



## Norway

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### Education for All 2015 National Review

*This report was prepared by the relevant national authorities in view of the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015). It was submitted in response to UNESCO's invitation to its Member States to assess progress made since 2000 towards achieving Education for All (EFA).*

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*EDUCATION FOR ALL*

## **NATIONAL 2015 REVIEW**

**NORWAY**

*Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research  
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Norad – Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation*

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# Contents

<b>1. Background and approach</b>	3
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## *Part I: Member State Report*

<b>2. Norwegian education and national EFA goal achievements</b>	4
<b>2.1 Norwegian education: principles, policies and structure</b>	4
<b>2.2 EFA in Norway: The development 2000 – 2012/13</b>	6
Goal 1: Status and development 2000 – 2012/13	6
Goal 2: Status and development 2000 – 2012/13	8
Goal 3: Status and development 2000 – 2012/13	10
Goal 4: Status and development 2000 – 2012/13	12
Goal 5: Status and development 2000 – 2012/13	12
Goal 6: Status and development 2000 – 2012/13	13
<b>2.3 Summary on achievements and challenges in the EFA perspective</b>	15

## *Part II: Donor and Development Partner Report*

<b>3. Norway in international development cooperation</b>	16
<b>3.1 National policy and priorities</b>	16
<b>3.2 Support to education 2000 – 2012/13</b>	18
<b>3.3 Support to education through multilateral channels and partners</b>	20
<b>3.4 Bilateral support to education</b>	20
<b>3.5 Support through civil organizations</b>	21
<b>3.6 Achievements of Norwegian ODA to education</b>	22

## *Achievements, challenges and further efforts*

<b>4. Norway's EFA performance: achievements and challenges</b>	23
<b>4.1 Performance, achievements</b>	23
<b>4.2 Challenges, including post 2015</b>	23
<b>4.3 White Paper on Education for Development 2014</b>	24

<i>Annex 1: Measures to promote inclusive education in Norway</i>	25
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<i>Sources</i>	26
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## ***1. Background and approach***

Education for All (EFA), the global project adopted in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, identifies six explicit goals to be met by 2015. As we approach 2015, it is time to monitor and assess the EFA process and achievements. The invitation letter from UNESCO ADG Tang, dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013, states that:

*“The overall aim of the National EFA 2015 Reviews is to assess progress made towards achieving EFA since 2000, and the extent to which countries have kept their commitments. ... The modalities of review may vary for each Member State. The decision on how to conduct the review belongs to you.”*

In the EFA Steering Committee meeting in May 2013, the ADG repeated the flexibility regarding the reporting procedure and format by stating that high-income countries are free to choose a “*minimum version*”. On this background, the Norwegian national review is based on a simplified approach, compared to the comprehensive procedure outlined in the guidelines distributed by UNESCO.

Like other high-income countries, Norway has two roles in EFA: i) as any other *member state* (MS) responsible for its own education system, and ii) as a *donor country* supporting the development of education in low-income countries.

The national responsibility for the two roles lies with different government units. We have thus chosen to structure our report in two separate parts, according to the different EFA roles and division of responsibilities.

The reporting has been coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research (MOER), and MOER has conducted the reporting from the MS angle. The reporting as a donor country is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and has been conducted in collaboration with Norad – the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

Norway has a fairly advanced national system for gathering of educational data. Official national statistics is published by Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå – SSB). Furthermore, Norway cooperates closely on education monitoring and assessment with UNESCO/UIS/GMR, the EU and the OECD. This report is based on official national Norwegian statistics, supplemented by and checked against statistics from the other sources mentioned. In addition to the quantitative data, the report leans on and describes major elements in the Norwegian policy of inclusion. This contains several measures in support of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, aiming to promote attendance, learning and a positive personal development for the individual.

## *Part I: Member State Report*

This part of the National Review deals with Norway as one out of 195 UNESCO Member States committed to develop and/or maintain a national education system of high standards. Norwegian governments of different political colors as well as the national Parliament have for decades unanimously agreed that it is of vital national interest and a public responsibility to provide high quality education and training to all national residents. The adoption of the EFA agenda in 2000 therefore did not imply any major new objectives or challenges to the Norwegian national education system. Even if the EFA has been well known in all institutions and organizations with interests in international education, the EFA label has never been used in our domestic system. Norway never presented an explicit national EFA strategy.

Below, we will first give a brief description of the overall Norwegian education system as of 2013. Major principles and features considered relevant to the EFA agenda will be presented.

Thereafter, we will look at status, achievements and challenges relating to each of the six EFA goals. As far as possible, both statistics and narrative form will be used, with 2000 as the baseline year.

The MS report will be summarized by a brief overall assessment of the status, achievements and challenges of Norwegian education in light of the EFA agenda.

## **2. Norwegian education and national EFA goal achievements**

### **2.1 Norwegian education: principles, policies and structure**

Equality and freedom of choice are general political principles which lie at the heart of Norwegian education and vocational training policy. All residents are to be ensured equal rights of access to quality education, irrespective of gender and social, geographical and cultural background. Accordingly, in Norway:

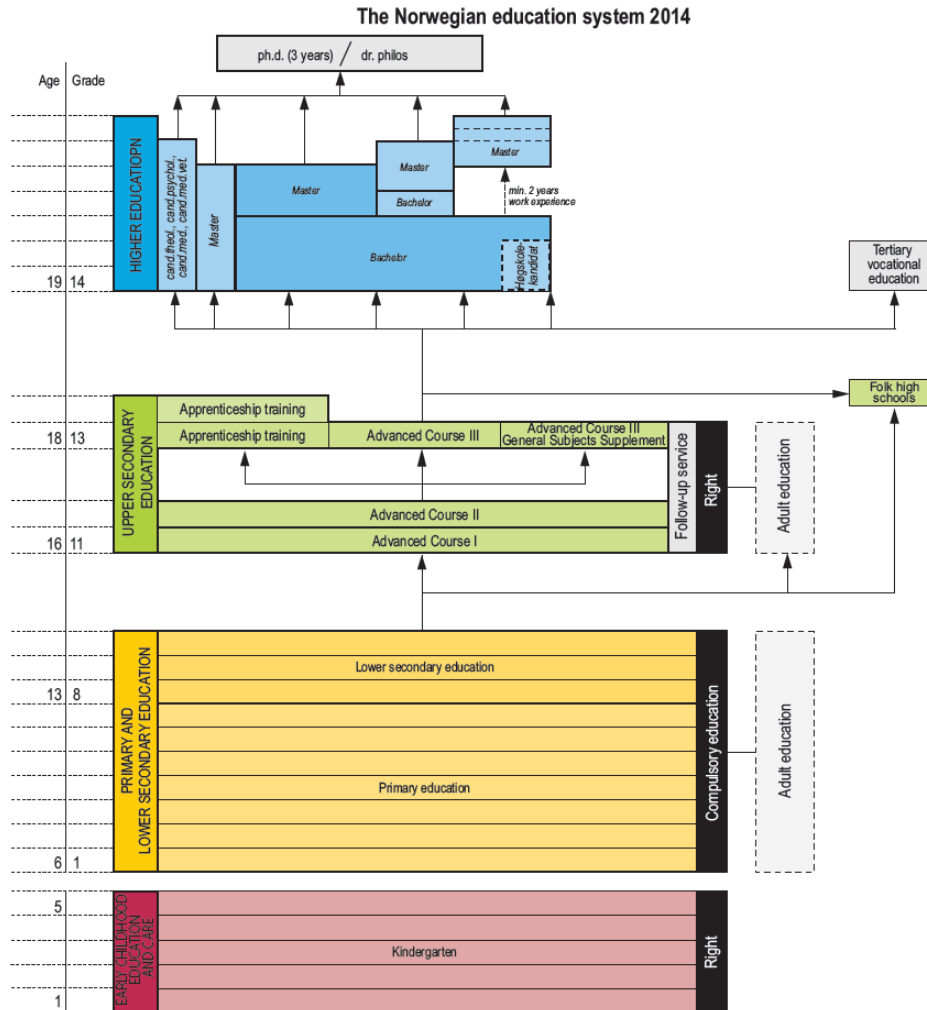
- education is a public responsibility;
- all education and training in the public domain is supplied free of charge, costs of tuition and learning material are covered by public budgets based on taxes;
- the supply of education and training should be of high quality and broad enough to allow for a range of choices irrespective of geographical location and social factors;
- state grants and soft loans are provided for students from poorer families.

Education and vocational training are regarded central means to achieve national social, economic, employment and regional policy goals. The education and training policy is shaped in the interface between cultural, economic and social distribution policies.

VET, including apprenticeship, is an integral part of the education system and is regulated by the same acts as general education. The employers' organizations and trade unions, as well as public and private entities of different kinds, have a major role in both the framing and implementation of VET policy.

Norwegian public mainstream education and training comprise the following levels: primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, tertiary VET, and higher education (*see figure below*).

Compulsory education lasts for 10 years (7 years at primary from the age of 6 and 3 years of lower secondary). Primary, lower and upper secondary general education and VET collectively constitute *basic education*.



Kindergarten, i.e. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is a *right* for every child from the age of 1 year, but it is not compulsory. The Ministry of Education and Research (MOER) has overall responsibility for national policy development and implementation of mainstream education and vocational training at all levels. Operational responsibilities for the development of curricula, delivery of training, examinations and quality control are mandated to other public and private bodies.

The 428 municipalities own and run the public *primary and lower secondary* schools, while the 19 counties are responsible for all aspects of public *upper secondary* general education and VET, including apprenticeship training and some tertiary VET. Municipalities and counties receive financial support from the central government. Public universities and university colleges are owned and funded by the MOER, but operate with a high degree of professional and economic autonomy.

Norwegian education and training have seen major reforms in all parts of the system during the last two decades in order to meet new challenges caused by developments in technologies and markets. The aim has been to improve and maintain access, quality and relevance of education and training, and to increase its effectiveness and cost-efficiency.

Other features of Norwegian education and training include:

- Every child is legally entitled to receive education adapted to his or her abilities.

- Special education is provided for those with documented needs.
- All young people completing compulsory school are legally entitled to three years of upper secondary education or vocational training.
- All adults with a resident permit, that lack education, are entitled to receive free basic education.

*Public-private partnership in VET*

Norway has a long tradition of close cooperation between education and training authorities and the social partners at all administrative levels. Formally, the role of the social partners in upper secondary VET is based on the ILO convention 142, which establishes that employers’ organizations and trade unions shall influence and participate in the framing and development of vocational guidance and training. The institutionalized participation is further legitimized in the Education Act, and in the formal agreements between the social partners that set the “rules of the game” for working life. Both the quadrennial “Hovedavtale” and the two-year wage agreements, “Tariffavtalene”, include sections on objectives, rights, obligations and procedures regarding cooperation on training of staff in member enterprises, including apprentices.

**2.2 EFA in Norway: The development 2000 – 2012/13**

Below, we will review the development of Norwegian education since year 2000, and the status as of 2012/13 in light of each of the six EFA goals. For each goal, there will be a short introduction that defines the area and points to selected target groups and success indicators. This will be followed by a descriptive part, which will emphasize the selected variables. For each goal, there will be a short assessment summary.

**Goal 1**  
Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

In this report early childhood include the first six years of a child’s life, from birth (or earlier) till the child enters compulsory school. Comprehensive care and education implies satisfactory hygiene, nutrition, health care, social and intellectual stimulation, and absence of mental and physical violence. These are conditions that affect children’s personal development and quality of life.

The most vulnerable children are those who are born with serious illnesses, or mental or physical disabilities. Another group is children of parents who are not able to provide the necessary care or meet their various needs due to drug og alcohol abuse, or due to poverty. Finally, children that grow up in families belonging to a linguistic minority group may fail to learn enough Norwegian to be able to understand and learn what is being taught at school. This is a serious disadvantage that may undermine their personal development and school career.

There is solid evidence that comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE) is of vital importance to personal health and development, for ability and motivation for learning, and for school and professional career of the individual. In Norway, general, comprehensive and compulsory health controls are provided to all mothers and children in the early years, both at local health stations and at the family’s residence. If considered necessary, the family is offered professional guidance, economic assistance or other appropriate measures. In the most serious cases, the child is removed from the family and placed in foster homes.

There are also visits by health personnel in kindergartens and in schools, and the staff in kindergartens and schools are expected to observe the children and contact the municipal health services or

children’s protection unit if they suspect maltreatment, malnutrition, under-stimulation or other conditions that could be harmful to a child’s wellbeing and personal development.

The teachers and other staff in the kindergartens and schools are *not* trained health personnel. Their job is to provide general and social care and protection, and to ensure social stimulation of the children’s curiosity and motivation for learning.

#### *Quantitative development*

In the early 2000s, some 62 percent of Norwegian children aged 1-5 attended kindergarten. A significant increase could be observed in the period 2001 – 2011, after which attendance rate stabilized around 90 per cent. The expansion was the result of decisions and annual budget allocations from the national assembly. It was supported by a broad political majority and implemented by governments of different colors. The national assembly also agreed on maximum attendance fees, in order to make the institutions more accessible for children from low-income families.

Almost half the children attend private kindergartens. These operate according to terms quite similar to those applying to public kindergartens, and they receive public financial support through the municipalities. Quality standards, content and learning plans, and operating regulations are the same for all kindergartens regardless of ownership, and they are subjected to the same municipal regime of supervision and quality control.

#### ***Children in kindergarten by age and weekly attendance 2000 – 2013. Percent***

Year	Age			Hours per week	
	<i>1 – 2 years</i>	<i>3 – 5 years</i>	<i>1 – 5 years</i>	<i>0 - 32</i>	<i>33 or more</i>
2000	37.1	78.1	62.0	36.6	63.4
2005	54.1	90.8	76.2	22.5	77.5
2010	78.8	96.5	89.3	8.2	91.8
2013	79.8	96.5	90.0	4.2	95.8
Percent increase 2000 – 2013	115.1	23.6	45.2	- 88.5	51.1

*Source: Statistics Norway*

In 2013, 92.3 percent of the enrolled children had an agreed weekly attendance of more than 41 hours.

There were 93600 employees in kindergartens in 2013. Less than 9 per cent of them were men. Ninety-three per cent of the directors and educational leaders had an approved pre-school teacher education or other college education that qualified them to work with children.

#### *Attendance of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged*

Vulnerable and disadvantaged children comprise those from poor families and families where the children, for various reasons, do not receive sufficient care and attention. In addition, children from minority-language families often do not have the necessary command of the Norwegian language to take the full benefit of teaching if they start primary school without prior kindergarten attendance. Here they learn to understand concepts and improve the Norwegian language skills through interaction with Norwegian children and adults. The positive effect on future school results is well documented<sup>1</sup>.

As pointed out, children suffering from some sort of maltreatment, in most cases will be identified and taken care of through the universal health scheme for children. In order to reduce the cost obstacle attendance fees are differentiated and subsidized according to family income. Families with the lowest incomes are exempted from paying attendance fees. Children needing special attention and follow-up may have personal assistants in kindergarten, organized and financed by the municipality.

<sup>1</sup> See eg . Schølberg et al 2008, Meluish et al 2004, Kane 2008, NOU 2009: 10, OECD 2011, NOU 2010: 8.



In general, minority language children have lower kindergarten attendance rate than native Norwegian children. Several targeted efforts, including information and economic measures, have been made during the last decade aiming to increase the attendance of this group. Attendance has increased for those aged 3 – 5, from 72 percent in 2005, to 90 percent in 2012. This is only six percent lower than the figure for the total population. For the age group 1 – 2, on the other hand, the participation of immigrant children is only around 42 percent, as compared to 80 percent of all children.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, there has been a significant improvement in policy and general attendance. But there are still challenges relating to the recruitment of the smallest children from immigrant families, as well as training, recruitment and retention of a sufficient number of qualified kindergarten staff.

## **Goal 2**

Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

The Norwegian government formulates the overall role of education, and hence its own overall education policy goals, in the following way:

“Every individual has a potential for learning, and the education system must ensure that this potential is utilised to the full amount, to the benefit of the individual and society. (...) The education system shall give all individuals the same opportunities to obtain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are important for being able to living a good life and become an active contributor in society. The education system shall, at the earliest possible time help, stimulate, guide and motivate each individual for “stretching out” as far as possible to realise his or her learning potential – regardless of his or her background. (...) The education system should support each individual in formulating and realise their “life projects” to the benefit of the individual and the society.” (MOER 2006)<sup>3</sup>

In Norway, education is rights-based from the age of six. Every person is entitled to get the opportunity and necessary support to identify and develop her / his talents to the full potential, including theoretical, practical, cultural and social aspects. It is furthermore the responsibility of the education system to provide the various sectors of society with qualified, critical and constructive individuals that will actively support and contribute to the maintenance and further development of the democratic welfare society.

The Education Act states that teaching shall be *adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupils and apprentices*. Emphasis shall be placed on creating a conducive learning environment, and to enhance co-operation between teachers and pupils, between the school and the home, between the school and the workplace, and between apprentices and companies, All persons associated with school or with training establishments: “.. shall make efforts to ensure that pupils and apprentices are not injured or exposed to offensive words or deeds”<sup>4</sup>

In Norway, primary and lower secondary education, i.e. the first 10 years of schooling, is free and compulsory, and has been throughout the reporting period, 2000 – 2013. In principle, this means that *the net participation rate was in 2000, and still is 100 for all children, both girls and boys, in the age group 6 – 15*. UNESCO and OECD state that 100 percent of Norwegian children have access to and

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<sup>2</sup> The low figure can partly be explained by a competing “cash-support” arrangement offered to parents of the smallest children who choose to not send their children to kindergarten, but instead cater for them themselves, at home. This arrangement is frequently put under political debate.

<sup>3</sup> Report No. 16 (2006-2007) to the Storting, preface. Norwegian version  
<http://www.regjeringen.no/Rpub/STM/20062007/016/PDFS/STM200620070016000DDDDPDFS.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Education act, section 1-2

actually participates in primary and lower secondary school.<sup>5</sup> Only 3.1 percent of pupils at primary and lower secondary levels go to private schools (2013).<sup>6</sup> Textbooks and other learning material are free and delivered by the schools. The teacher/student ratio is 1:16.8, if students who receive special education (see below) are kept apart and 1:13.5 if the latter group is included. Public spending in education and vocational training has in the full period been in the range of 7.5 – 6.4 percent of GDP.<sup>7</sup>

In Norway, children in difficult circumstances may comprise children from poor families as well as children from families that belong to language minority groups. Other vulnerable children are those with different sorts of learning problems or mental or physical disabilities, that thus are in need of special education measures.

Inclusive education has been a central policy principle and goal in Norwegian education and training since the mid-seventies. The operational understanding of and approach to inclusive education is that every individual shall be provided optimal learning conditions in the regular learning context – *as far as possible*. Only in exceptional cases students receive instruction outside this context.

A number of specific measures that support and promote inclusive education are in operation, adapted to the various types of education and target groups. Some of them are under the auspices of other ministries than MOER. The arrangements fall in four major categories and span all education levels (see Annex 2 for details).

In 2013, some 51 000 children were granted special support. 68 percent of these were boys. The number and share of children under this arrangement increases by each grade, from 3.8 percent in grade 1, to 11.2 percent in grade 10. In 2013, around 4000 children received the support in special schools and separate departments in regular schools. Of those who received special education in ordinary schools, 14 000 received the support in the regular class, delivered by an extra teacher or assistant. The other 37 000 were provided the special education in separate groups of 2 – 8 students.

In order to cater for particularly immigrant children, different language support measures are provided:<sup>8</sup>

- Strengthened Norwegian language training (45 000 students)
- Basic Norwegian for linguistic minorities (15 000 students)
- Mother-tongue language learning and training: Offer comprise more than 100 languages (17 100 students)

In Oslo, almost 25 percent of all children in compulsory school received strengthened Norwegian language training in 2013.

All children in the lowest grades (1-4) are entitled to some organized homework support at school, after regular classes. In 2013, a total of 114 500 children took advantage of this arrangement.

Norway is a country characterized by mountains, fjords, islands, long distances, a small population, and a decentralized settlement pattern. Small settlements are found all along the coast and on islands from north to south, and the 428 municipalities are obliged to deliver ten years of quality education to all children. The general opinion is that children should not be requested to travel far or live apart from the family in order to go to school.<sup>9</sup> As a consequence, schools are found even in rather small and isolated communities, included on islands. Out of the 2 907 schools, 903 have less than 100 students.

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<sup>5</sup> GMR 2013/14, p 343 and OECD Education at a Glance 2013, page 269

<sup>6</sup> A slight increase from 2.0 percent in 2003. <http://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/utgrs/aar/2013-12-13?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=152680>

<sup>7</sup> GMR 2013/14, page 381

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Norway: <http://www.ssb.no/utdanning/statistikker/utgrs>

<sup>9</sup> According to the Education Act, children in grade 1 are entitled to free, public transport if they live more than two km from the school. Children in grades 2 – 10 are entitled to transport if the distance between home and

The paragraphs above outline an ambitious national education policy and delivery system. There is a comprehensive and far-reaching system of supportive arrangements and measures justified by the broad social mission of education. But are the results according to expectations?

The Norwegian education system is expected to realize a broad range of goals to the benefit of both the individual learners and society, in short and long time perspectives. Monitoring of learning outcomes is easier for some goals than for others. Most international and national tests tend to concentrate on monitoring of foundation skills like reading, writing, numeracy, and ICT mastery. Norway's results in such tests, including PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA are in general at the average of all participating - mainly high-income - countries, in the period 2001 – 2013.<sup>10</sup> Politicians, as well as the general public, expect better results, considered the huge investments in education by society, and the vital importance of these skills for further learning, work and life in general.

On the other hand, there are other international tests, like CivEd/ ICCS that monitor students' values, attitudes and democratic competencies, indicating that Norwegian education is doing well on these targets. Both girls and boys give strong support to gender equality and equal rights to all ethnic groups, and to major democratic processes.<sup>11</sup> Norwegian students learn to participate in open discussions and take active part in democratic processes. Norway has a strong economy, low unemployment, a high innovation rate, and a general high standard of living. These facts indicate that Norwegian education and training in general is working well.

### **Goal 3**

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.

In Norway, life-skills education is an integrated part of public education, integrated in different school subjects and in the daily social life in kindergarten and schools. At all levels, the principle that teaching shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupils and apprentices, stands firm. Upper secondary school, which comprises both general studies preparing for higher education, and vocational education and training programs, is offered to all youth that have completed lower secondary school. All young people are entitled to three years of general studies or vocational education and training, and career guidance and study counseling is offered at several stages of lower and upper secondary school to ensure informed choices of appropriate training programs. Students that leave school after compulsory education are contacted by the public Follow-up service, and the schools offer to adapt the study provision in order to keep them in the system. They can also organize combinations of school and work, in some cases even placements in an enterprise.

National investments in updating and further education for adults are significant. Adults have a statutory right to primary and secondary education and training, free of charge, delivered by the municipalities and counties, respectively.

Above upper secondary level, there are several options regarding free, further studies at all the public universities and university colleges for those who have completed three years of general education. Universities and other higher education institutions, as well as a high number of non-profit and commercial providers deliver education according to national curricula on secondary and tertiary

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school is 4 km or more. Functionally disabled children and those with a particular dangerous way to school, are entitled to transport regardless of distance.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Norway 2013: Utdanning 2013, Chapter 3. <http://www.ssb.no/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/utdanning-2013#content>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

levels, as well as work and personally oriented courses. Full-time, part-time and evening courses, as well as internet-based teaching, are available to ensure flexible options.

Vocational candidates that pass the trade test and wish to qualify further can choose to enroll in a technical college. After some years of practical work, those who possess a trade certificate, can qualify further as a Master Craftsman, or even study further at a university or university college.

More than 95 percent of young people in Norway enter upper secondary education and training. All years since 1999, 67 – 70 percent of them have completed and passed the three year program. This means that some 30 percent do not complete the program they started within a given time.<sup>12</sup> Many of them switch to other education programs, whilst others drop out of education and training completely. For those who drop out, there are second-chance options. Every year, several thousand earlier drop-outs register as private candidates and sit for theoretical examination in individual subjects at lower and upper secondary level. Adults who have at least five years of relevant practice in a specific vocation, may be allowed to do the combined practical - theoretical trade test and obtain a vocational certificate to documents his/her actual skills. *The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration* (NAV) provides targeted labor market training courses for different groups of unemployed jobseekers.

Vox, the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning, is an operational unit under the MOER. Its main mission is to contribute to improving employability. Vox promotes access and participation in formal, non-formal and informal adult education. Tailor-made basic education in enterprises can be subsidized by the Programme for Basic Competence in Working Life (BKA). Vox administers governmental subsidies for the operational costs of study associations, distance learning institutions and study centers. In 2013, a total of 493 000 adults attended a course provided by a study association. Of these, some 42 percent were above 50 years of age, and 57 percent of the participants were women.<sup>13</sup>

Refugees and their families who have been granted a residence permit in Norway have a right and a duty to complete an introductory program. All municipalities that settle refugees are obliged to offer the program. The *Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI)* is responsible for providing guidance and for follow-up in relation to the municipalities and their work.

The Introduction Program is a full-time course with duration of up to two years. Participation in such programs is compulsory for refugees. The program aims at providing basic Norwegian language skills and insight into the Norwegian society, and aims to prepare refugees to enter into the labor force or education. Municipalities are responsible for offering the program to refugees in accordance with national curricula and quality standards.<sup>14</sup> Refugees receive economical support whilst participating in the introductory program, currently around 15 - 20 000 US\$/year.

The text above shows that the policies and resource allocation for promoting the EFA goal 3 is significant. Regarding the outcomes, one may conclude that they are encouraging. Participation in the various formal and informal lifelong learning programs is high, as indicated above. Figures for 2012 indicate that more than 50 percent of the adult population takes part in some form of work-related education and training each year.<sup>15</sup> The general unemployment is low: at 3.3 percent, and at 8.5 percent for young people (16 – 24) and 7.3 percent for the immigrant population (2014). Finally, Norwegian test results from international literacy and life skills surveys IALS and ALL in the period 1998 – 2007, show that basic skills levels are above average in the participating Western countries.<sup>16</sup>

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[http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/KD/Kampanjer/NyGiv/Statistikkprosjektet/gjennomforingsbarometeret\\_2013\\_2.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/KD/Kampanjer/NyGiv/Statistikkprosjektet/gjennomforingsbarometeret_2013_2.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Norway 2014, <http://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/voppl>

<sup>14</sup> See IMDI homepage: <http://www.imdi.no/en/Sprak/English/The-introduction-scheme/>

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Norway, see: <http://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning?de=Adult+education>

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Norway, see: <http://www.ssb.no/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/utdanning-2013>

The OECD survey of adult skills, PIAAC, published late in 2013, confirms the picture of an adult population with a satisfying qualification level: Compared with the other participating countries, the Norwegian adult population has relatively high proficiency scores in all three domains. Norway is one of four countries where proficiency scores are above the OECD average in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in a technology-rich environment.<sup>17</sup>

**Goal 4**

Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

According to the CIA Factbook, updated as of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013, the literacy rate is 100 percent for both men and women in Norway (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/no.html>). The GMR 2013/14 contains no figures for adult literacy rates in Norway and most other high-income European countries (table 2, page 322).

A study of adult skills published by OECD (PIAAC 2012) operates with 5 levels of literacy, specified according to functionality. Whereas Norway ranks as no 5 out of the 23 high- and middle-income countries listed, the figures show that some 3.3 percent of Norwegian adults aged 16 – 65 have so weak skills that it is reason to believe that they will face functional difficulties when it comes to reading and writing.<sup>18</sup>

The overall aim implicit in EFA Goal 4 is to achieve universal literacy in the population. Considering that people are different in terms of motivation and abilities, it is probably not realistic to ever reach a full 100 percent achievement at the highest PIIAC level of literacy. In this perspective, the Norwegian policies, arrangements and achievements in ensuring universal literacy must be regarded successfully. Existing arrangements will nevertheless be continued in order to ensure the same high achievement level also in the years to come.

**Goal 5**

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

On the issue of equal access to education, we refer to the text under Goal 2 above: UNESCO and OECD state that 100 percent of Norwegian children in 2012/13 have access to and actually participates in primary and lower secondary school. The net participation rate was 100 in 2000, and still is 100 for all children, both girls and boys, in the age group 6 – 15.<sup>19</sup> There are no obvious gender disparities in Norwegian primary and lower secondary education. Equal access to education is ensured by law, policies and practice at all levels.

Regarding potential gender differences in learning outcomes, we need to study formal school marks and test results to find if this is a general challenge. For 2013, the final examination results of those who completed lower secondary school (grade 10) show girls achieved higher marks in all subjects, except physical education. This is in line with results from earlier years. The largest gender gap was in Norwegian first-choice form, where the girls achieved on average 4.2 compared with boys who

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Norway: <http://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/ferdigheter-i-voksenbefolkningen>

<sup>18</sup> OECD Skills Outlook 2013, pages 63 – 64.

<sup>19</sup> GMR 2013/14, p 343 and OECD Education at a Glance 2013, page 269

achieved 3.5.<sup>20</sup> National tests for grade 5 students in 2013 gave somewhat different results. On average, girls achieved higher results than boys in reading. In English the differences between boys and girls were less pronounced. Boys achieved better results in Mathematics.<sup>21</sup> In conclusion, there are no indications that girls' are given fewer opportunities than boys when it comes to learning achievements in primary and lower secondary school. On the contrary, these observations may indicate need for new initiatives in support of boys' learning opportunities.

### **Goal 6**

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Quality in education is a diffuse and complex concept that is relating to many different factors, aspects and levels of education. But even if perceptions will vary somewhat between different contexts, quality will in general be considered connected to:

- Overall national goals for education
- National budgets and legislation (on access, availability/scale, responsibilities)
- Availability of appropriate learning arenas – schools, workshops, training enterprises
- Availability of qualified teachers and teacher training institutions of high standards
- Relevant and updated content of education – curricula, syllabuses - at the various stages
- A positive learning environment with committed teachers and motivated students
- System for regular monitoring and assessment of learning outcomes (quality) and follow-up adjustments at various levels: institutional, local governmental, and national governmental.

The Norwegian education and training system has ambitious goals, as described on previous pages. The national framework of policies, strategies, regulations, funding and administrative arrangements is designed for optimal goal achievement, and has been throughout the reporting period. All children and youth (and adult learners) are indiscriminately legally entitled to cost-free education and training of high quality. Public budgets for education are among the highest in the world, teachers are in general well qualified, and the teacher-learner ratio beats most other countries. In general, institutions and teachers in basic education succeed in establishing and maintaining a positive social and learning environment. Schools and teachers in general provide adapted instruction to the individual learners, but there are indications that many teachers lack necessary competencies in this area and that adaptation could be improved. International test results do not meet national expectations as regards core foundational skills.

Norway has a decentralized education system, implying that the school owners and institutions have far-reaching budgetary and professional autonomy within the overall national regulations, curricula and budgets. The responsibility for the daily quality control lies with the school owners, the institutions and each individual teacher. Within each of the 19 counties, the County Governor, who represent the government, is responsible for supervising and controlling that school owners and institutions are delivering according to national regulations and plans. The Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR) has the national operational responsibility for quality control and improvements.

In the reporting period, after the publication of the PISA results in 2001, there have been several, comprehensive initiatives aiming to improve the measurable learning outcomes:

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<sup>20</sup> Statistics Norway: <http://www.ssb.no/utdanning/statistikker/kargrs>

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Norway: <http://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/nasjprov>



- In 2001, the national assembly appointed a committee – “*The Quality Committee*” - to investigate and present a Green Paper on how to strengthen quality in compulsory education. The Green Paper<sup>22</sup> was published in June 2003 and contained more than 100 concrete proposals for quality improvement. Some of them, including measures to strengthen the national monitoring and quality control, were introduced within the first two years.
- Many other proposals from the Quality Committee were integrated in the comprehensive reform of basic education, *Kunnskapsløftet (Knowledge Promotion)* that was implemented from 2006.<sup>23</sup> The reform introduced changes in substance, structure and organization from the first grade in the 10-year compulsory school to the last grade in upper secondary education and training. The Directorate for Education and Training presented “*The Quality Framework*”, which translates the policy down to daily practice at institutional and municipal levels.<sup>24</sup>
- One major element in the Green Paper findings and policy advice was the principle of “Early Intervention” in order to give the children a better foundation for further learning. The principle was, and still is a major argument for “*The Kindergarten Reform*” that was endorsed by the national assembly in June 2003 and introduced from 2004.<sup>25</sup> The objectives of the reform was to significantly increase attendance of children 1 – 5 years and strengthen the efforts on linguistic and other preparations for systematic learning. As described above, the ECCE participation increased by some 50 percent over the reporting period, and a national maximum attendance fee has been introduced.
- In 2005, a new *Kindergarten Act* was endorsed, and in 2006, the MOER submitted a new “*Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of the Kindergarten*”.<sup>26</sup>
- A *Teacher Education Reform* was implemented in 2010, implying that the earlier education for a general teacher, levels 1 – 10, was substituted by two separate teacher education programs, for levels 1 – 7, and 8 – 10, respectively. One purpose of the reform is to allow for greater specialization for teaching at the different age levels. General teacher education has been four years duration throughout the reporting period, but an extension to five years is now being discussed. Extra funds and arrangements have been introduced for updating and further education for in-service teachers since 2005. Extra measures for qualifying teachers have been introduced from 2014.

Norway’s results in international tests of learning outcomes in foundation skills saw only minor improvements during the reporting period, despite the various reforms to the end of improved quality. This may indicate that the new policy elements and measures did not hit the target straight on, or that it is still too early to expect effects of the reforms. It may also be that the relatively weak results are due to factors and conditions beyond MOER control. Lastly, considering the ambitious goals of Norwegian education and training, and the 100 percent attendance rate in primary and lower secondary education, one could ask whether it is unrealistic to expect that every individual ever will achieve the expected learning outcomes at the highest levels.

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<sup>22</sup> NOU 20013:16, <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/dok/nouer/2003/nou-2003-16.html?showdetailedtableofcontents=true&id=147077>

<sup>23</sup> MOER: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kd/Selected-topics/compulsory-education/Knowledge-Promotion.html?id=1411>

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.udir.no/Upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte\\_lareplaner\\_for\\_Kunnskapsloftet/5/prinsipper\\_lk06\\_Eng.pdf?epslanguage=no](http://www.udir.no/Upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte_lareplaner_for_Kunnskapsloftet/5/prinsipper_lk06_Eng.pdf?epslanguage=no)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/dok/regpubl/stmeld/20022003/stmeld-nr-24-2002-2003-.html?id=135490>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/KD/Vedlegg/barnehager/rammeplanen.pdf>

The Norwegian government is, however, highly committed to continue the efforts to obtain successful goal achievements for *all* students in optimal learning of core skills. At the same time, we will seek to maintain the strong results regarding transversal skills and democracy competencies as referred to above.

### 2.3 Summary on achievements and challenges in the EFA perspective

In general, the Norwegian education and training policy is in line with what is the overall objective for EFA. The framework conditions are excellent. So is the availability of monetary and human resources. The ECCE reform has been a success, but the impact of this and other quality reforms in terms of improved learning outcomes and other results are still pending. Equal access to ECCE, primary and lower secondary education is a reality for girls and boys alike, from all socio-economic groups, ethnic and religious groups, and geographic areas. The learning environment has improved throughout the period. The PISA 2012 results show that students' social background and which school you go to, means less for the learning outcomes in Norway than in most other participating countries, and the influence of these factors have been reduced from 2003.<sup>27</sup> Norwegian education quality is generally at a high level, although the learning outcomes are not above the average of the PISA participants.

Challenges relating to *equity* that will be addressed in the time to come:

National monitoring shows that linguistic minority students still tend to perform at a lower level than linguistic majority students. The Kindergarten reform was meant to address this problem, but so far the equalizing effect has been below expectations. Children from minority groups are over-represented in the group of children that do not attend ECCE. It remains to see whether the learning outcomes for this group will improve if and when one year of ECCE is made compulsory (and not only a right).

Monitoring results also show that students with highly educated parents tend to get significantly better learning results in basic education than learners who have parents with low education. The differences related to social background are most evident in theoretical subjects, such as mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences. It is thus reasonable to say that the Norwegian education system to some degree contributes to reproducing social inequalities. The voluntary "homework assistance" scheme offered to all children in the lowest grades from 2010, was introduced with the aim to compensate for the imbalance in available knowledgeable home resources. However, the intended leveling effect could not be documented in an evaluation in 2013.<sup>28</sup>

In general, poor learning outcomes implies that too many pupils with weak school results are let through compulsory school and face severe problems and dropout when entering upper secondary education and training. The high drop-out rate in upper secondary education and training is considered a serious problem for the individual and for the society, and is highly prioritized by the government.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.udir.no/Tilstand/Internasjonale-studier-/PISA2012/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.udir.no/Upload/Rapporter/2013/leksehjelp.pdf?epslanguage=no>



## Part II: Donor and Development Partner Report

### 3. Norway in international development cooperation<sup>29</sup>

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for the general foreign policy, including international development cooperation. Implementation of the development cooperation is conducted by and through a variety of internal and external (to MFA) organizations and institutions. The Norwegian ODA is mainly in the form of monetary support, whereas technical assistance (TA) and professional / expert advice are limited.

The major implementing agent is Norad – the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. As a Directorate under the MFA, Norad has a central advisory role towards the policy-makers. In addition, Norad administers considerable funds for selected programs and target groups. A separate unit in Norad is responsible for quality control of the various programs.

#### 3.1 National policy and priorities

Norway recognizes its international responsibility for contributing to the development of poor countries through international development cooperation. Contributions are provided according to international agreements on development cooperation, e.g. the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action,<sup>30</sup> that guide the donor countries regarding Official Development Assistance (ODA). It is one of the few countries that meet international targets regarding high-income countries' ODA: the Norwegian contribution has been over 0.76 percent of national Gross National Income (GNI)<sup>31</sup> every year in the reporting period, and 0.9 or more since 2002. In 2013, the ODA was record high and reached 1.07 percent of GNI, an increase of almost 19 percent from 2012. Norway is also one of the largest financial contributors to the UN organizations and programs.

#### Norwegian ODA, 2000 – 2013. NOK\* and percentage of GNI

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
MNOK	11115	12104	13544	14469	17995	21808	25624	26424	26653	27638	32807
ODA/GNI %	0.76	0.80	0.89	0.92	0.94	0.95	1.06	1.05	0.96	0.93	1.07

Source: Norad

\* 1 US\$ ~ 6.10 NOK

Since 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have given strong guidance to the Norwegian priorities in international development cooperation under different governments. This is how the government described its development policy in a White Paper in 2004:

*“Norway’s development policy (...) is based on the fundamental principle that all people are equal in human dignity. (...) It is also about promoting human rights – economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. The fight against poverty is a fight for justice. (...) Poverty leaves little room for choosing and achieving a different existence, either for individuals or for countries. From this perspective, national and international development policy is about providing opportunities for individuals to create a new future, and for poor countries to do the same. Consequently, it is about contributing*

<sup>29</sup> Sources of all figures in this chapter: Global Monitoring Report various years; 2013 Norad Results Report Health and Education ; Norad Statistics

<sup>22</sup> GMR 2013/14, p. 395; Statistics Norway: [http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/\\_attachment/176087?\\_ts=145db65fb68](http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/176087?_ts=145db65fb68)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> For explanation of GNI, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross\\_national\\_income](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_national_income)

*human resources, health and education. It is about democracy, freedom of speech and equality under the law.*"<sup>32</sup>

The priority to education as a means for reaching major development goals continues and will be considerably strengthened under the current government. In a White Paper presented in June 2014<sup>33</sup> it is stated already in the introduction that:<sup>34</sup>

*“Education forms the foundation for the development of the individual and society, and is a prerequisite for achievement of growth and development. A global effort in favor of relevant education of good quality for all will represent a leap for the fight against poverty, for new jobs, industrial development, health, nutrition, gender equality, peace and democracy. Time has come to take this leap, and Norway will be a driving force and partner.”*<sup>35</sup> See section 4.3 for further information.

Specific policy priorities in ODA in the reporting period include:

- Promotion of Human rights
- Enhancement of democracy and good governance
- Support to management of natural resources and development of national policies, regulations and institutions in this area (petroleum, hydroelectricity, aquaculture and fisheries)
- Capacity building in management of taxation and anti-corruption work
- Mitigation of climate change by protection of tropical forests and promotion of clean energy
- Provision of health services and capacity building in health systems and institutions
- Education and Research
- Conflict resolution
- Emergency relief

During the reporting period, between 40 and 50 percent of total ODA has been provided through multilateral organizations and global funds. Public partners in recipient countries have received a gradually reduced part of the ODA.<sup>36</sup> National and international non-government organizations (NGO/INGO) is the second-largest channel for management of Norwegian ODA.

**Norwegian ODA, 2000 – 2013. Distribution by partners / channels. Percent of total**

<i>Year</i>	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
<i>Channel</i>								
Multilateral org.	41	48	48	49	49	48	48	44
Public sector in recipient country	14	10	10	11	9	8	8	17
Norwegian NGO	18	17	17	17	15	14	13	13
Other NGO/INGO	5	4	4	5	6	8	8	7
Others	22	21	21	18	21	20	21	19

*Source: Norad*

Shifting governments and compositions of the national assembly in general have followed the same ODA policy in the relevant period. But different governments have given shifting priority

<sup>32</sup> Report No 35 (2003-2004) to the Storting. [http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/documents/propositions-and-reports/reports-to-the-storting/20032004/report\\_no-35\\_to\\_the\\_storting\\_2003-2004.html?id=197372](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/documents/propositions-and-reports/reports-to-the-storting/20032004/report_no-35_to_the_storting_2003-2004.html?id=197372)

<sup>33</sup> Report No 25 (2013-14) to the Storting. <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2013-2014/Meld-St-25--20132014/1.html?id=762555>

<sup>34</sup> The White Paper is currently in Norwegian only. Hence, the quote is translated for the purpose of this report.

<sup>35</sup> The report recognizes the important work of UNESCO in assisting member states developing education for all, and states that Norway’s support to UNESCO in this area will be maintained.

<sup>36</sup> The high figure for 2013 in the table (17 percent) does not indicate a policy shift, but is caused primarily by the transfer of a compensation grant to Brazil for future protection of tropical forest.

to the respective themes, such as Climate, Health and Education. This is reflected in the figures for specific sector support. Support to education was relative stable around 6 – 7 percent in most of the period, and peaked in 2004 – 2006, when 9 percent of total Norwegian ODA went to education.

**Norwegian ODA, 2000 – 2013, distribution by identified sectors. *Percent of total***

<i>Year</i>	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
<i>Sector</i>								
Good governance	12	14	14	15	15	15	14	13
Health and social	12	11	11	10	9	7	7	8
Economic dev, trade	11	12	14	15	16	14	12	11
Emergency	9	9	7	8	8	8	7	8
Energy	7	6	6	6	9	12	17	21
Education	6	6	9	9	7	6	6	5

*Source: Norad*

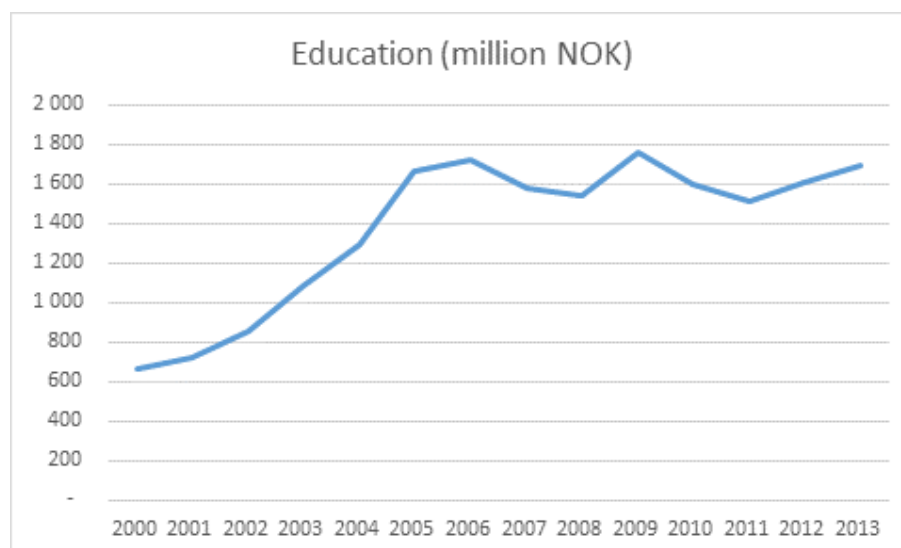
**3.2 Support to education 2000 – 2012/13**

In general, Norway’s contribution to education development has increased since the EFA and Millennium Development Goals were introduced. Education aid has mainly been channeled through multilateral schemes. In addition, Norway has supported the development of education in several countries through various forms and means of bilateral support.

In 2012, Norwegian ODA to education was NOK 1.6 billion. This constitutes some 3.2 percent of the total, global development assistance to the education sector.

Education has played an important role in Norwegian development policy for many years. Greater emphasis was placed on education from 2001 to 2005 than in the latter part of the decade and up to 2012. However, in 2013, education was again announced to become a top priority within Norwegian development cooperation in the years to come.

**Norwegian ODA to education 2000 – 2013.**



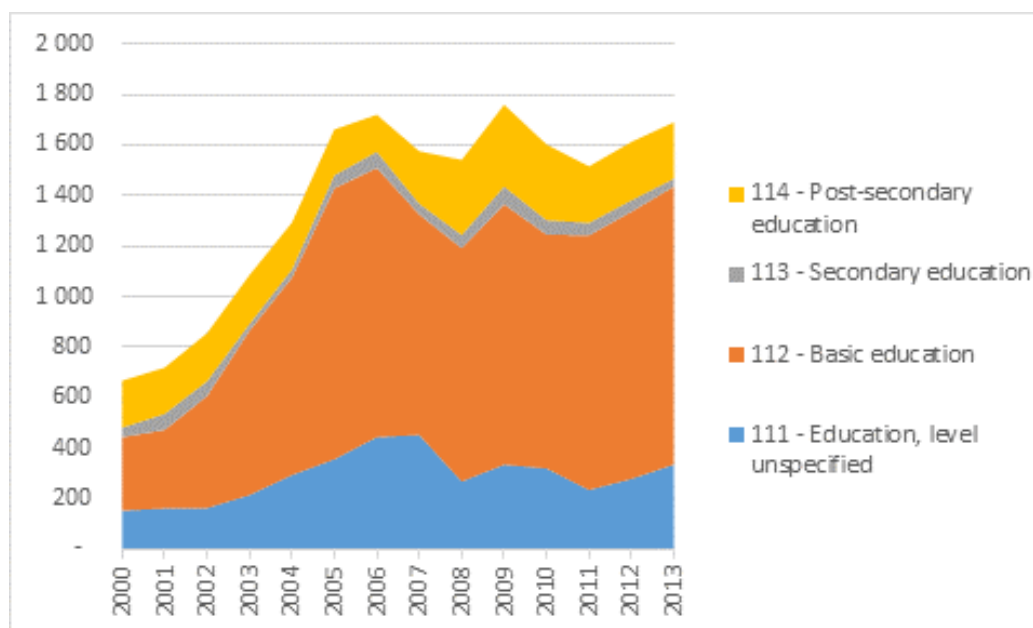
*Source: Norad*

The main objective of Norwegian development cooperation in education has been and still is to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 and the EFA goals. This means that universal primary education and gender parity in schools have been priority areas for Norwegian aid. Access to education for girls, marginalized groups and children in countries ravaged by war and conflict have been particularly important areas of focus. Improving the quality of schools has also been an objective. Increasing the number of teachers, improving curricula, introducing more and better teaching materials and using relevant teaching languages have been important means for achieving quality improvements. These are central in the EFA agenda.

The main strategy for achieving education goals has been to support the recipient countries' own plans, by enhancing their institutional capacity for policy development, management, and implementation. During the recent years of declining international aid, Norway's support for primary education has remained stable.

Norwegian financial ODA to education saw a significant increase during the past decade, from NOK 856 million in 2002 to about 1.6 billion in 2012. The distribution of support to different types and levels of education has varied over the years, as illustrated below. In 2013, 65 percent went to primary education, three percent to secondary education and 15 percent to higher education. For 17 percent of the funds for education the level was not specified. Of the funds specified by education level, some 81.3 percent went to primary education, 16.5 percent to higher education, and only 2.2 percent was spent on secondary education and vocational training.

**Norwegian ODA to education by education level, 2000 – 2013. Mill NOK**



Source: Norad

The goal for Norwegian support to *higher* education in recent years has been to contribute to developing candidates that can staff important social institutions and improve national governance and economic development. Furthermore, the support will enable education institutions in developing countries to educate more graduates that in turn can contribute to the development of society and economy. In line with Millennium Development Goal 3 on equal access to education at all levels for women and men, an important target has been to increase the proportion of women who complete higher education.

Norway supports capacity development in higher education and research through embassies and through the programs NOMA (Norad's Programme for Master Studies), NUFU (The Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education), EnPe (Master's degree studies in energy and petroleum) and NORHED (The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research Development). Norad administers these programs. Based on an evaluation of NOMA and NUFU in 2009, NORHED was established in 2011. NORHED combines the objectives of NUFU and NOMA, thereby ensuring more emphasis on institutional capacity development. This will improve sustainability.

### **3.3 Support to education through multilateral channels and partners**

870 out of the 1600 million NOK provided to education in 2012 were channeled through multilateral channels. UNICEF, the World Bank, UNESCO and UNDP were the most important channels and partners in administering these funds. Since its inception in 2002, Norway has contributed a total of NOK 1.4 billion to the Global Partnership for Education, GPE (earlier FTI). This represents some 8 percent of GPE's total funds in the period.

Multilateral organizations such as UNICEF, the World Bank and UNESCO have played a key role in efforts to meet the EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals for education so far. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has lately become an important financing mechanism and broad partnership for channeling of Norwegian ODA funds for education. In addition to the channeling of ODA funds, Norway is an active participant in the professional development and management of these organizations and structures. Representatives from government bodies, including the MFA, Norad and the MOER, actively seek and become elected members of governing boards, and advisory and expert committees that decide on policies and priorities in investments and support of programs and countries.

Norway is the third largest donor to UNICEF, and supported the organization with a total of almost NOK 1.4 billion in 2012. Core support amounted to one-third (NOK 450 million), while earmarked funds for specific programs accounted for two thirds (NOK 916 million). In 2012, UNICEF's budget totaled NOK 23 billion. That year, Norway's support represented six percent of both the core budget and the total budget of the organization.

Norway has an active partnership with UNESCO, particularly in education. In addition to the regular member state fee, Norway provides financial support to several of the specialized institutes in the education sector, including UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), and International Bureau of Education (IBE). Norwegian representatives have been at the UNESCO Executive Board, and at various boards and committees of several of the specialized institutes. Norway was one of the Nordic countries that took initiative for establishing the successful program, *CapEFA – Capacity development for the implementation of Education for All*, which targets the least developed countries. The program was established in 2003 and is today financed by a group of Nordic countries.<sup>37</sup> Norway's contribution to the program was increased from 18.4 million NOK in 2013 to 26 million NOK for 2014.<sup>38</sup>

### **3.4 Bilateral support to education**

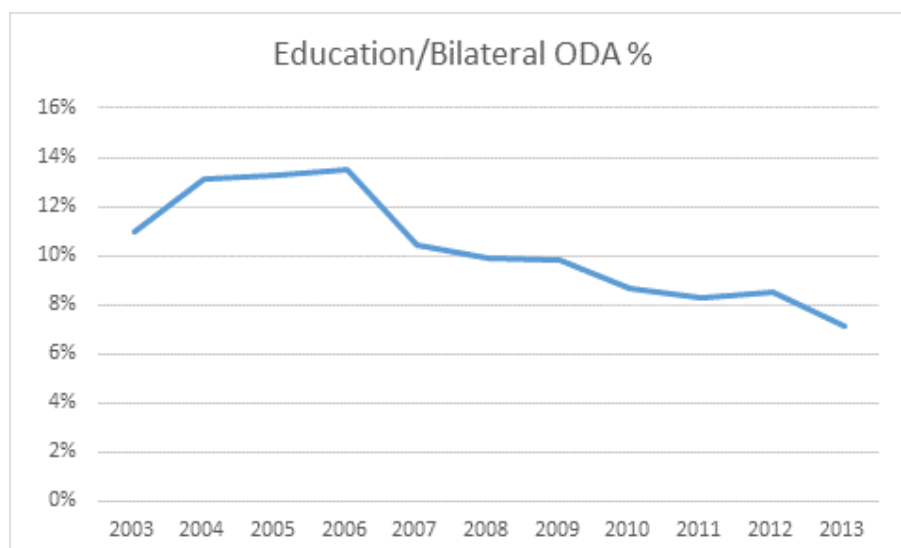
In recent years, the Norwegian *bilateral* contribution has been somewhat higher for education than for example for health, where most contributions have gone through multilateral channels and global funds. In addition to government-to-government aid, the bilateral contribution includes support to civil society organizations (CSOs) and pool earmarked funding channeled through multilateral organizations. Education aid amounted to 8.7 per cent of total Norwegian bilateral aid in 2000 and

<sup>37</sup> For more information about CapEFA: UNESCO (2011): "CapEFA – Translating theory into practice", <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002122/212262e.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Source: MFA.

reached its peak at 13.5 per cent in 2006. In 2012 bilateral education ODA amounted to 8.5 per cent. Nepal, Uganda and Madagascar were the countries that received most this year.

Through bilateral cooperation, Norway supports the education field directly in countries such as Burundi, Madagascar, Palestine, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This support contributes to better planning, operation and follow-up of education programmes in these countries. Examples of results from these countries, presented in the 2013 Results Report Health and Education, and in Norad's results portal ([www.norad.no](http://www.norad.no)) , give more details on how Norway works.



Source: Norad

### 3.5 Support through civil organizations

CSOs, including Norwegian non-government organizations (NGOs), local NGOs and International NGOs (INGOs) play an important role in influencing development policies and priorities in both donor and recipient countries. In the low-income countries they furthermore represent an important supplement to the state in delivery of vital services within health and education. For these reasons, Norwegian ODA authorities cooperate closely with the NGOs and use them actively in pursuing the development goals, including in education. In 2012, Norwegian and international civil society organizations managed NOK 355 million, i.e. 22 percent of the Norwegian bilateral education funds. Private-sector players are engaged in the development of vocational education.

Norad's civil society panel (March 2012) reported after investigations in four countries that CSOs play an important role as service providers, especially in rural areas. Estimates from Ethiopia show that NGOs account for as much as 25 per cent of the total service delivery in the country. In Nepal civil society accounts for between 10 and 15 per cent of all education services. The figures are significantly higher in hard-to-reach areas and countries with intense political unrest or armed conflict, such as Afghanistan and Somalia, where the government is unable or hesitate to offer these services to the population. In addition to this work, CSOs have become increasingly involved as driving forces for policy development.

CSOs also manage a large proportion of the Norwegian humanitarian aid to countries in crises and conflict. Education is a relatively small, but important part of humanitarian aid. It is not possible to isolate the proportion spent on education. Of the support to the UN-coordinated disaster relief appeals in 2012, education represented only 1.3 percent. Around 50 per cent of the total humanitarian aid was

managed by multilateral organizations. The rest was managed by CSOs, such as the International Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian People's Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). This is described in a separate annual report: Norwegian humanitarian policy, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **3.6 Achievements of Norwegian ODA to education**

Norway has contributed significantly to the international development cooperation in education. The main objectives of the education ODA has been and still is to contribute towards achievement of the EFA goals, and these have guided the Norwegian support strategies.

Norway was one of the initiators of the GPE/FTI, which has contributed significantly to realize children's right to schooling. Today, the GPE is a partnership between 59 developing countries, donor countries, the UN, the World Bank, civil society organizations and the private sector. The countries that participate in GPE have enrolled twice as many children in primary education as countries outside the GPE partnership. It is estimated that since the GPE/FTI was launched in 2002, 21.8 million more children have gained the opportunity to go to school because of the added capacity to which the GPE has contributed. However, ten per cent of children in developing countries are still out of school.

Norway combines financial aid with other instruments. There are indications that the combination of political engagement, alliance building, funding and technical initiatives has made a difference and had important impact. Consistent policy and conscious choice of instruments and partners has been vital for successful mobilization of a vigorous joint effort with specific goals. Emphasis has been placed on leadership to strengthen international efforts, especially for girls' education and basic education in humanitarian crises and conflict.

Norway provides a clear voice for rights and equal opportunities in international negotiations at the UN, in dialogue with partner countries, and through support to civil society organizations.

It is challenging to monitor and assess results of support that has been provided through multilateral organizations. Norway is often only one of several donors that contribute to pool funding. A typical example is core support to multilateral organizations, which is not earmarked for a specific theme or geographical area. 52 percent of the Norwegian support through multilateral organizations is in the form of core contributions.

Core support gives the organizations greater financial flexibility and makes it easier to plan for the long term. When several donors contribute to a common pool, it is challenging, if not impossible, to say which results are attributable to the various donors. Norway nevertheless chooses to provide aid through multilateral organizations because pooling of resources can have greater impact than Norway could have achieved alone.

Gender parity promotion in higher education has been promoted through NOMA, NUFU and NORHED. These initiatives promote implementation and integration of gender as a dimension in education and research. NUFU and NOMA had specific targets for the ratio of women: 40 and 50 per cent respectively. The objectives were largely achieved, partly through financial awards to those projects that succeeded in recruiting the desired proportion of women. Arrangements were also made for women who gave birth during the study period, giving them a better opportunity to complete their studies. For NORHED, equality is a key objective, with a focus on recruitment of female students and staff. The new program supports Millennium Development Goal 3 and EFA goal 5 by carrying forward objectives including the goal of enabling more women to gain access to and complete higher education.

## *Achievements, challenges and further efforts*

### **4. Norway's EFA performance: achievements and challenges**

#### **4.1 Performance, achievements**

This report shows that Norway domestically, as well as in the international development cooperation, has been committed to the EFA goals. The commitment is reflected in policies and priorities, as well as in strategic investments and other implementation measures.

Norway's national education and training in general seems to meet the final objectives of the EFA Goals 1 – 5. The most obvious improvements in the reporting period are related to the ECCE reform. Gender parity in terms of access rights and learning opportunities are realities. There have been several system reforms to the end of improved quality. We have seen, however, that there is a potential for quality improvements, EFA Goal 6, in order to improve the learning outcomes in foundation skills.

Norway is a large contributor in international development cooperation, and the support to education has been loyally and systematically in accordance with the EFA priorities and goals. Universal access and gender equality in primary education has been given particular attention. Education's part of total ODA has been at a relatively low level, however, and there is currently a significant imbalance in contributions to the different education levels and types. Norwegian support to education through multilateral organizations, global funds and other joint financing arrangements have contributed to a documented improvement in access to education and improved gender equality in many low-income countries.

Globally, there are serious shortcomings relating to the quality of the education that is being provided, however. Recent reports indicate that 40 – 50 percent of primary school children in some areas leave school after 4 – 5 years without the most basic reading or numeracy skills. Furthermore, estimates indicate that as many as 58 million children still do not have access to primary education. The situation in ECCE and secondary education is even worse.

#### **4.2 Challenges, including post 2015**

In order to improve existing systems and efforts, and in attempting to meet expected needs and demands of the future, Norway faces several challenges relating to the EFA goals both domestically and as a partner in international development.

Domestically, the most immediate challenges include:

- Improve learning of foundation skills in general, and especially for the low-achievers.
- Strengthen teacher recruitment, training and retention
- Increase efforts and find new means for reducing current reproduction of social inequality caused by parents' different education level
- Ensure that all children attend ECCE of at least one year as preparation for primary school
- Reduce the level of drop-out from upper secondary education, and especially from VET in order to be able to meet labor market needs

In the international development cooperation, there are serious challenges relating to both improved access and quality in the education being provided:

- In general, to find the most efficient and effective approaches, in terms of financial support, professional contributions, partnership arrangements, channels, geographical concentration etc.
- Increase the focus on education and training for reduction of poverty, with a particular focus on training for income-generation



- Find a good balance of support to the various levels and types of education and training
- Connect support to education and training with development measures in major sectors, such as health, energy, climate change mitigation, and industrial development
- Contribute efficiently and effectively to the recruitment, training and retention of teachers, to the end of improving both access to and quality in education
- Find the most efficient and effective approaches to ensuring access and appropriate education provisions for girls, children in conflict and disaster areas, and other vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities.

Education and training is the most powerful means for social transition, for development of societies, for reduction of individual and social poverty. Education and training is necessary mitigation of climate change and establishment of a sustainable development. Thus, the global efforts for high quality education and training for all people must continue also post 2015. The Norwegian government will take a lead role in ensuring appropriate education and training for all.

### **4.3 White Paper on Education for Development<sup>39</sup>**

A White Paper, “Education for Development”, was submitted to the Storting in June 2014. The document identifies education as a top priority in development and foreign policy, where Norway is to contribute to a new international offensive for Education for All. The paper is strongly founded on a human rights platform.

The document states that the government sees education and training as a prerequisite for economic growth, private sector development and employment. Qualification for the workforce, including through technical and vocational education and training is a top priority. Education is a catalyst for poverty reduction, better health and nutrition, nation building, protection of human rights, prevention of conflict, and promotion of democracy. The government will identify a couple of pilot countries where Norway will scale up bilateral support according to these goals.

The immediate ambition will be to reach ten percent of children that today have no access to primary education, with a special priority to girls, the poor, and children subject to discrimination, crises and conflict. Children that have completed primary education, but lack the skills to enter the workforce is another important target group. Education is seen as an integral part of humanitarian relief. Protection of education institutions will be a priority.

According to the new policy document the government will support international partnerships that can become a political and financial force to support education in poor countries in an effective way, by making education and training a top priority in the UN and other multilateral forums. Provided that agencies can substantiate efficient and effective implementation, Norway will support good programs and projects.

The White Paper strongly emphasizes quality of learning, including foundation skills and skills for entering the labor market. Utilizing opportunities from innovation and new technology, including e-learning for access and improved learning is seen as important. Civil society and private sector actors will be engaged as main partners. Norwegian enterprises abroad will be involved through the provision of skills development for local staff. The Norwegian contributions will not replace, but support national efforts to strengthen education and training.

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<sup>39</sup> Report No 25 (2013-14) to the Storting: “Utdanning for utvikling” (Education for Development): <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2013-2014/Meld-St-25--20132014/1.html?id=762555>

## *Annex 1 Measures to promote inclusive education in Norway*<sup>40</sup>

A number of specific measures that support and promote inclusive education are in operation, adapted to the various types of education and target groups. Some of them are under the auspices of other ministries than MOER. The arrangements fall in four major categories and span all education levels.

### *Social-pedagogical, including:*

- PPT - Pedagogical-psychological services at local level, providing diagnostic and counselling services to kindergartens and schools on adaptation of teaching for learners that experience a difficult social or educational situation.
- Social and vocational counselling services at institutional level.
- Needs-based priority entrance to upper secondary school.
- Follow-up service for dropouts and non-attendants at upper secondary level.

### *Professional, including:*

- Formal involvement of parents, cooperation school – home.
- Homework support arrangements.
- Deviating education paths and assessment arrangements.
- Entrance to higher education based on assessment of formal education and work experience.
- System for validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.
- “Second chance” arrangements for learners who leave education without completing upper secondary level.

### *Financial, including:*

- Subsidised loans and grants to learners organised through the State Education Loan Fund.
- Financial support to families with weak economy through various arrangements.
- Tax relief to companies that invest in education of staff.
- Subsidised adult education arrangements.

### *Technical, including:*

- Free provision of necessary technical equipment to learners with specific needs.
- Free transport.
- Physical adaptation of all schools to ensure universal access.

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<sup>40</sup> Source: Norway’s national report to the International Conference on Education 2008: “All inclusive?”. See: [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/norway\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/norway_NR08.pdf)

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### **VOX**

Homepage with access to statistics and reports on policies, results, international cooperation etc:

<http://www.vox.no/English/>