problem solve any issues that hinder their school attendance or mitigate their learning outcome. Social workers in Albania play a similar role working with both the school authorities and the families of the Roma and Egyptian students. Social workers in Albania provide additional support to the Roma and Egyptian families to improve income generation opportunities and their economic conditions. They facilitate access to Vocational Education Training for the youth in the Roma and Egyptian families so they can break the poverty cycle and increase their future income generating opportunities. For families that face exceptional economic hardship, the social workers support the families with economic initiatives for income generation. For example, families are provided with sewing machine and kit to start their own small-scale income generating activity. Over the period 2013-14, 96 women and men started small economic activity with support from the program. Their number is still low, but great importance is given in SDC to such vocational skill development programs. Therefore, it is expected that the number of beneficiaries will increase over the next few years.

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[12] Referred to as "pedagogue assistants" in Serbia and Albania.

Overall, the Swiss education system has extensive experience with community participation in schools.[13] The members of the school boards are elected representatives of the community. Such a system of "social accountability," in which school directors and teachers are accountable towards the school community is considered a best practice in international educational development. It ensures ownership by the community, strengthens school-based management, enhances fiscal transparency, reduces financial leakage, and overall leads to a more efficient and effective governance of schools. Therefore, different donors support community participation for different reasons: for example, the Nordic donors advocate for multi-year school development plans, the development banks for grant-for-schools programs, and USAID for school-based management; all programs that require in one way or the other community participation or, more specifically, well-functioning school boards.

2.1.3 Education for Sustainable Development in Mongolia

Another comparative advantage of SDC is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). SDC Mongolia has launched a CHF 13.3 million ESD program (2014 – 2020) that draws on schools and communities as catalysts for change. In line with UNESCO's conception of sustainable development, the program in Mongolia takes into account natural (environmental), political, economic, and social dimensions for teaching students skills and knowledge that are relevant for a sustainable development. The program is co-funded by two ministries—Ministry of Education, Science and Culture as well as the Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism—and is implemented with the support of civil society organizations in Mongolia. Figure 2 shows the UNESCO definition of the ESD, utilized in the SDC Education for Sustainable Development program in Mongolia.

Strikingly, the UNESCO definition of ESD that SDC uses is remarkably similar to the notion of Education for Sustainable Development utilized in the curriculum reform "Lehrplan 21" (English: Curriculum 21) implemented in German speaking Cantons of Switzerland. The latter lists five thematic entry points (German: Zugangsbereiche) for teaching the common core of sustainable development (marked in yellow): global learning, environmental education, political education including the learning of human rights, health, and economics.

A comment on how the three areas of comparative advantage relate to the overall goal of SDC—serving the most excluded—may be in order here: It is not coincidental that the BE programs that support bilingual education, community participation, and ESD are particularly geared towards those segments in the population that are most excluded. The evaluation shows that programs with such a focus are particularly important for schools in rural and semi-urban areas where the monolingual focus and the lack of community participation lead to non-enrollment and dropout out students, and where land degradation, deforestation, and other natural disasters are push factors that cause rural flight,

Figure 2: The UNESCO Conception of Education for Sustainable Development Used in the SDC Program in Mongolia (2014 – 2020)

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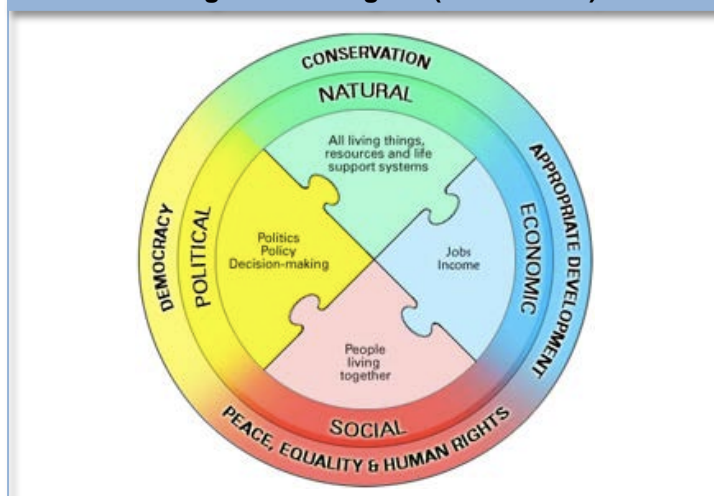
[13] German: Schulpflege; French: commission scolaire

rapid urbanization, and urban poverty. Thus, it is not a matter of "exporting" Swiss values or experiences, but drawing on shared values, capacities and resources that exist in Switzerland to serve the most excluded in other parts of the world.

The evaluation found that SDC mostly funds bilingual education, community participation, and ESD *outside* the regular curriculum, in afterschool classes, or in donor-funded centers. As will be reiterated in the last section of the report, there is an untapped potential to close the innovation gap between nonformal and formal education and assist governments to institutionalize innovative practices in the regular education system.

Recommendation 1: SDC would be ideally suited to support governments that acknowledge multilingualism as an individual right and a social enrichment but lack financial and human resources to embark on a multilingual future. This is considered one of the comparative advantages of Switzerland's conceptualization of cooperation and development in education.

Recommendation 2: The Swiss system of school boards corresponds internationally to the much-acclaimed "best practice" of social accountability and community participation. This corresponds to the second comparative advantage of SDC. In education, "good governance" translates not only into the devolution of decision-making authority from the national to the local level but in addition also into community participation, or more specifically into the establishment of school boards. For this reason, community participation should possibly be treated a transversal theme in all education programs.

Recommendation 3: There are two reasons why SDC would be well positioned to advance education for sustainable development. First, the current Swiss curriculum reform, called "Lehrplan 21" has built capacity in Swiss institutions on how to teach students skills and knowledge in sustainable development. Second, SDC's work in the global South and East entails in great part a commitment to projects that focus on agriculture, food security, water, climate change, environment, and other themes that are directly related to the upcoming global development agenda. The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals will increase the demand for projects that use education as a tool for public awareness and action on topics that are related to sustainable development.

Recommendation 4: The Swiss educational systems is known for its commitment to lifelong learning. Numerous bridge programs ("passerelles") at critical interfaces of the education system ensure that individuals are able to complete their basic education, vocational training, or academic study regardless of their age and life circumstances. In the development context, such an inclusive approach is ideally suited for reaching marginalized and disenfranchised groups that are left out or drop out from primary or secondary education.

Recommendation 5: Taking into account the Swiss comparative advantage—notably in the areas of bilingual education, community participation, education for sustainable development, inclusion of marginalized groups—entails drawing on capacity, experiences and shared values in Switzerland to draw greater attention to the most excluded. It will enhance the involvement of Swiss experts as well as Swiss institutions.

2.2   Inter-Sectoral Collaboration

From all examined cases, the humanitarian aid programs at SDC and the Roma Education programs in the Western Balkans region apply most rigorously an inter-sectoral approach. The two case studies of humanitarian aid in Afghanistan and Haiti clearly reflect such an international "best practice," as inscribed in the *INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery* (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies). In addition, Haiti is a good example of how smoothly the transition from an emergency to a recovery operation and from recovery to development was planned. The program officers in charge were able to sustain the innovations, networks, and resources that were built at the early stage. The SDC-funded masonry program led not only to new and safer schools in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake but also helped professionalize masonry by establishing qualification standards and subsequently institutionalizing them in training institutions in Haiti.

In the Western Balkans region, SDC followed EU standards on social inclusion by combining education with employment, housing, health care and other social protection services. Through an inter-sectoral approach SDC programs have found synergy between the education sector and other social development sectors to take advantage of coherent and holistic community development. Such an inter-sectoral intervention approach resembles the holistic education approach also found in other SDC-funded programs but moves beyond it. SDC programs in each of the countries either incorporate multiple sectors within one program or within the overall Roma programs portfolio strategic approach. In each context it is acknowledged that social inclusion of disenfranchised communities is a complex process and requires tackling multiple issues and overcoming the lack of access to all public services to achieve full integration of the communities.

In Albania, the SCO approaches all country programs and the SDC regional programs as part of its social protection and inclusion strategy. Two of the three country programs (implemented by UNICEF and UN Country Team) work with various line ministries in the Albanian government to ensure that social services and social protection policy and practice incorporate Roma and Egyptian communities. The third program, Alternated Education and Vocation Training program, primarily focuses on Roma and Egyptian children's access to mainstream schools, but through a multi-layered approach. Program staff works with the school to support integration of Roma and Egyptian children, and also with families to solve any issues with school attendance. Staff works with individual families to alleviate the burden of poverty through provision of vocational education training and income generating initiatives.

In Romania, three projects are implemented within the Thematic Fund for Roma Inclusion of the EU Enlargement Framework Agreement. All three programs are implemented by consortia composed of Swiss and local Romanian organizations contributing their expertise in multiple sectors – education, health and community development. All three projects utilize their inter-sectoral interventions for further advocacy at the national level to improve social services and inclusion of Roma communities.

In Serbia, two programs include an inter-sectoral approach within the program. The HEKS/EHO program works mostly at the community and local institutional levels to improve the living conditions and government services available to Roma communities. The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) works with all line ministries and their local institutions to improve policy development and implementation for social inclusion. Although, the Joint Program in Serbia works primarily in the education sector at both the local and policy levels, it also includes health sector and employment issues at the local level in order to tackle social exclusion problems at large.

The SCO in Kosovo implements two Roma inclusion programs, both funded through the Migration Partnership. Both programs take an inter-sectoral approach to social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, with education being one of the components.

The program implemented by Caritas operates in one municipality of Kosovo aiming to provide permanent housing for the community along with improving access to public services like education, health and opportunities for employment and economic activity. HEKS, TdH and VoRAE have implemented the second program in nine municipalities with four components focusing on advocacy for access to public services, education, housing and employability.

> **Recommendation 6:** There is room for enhancing inter-sectoral collaboration in the regional programs of SDC: in particular, in adult literacy programs but also in non-education programs where education is merely identified as a secondary or tertiary domain. Examples of effective inter-sectoral collaboration exist in SDC's programs that target European countries and countries of humanitarian aid.

Best Practice 3

2.3 Voice and Impact

The evaluation estimates that SDC spent CHF 112.5 million for basic education programs in 2014. It uses three channels to finance BE programs:
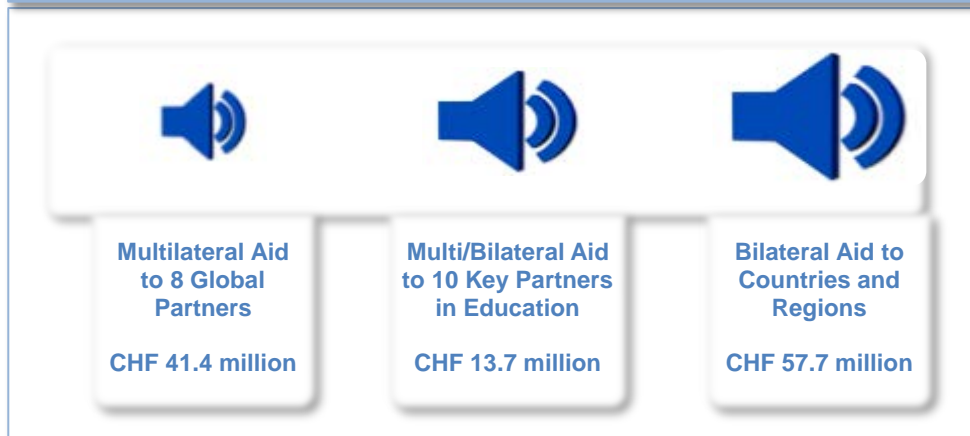
1. ***Bilateral aid: CHF 57.7 million.*** In 2014, SDC spent CHF 57.7 million to support BE programs, which are closely aligned with Switzerland's vision of development and cooperation, its country as well as its regional cooperation strategies.[14] In most countries and regions, SDC functions as a funder, rather than as an implementer, of bilateral aid. One quarter of the bilateral aid is allocated to the Western Africa region: Of the CHF 57.7 million, CHF 11.9 million was disbursed for national programs in Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, and Benin, and CHF 3.5 million for regional programs in the Western Africa region. Another priority in BE is fragile and conflict affected states and regions. In 2014, SDC spent CHF 13.5 million of the total amount of CHF 57.7 million in such states and regions.

2. ***Multi/bilateral aid to key partners in education ("multi-bi"): CHF 13.7 million.*** SDC selected ten international organizations in the field of education that reflect most closely Switzerland's vision of development and cooperation.[15] In 2014, it allocated CHF 13.7 to these ten educational partners, of which slightly over half was allocated to the Global Partnership for Education, one-third was given to four UNESCO affiliated institutes (GMR, IBE, IIEP, UIL), and the rest was used to support civil society organizations (NORRAG, ICAE, RECI) or intergovernmental organizations devoted to programs benefiting francophone countries (CONFEMEN, MOOCs).

3. ***Multilateral aid through global partners: CHF 41.1 million for education (estimate).*** Switzerland actively supports the international development agenda, previously the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with un-earmarked contributions. In 2014, SDC supported eight key multilateral partners (World Bank/IDA, UNDP, African Development Bank, UNICEF, UNRWA, Asian Development Bank, and International Fund for Agricultural Development) in the amount CHF 450.4 million. The evaluation estimates that these eight multilateral partners spent CH 41.1 on education.[16]

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[14] See Table 1 in the Inception Report. The figures also includes aid to initiatives in which BE was classified as 3nd and/or 3rd priority in all sectors.

[15] See Table 5 in this report.

[16] See Table 4 in the Inception Report. Note that the figure includes all sub-sectors of education, that is, is not restricted to basic education only.

Figure 3: SDC's Voice and Leverage by Funding Channel

Multilateral Aid to 8 Global Partners	Multi/Bilateral Aid to 10 Key Partners in Education	Bilateral Aid to Countries and Regions
CHF 41.4 million	CHF 13.7 million	CHF 57.7 million

It is important to keep all three funding channels in mind when developing visions, strategies or guidelines in basic education.

In terms of a side comment, there exists a fourth and fifth funding channel that is underexplored and deserves much greater attention within the organization even though channels 4 and 5 typically are not considered core to an education strategy:

- Funding Channel 4: non-education programs at SDC that select education as a 2nd and/or 3rd priority. As shown in the portfolio analysis (see section 1.2.1 as well as the Inception Report in the annex), SDC spent in 2014 CHF 6 million in such programs.
- Funding Channel 5: non-education programs at SDC that use education as a medium for public instruction and awareness building without identifying education as a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd priority. In such programs, SDC funds educational initiatives even though it does not regard education as a priority. The evaluation estimates that educational programs in water, agricultural, food security, and other SDC priority areas exceed by far the financial volume of programs that are explicitly declared as educational programs; yet there is little collaboration with SDC's education network.

Naturally, the three principal funding channels, mentioned above, have their own opportunities and challenges for implementing the Swiss vision of development and cooperation. Figure 3 shows the continuum between the three funding channels in terms of having a *voice*, that is, in terms of having leverage on the priorities established for basic education programs. SDC has the greatest leverage in bilateral aid, that is, in those programs for which it makes the funding available, and has the least to say when it contributes to global partners.

The evaluation found that SDC pursues three strategies to share its development priorities ("voice") in the larger donor community and to enhance the impact of SDC program at country and regional level. The may be summarized as voice and impact by using (i) governance, (ii) coalition building, and (iii) and advocacy. In contrast to larger bilateral donors, notably the US, UK, and Japan, Switzerland exerts caution in applying a fourth approach to being heard and having an impact: (iv) leverage by bilateralization of multilateral aid.

2.3.1 Voice and Impact by Governance

Table 7 lists examples of how SDC successfully manages to exert a leadership role at national, regional, and global level. The three cases listed below merely represent a few examples of SDC's active involvement in governance matters of global partners (example: UNRWA), key international partners in education (example: GPE), and as lead donor at national level (example: Burkina Faso).

Table 7: Leverage by Governance: Examples for the Three Types of Funding Modalities		
Type of Funding	**Example**	**Description**
Multilateral Aid through 8 Global Partners	UNRWA	Key role in Advisory Commission, Subcommittee; Commissioner General is Swiss national
Multi/Bilateral Aid to 10 Partners in Education	GPE	Board Member, representing constituency 1: Switzerland, Belgium, Luxemburg, Netherlands
Bilateral Aid to Countries and Regions	Burkina Faso	Lead Donor (donor coordination); Chair of Working Group on Nonformal Education

With the exception of GPE where Switzerland is considered a small but active donor (Swiss contributions amount to less than 2% of GPE's budget), SDC tends to be among the top ten donors in agencies or organizations in which it assumes a leadership role. For example, Switzerland is the 8th largest financial contributor to UNRWA's General Fund and has historically been one of its top 10 supporters. In Burkina Faso, Switzerland is the largest donor in nonformal education and a long-term and reliable donor, albeit of moderate size, in the education sector in general.

2.3.2 Voice and Impact by Coalition Building

The alliances and coalitions that SDC builds vary by region, country, and multilateral organization. In almost all BE programs that the evaluation investigates, alliances were generated with like-minded donors; some in a more formalized manner and some more informally. The evaluation found that SDC sees, for example, the UK and USA as like-minded donors for educational programs of UNRWA; Germany, Sweden and Norway as like-minded donors that support international agencies in education; or, in the past, could strongly rely on its alliance with Netherlands for all its bilingual and nonformal education programs in West Africa. Without any doubt, alliances and coalition-building change over time and are strongly context and program specific, yet they are an effective tool for enhancing leverage and impact. SDC's Afghanistan programs serve as a good case in point to show the importance of alliance and coalition building.

In Afghanistan SDC has co-financed all major education programs with other bilateral and multi-lateral donors, with SDC funding either a specific program component or activities in specific provinces/district (see Table 8). All the programs have common overall goals that all donors support and knowledge is shared among them.

The Afghanistan Case Study Report explains in greater detail the various programs, listed in Table 8, in which SDC participates in collaboration with other donors.

2.3.3 Voice and Impact by Advocacy

There are two examples from SDC's immediate past that best demonstrate how SDC successfully supports advocacy work that helps elevate the Swiss development and cooperation vision to an international level: one is the additional credit for ICAE (International Council for Adult Education) to advocate and lobby for adult education and life-long learning in the post-2015 SDG debates and to make these concerns visible during the 2015 World Education Forum, held in Incheon, Korea, in May 2015. [18]

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[17] Exact disbursement data from other donors is not available. The numbers have been derived from SDC documents.

[18] See 7F-5822.03, SDC: Contribution to the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Additional Credit (01.01.2015 – 31.12.2015).

Table 8: SDC Joint Contribution to Multi-Donor Education Programing			
Program Title	Additional Donors	SDC Actual Expenditure by 2013 (in CHF)	Approximate total Program Funding Committed[19]
GSSP	AKF, CIDA, Norwegian Embassy, NZAID, USAID	5.2 Million	USD 15 Million
BEPA	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	1.4 Million	EUR 19.7 Million
AEPO	AKF, Belgian PO, DFID, Dutch Embassy, EC, EU, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NRC, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNIFEM	437,500	USD 6.8 Million
YEP	Norwegian Government, SIDA	500,000	CHF 2.8 Million

Another is the so-called Back-Up Initiative (Building Alliances, Creating Knowledge and Updating Partners) within GPE, in which SDC collaborates with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). As mentioned in the previous section, Switzerland holds a seat on the board of GPE and is, according to the evaluation, known for being vocal in calling for a more comprehensive notion of education and for advocating for a more participatory approach to establishing reform priorities. The participatory approach, propelled by the delegate from Switzerland, has already yielded first positive results, not least due to the BACK-UP Initiative. BACK-UP was created by BMZ (Bundesamt für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit) and is administered by GIZ. To date, Switzerland is the only other donor who supports the initiative with a contribution of CHF 2 million over the period October 2014 until December 2015. The initiative aims at building the capacity of local, national, and regional partners from African countries, both from governments and civil society organizations, to actively participate in identifying reform priorities and to speak up during GPE board meetings. According to the interviewed GPE representative, the BACK-UP Initiative has had a great impact on board members from developing countries; they now speak up during meetings and actively participate in shaping the agenda of GPE.

2.3.4 Voice and Impact by Bilateralization of Multilateral Aid

Different from other bilateral donors, SDC was up to now reluctant to join the trend to "bilateralize" multilateral aid.[19] It has not favored results-based contracting or earmarked contributions nor has it requested excessive annual reporting by its multilateral partners; all requirements that tend to boost administrative cost and paralyze the work of multilateral agencies, especially smaller ones. The interviewed representatives of the five largest multilateral partners in education had only praise for SDC's intervention, cooperation and communication approach. Not one negative comment was uttered. They used flattering language such as, "SDC has a relationship of trust with us," "SDC is involved but not interfering," "SDC is attentive" and "SDC always provides prompt feedback on our proposals; in fact sometimes in too much detail"; these are all expressions of the high regard for SDC as a reliable, professional and active partner.

The only instances of conditionality for further funding were found in the Core Contribution Management (CCM) tool. By all means they represent "soft," supportive and effective types of conditionality. In the case of the UNESCO affiliated institutions UIL and IIEP, for example, SDC provided additional funding to help develop solid data-based mid-term strategies for the next few years. In the case of UNRWA, SDC supported a project for

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19 See Piera Totora and Suzanne Steensen (2014). Making earmarked funding more effective: Current *practices and a way forward.* Paris: OECD Development Co-operation Directorate.

resource mobilization. Finally, in the case of UNESCO IBE SDC insisted, along with other bilateral donors, to reform IBE's inefficient government structure and reduce the number of board members from 28 to 12 members. In all these cases, SDC provided additional funds to help remedy the shortcomings in strategic planning, resource mobilization, or management that the multilateral partners were exhibiting.

> **Recommendation 7:** SDC has successfully increased its impact and voice by means of participation in governance structures of relevant partners, coalition building with like-minded donors, and advocacy for Swiss visions of development and cooperation. It is important to continue, and possibly expand, funding for these kinds of collaborative activities and make them better known by means of better public relations and communication strategies at SDC.
>
> **Recommendation 8:** SDC's impact and voice is greatest in bilateral aid and smallest in multilateral organizations. Similarly, the greater the financial contribution, the more impact and voice. Therefore, SDC may consider reducing the number of international organizations in basic education ("multi-bi") it supports and simultaneously increase the funding level for those it prioritizes.
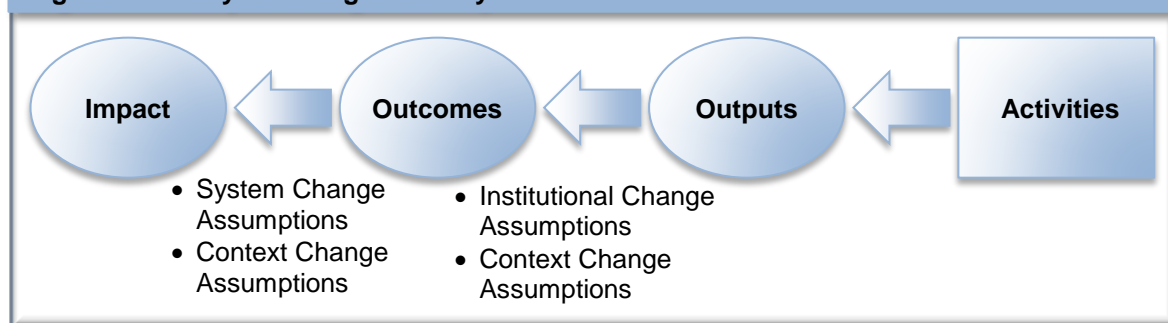
2.4 Impact Orientation and Theory of Change

Best Practice 4

The *Parliamentary Message on International Cooperation 2013-2016* prioritizes poverty reduction as a major goal of Swiss international cooperation. In line with this goal, all Swiss government funded programs internationally are meant to contribute towards poverty reduction, which is a challenging "result" to measure as it may be realized in the remote future. To measure project contribution to poverty reduction, SDC field handbook recommends the use of Impact Hypothesis or Theory of Change. Theory of Change is meant to be used for Project Cycle Management process - design, monitoring, reflection and impact evaluation.

Theory of Change is a way to define how the expected institutional and system change, like poverty reduction, is supposed to take place through project activities. It should explicitly state the cause-effect relationship between the project activities and project goal. The focus of the reflection in the project therefore becomes the project outcome rather than the outputs of the designed activities. During the project-planning phase, a Theory of Change approach works backwards from expected project impact/goal to outcome to outputs (see Figure 4). During the planning phase stakeholders define the logical change pathway on how the program activity process would lead to the impact i.e. system change. Joint reflection by the stakeholder on the change process or pathway is a way to reach shared consensus and make explicit the values, beliefs and assumptions for the given project. There is an emphasis to explicitly define the change process assumptions that are outside the control of the project. This reflection process raises the discussion and reporting of the project from activity and output level to outcome and impact level.[20]

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[20] SDC (2014). How to note on Impact Hypothesis. SDC Field Handbook. Quality Assurance.

Figure 4: Theory of Change Pathway

Impact
- System Change Assumptions
- Context Change Assumptions

Outcomes

Outputs
- Institutional Change Assumptions
- Context Change Assumptions

Activities

An explicit Theory of Change should be the basis of a project logframe. However, in most cases logframes become a "stand alone" documentation exercise with a focus on elaborating indicators for project outcomes and outputs, instead of a tool for reflection on the change process. At closer examination, many outcomes are in practice formulated in terms outputs. However, when the focus of project monitoring is outcomes, the specific activities become flexible and can be modified during the project cycle management if they do not yield the expected periodic outcomes. Periodic reflection on the explicit project assumptions also helps evaluate whether the planned project activities are realistic and relevant in reaching project outcomes.

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (SIPRU) program in Serbia uses Theory of Change approach in place of a logframe exercise. The program staff believe that in a logframe design, activities are assumed to be both *necessary* and *sufficient* to achieve the results, however, this is not realistic in system change context where the environment is dynamic and often out of the control of program staff. The overall goal of SIPRU is "improved social inclusion in Serbia."[21] Under this goal, the program outlines thirteen expected outcomes and makes assumptions behind reaching these goals explicit.

The periodic program monitoring report for SIPRU assesses the following aspects:

- the extent to which each of the outcomes have been achieved
- the extent to which the program activities are contributing to these outcomes
- the extent to which other actions are contributing to achieving these outcomes (or preventing their achievement)
- an analysis of the program approach together with any recommendations for new or adjusted activities for the following year

This level of analysis is expected to inform the mid-term evaluation of the program and adjust activities accordingly in order to reach to program outcomes and overall goal.

> **Recommendation 9:** A Theory of Change approach in conjunction with logframe design—currently used in some divisions of SDC but not in others— could be used in most SDC projects to enhance institutionalization of SDC interventions at organizational and institutional level. The Theory of Change enables SDC to think "big" and more long-term and to keep the broader outcomes of a project in mind even if adaptations of the project design may prove to be necessary over the course of the project.

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[21] SIPRU Project Document Annex 1 (see Case Study Report on Roma Education in the Western Balkans Region).

2.5   Diffusion of Innovation

Best Practice 5

For the purpose of understanding collaboration and diffusion of innovation amongst SDC-funded partners, the evaluation interview protocol included a social network analysis instrument (see Inception Report in the annex). Each responding organization was asked to indicate collaborators in the field as well as organizations with important qualities to policy implementation (reliability, innovation, efficiency, sustainable impact, responsiveness to local needs, gender sensitivity, exhibiting good governance). The evaluation refers to such a networks as "communities of best practice" because the organizations select each other based on positive attributes or best practices in the respective context. Figures 5 and 6 present the findings from the social network analyses in Burkina Faso and in Romania. They show the communities of best practices, as identified by the interviewed SDC partners. Both social network analysis figures demonstrate a successful diffusion of innovation in the SDC BE programs: SDC's common practice of contracting Swiss institutional, regional, global, or national partners that have in turn established a consortium with, or subcontracted, local implementation partners is effective for a diffusion of innovation.

- Figure 5 shows that SCO Burkina Faso directly collaborates with 40 organizations. However, responding organizations were able to nominate other organizations—that is, to expand the boundaries of their network—in their responses. Indeed, the final list of organizations included in the analysis comprises 81 organizations. The fact that 81 organizations, almost all of them based in Burkina Faso, directly or indirectly (with one degree of separation) collaborate with, and in most cases are financially supported by, SDC is impressive. If collaborators of collaborators (two degrees of separation) would be listed in a complete network analysis, the network would be exponentially larger.
- The same diffusion of innovation applies to the work of the Swiss Contribution Office in Romania. It is especially visible for the consortium built by the institutional partner Terre des Hommes (TdH, see Figure 6). TdH collaborates with organizations that otherwise would not be part of SDC's wider network. The fact that each contractual partner works with three to five local implementation partners accounts for a wide dissemination of services and best practices.

Two critical comments for further exploration and discussion may be appropriate here: Even though SDC's partnership models visibly enhance the effective diffusion of innovation, the dependency from SDC funding and the problem of "clique formation" are not resolved:

1. ***Donor-Dependent Networks***: Both network analyses, depicted in Figures 5 and 6 also demonstrate that SDC or DDC (or SCO or PMU) are the center of the networks "holding" the wide network together. Most links are established through SDC, SCO or SDC-supported coordination units (e.g., Program Management Unit). The network is therefore not stable and not likely to survive once the center is removed or, more concretely, once SDC program funding has ended.

2. ***Competition over Collaboration***: The network analyses also show that there are distinct subgroups and cliques within the network in which the SDC contractors function as a hub for the wider network of peripheral groups. In Burkina Faso, this is clearly discernible in the subgroups held together or funded by APESS (Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage au Sahel et en Savanne) and APENF (Association pour la Promotion de L'Éducation Non-Formelle), both civil society organizations that receive SDC funding. There is little learning, exchange of best practices, or collaboration going on *between* SDC's partners. This may be attributed to the fact that SDC's partners, in particular institutional, local, national and regional partners compete with each other over securing external funding from SDC.

Figure 5: Social Network Analysis in Burkina Faso - Communities of Best Practices
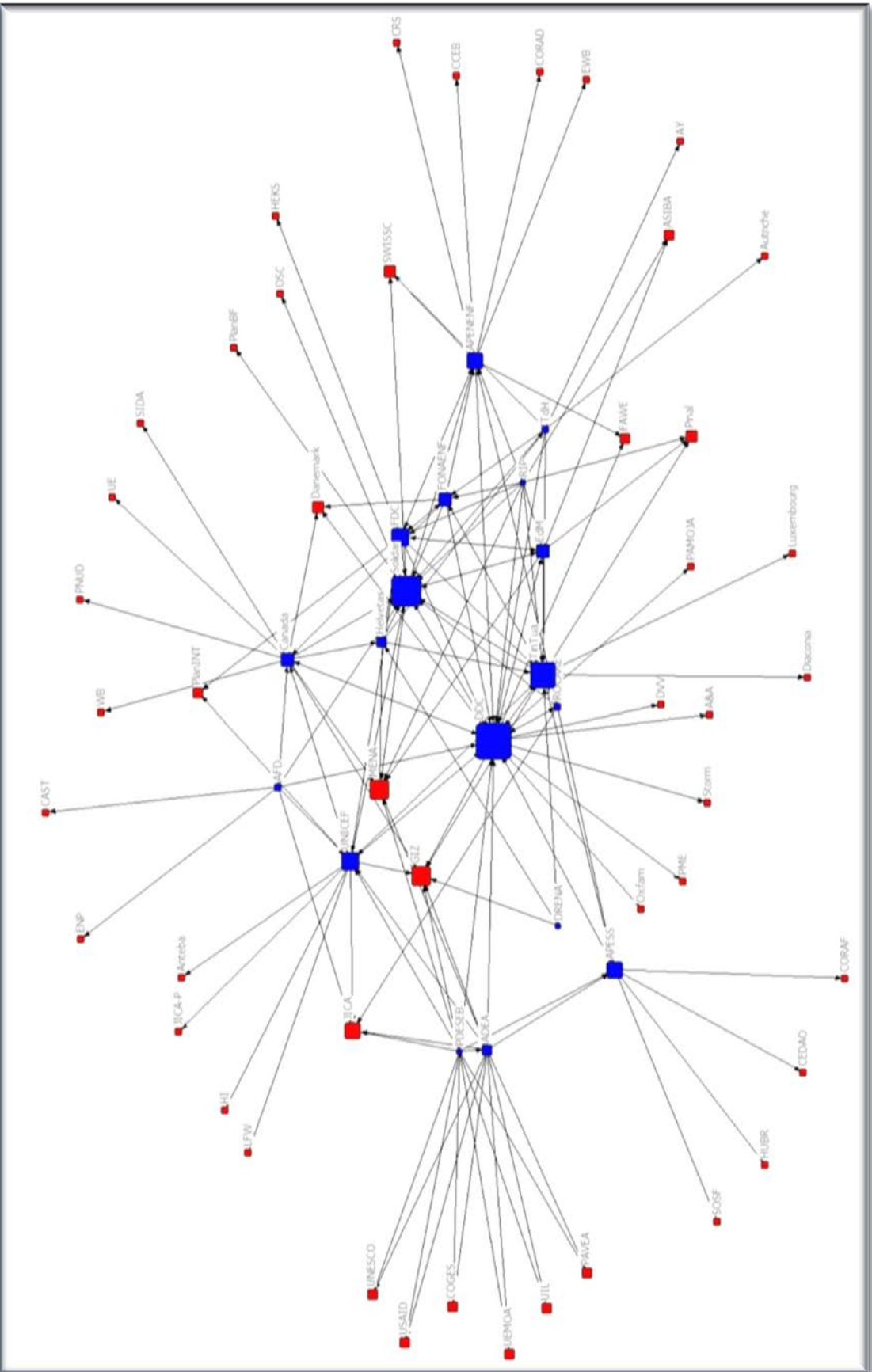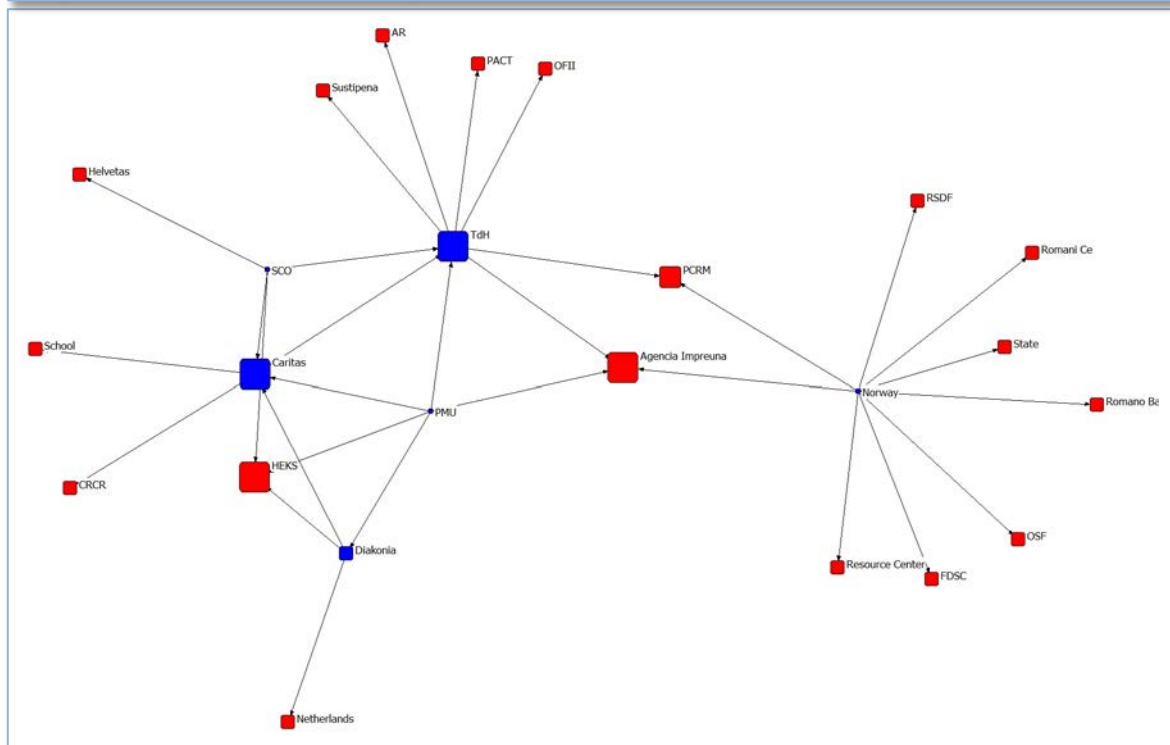
Figure 6: Social Network Analysis in Romania - Communities of Best Practice

Recommendation 10: SDC's preferred collaboration modality—contracting institutional partners who in turn subcontract (or build a consortium with) local organizations for implementing innovation—works well for diffusion of innovation but is of limited use, or in the worse case scenario, prevents the scaling up of innovation. The different contractors or subcontractors, respectively, pull in different directions, compete with each other, and for the sake of their own survival have an interest in indefinitely implementing new pilot projects, thereby preventing a hand-over of effective pilot projects to government structures. It is therefore imperative that (i) the scaling-up of innovation and, if applicable, the institutionalization of innovation, are part of the project cycle, that is, needs to happen *during* the period of SDC-funding, and that (ii) financial support for piloting innovations ends when scaling-up begins.

3 Five Proposed Areas for Improvement

This section presents a few areas that the evaluation has identified as problematic and in need of improvement. In an attempt to further promote reflection and discussion within SDC, the five points are listed in as much detail as possible.

3.1 Inserting the Missing Third Dimension: Frame Credit x Context x Theme

Proposed Area for Improvement 1

Currently, SDC's strategic priorities are literally flat: they are anchored in the funding source (frame credit) and in the country and/or regional cooperation strategy. In education, there only exist guidelines but not a strategy. As a result, educational programming is currently not driven by SDC's comparative

Figure 7: The Frame Credits of the Swiss Government
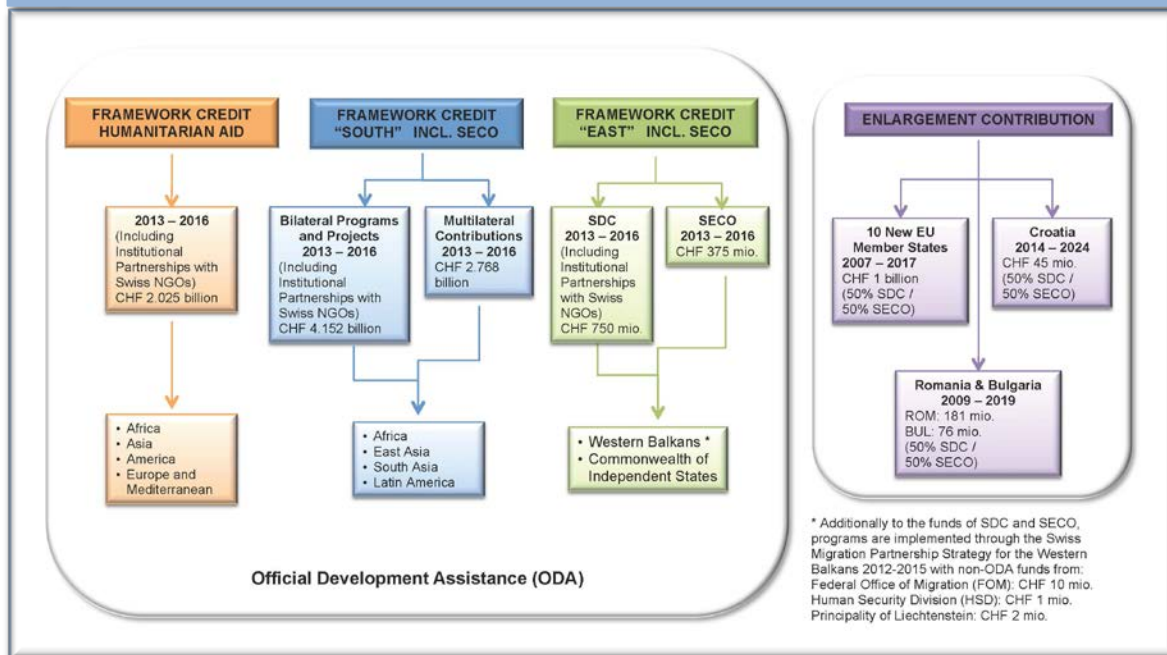
advantage and unique contribution in education; but essentially determined by considerations of the funding source (see Figure 7) or by political considerations that are reflected in the country and regional cooperation and development strategies.

Such a reactive approach, which prioritizes funding source and political context over SDC's global contribution to education, makes it difficult to forge alliances and have a voice in international settings. One of the most effective tools for enhancing impact and leverage on a global scale, but also in the countries and regions in which SDC is operating, is an education strategy that is rigorously enforced and made known to all partners of SDC. It is crucial to point out here that having an education strategy does not preclude a commitment to being context specific and attentive to local/national needs, but it helps to make informed choices given the vast array of needs that require external financial and technical assistance.

In addition, the evaluation identified a few inconsistencies and inefficiencies that would be resolved if a unified education strategy, covering all educational programs at SDC, would be developed and used for prioritizing programs and partnerships while designing effective implementation modalities.

Figure 8 shows the proposed expansion from a flat two-dimensional conceptualization of development and cooperation (left figure) to one that takes into account three dimensions (right figure): the x-axis represents the financial context (reflected in frame credits of the Swiss Government), the y-axis the political context (manifested in SDC's country/regional development and cooperation strategies), and the z-axis is the thematic context (in this case: education).

Figure 8: Moving from a Two-Dimensional to a Three Dimensional Framework
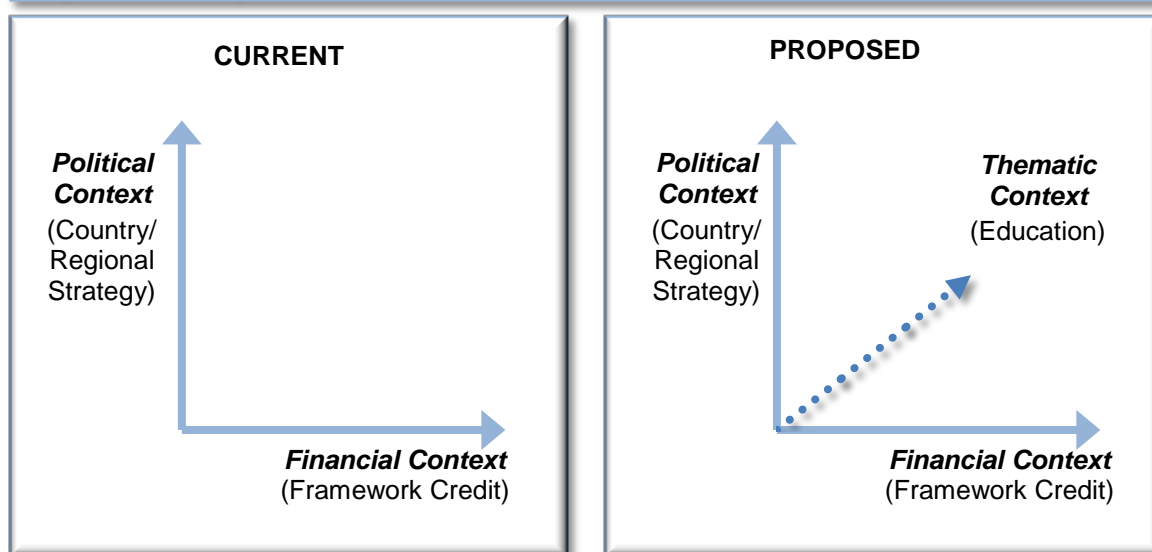
3.1.1 To BE or Not to BE?

There is disagreement within SDC as to when basic education (BE) ends and when technical-vocational education begins. This applies especially to the vast number of vocational-skills development (VSD) programs for adolescents and young adults that SDC offers worldwide. There is a tendency for SDC program officers in the headquarters to insist on a comprehensive notion of BE which includes VSD and that is organizationally hosted in the SDC's West Africa Division. In contrast, SDC program officers at Swiss Cooperation or Contribution Offices in field offices tend to see VSD programs as part of technical-vocational education[22] hosted in the Latin America and Caribbean Division as part of the unit Employment and Income. Such a diffusion of responsibility is detrimental for the work of SDC program officers and their partners.

3.1.2 Eliminating Double Standards

Abroad, when SDC interacts with the international donor community—most recently at the 2015 World Education Forum held in Incheon, Korea—it is quite persistent, and in fact spends money to advocate for, a comprehensive notion of education that is lifelong and that encompasses all level of schooling and all types of education (formal and nonformal). The same applies when SDC works with recipient governments: one of the remarkable and forward-looking features of SDC's approach to strategic planning is its insistence on a unified education sector strategy rather than the more common fragmentation into an (basic) education strategy, technical-vocational strategy, and higher education strategy.

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[22] For example, the SAP database lists the contribution for the vocational skills development programs in Burkina Faso, coordinated by Terre des Hommes Suisse (CHF 0.09 million) under "contribution to Swiss NGOs" in BE. In the database of SCO Burkina Faso, however, the only two institutional/Swiss partners listed as having received funding were Enfants du Monde and OSEO-Solidar; most likely because the SCO Burkina Faso does not count them under BE but rather under vocational-technical education. The opposite also applied: in the draft versions of the UNRWA and Haiti case studies, the evaluation team did not incorporate some of the vocational skills-development programs because they were bordering technical-vocational education, but then the team was asked to include them because the SDC staff at the headquarters considered them being part of BE.

3.1.3 "Nonformal": An Outdated Term and a License to Disown

The evaluation found that SDC and its funded institutional, local, and regional partners use a term that is outdated and ridiculed in the wider development community: nonformal education.[23] What SDC means to denote with the term is ambiguous, ranging from compensatory after-school programs for Roma and other vulnerable students in the Western Balkans Region, professional development of school teachers in Serbia to literacy courses for adults and adolescents, e.g. in Burkina Faso and Niger, that either never enrolled or dropped out from school/formal education. The common feature between the wide spectrum of so called nonformal education programs, currently supported by SDP, is that they are donor driven and donor funded. However, the very term provokes a wrong association: the expectation that donors such as SDC will indefinitely support such parallel education systems or programs, and thereby alleviate the recipient government from the need to own, institutionalize, and fund reform programs for the most excluded. The fact that some UNESCO publications still differentiate between formal, nonformal, and informal education only reconfirms the loss of stature and expertise of UNESCO institutions in the wider development and cooperation community.

The term "lifelong learning" is narrowly defined but nevertheless lends itself for misinterpretation. The only two commonalities of various forms of lifelong learning are (i) that learning is not reduced to the period of childhood and youth, and (ii) the acknowledgment that schools indeed do not constitute the only site where learning takes place. It is a term that is nowadays widely acknowledged beyond the boundaries of Europe. Nevertheless, the term "lifelong learning"—used in target 4 of the SDGs—is ambiguous to the extent that many experts anticipate that the inclusion of the term in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (goal 4) will very soon be framed as entrepreneurship and vocational skills development at lower secondary school level, an interpretation that is strongly advanced by the World Bank and the private sector.[24]

This is not to downplay the importance of conveying SDC's fundamentally different, progressive and holistic notion of education. However, SDC needs to speak the language of the others in order to communicate how its conceptualization differs, or is alike, to current conceptualized used in development.

3.1.4 Building on SDC's Comparative Advantages

The previous section of this report identified SDC's commitment to the most excluded—which concretely manifests itself in its support for bilingual education, community participation, and education for sustainable development—as the primary area where SDC indeed has more to offer than most other bilateral donors. There is another area of comparative advantage that sets SDC apart from other donors: the ability to commit long-term support and act as a reliable partner. The mechanisms of multi-year Entry Proposals (for bilateral aid) and multi-year CCM data-sheets (for multilateral aid) ensure a long-term partnership and long-term planning. These mechanisms enable a fundamentally different type of donor-recipient relationship than some larger bilateral donors pursue. Once SDC commits to a multi-year cooperation and development engagement, it does typically not back out if the recipient country happens to experience unforeseen political or economic changes.

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[23] BRAC, the internationally acclaimed NGO that greatly advanced adult and youth literacy in Bangladesh since 1985 and later on in other countries, dropped the term "nonformal" in 2003.

[24] Goal 4 is formulated as follows: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." Targets 4.1 and 4.2 preserve the focus on formal basic education (including pre-primary and post-primary) and targets 4.3 – 4.7 address issues that are closely related to SDC's development framework. Goal 4 also proposes three implementation modalities (see World Education Forum 2015).

3.1.5 Harnessing Synergies rather than Duplication

An education strategy would also need to clarify the various functions of SDC's various partners and identify areas of synergy but also address how duplication may be avoided.

For example, SDC has continuously supported Burkina Faso since the late 1970s. From 2007 to 2014, SCO Burkina Faso neither implemented nor coordinated educational projects directly but rather contracted implementation partners—mostly Swiss institutional partners (Enfants du Monde, etc.), large local partners (e.g., Tin Tua, APENF), regional networks (e.g., RIP)—or provided financial support to government affiliated institutions, either by means of sector-wide pooled funding (CAST mechanism for PDSEP) or direct financial support (e.g., FONAENF). It is not entirely clear what type of partners is selected for which type of intervention except for the regional partnerships and global partnership programs.

According to SDC's educational advisor of the regional programs of the West Africa Division, the regional programs pursue three clear objectives that differentiate themselves from national programs:

- "amplification" or strengthening of national programs
- networking, scaling up, sharing of knowledge and best practices in the region
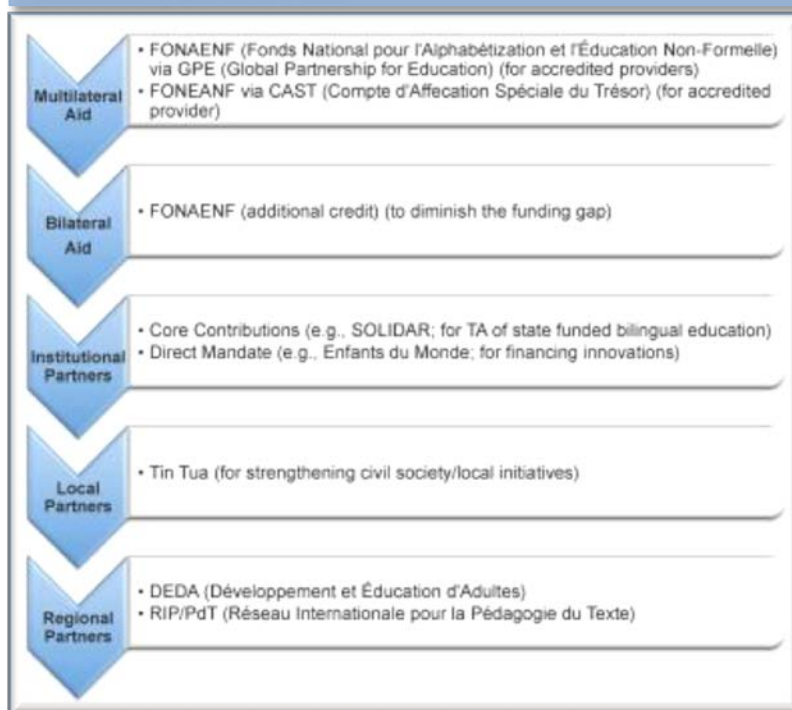- transnational advocacy work and policy dialogue

For the national programs, it is not entirely clear what criteria are used to contract the different types of partners. It is, for example, common for SCO Burkina Faso to contract Swiss institutional partners (currently, Enfants du Monde, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Terre des Hommes) who, in turn, build consortia or sub-contract local partners to implement projects. In fact, SDC considers this modality key for strengthening the management capacity of civil-society organizations in light of the decentralization reform that is supposed to be successfully implemented by 2021. However, another "logic" or theory of change also seems to apply in Burkina Faso, making it difficult to understand the rationale for the different funding channels; SCO also contracts local partners directly (e.g., Tin Tua) to scale up their work. It is not clear for which tasks different types of partners are contracted, notably, local, national, and Swiss/institutional partners. It would be useful to carry out periodically a functional analysis as part of internal reviews to avoid duplication.

Using Burkina Faso as an example, Figure 9 lists the five funding channels and presents examples of institutions that receive funding.

Some differentiations are clearer than others.

In principle, the availability of different funding channels and cooperation partners increases the effective-ness of a program, provided that (1) the criteria for selecting one type of partner at the expense of another is

Figure 9: SDC Funding Channels to Support Basic Education, Burkina Faso

Multilateral Aid
- FONAENF (Fonds National pour l'Alphabétization et l'Éducation Non-Formelle) via GPE (Global Partnership for Education) (for accredited providers)
- FONEANF via CAST (Compte d'Affectation Spéciale du Trésor) (for accredited provider)

Bilateral Aid
- FONAENF (additional credit) (to diminish the funding gap)

Institutional Partners
- Core Contributions (e.g., SOLIDAR; for TA of state funded bilingual education)
- Direct Mandate (e.g., Enfants du Monde; for financing innovations)

Local Partners
- Tin Tua (for strengthening civil society/local initiatives)

Regional Partners
- DEDA (Développement et Éducation d'Adultes)
- RIP/PdT (Réseau Internationale pour la Pédagogie du Texte)

clear, (2) there is no overlap in activities between the various partners, and (3) there is no double funding for one and the same activity.

In Burkina Faso, there is potentially a risk of "double-dipping" because three types of partners—regional partners, local partners, institutional partners—with possibly the same individuals working at the local and regional level—benefit from SDC funding. This applies in particular to the network that promotes, provides training for, implements, and helps accredit Pédagogie du Texte.

In the Western Balkans region, the opposite applies: in two of the visited countries (Romania and Serbia) there was very little or no collaboration, let alone overlap, between the national Roma inclusion programs and the three regional programs—Roma Education Fund (REF), UNDP, ERIO—that SDC had supported over the evaluation period 2007 – 2014. In the other two visited countries (Kosovo and Albania) the collaboration with the regional programs was better.

One of the underutilized modalities of regional cooperation that the evaluation noticed is triangular cooperation, that is, the practice of hiring regional experts or contracting organizations as technical advisors for cooperation and development projects in the same region. Triangular cooperation would be very much in line with Switzerland's commitment to East-East and South-South cooperation

3.1.6 Gender Equity: More than Counting, Disaggregating, and Documenting

The evaluation found that the education of girls and women is mentioned in each and every SDC-funded project; mostly by documenting the number of beneficiaries disaggregated by gender.

There are three issues, however, that deserve greater attention:

- **Gender parity at the level of providers and managers.** Today, gender sensitivity is almost exclusively applied to document the gender of end-users (students or learners) and to a smaller extent to the education providers (educators, trainers, or animators) and managers (directors and community leaders).
- **Gender stereotypes.** There is only punctual work done on tackling gender stereotypes. In Burkina Faso, for example, SDC funds two small but interesting projects that Terre des Hommes Suisse oversees for skills development of female teenagers or adolescent women in professions that in Burkina Faso are considered typically male (e.g., mechanic). The local partners of Terre des Hommes that implement these projects are Attousse Yenenga (Ouagadougou, 40,000 CHF per year) and Association Songtaaba (Kombissiri, 30,000 CHF per year).
- **Boys:** an at-risk-group for school dropout among the poor or most excluded. For a variety of reason that needs to be explored further, the so-called opportunity cost at secondary school level may possibly be higher for boys than for girls. That is, poor families prefer to have their sons contribute to the household income rather than having them enrolled at secondary school because they perceive the cost of attending a school that ultimately does not improve the sons' livelihood and employability as too high as compared to the income that the sons could generate for the household from their (child) labor. The high drop-out rate for boys may be both observed in educational systems, such as in Mongolia, where boys are in general at a disadvantage as compared to girls, as well as in more common situations, where girls' education lacks drastically behind the educational attainment of boys.

Part of the issue with reducing gender to a transversal theme is the tendency to focus on end-users and equate gender with girls or women. A more nuanced and more targeted approach is nowadays needed to systematically improve gender equity. In most countries and settings girls and women are at a disadvantage. But also the opposite exists and should be taken into account, especially in an organization such as SDC that is sensitive

to context. In Burkina Faso, for example, special measures for boys would be needed to tackle boys' drop out from lower secondary schools. In general, it is recommended to also design special projects benefitting girls/women (or in some cases, as mentioned above, benefitting boys/men) to target deep-rooted gender stereotypes and inequalities in addition to using gender as a transversal theme.

3.1.7   Good Governance: An Implemented but Not an Envisioned Principle

Curiously, the field-based evaluations in Burkina Faso and in the Western Balkan region found the interviewees were at a loss at explaining how governance as a transversal theme is or should be implemented. Different from gender as a transversal theme, there seems to be, within SDC as well as among its partners, little discussion and reflection on what implementing governance as a transversal theme would entail.

In practice, SDC forcefully and systematically supports local governance and community participation in all BE programs. However, the interviewees were not certain whether this counts as implementing (good) governance as a transversal theme. There is a need to specify what this particular transversal theme means in practice and how it can be measured.

3.1.8   Regional Strategies or Transversal Themes

In the evaluation of the Roma Education Programs in the Westerns Balkans region, the question came up as to whether SDC should develop regional thematic strategies (e.g., a Roma Inclusion Strategy) and/or develop regional transversal themes that would be applied to SDC-supported programs in a given region.[25] The recommendations were inconclusive but there was consensus that SDC needs a clearly defined vision on Roma inclusion. The vision would integrate the various Swiss agendas currently pursued in this area of intervention: migration-related, political, economic, and social aspects. Currently, Serbia and Albania have incorporated the Roma inclusion programs within the Swiss Cooperation Strategy, however this is more complicated in Romania and Kosovo. In Romania, the programs are funded from the Thematic Fund of the Framework Agreement and in Kosovo both programs are aligned with the Migration Partnership Strategy. A common Swiss vision for Roma Inclusion would not only help the SCOs harmonize approaches within all their Roma programs but also enable the ambassadors of Switzerland to engage in a more effective policy dialogue at national level. Furthermore, it will also help the Swiss Ambassador participating in the Roma Education Fund board to advocate for approaches that are aligned with other Swiss government programs in Roma inclusion.

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[25]   A frequently referenced example in the region is the policy of Norway to establish social inclusion as a transversal regional theme and to ensure that *all* social programs in the region allocate at least 10% of their funds for social inclusion.

Recommendation 11: The evaluation recommends the development of a unified and comprehensive education sector strategy of SDC, that is, a strategy that addresses all levels of education (pre-primary, primary, secondary, vocational, higher, adult), all forms of education (formal and nonformal), all types of partners (bilateral aid, multi-bilateral aid to key partners in education, multilateral aid), and in all contexts (developing countries, fragile states, migration countries, EU enlargement and other countries). It also proposes to spell out a more nuanced and targeted approach to gender sensitivity and good governance in education.

Recommendation 12: The strategy needs to capitalize on SDC's long-term support of, and engagement in, organizations, countries, and regions. This partnership feature clearly represents a comparative advantage of SDC. At country and regional level, this feature enables SDC, for example, continuous policy dialogue and allows SDC to assist governments in systematically scaling up and institutionalizing innovations. At multilateral level, it creates the opportunity to persistently make SDC's vision of development and cooperation heard and understood.

Proposed Area for Improvement 2

3.2 Understanding Data Skepticism, Producing Better Data

The evaluation has attempted to understand the widespread data skepticism that is prevalent among the SDC program officers. It analyzed the impact that the data skepticism, ranging from manifestations of data shyness to outright data phobia, has on their work. The culture of data skepticism exists at all levels and manifests itself in a disbelief that the collected data is reliable and valid and that data analysis could possibly yield meaningful and useful findings. Some of the data skepticism is based on real facts and glitches that need to be fixed.

3.2.1 Major Flaws with Reliability and Validity of Data

The evaluation found major flaws in how data is recorded at SDC. The evaluation had to rely therefore on three different databases to assess SDC's portfolio in basic education:

1. SAP database of SDC (actual spending)
2. Credit proposals (projected and planned spending)
3. Financial accounts of the Swiss Cooperation or Contribution Offices

It has to rely on these three sources because the centrally administered but locally entered SAP dataset is neither user-friendly nor yields valid data in a number of areas, notably:

- Definition of "basic education"
- Definition of "multilateral-bilateral" actuals
- Definition "Non-profit organizations of South/East" (code 13072) under "Non-Governmental Organizations – International/Foreign"

The divergent interpretation of "Non-profit organizations of South/East" makes it impossible to accurately assess how much was disbursed by type of partner. The latter is possibly a matter of a divergent interpretation or misunderstanding between the field-based SCO staff who feeds the database and the central level experts, based in Berne, who evaluate the data. It is an interesting misunderstanding that is worth disclosing in full in the next section.

3.2.2 Non-Profit Organizations of the South/East: A Matter of Perspective and Location

The SAP manual (pages 20-21) lists twenty organizations under "Non-Governmental Organizations – International/Foreign" such as, for example, Aga Khan Foundation (code 13003), Handicap International (code 13061), Norwegian Refugee Council (code 13065), Oxfam (code 13066), Non-profit Organizations of South/East (code 13072). The last category is entitled "Non-profit organizations of South/East" (code 13072) and includes organizations in the Global South/Global East (in this case, in Burkina Faso) that receive SDC funding. Therefore the SAP database understandably classified Burkinabé NGOs such as, Tin Tua, APENF, etc. under code 13072, skewing the results in ways that suggest a disproportionate high allocation to international/foreign NGOs. Arguably, these local NGOs are only international/foreign for those SDC staff based at the headquarters in Bern. For those based in Burkina Faso, they clearly are "local partners" and coded as such. Table 9 provides an excerpt from the SAP manual that deals with the misleading variable "type of partner."
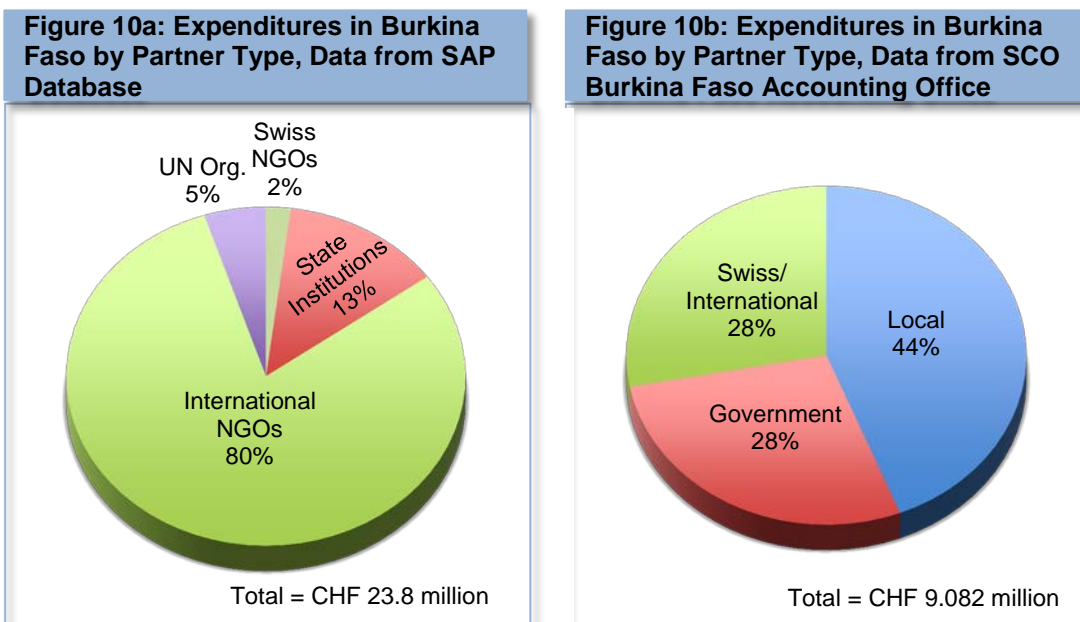
Table 9: Codes for Type of Partner, Excerpt from SAP Manual

Groups (no selection)	Code	Text	Explanations / comments
Non-Governmental Organization International / Foreign	13057	ACF	Action contre la Faim
	13058	ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
	13003	Agha Khan Foundation	AKF Agha Khan Foundation
	13059	CI Care International	Care International
	13201	Collab. Learning Projects Inc.	CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA)
	13060	CONGO	Conference of NGO's in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations
	13061	HI Handicap International	Handicap International
	13062	ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
	13063	IFRCRCS	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
	13200	Internat. Commission Jurists	International Commission of Jurists, Geneva
	13064	MSF (INT)	Médecins sans Frontières (International)
	13065	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
	13085	ODI Overseas Develop.Institute	Overseas Development Institute
	13066	OXFAM GB	OXFAM GB
	13067	Première Urgence	PU-AMI, Asnières-sur-Seine (F) - Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale
	13069	SCF	Save the Children Fund
	13070	WILTON PARK	Wilton Park
	13178	WWF International	World Wide Fund for Nature International
	13071	Other NGO Int/Foreign North	Other NGO International / Foreign North
	13072	Non-profit Org. of South/East	Non-profit Org. of South/East

Source: Manual of SAP Characteristics Version 08.12.2014*, pp. 20-21.*

The following two figures (Figure 10a and Figure 10b) juxtapose the divergent results for one and the same evaluation question: what type of partners did SCO Burkina Faso contract? The figure to the left is generated based on information from the SAP database and the Figure to the right is based on data provided by the SCO accounting office. The two data sets use not only different categories but also yield completely different results: the SAP database makes one believe that 80% of SDC funding is spent on international NGOs (CHF 19.0 million over the period 2007 – 2014) and another 5% on Swiss NGOs (CHF 0.4 million) whereas the accounting calculations of SCO Ouagadougou document that 28% of the budget (CHF 2.5 million) was spent on Swiss/international education. There is a huge difference of CHF 16.9 million between the two sources of information, because the SAP dataset reports actuals in the amount of CHF 19.4 million for Swiss and International NGOs, whereas the SCO in Ouagadougou only documents CHF 2.5 million.
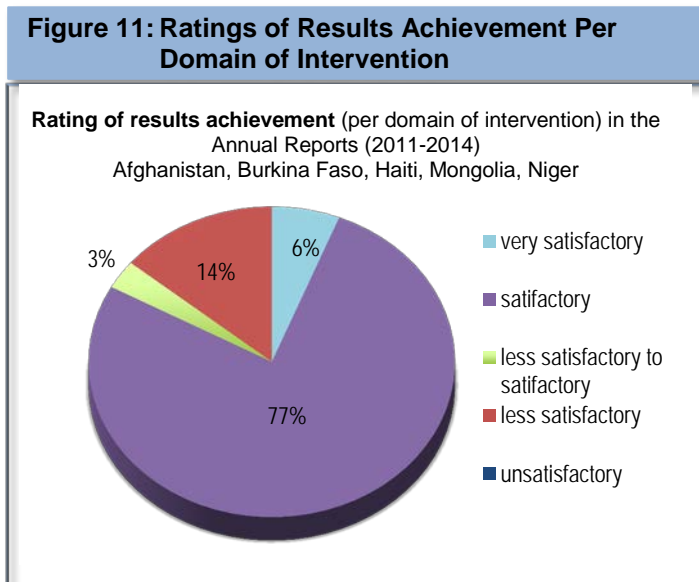
There are too many inconsistencies between the three financial data sources to enumerate here. It is problematic that none of the three data sources alone provide an

Figure 10a: Expenditures in Burkina Faso by Partner Type, Data from SAP Database

Swiss NGOs 2%
UN Org. 5%
State Institutions 13%
International NGOs 80%

Total = CHF 23.8 million

Figure 10b: Expenditures in Burkina Faso by Partner Type, Data from SCO Burkina Faso Accounting Office

Swiss/International 28%
Local 44%
Government 28%

Total = CHF 9.082 million

accurate picture of SDC spending for a particular sector (in this case education; or more narrowly basic education) in a particular country[26] Given the major inconsistencies, it is not surprising that SDC program officers exclusively use SAP for reporting purposes rather than for internal planning, monitoring and evaluation.

3.2.3 Uncritical Internal Reviews

The evaluation examined the internal ratings of results achievement, presented in the Annual Reports 2011 – 2013. The sample consisted of the five country-specific case studies of the evaluation: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mongolia, and Niger. Four out of five internal reviews report "satisfactory" (77%) or "very satisfactory" (6%) achievement of results (see Figure 11). The uncritical internal reviews reflect possibly a misunderstanding of what exactly is supposed to be rated: the efficiency of SCO's work (funder), the effectiveness of SDC's partners (implementer), or the outcomes for the sector/country? As mentioned before, there is a strongly held belief at SDC, which may be an erroneous assumption, that only implementers but not funders need to be evaluated.

Figure 11: Ratings of Results Achievement Per Domain of Intervention

Rating of results achievement (per domain of intervention) in the Annual Reports (2011-2014) Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mongolia, Niger

- 6% very satisfactory
- 77% satifactory
- 3% less satisfactory to satifactory
- 14% less satisfactory
- unsatisfactory

Sources: Annual Reports 2011 – 2014 CSO Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mongolia, Niger

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[26] See example referred to in footnote 24 of subsection 3.1.1: To BE or Not to BE?

3.2.4 Lost in Track Changes

There appears to be a tacit division of labor within the organization of SDC: the program officers correct and the senior management provides substantive feedback. The evaluation applied a utilization-focused evaluation that rests on iterative reflection and continuous dialogue to ensure that the evaluators properly understood the context and provide accurate interpretations and feasible recommendations. However, the feedback was at first limited to Track Changes and only over time was there a receptiveness to discuss content and engage in a dialogue. The CLP opened up during its third meeting and provided valuable feedback on the findings of the evaluation.

3.2.5 Toward a Responsible and Sensible Use of Data

There is a scarcity of analytical work, undertaken within and for SDC, compared to the standards currently used in development work. Strikingly, several interviewed SDC program officers and partners view this as a strength, rather than a weakness, of SDC. For them context knowledge, trust, intuition and experience trump over a more pragmatic approach that typically relies on collecting and analyzing facts for informed planning and decisions. However, also the opposite applied and others commented on the apparent lack of accurate situation/context assessment, evidence-based planning and evaluation in SDC programs. One of the interviewed bilateral partners in Burkina Faso, for example, could not understand why Switzerland funds and advocate, for over twenty years, adult literacy programs (referred to as nonformal education) in the Western Africa region without demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of such programs:

> Switzerland needs to demonstrate the results of the investment in NFE to the GPE, it needs to produce real figures, if necessary by impact evaluation or a randomized-controlled panel! It needs to work more with data. *Interviewed representative of a bilateral donor in Burkina Faso.*

Also within SDC, there are SCOs that actively promote data-based planning and decision-making. For example, the Swiss Cooperation Office Serbia and the Swiss Contribution Office Romania demand thorough baseline studies before a contract is issued. In Romania, the belief in the great value of accurate situation/context analysis is great to the extent that the program officers in charge at the headquarters and the Swiss Contribution Office in Romania extended the inception phase for the bidders (institutional partners) to six months to enable a thorough and accurate analysis and detailed planning.

True, there is nowadays a tendency for amassing commonsensical as well as nonsensical data in development work, leading to a narrow focus on outcomes that are measurable. There needs to be a middle ground; one in which data is systematically used in a responsible and sensible manner to help reflect on one's own work, provide feedback to partners, and assess the impact and effectiveness of one's funding.

Recommendation 13: There is a need to correct glitches in the SAP system and make it more user-friendly so that SDC staff use it for program planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

Recommendation 14: The underutilization of effectiveness studies and impact evaluations is noticeable. Such studies are worth considering in areas in which SDC replicates the same type of projects in different parts of the world (vocational skills development, after-school programs, adolescent literacy programs, etc.).

3.3 *Contra* Tyranny of the Context and *Pro* Professional Expertise

It is noticeable that program officers resort to contextual knowledge as guiding principle for their work. This is an astounding finding of the evaluation given that SDC is an organization that rotates and dislocates its program staff every four years. What is conspicuously absent is the belief in thematic expertise, notably expertise in the professional field known as international educational development, international or comparative education, or education and development studies. Even though the focal point and the network in education exist, and are competent and active, collaboration with them is entirely left up to the program officers in the headquarters and at the SCOs. The lack of professional expertise has a negative impact in at least two regards: low recognition and profile of SDC and low quality of education components in non-education programs.

3.3.1 Image and Recognition of SDC

The evaluation unambiguously found that SDC has an excellent reputation as a reliable, long-term and attentive partner that is sensitive towards local needs and gender. But it is not known for its innovation in education or for analytical work in select areas of its expertise (e.g., compensatory education, adolescent/adult literacy, bilingual education). There is a need for contracting educational experts that analyze and write up project experiences and share them more widely.

3.3.2 Quality of Education Programs in the Non-Education Sectors

Education is an *object* of SDC support in terms of improving access and quality of education in a country or region, supervised in the West Africa Division (if related to basic education) or the Latin America and Caribbean Division (if related to vocational education), respectively, and an *intervention modality* applied in non-education sectors. There is a quality assurance vacuum for the latter type of education programs, integrated in non-education sector initiatives.

As noted in the discussion of the five SDC funding channels in section 2.3, it is important to keep in mind that there is a far greater number of educational programs at SDC than meets the eye. Over the period 2007 – 2014, SDC spent CHF 302.5 million in bilateral aid for programs that listed basic education as first, second, or third priority. The share of programs in non-education sector initiatives at SDC that *uses* education (identify basic education as a second and/or third priority) doubled over the past five years. In 2014, approximately CHF 6 million was disbursed for programs in non-education sectors of SDC that identified education as a second and/or third priority (see Figure 3 in Inception Report). This figure is much higher if all SDC programs are taken into account that include an educational, public awareness, or training component regardless of whether these components are integrated in an agricultural, food security, water, health or governance program.

The evaluation examined such a (water) program that is listed in the SAP database as having education as a second and/or third priority. Already in its eleventh phase (CHF 9 million for the period 1988 – 2012; 7F-03635), SDC continues to contribute, approximately CHF 1 million year per year, to the Sanitation Leadership Trust Fund of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) without any input from the SDC education network or focal point. It must be assumed that the number of programs in non-education sector at SDC that have an education component but do *not* identify that component in the SAP database is vast, raising concern about the quality of education used in such program components. There is a need to create options for program officers in non-education sectors at SDC to seek and receive technical advice from experts in the education network.

3.3.3 Outreach to the Non-Education Sector

This report repeatedly recommended that non-education sector program officers should collaborate more closely with education specialists in SDC. It is important to bear in mind that the opposite applies too: the evaluation recommends that education programs initiate collaboration with other sectors to enhance the relevance of education for improving the livelihood of individuals and households. An inter-sectoral approach seems to yield better results in some area, such as, for example, in programs that target second chance education, drop out prevention, or adult literacy.

3.3.4 Learning from and Contributing to Professional Debates

The evaluation noted how little SDC staff participates in debates and discussions of "best practices" in the larger community of experts in education and development.

Two examples may help illustrate the point: First, the evaluation was surprised to find the scarce use of an inter-sectoral approach frequently used in developing countries for reaching the most excluded: inter-sectoral programs that link literacy to poverty alleviation, health care, and income generation have proven to be effective in terms of improving the livelihood of beneficiaries in a sustained manner. As mentioned before, the only cases of inter-sectoral collaboration were in the humanitarian aid programs and in the Roma inclusion programs of Europe. Second, a recurring theme during the regional seminar on Roma inclusion was whether targeting Roma and vulnerable groups as beneficiaries of SDC interventions would have a detrimental impact on inter-ethnic relations and further the hostility against the minorities. As an alternative, it was discussed to lift the quality of education and social services for *all* living in districts with a high proportion of ethnic minorities. Apparently, this is a recurring theme within SDC discussions on Roma inclusion. It is also a recurring theme among multicultural education experts in Switzerland.[27] This is another example of how lifting educational expertise within SDC and inclusion of thematic expertise, in this case multicultural education and/or human rights education would help to disentangle the pros and cons of the various intervention modalities, and help mitigate the negative effects of the chosen intervention.

> **Recommendation 15:** SDC could considerably enhance its impact and reputation in the international development and cooperation community by (1) supporting the professionalization international educational development studies at Swiss universities and institutions and (2) defining technical expertise as one of the key qualifications for new recruitments.
>
> **Recommendation 16:** There is need to institutionalize the collaboration between program officers and the focal point in education when the program design includes education as a public awareness and training tool. For example, the review could be mandated periodically or at critical stages of a program (possibly at the preparatory stage of an entry proposal).

Proposed Area for Improvement 4

3.4 Support Innovation *and* Scaling-Up

SDC is not alone with experiencing one of the greatest challenges of development and cooperation: innovations and pilot projects, funded by bilateral or multilateral donors, are rarely scaled-up or institutionalized, and are often discontinued a few months or years after project funding dried up. The evaluation attempted to understand possible causes for this fundamental shortcoming of aid by

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[27] See, for example, the QUIMS project in the Canton of Zurich (Qualität in multikulturellen Schulen).

scrutinizing the most common funding modalities and implementation modalities pursued in SDC's BE programs.

3.4.1 SDC's Preferred Funding Modalities

Broadly defined, the evaluation encountered three funding modalities, depicted in Figure 12: contractual arrangement with implementers (type A), contribution to recipient government's strategic plan(s) (type B), core contribution to trusted and effective partners (type C).
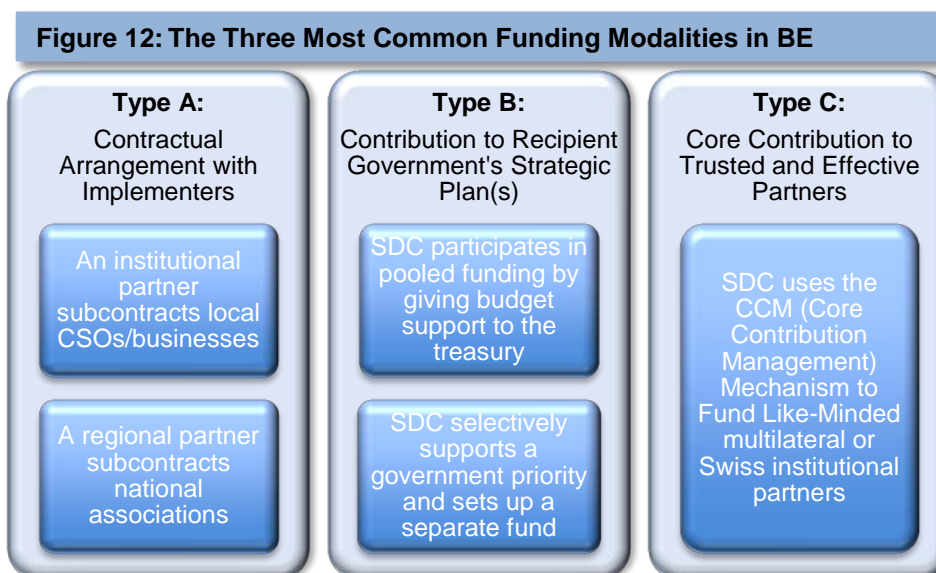
Figure 12: The Three Most Common Funding Modalities in BE

Type A: Contractual Arrangement with Implementers	Type B: Contribution to Recipient Government's Strategic Plan(s)	Type C: Core Contribution to Trusted and Effective Partners
An institutional partner subcontracts local CSOs/businesses	SDC participates in pooled funding by giving budget support to the treasury	SDC uses the CCM (Core Contribution Management) Mechanism to Fund Like-Minded multilateral or Swiss institutional partners
A regional partner subcontracts national associations	SDC selectively supports a government priority and sets up a separate fund	

Table 10: Tentative Rating of Three Funding Modalities

|	Type A		Type B		Type C
	Institutional Partner as Contractor	Regional Partner as Contractor	Pooled Funding into Treasury	Ear-marked Funding for Government Priority	CCM
Match with SDC visions	✓	✓		✓	✓
Ownership by recipient government			✓	✓	
Cost-effectiveness			✓	✓	✓
Sustainable Change			✓	✓	
Innovation	✓	✓			

Besides presenting the three most common funding modalities, Figure 12 also lists prototypical examples for each of the three modalities. Naturally, there are advantages as well as disadvantages to each of the three modalities and it ultimately matters what SDC values most in its support of basic education. Table 10 presents a matrix with a few criteria typically taken into considering in SDC programming and reflecting a combination of OECD DAC evaluation criteria as well as aid effectiveness criteria.

It is essential to keep the following disclaimer in mind when reading the matrix: The checks mark in a tentative manner the observed strengths of each modality, in terms of the five selected criteria. They represent tentative ratings that are merely meant for further brainstorming. The ratings are not derived from quantitative or statistical analyses.

The evaluation found an ambiguous conception of the role of the national (recipient) government. In all the contexts examined in the evaluation, the collaboration with civil society organizations and with local government were prioritized over the collaboration with the national government. In most cases, such as in Serbia, the collaboration starts out with strengthening local government and then, in a next phase, the project pursues a vertical move to also involve the district and then finally the national government. The bottom-up approach is clearly the preferred mode of collaboration in all the examined cases. This intervention modality corresponds to the overall *Parliamentary Message on International Cooperation 2013-16* of strengthening decentralization and local government.

3.4.2 SDC's Tacit Logic of Systemic Change

There is a particular logic to how SDC (implicitly) conceives systemic and sustainable change in the education sector. In all the examined cases, SDC first supports innovation or pilot projects by first (1) contracting civil society organizations who implement the innovation in select locations, then (2) supporting experts who monitor the pilot projects and continuously improve them, (3) defining standards for the innovation which the government should for validation or accreditation, (4) hiring interests groups who advocate for the validation of the innovation, (5) helping establish an accreditation agency that is recognized by government, and (6) having the government administer and pay for the institutionalized innovation, either from own funds or from pooled funding provided by SDC and other donors. Figure 13 demonstrates the ideal-typical innovation cycle that SDC tacitly pursues. The evaluation found this tacit logic, with minor deviations in all examined cases, ranging from masonry programs in Haiti, professional development

Figure 13: SDC's Tacit Logic of Systemic Change
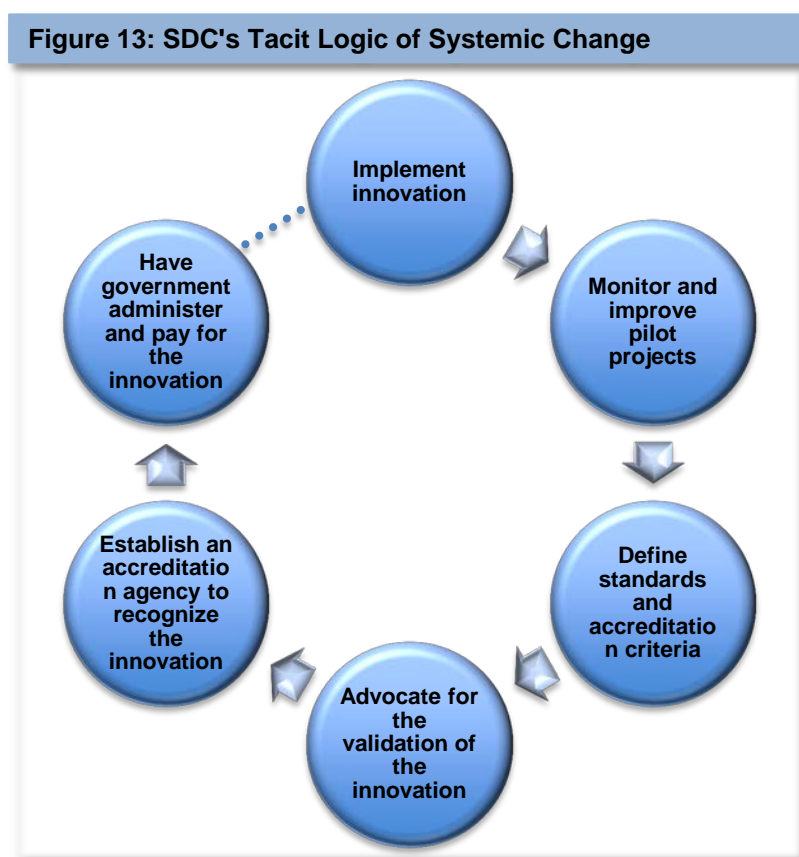
courses for teachers in Serbia, to literacy programs for adults in Burkina Faso and Niger. It is a convincing model for which SDC in principle would be ideally suited given its long-term involvement in countries and regions it supports. The entry proposals or the multi-year CCM datasheets of SDC typically project, more implicitly than explicitly, such a tacit

logic of systemic change, pursued over a period of 5-10 years. In reality, however, all phases except the crucial sixth phase are implemented. There are many reasons for the difficulty to scale up and institutionalize programs. They include, among others, the following:

- The high cost and the high quality standards of innovations, funded by SDC, hinder a cost-effective and efficient dissemination
- SDC's implementation partners are in effect "businesses" that compete with each other over external funding; their organization remains in business by being different from each other, by claiming ownership over the innovation, and by not sharing best practices with other competitors
- The (recipient) state is too weak to exert the role of regulator, accreditor, or administrator of innovation due to frequent change in leadership or lack of capacity
- SDC does not sufficiently engage in policy dialogue and does not systematically design multi-level intervention at each stage of the project
- There is no consensus within SDC as to what sustainable impact, policy dialogue, and multi-level intervention would entail at project or program level.
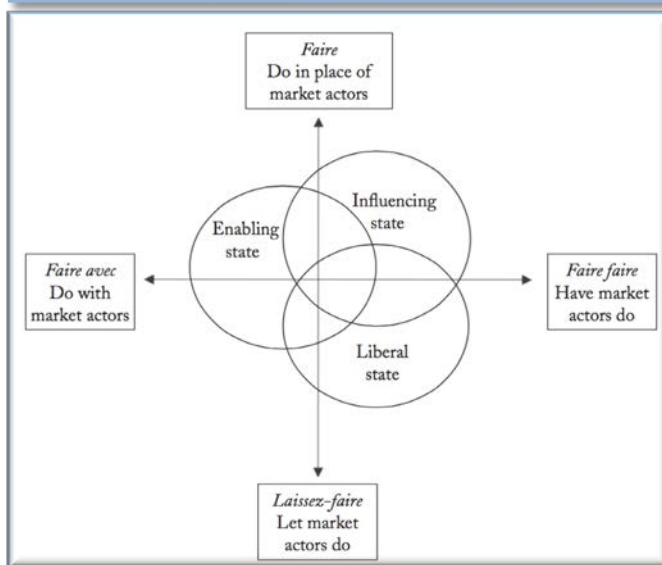
3.4.3   The Collaboration Triangle: Donor – Government - Implementer

The preferred mode of collaboration with the government is nowhere better explained than in the Faire-Faire model, used for the adult/adolescent literacy programs in Burkina Faso. Faire-Faire was an attempt to diversify and augment the supply of so-called nonformal education providers in an environment that had a huge demand for literacy programs. The division of labor between government, the private sector/donors, and local implementers was introduced to diversify the supply of adult alphabetization programs and to scale up the programs at a faster pace. According to Faire-Faire there is a division of labor between three partners:[28]

- Government: regulator (including accreditor)
- Civil society organizations: implementers
- Donors and private sector: financiers.

The political economy literature uses the term to denote the collaboration

Figure 14: The Role of the State in the Faire-Faire Collaboration Model

Source: Vivien A. Schmidt (2009, page 526).[32]

between the state and the market. In the Anglophone literature of international and comparative education, the collaboration is discussed in terms of public-private partnership in education.[29] Figure 14 shows that in a Faire-Faire model, the state is mostly assumed to be liberal (enabling donors to fund and civil society organizations to

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[28]   Napon, A., Maiga, A (2012). *Évaluation de la* Stratégie *du Faire-Faire en Alphabétisation et en Éducation Non-Formelle au Burkina Faso.*.Ouagadougou: Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation.

[29]   See, for example, Susan L. Robertson, Karen Mundy, Antoni Verger, Francine Menashi, eds. (2013). *Public Private Partnerships in Education. New Actors and Modes of Governance in a Globalizing World.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publisher.

implement) and is supposed to have a strong role as an "influencing state" (in our case: serve as a regulator and accreditor).

In practice, however, the triangular relation is uneven because, in the absence of a functioning private sector, the donors represent a crucial source of non-governmental funding. Thus, the financial dependency on external funding is endemic and perpetuated in the faire-faire model, making it <u>problematic</u> for work in development and cooperation.

As recognized in SDC program documents and reiterated in the case study reports (see annex), multi-level approach and intense policy dialogue are indispensable in order to scale-up, help institutionalize innovations, and attain sustainable change. In this vein, it is noticeable that SDC does not hire education policy specialists as technical advisors for their BE programs. In comparison, most external specialists as well as project back-stoppers in BE tend to be topic specialists, trainers, M&E specialists, or project management professionals.

> **Recommendation 17:** Entry proposals and multi-year credit requests for supporting innovations and pilot projects should spell out how and when a hand-over to government—as regulator, accreditor, administrator, and eventually as funder - is planned. The evaluation strongly recommends that such proposals and requests include a scale-up, institutionalization and hand-over plan.
>
> **Recommendation 18:** There is a need to share knowledge and best practices within SDC as to what micro level (individuals), meso level (institutions) and macro level (state) intervention entail and how policy dialogue can be best achieved.

Proposed Area for Improvement 5

3.5 From Saving Donor Orphans to Making Education More Inclusive of the Most Excluded

The last proposed area of improvement addresses another fundamental challenge that SDC currently faces: the fact that its vision departs in more than one way from the current education targets, established in the Millennium Development Goals. By implication, SDC risks becoming the largest bilateral donor for programs in which it believes. This dilemma, combined with SDC's commitment to establishing a trusted and long-term partnership with the (recipient) governments may slow down the resource mobilization by government and encourage other donors to pull out, turning the reliance on SDC funding into a vicious cycle of aid dependency. Two examples illustrate how SDC inadvertently ends up becoming the "foster donor" in nonformal education, an area that other bilateral and multilateral donors tend to consider as non-priority areas for development and cooperation: SDC's bilateral aid to the Fonds National pour l'Éducation Non-Formelle (FONAENF) in Burkina Faso and SDC's multilateral aid to the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg.

3.5.1 SDC as Savior of Donor Orphans

As shown in Figure 15, Switzerland used to be one of three donors supporting national fund for nonformal education FONAENF in 2003. The figure also clearly demonstrates government contributions to FONAENF increased visibly over the evaluation period 2007-2014. It constituted merely 18% of the total fund in 2007 and increased to 39% in 2014. However, the government's contribution is far less than what it had planned to commit in 2012 and SDC agreed in 2014 to help close the deficit.

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[30] Vivien A. Schmidt (2009). Putting the Political Back into Political Economy by Bringing the State Back in Yet Again. *World Politics, 61/3,* 516-546.

Without any doubt, nonformal education in Burkina Faso would collapse without financial support from donors. The donors finance 61% of the FONAENF budget; of which 38% consists of the pooled donor fund (CAST), 19.2% direct contribution of Switzerland, and 3.8% funding from the Danish Embassy. The dependency on Swiss funding became obvious in 2014 when FONAENF had to rely on Switzerland to narrow its deficit. By 2014, three out of the four large bilateral donors of nonformal education ceased to support FONAENF directly: Sweden stopped its bilateral funding in 2012, the Netherlands in 2014, and Denmark cut its contribution by half in 2014, leaving Switzerland as the sole donor who contributes significantly both by means of multilateral funding (through the CAST system) as well as in terms of bilateral funding. The reliance on Swiss funding is not sustainable in the long run and more systematic approaches must be explored to enhance resource mobilization on one hand and carry out literacy programs more cost-effectively. It is for this reason that interviewee after interviewee urged SDC, the last major bilateral donor left in the nonformal education sector, to step up the policy dialogue and convince the Government of Burkina Faso to honor its financial commitment towards nonformal education so that the National Program for Accelerating Alphabetization (PRONAA) may be implemented more rigorously.

Figure 15: Contributors to the Fonds National pour l'Education Non-Formelle (FONAENF), 2003-14
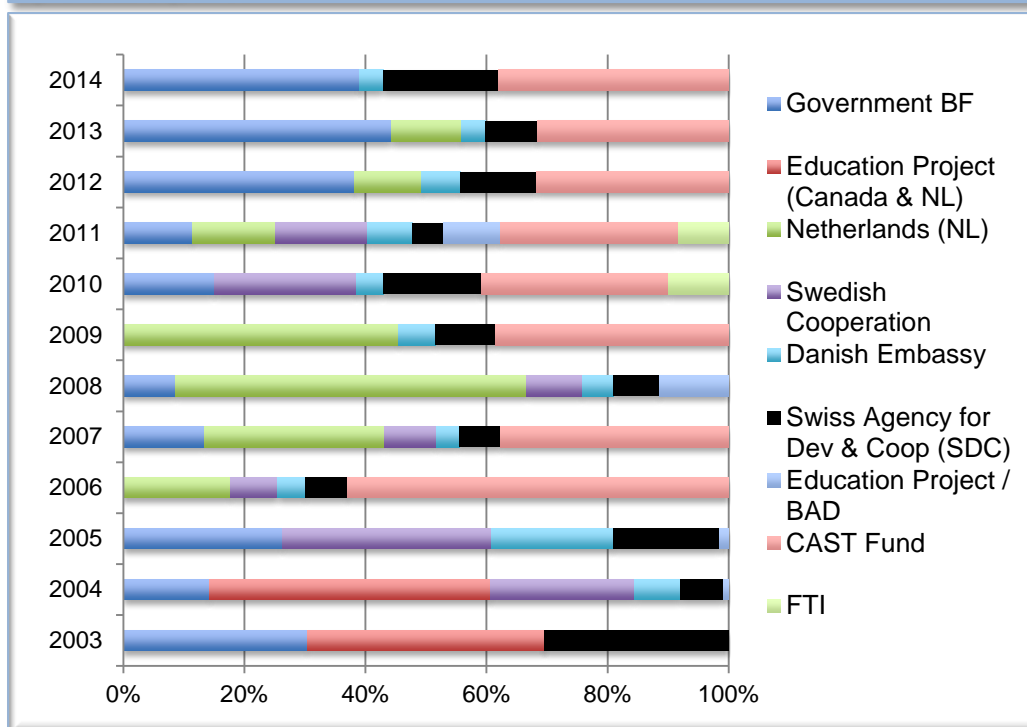
Source: Burkina Faso, FONAENF (2014).

A similar dependency on SDC exists for another institution that is committed to nonformal education: UIL. As with FONAENF, there were external circumstances that aggravated UIL's financial situation. Following the withdrawal of US funding from UNESCO affiliated institutions in October 2011, several of the institutions experienced a major financial crisis: UIL was hit hardest and would not have survived had SDC not come to its rescue. In fact, it had accrued substantial deficits that SDC helped to recover. In 2012 and 2013, SDC was the largest supporter of UIL. At UIL, the new director managed to reposition UIL in 2012 and also shaped the medium-term strategy 2014-17. The strategy seems to resonate with several donors and it seems that UIL has survived the financial crisis with the help of the new director who is well networked and experienced. Nevertheless, it faces difficulties with securing funding from additional donors.

3.5.2 Closing the Innovation Gap between the Nonformal and the Formal System

SDC supports many programs around the world which it considers to be "nonformal," either because they are donor funded, organized after school, do not follow the state regulations in terms of curriculum, teacher qualification, and textbooks, or because they are held in community centers. Precisely because such programs are heavily infused with international expertise and capacity-building of local professionals, and because they receive external funding, the quality of the programs is better, the infrastructure more modern, and the teaching and learning material more attractive. In addition, SDC's basic education programs reflect the broader vision of education including the three comparative advantages, mentioned earlier in this report: bilingual education, community participation, and education for sustainable development. Drawing on the example of Burkina Faso, Figure 16 illustrates the innovation gap that currently exists between formal and nonformal education. The latter is mostly donor-funded and is more innovative and better in terms of teaching methods, teaching material, curriculum, and teacher qualification.

Figure 16: The Innovation Gap between Nonformal and Formal Education
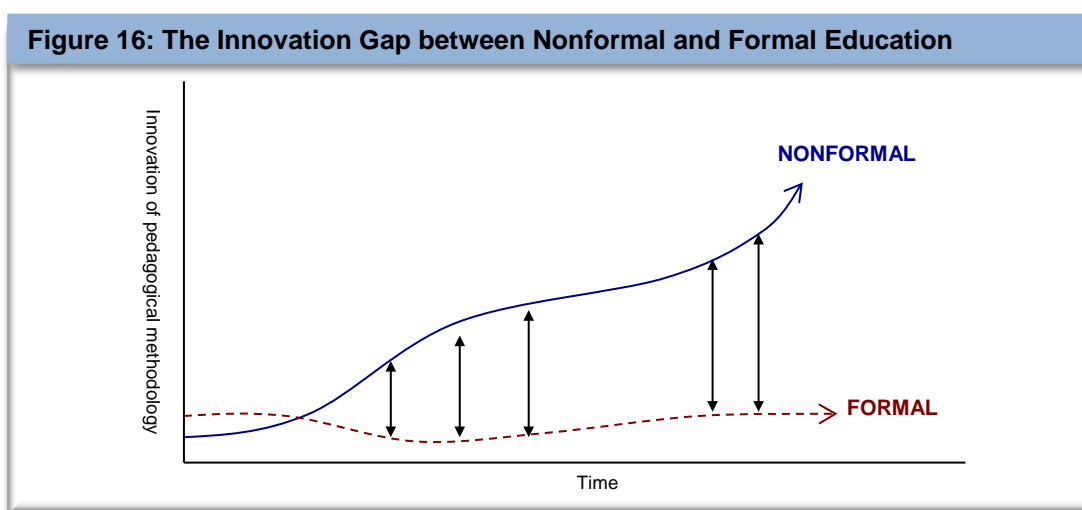
Up until today, SDC's tacit logic of systemic change was, as explained earlier, to fund innovations in a *parallel system of nonformal education* with the expectation that the government, with the support of other donors, will eventually scale-up these programs that are typically geared towards dropouts, illiterate adults, marginalized and vulnerable groups, and in general towards the most excluded. Given the global development and cooperation agenda, such an expectation from the recipient government is unrealistic. SDC and a few other like-minded donors and multilateral organizations will most likely continue to constitute a minority that supports such programs. The evaluation recommends a dual strategic approach: phase out the support for parallel education programs and structures over the next ten years and start infuse and help scale-up innovative practices into the formal education systems. The goal should be to transfer innovations from the parallel education system to the regular one and to make in the long run (in ten years or so) the parallel system superfluous because the regular system caters to the most excluded. SDC is strongly advised to discontinue its investments in those parallel education programs that are donor-sustained, for which the recipient governments merely give lip service, or do not honor their affirmed cost share. Naturally, such a strategic re-orientation of SDC's BE programming clearly deserves thorough deliberation, diligent preparation, and long-term planning. As a reliable partner, SDC should gradually, and in close cooperation with its partners, implement such a strategic re-orientation. Three practical steps may be useful for consideration:

1. Stop referring to the SDC BE programs as "nonformal" education and thereby consider it a government responsibility to also cater to the most excluded. Alternative descriptors need to be sought. For example, SDC's programs in education may be characterized as programs that support *education in and out the classroom and across the lifespan.*
2. Mobilize other like-minded donors and multi-laterals to fund such programs at *all* stages of the project cycle: from pilot-testing an innovation to scaling-up and institutionalization;
3. Assist the governments in making their (formal) schools more inclusive of the most excluded and thereby integrate complementary and supplementary education programs for the most excluded into the regular system. Such an approach would entail investing in closing the innovation gap that currently exists between donor-sponsored programs (literacy programs for adolescents and adults, afterschool programs, etc.) and government-run schools.

Recommendation 19: SDC's outstanding reputation as a reliable and long-term partner may also have its risks: it enables other bilateral donors to withdraw, governments to shift their priorities for resource mobilization, and generate a vicious cycle of dependency on SDC funding. Inadvertently, SDC may end up becoming the sole or largest supporter of controversial intervention approaches and the "foster donor" of organizations and local businesses that were left orphaned.

Recommendation 20: The education strategy will have to clarify the relation between compensatory, supplementary, and regular education and identify SDC's support to all three forms of basic education. It is important to keep in mind that closing the innovation gap between the donor-funded and state-run educational provisions will benefit the most excluded because it will make education more relevant, ensure community participation, and respond to bilingual and other needs of the community.

Annex 1:   Composition of the Evaluation Team

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                           University (2005)
                           Director of Research and Development NCREST and Co-
                           Director ICREST, Adjunct Associate Professor in International
                           and Comparative Education
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Additional Team Members

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                           Teachers College, Columbia University

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Whitney Warner   Education Consultant, New York

Alamissa Sawadogo   Education Consultant, Ouagadougou

Vlera Kastrati   Education Consultant, Pristina

Annex 2: Members of the Core Learning Partnership, Members of the E+C Division and Dates of CLP Meetings

Members of the Core Learning Partnership

SDC Cooperation with Eastern Europe

Laurent Ruedin	Programme Officer

SDC Global Cooperation

Philippe Puyo	Programme Officer, Global Institutions Division, UNICEF

SDC Humanitarian Aid and SHA

Corinne Conti	Programme Officer, Haiti
Gilles Cerutti	Programme Officer, Palestine Refugees Desk

SDC Institutional Partnerships

Petra Winiger	Programme Officer, Institutional Partnerships

SDC Regional Cooperation

Marie Brüning	Programme Officer, Education
Richard Chenevard	Programme Officer Niger
Jonathan Demenge	Desk Regional Education, Formation Professionnelle
Mary-Luce Fiaux Niada	West Africa, Regional Advisor Basic Education & Vocational Skills Development
Nicole Gantenbein	Programme Officer Education
Simon Junker	Focal Point, Employment and Income – Vocational Skills
Ursula Keller	Focal Point, Gender
Valérie Liechti,	Focal Point, Education
Chloé Milner	Programme Officer, Benin
Yvan Pasteur	Programme Officer, Chad
Anne Savary Tchoursine	Programme Officer, Afghanistan
Frédérique Lucy Weyer	Programme Officer, Haiti

Members of the Evaluation and Controlling Division

Sabine Brüschweiler	Programme Assistant, E+C Division
Jean-Marc Clavel	Head E+C Division
Hans Rudolf Felber	Deputy Head E+C Division
Thomas Knobel	Academic Intern, E+C Division
Alexandre Kobel	Controller, E+C Division

Dates of Core Learning Partnership Meetings

CLP Meeting 1: January 15, 2015
CLP Meeting 2: March 2, 2015
CLP Meeting 3: June 18, 2015
CLP Meeting 4: August 24, 2015