

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: [DFID's work on education: Leaving no one behind?](#), HC 639

Tuesday 28 March 2017

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 28 March 2017.

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Members present: Stephen Twigg (Chair); Dr Lisa Cameron; Stephen Doughty; Mr Nigel Evans; Pauline Latham; Mr Ivan Lewis; Wendy Morton; Paul Scully; Mr Virendra Sharma

Questions 186 - 267

Witnesses

I. Dr Shannon May, Co-Founder, Bridge International Academies

II. Rt Hon Lord Bates, Minister of State for International Development; Anna Wechsberg, Policy Director, Policy and Global Programmes, Department for International Development; Ian Attfield, Education Adviser, Department for International Development



Examination of witness

Witness: Dr Shannon May.

Q186 **Chair:** Good morning everyone, and welcome to this final evidence session as part of our inquiry into DFID's work on education. We have two panels this morning. The first session will be for about half an hour, with Dr May from Bridge, and then after that we have the Minister. It is wonderful to see the Minister in the gallery; you are welcome, Lord Bates.

Let me make a start. I will open with a question, but feel free to provide some words of introduction before answering the question. According to your website, Bridge's investors are mainly venture capital firms, philanthropists and development finance institutions. My understanding is that to date DFID is the only donor agency to have invested directly in Bridge. Is that correct?

Dr May: First, good morning, Chair. Thank you all for inviting me to answer your questions. I am Shannon May. I am one of the co-founders of Bridge. I was a teacher; I was also an anthropologist. What led us to start Bridge as a mission-driven social enterprise was my and my husband's own work with families who were faced with struggling and failing schools, and the lack of a future their children had when they simply were not learning.

We did not want to keep facing a future with 260 million children out of school and over 130 million children in school for more than four years that were still not able to read. To date, over the past 10 years, we have worked with over 250,000 children, helping them not only to have their dreams but to achieve them. We are very proud of our work. I am glad to share that with you today.

To the Chair's question, we do have financial partners that include venture capitalists and large financial institutions, such as IFC and CDC. We do have contracts working in Liberia with large donor and philanthropic investors to help support the work that is happening in Liberia to create very powerful public schools. I am not clear as to whether you would call those donations or contracts. We also have been working under a contract with DFID specifically in Lagos State to improve our learning outcomes for marginalised children across Lagos.

Q187 **Chair:** Have you ever approached other bilateral donors to have the sort of relationship that you have with DFID that you have just described in the example of Lagos State?

Dr May: Specifically to go into the history of DFID quickly, we simply responded to a term of reference. We had not approached DFID per se in a conversational or personal way. We were just starting to look at this type of work as we felt more confident in our ability to deliver, and we



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responded to that term of reference and went through the procurement process. We are honoured to have been awarded that specific contract in Lagos.

We are currently under response to a term of reference for USAID. We have been asked to submit proposals against the GDA funds that USAID does in areas of specific marginalisation. When we first started we were not sure if this was all working. We were not going out trying to apply for big grants for contract work.

Now, several years into this, we have the evidence base. In many ways we ourselves were waiting until we had the evidence base, of multiple years of national examinations and multiple years of quasi-experimental studies showing that our approach to supporting teachers and to ensuring children learning actually works, before we applied for that type of contract work.

Chair: We are going to explore some of that evidence base in a moment, but we will stick with Nigeria for now.

Q188 **Wendy Morton:** Good morning, Dr May. You mentioned Lagos State; some of us from the Committee visited one of the Bridge schools in Nigeria last year. DFID made a substantial £3.4 million investment in Bridge as part of its DEEPEN programme in Nigeria. Was DFID's support necessary for Bridge to enter the market in Nigeria, or would you have done it anyway?

Dr May: We would not have entered the market in Nigeria without the specific contract, and there are many reasons for that. First and foremost, when we were first starting Bridge as a social enterprise back in 2007, we did extensive amounts of research across sub-Saharan Africa. We looked at where there was a need, where there were schools that were failing children and where there was a regulatory environment that was seeking partners to develop a stronger ecosystem.

Nigeria historically has had an incredibly large private sector devoted to serving marginalised children, in many ways because there has been such a struggle within the state funded sector to deliver on what parents are looking for. Historically, it had been a hostile relationship between the State Government in Lagos and the thousands of affordable private schools that are there.

It was DFID's own research, done in 2011 by Dr Gibson, that showed at the time there were more than 12,000 affordable private schools, with close to 70% of the population attending these schools. It was really DFID looking into this space and seeing that there was such a need and that the majority of children were not in the state sector. We did not originally see this term of reference, to be honest. A large consulting firm approached us and asked if we would be a partner in their application, as an original part of what became DEEPEN. After further conversations with them we decided not to work together. We



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approached them and said, “Would you mind if we bid on this work ourselves as well?”

That is how we went forward, but at the time that the bid was put in—it started in 2012—we had not yet expanded outside of Kenya. We had no intention of working in Lagos. It is a much more fraught commercial market, just from a national regulatory perspective. I am sure you have all seen how the naira has gone from 199 to 520 and now back to 400. It is a very difficult space to try to be working and serving families. We would not have entered without the specific contract from DFID.

Q189 Wendy Morton: Can I follow up with a question about the relationship between Bridge and DFID? The 2016 annual report for the DEEPEN programme describes the relationship between Bridge and DFID as poor and documents a number of problems with the grant arrangements. I wondered if you could explain why this has not been the successful partnership that it may have been. Perhaps you think it has been a successful partnership.

Dr May: We are working very successfully together now. There was a period where I think there was confusion, and we openly discussed that with DFID in terms of how we could move forward. We negotiated the contract to ensure that it was output-based. One of the things that had changed was that the original contracting officer and the original education adviser shifted during the period of this contract. There was an issue about continuity around what the design of the contract was and what its original intent was. In many ways it was us trying to make sure that we understood that from DFID, and that we understood how we should meet this contract. Part of what happened back in 2015 was looking at how to ensure that we were delivering against the outputs. We had understood this as an output or outcome-based contract. There was some variance from the procurement team on how to make sure that was defined and how to ensure that we were measured against that very specifically.

We wanted that, so we were very happy to go through that process again with DFID. We have met all of the terms and the delivery of service has now been completed. What we are now very excited about is that we are moving into the phase of monitoring and evaluation. There should be a full EDOREN learning gains study that will start in September 2017 and continue for two years, to measure the learning gains of children who are attending the Bridge community schools.

Q190 Wendy Morton: On that point of monitoring and evaluation, you mentioned that the programme will be starting very soon. What monitoring and evaluation is taking place to date in Nigeria to ensure that we are getting the best results for the investment that is made there?

Dr May: From the beginning, the plan for a large-scale M&E programme was always to start in 2017 or 2018. The reason for that is that until you have a large enough sample—a large enough number of children to be



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working with—it is hard to find statistically significant differences. As a big-picture programme, it was always planned, even from the original TOR, regardless of Bridge being involved, that that was when a large-scale study would happen.

From the very beginning, however, we had been doing internal monitoring and evaluation, measuring pupil growth, within the year and year on year, in the schools that we support. To date we have seen significant gains. It is not an impact study. It is not a randomised control trial, but we would be happy to submit those specific reports to you as we have to the DFID team in Nigeria, so that you have them directly.

Q191 **Chair:** These are your own internal assessments.

Dr May: They are internal assessments but you can validate the data. The DFID Nigeria team has seen them, and we would be happy to share them with you.

Q192 **Chair:** Thank you. Is the work you describe as forthcoming conducted by yourselves, or is that independent?

Dr May: It will be an independent evaluation. We hope it will be a randomised control trial but those are more expensive to fund, so that will be up to DFID, whether it chooses to go down that path or a quasi-experimental path.

Q193 **Pauline Latham:** You have received considerable investment from CDC directly and also indirectly through its investment in the venture capital firm, Novastar Ventures. When do you think CDC will see a return on this rather large UK Government investment?

Dr May: From the very beginning, Bridge has been set up as a social enterprise. What does that really mean? It means that we have been structured to ensure that we are able to serve families at a fairly minimal fee level. These are families that are earning \$1.25 per day per capita. From the very beginning, including when CDC evaluated its investment in Bridge, we were an opportunity that is about scale. It is about trying to solve this much larger global and national problem of millions of children either not having access to school or not going to a school that is meeting their needs.

Currently we are not yet at the scale where we would be looking at becoming financially sustainable, but that is as it has been planned. As we grow over the next two to three years, we hope that we continue to deliver beneficial support and continue to show that children are learning; that we continue to support parents in their communities as well as state-funded schools through government contracts; and that we then meet our objectives of becoming a financially sustainable social enterprise and therefore the objectives of CDC.

Q194 **Pauline Latham:** You mention social enterprise. In my mind, social



enterprise means that you are not for profit and that you plough everything back in, but that is not your remit. You are going to make a profit. You want to make a lot of money from this, so how do you square that? You are saying you are a social enterprise but you are telling everybody you are going to make a big profit. How does that work?

Dr May: Perhaps it could be just a difference in interpretation of terms. Our understanding and how we see social enterprise is that it is an organisation that is mission-driven, and that is committed to—

Pauline Latham: Making a profit.

Dr May: It is committed to having a developmental impact and doing that in a financially sustainable way. Without such mission-driven social enterprises, we would not be having the development we need.

Q195 **Pauline Latham:** A financially sustainable way does not necessarily mean making a big profit. That could mean that what you are doing is ploughing it all back in, and it is sustainable because it continues because you make profit and plough it back in. That is not what you are going to do.

Dr May: The reason we chose very carefully to be structured how we are is to ensure that we could attract the type of investment that is needed to treat education like a science. We think it is a good thing to draw investment into the sector that needs it most. If we want a different future for our children than we have today, we need to invest in their education. That not only develops economic prosperity but increases health outcomes for mothers who have been able to be educated.

One of the great challenges in education, as Andreas Schleicher of the OECD has said, is that education has historically been an innovation-hostile environment. We need more investment into education so that there can be more research and development, and things that develop scientifically based teacher-training programmes and pedagogy programme. That will mean we can bring the technology needed into schools. We are structured to enable us to draw that type of investment, and we have funded world-leading research into the field of education that is benefiting the children who need it most. We are very proud of CDC's partnership with us, and we look forward to continuing on that development impact.

Q196 **Pauline Latham:** You are supposed to be giving a return on their investment. From what you are saying, you will not be doing that, so CDC will not get a return on the UK Government's investment.

Dr May: What I am saying is that if we continue to deliver the development impact that we have historically, and if we continue to increase our service to families and to Governments, we will become financially sustainable. Therefore, we will have met our business obligations and we will have met the needs of our investors.



Pauline Latham: On the terms that you use, “financially sustainable” can mean all sorts of things. You are saying the right words but I am not sure that you are going to deliver what you promised to deliver at the beginning.

Q197 **Wendy Morton:** I wanted to follow up on that point, if I may, for a little bit of clarity. When we are talking about venture capital firms and investment, are those firms expecting, and will they receive, a return on their investments? I think what Mrs Latham is driving at is to know whether there is an element of profit that is being generated that will go back to those original funders and investors, as opposed to going back into the organisation and the social enterprise.

Dr May: Perhaps what I should say first is that over the past year, just in 2016 alone, we subsidised the education of the children we served by over \$12 million. We spent more on our teacher-training, our service-level deliveries and our academic support than parents paid in small fees. I do not think it is a bad thing to draw investment into education, or that an investor should receive a return.

Wendy Morton: That is not the issue.

Dr May: If we deliver on our plan to continue service to Governments and to children, our investors will receive the returns that they have expected. That is of course what will happen.

Q198 **Chair:** What are those returns? What do they expect?

Dr May: It would be important to ask each of them directly. Each of them has their own investment prospectus and their own reasons for investing. When you look at a venture capital investment, it is always risky. There is no guaranteed return. This is not a bond. This is not something with a dividend. There are no annual payments. This is something where people have come together to invest in something that has radical development impact. There is a risk to that.

Q199 **Chair:** What you are saying is that if you were not structured in that way, some of those investors would not invest.

Dr May: Exactly. There is not a guarantee of a specific return. This is about putting capital behind research and development and service delivery where it is needed most. If that produces an incredible opportunity, that is something that an investor should benefit from.

Q200 **Paul Scully:** Dr May, thank you very much for coming to us today. A number of us went to Uganda and Kenya just recently. As you know, we visited Bridge schools in each. We noticed a big difference in the quality of teaching in those schools, especially with weaker teaching in Uganda. I am wondering if you can explain why that might be.

Dr May: First, thank you to those of you who were able to make that trip to both Uganda and Kenya, and to Nigeria last year. First, any given teacher can have a good or bad day. I know that personally, and often



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when you are being observed that can be very harrowing. Secondly, of course there will be variation across teachers. We see that and we measure that. One of the things that is really important to us is looking at people growth, and then doing that across the course of a year. It is also watching every teacher teach a full lesson every week so that they can have additional professional development coaching. If we do see a teacher that is struggling, there is an immediate support network that comes into place to support that teacher. I am thankful for your concern that you saw a teacher that you thought was weaker.

Also, one of the things that we look at is not just the single-day performance of a teacher but what is happening over the course of a unit over the course of a term, and certainly over the course of a year. We use all of that information to best support individual teachers and to change the overall programme within the school.

Q201 Paul Scully: I must admit that in Uganda I wish it was just one teacher; it was more than one teacher. There was a fundamental thing that seemed to be going on because of the use of a tablet; an unintended consequence of it was a dependency in the way that they were delivering the lessons. I am wondering if you could let us know what qualifications teachers have and the training that they have before they are teaching.

Dr May: In every country, and sometimes in every state or regulatory area, there are different requirements for what creates a candidate for a teacher. We work with each Government in Uganda or Kenya or Liberia to ensure that we are working with their standards. We are working closely with the Teachers Service Commission in Kenya and with the ministry directly in Uganda on that. In Uganda it is called a G3. That is the certification that you have after you go to a primary teaching college. We work closely with many of them across Uganda.

Uganda as a country has been struggling with teacher-training. The Uganda National Examinations Board released a report last year unfortunately showing that the majority of their graduates from their primary teacher college are neither literate nor numerate at sixth grade, in English or mathematics. While we work with the Government to ensure we are working with the teachers they are preparing, many of them are still struggling. That is part of why we have additional induction training for teachers and ongoing service support.

I am grateful for your feedback. We will make sure that we continue to look into how to strengthen our programme in Uganda. What we can say is that the early M&E work that we have been doing is showing learning gains as compared to the alternative. We are not where we want to be yet. We will continue to improve, but the key thing is that we acknowledge where we are and continue to show improvement. We are showing stronger learning gains than what is available in other schools within the same communities that we serve.

Q202 Chair: Before coming on to my question, can I reinforce what Paul said?



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Having been to a school in Lagos, a school in Uganda and a school in Kenya, there was a very stark difference. The situation in Uganda was much weaker than what I saw in Lagos last year and what we saw in Kenya a couple of weeks ago. I wanted to ask you a question as a teacher about the method with the tablet. Do you think, in the longer term, it is a sustainable model? The sense I have is that it is quite disempowering for the teacher as a professional to be so reliant on the tablet.

Dr May: Speaking from my personal experience and from the experiences of the teachers we work with closely, what I have found most empowering as a teacher is seeing children learn, and there are different forms of technology that might help you to get there. Many of us might have experienced chalk and a blackboard or a pencil and paper. Now many teachers have access to computers, the internet and other sorts of resources. It is important to think of teacher tablets, teacher guides and textbooks as all being resources. They are all different forms of technology.

Q203 **Chair:** Is the great thing with technology not that it is much more interactive than a chalkboard? The use of technology that we saw in the classrooms could just as well have all been written down on a piece of paper. It was not anything particularly to do with it being the technology. I know you have other uses in terms of monitoring teacher attendance and those issues, which I can see is a positive, but in terms of the delivery of the curriculum, is it that different to just having a worksheet and the teacher working very closely from it?

Dr May: I am really glad you asked that. There are two things. The first is that it is interactive. One of the core things is that as we take the assessments from the children and we see how they are learning, we can send different teacher guides, different lesson patterns, and different worksheets to the teachers in response to how the class has been going and how children have been learning. It is more interactive than a pre-printed book, which a publisher may not reprint for three or four years. It is also important to note that we are very scientifically driven and evidence-based. The use of teacher guides or a strong lesson plan that has been formatted for a teacher has been shown to be successful in many contexts. In the USA it is now formal policy to encourage teacher-guide use in English and mathematics in the countries in which it works. In Kenya, every state-funded school now has DFID, GPE and USAID funded teacher guides in English and mathematics.

Chair: Yes, we saw them.

Dr May: That is because it has been proven to work. When all of us who are scientifically based in our education methods find something else that works better, I promise you it is what we will do. In the future I imagine there will be more findings; as long as there is continued investment from groups such as DFID into this space, we will all continue to learn more.



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When Bridge first started, we did not have teacher computers, first because the hardware was too expensive and secondly because we were still trying to figure out the basic methodologies that would be successful in a classroom. I hope that the way we are approaching a classroom is different in five years because we will have learnt more too.

Q204 **Chair:** Can I move us on now to an issue that you touched on before, which is about assessment of your schools and in particular independent assessment? Some of the evidence that we have had suggests that you are hostile to independent assessment. You have shared with us your own assessments that you conduct, but when are we going to see independent assessment of the schools? You have mentioned Lagos but what about in other places where Bridge is, particularly in Kenya and Uganda?

Dr May: First, we have had independent assessments since 2010. We have worked with Decisions Management Consulting, which is an independent group that has administered all of the examinations. It is the same group that USAID used to first administer EGRA and EGMA examinations before they built an in-house team to do that. It would not be completely accurate to say that there have not been independent assessments. There have been. These are not exams that we administered ourselves. Our teachers are not administering them.

If we were to move further, we have sat two different national examinations. These are administered by the Government of Kenya. It is a census-based exam. Every child at the end of eighth grade takes it. We have nothing to do with the administration of it, the proctoring of it, or the invigilation. We have had more than 3,000 children sit them. Beyond that, it raises the question about EDOREN and whether there should be a separate randomised control trial or something of that nature. First, you have to have a large enough sample for something like that to make sense and be value-for-money. Second, a research economist or an organisation such as DFID or the World Bank is only going to want to do that type of research when there is already a strong hypothesis and something to test. In this space we are one of the very few organisations that has been subjected to and asked for the amount of independent assessment that goes on about the work we do. There is currently an active randomised control trial that was started by Michael Kremer, an economist from Harvard. The baseline was done in January 2016 and the end line will be at the end of this year.

Q205 **Chair:** What country or countries?

Dr May: In Kenya.

Q206 **Chair:** In addition to the Kenyan national exam that you referred to, there is also the randomised control trial.

Dr May: The Ministry of Education in Liberia, with other partners, commissioned a small evaluation of six of the public state-funded schools that we are working with in Liberia versus six non-intervened



state-funded schools. The midline of that has just come out. After 15 weeks something radical has happened. It is not something we even expected, which was a 0.79 standard deviation gain in literacy and a 0.19 deviation in mathematics, in just 15 weeks. That is a radical gain, and there will be an end line for that in June.

At the same time, there is a larger randomised control trial that is also happening in Liberia, which is done by the Center for Global Development. That is larger. It is a fully randomised control trial and it includes about 100 schools—I guess about 200; there are 93 total partnership schools for Liberia. They each have a matched non-intervened state-funded school. The end line for that will be done in June or July, so we are hoping results for that will also be out this year.

Q207 Chair: Thank you. I am sorry to rush through, but we want to get through all the questions. There is one more from me and then I will go to Paul. There have been allegations of some of the Bridge staff exhibiting threatening behaviour towards independent researchers, both in Uganda and Nigeria. What is the response to those allegations?

Dr May: I believe I know the case you are talking about in Uganda, which we found incredibly unfortunate. There was a gentleman who did not have ethical review board approval from his university who was misrepresenting his identity stating that he was someone who worked for Bridge. Parents and teachers recognised that he did not work for Bridge. They called in to our Bridge customer service line, and in some cases called their local police station, which many parents in the UK would also do if there was a stranger who was impersonating an employee of the school. Parents knew he was not. Our parents and teachers did the right thing by warning the police of someone who was impersonating a staff member of the school. They then followed up. We have looked into this. Parents and members of our organisation have requested from the university to which this student is affiliated information to be able to understand the ethical review process that went through for the research, because it was not followed.

Q208 Paul Scully: We know that the relations between Bridge and the Governments of Uganda and Kenya have been a bit strained, with a significant risk of school closures in both those countries. The relationship with the Liberian Government has been challenging as well. Why is Bridge failing to develop productive and respectful relationships with the Governments in the countries that it is operating in?

Dr May: Thank you for the question, but I would respectfully submit that we have very strong relationships with the Governments with which we work. First, in Liberia we have been specifically requested by President Sirleaf and the Minister of Education to work with them. We only came into partnership with Liberia at their request and have been part of all of their studies. They are currently evaluating how they will expand their partnership school programme. Currently the only policy evidence on learning gains is from the schools in which we work. For example, we



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were assigned to work in 23 state-funded schools in Liberia. At the specific request of President Sirleaf we were assigned another one, and then at the specific request at of the head of the education committee we were assigned another one.

Q209 **Paul Scully:** The teachers there are on strike at the moment.

Dr May: No, they are not.

Paul Scully: They have been on strike.

Dr May: The teachers have never been on strike. What you might be referring to, sir, is that in September the National Teachers Association of Liberia called for a strike, asking for Minister Werner's resignation. Not a single teacher we worked with went on strike. It was also not a strike that was legal, according to the country's own regulations. It did not impact learning. Teachers did not leave the classroom. Essentially, it was a non-event. Learning has continued.

Q210 **Paul Scully:** You talked about Governments in general and working with them. The obviously one is Uganda where they are threatening to close all the schools. There is obviously a breakdown in relationships there. I wonder if you can talk about that.

Dr May: There was a short period of misinformation and confusion, which we found unfortunate. As those of you who were on the visit to Uganda earlier this month will have seen, we are now working with over 14,000 children. All of those nursery and primary schools are open. We continue to work very closely with the district educational officials and with the officials in the ministry within Kampala, and we have a continuing positive working relationship with them. That is similar in all of the countries in which we work.

Q211 **Paul Scully:** You have talked a lot about regulatory environments and working with them. There has obviously been a concern about that, and there still remains a concern that is going through the courts about the future of Bridge schools in Uganda.

Dr May: There was a period last year of significant misinformation, which has since been clarified, and we continue to work and proceed through the licensing process in partnership with the Government.

Q212 **Paul Scully:** You do not believe that the schools will be closing in Uganda any time soon.

Dr May: No, I do not.

Q213 **Paul Scully:** Can I ask whether DFID has played a role in helping you through that period at all?

Dr May: We have engaged with DFID as an adviser. Ed Barnett, who is the education adviser within DFID in Uganda, is someone who we meet with regularly, as many other education providers in this space do. We



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continually seek his counsel and look to better understand how to be a complementary partner in the system.

Q214 **Mr Lewis:** Good morning, Dr May. You are a co-founder of Bridge as an organisation, and therefore you have a tremendous amount of personal investment in its success. My experience of people who found organisations like this is that it is an incredible passion and a mission, and people get very personally involved, which is absolutely appropriate. There are, it seems to me, very serious issues to do with quality of education and resistance to inspection. You have talked about random controls but have not really answered directly the question about why the organisation appears so reluctant to have its schools inspected.

Finally, there is financial return. The financial return point is that Bridge has said, "We will provide a financial return". It is not that it is an externally imposed contract. To the Committee you are saying, "I am not sure whether that is actually is going to happen". You seem as an organisation to have quite a lot of challenges. What I am wondering is who is responsible for leading your organisation and reflecting on the fact that clearly, if you look at the challenges you face at the moment, on quality, on concerns about an unwillingness to be inspected and on return of investment the organisation, your organisation has serious problems and challenges. Who within your organisation is facing up to those challenges and providing leadership?

Dr May: Thank you very much for your question. Certainly I am accountable for our organisation, as is my co-founder and our CEO, as is our board. We do not shy away from looking at our performance and continuing to grow and improve. I would first suggest that when we look at quality, it should be measured by evidence and not by headlines that could be misleading. Education is a place that needs to be driven by science, not by rumour or ideology. I would simply ask that we look at the evidence.

In Kenya we have two years of national examination results showing that children pass the national exam. 74% of them pass when they have been at a Bridge supported school versus 44% at a different school in the community. That is a radical improvement in quality as experienced by that child. I hope that you will have time to read the submissions from children, teachers and parents that have come to the Committee stating the quality that they see and that they receive. We have seen those gains starting to form in Nigeria, Uganda and emphatically in the evidence coming from Liberia in just less than four months.

If we look at quality, that is not a place in which we struggle. That is a place where every day we are delivering on the needs of children and supporting teachers. If we look at inspections, I would suggest that we would be more than happy to submit to you hundreds of inspection reports.



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There has been no doubt that all of our schools have been inspected. There are positive PHO reports and quality assurance reports. That has never been in question. In Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria we have followed those licensing processes. As I know this Committee has seen, sometimes there can be misinformation and there can be misleading headlines. That was why I was so honoured to be invited to answer your questions.

Chair: Dr May, we are going to have to wind up now.

Dr May: I am happy to send you any additional notes on that and to make sure that you have copies of various inspection reports from the various schools.

Chair: Dr May, thank you very much indeed. We are grateful to you for coming to give evidence and also the opportunity that we have had to visit the schools that we have visited in Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya. Please feel free to stay for the second evidence session this morning.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Rt Hon Lord Bates, Anna Wechsberg and Ian Attfield.

Q215 **Chair:** We have quite a lot of questions we want to cover. We have an hour and a half, and we will be finishing after an hour and half because it is Foreign Office Questions in the Chamber, which colleagues will be keen to be in the Chamber for. We have around 16 areas that we want to cover in an hour and a half, so the crisper the questions, colleagues, and the crisper the answers the better. Let me kick off, Minister. During this inquiry, we have heard from a number of witnesses, including Gordon Brown and Alice Albright, that there is a funding crisis in global education. Do you agree with that assessment? If so, what role is DFID going to play in addressing it?

Lord Bates: Good morning to you. We certainly recognise the fact that there is a significant gap. We recognise the projections that have been made by the Education Commission about what would actually be needed to meet the sustainable development goals—goal 4 and its subordinate targets; it would be around \$39 billion per year. We recognise that sum. When you extrapolate that to what the total gap is—I have heard figures used in the area of \$1.2 trillion—it is a significant amount of funding.

Where we would come back to in terms of balancing is to say that there is an argument about how the money that is currently spent on education could be more effectively spent, both from donor countries and also from domestic countries following the Addis Ababa approach, which said that a lot of the funding ought to come domestically first. There is a big debate there. We recognise that there is a gap, and there was a debate to be had about how that gap should be filled.



Q216 **Chair:** Looking at the gaps, my understanding in terms of international aid, and I agree with you that there is also domestic resource capacity as well, is that education's amount is around \$6 billion a year less than is spent on government and civil society. It is \$9 billion less than is spent on health. Do you think those gaps are a cause for concern? If you do, what can we do to close them?

Lord Bates: From our point of view we are looking at this in the round. We are looking at this and saying that there are certain elements there. For example, you mentioned health. Health has a direct impact on education, if you look at days lost from teachers and students through diarrhoea, which can have simple remedies, through health interventions or deworming programmes. These can make a major difference.

If you look at the money we spend on economic development, we know that where there are skilled jobs required for people to move into, that is an incentive within the education world for people to move there. Where there is peace and security, of course it is a lot easier to get the resource there.

We would not necessarily approach it from a binary position of asking what the amount of spend was and how it compared to another. We would ask what the outcomes were and how we were working across the piece to deliver context-specific responses to situations in particular countries.

Q217 **Chair:** On the specific proposal for a new international finance facility for education, is that something the United Kingdom will support?

Lord Bates: We have seen the proposal that has come there and have been involved in it. I do not know whether Anna wants to come in at this point on this. We are open-minded on that. We have some questions about the claims that are made. It is sometimes presented as a bit of a silver bullet: that you can simply raise an extra \$2 billion and, hey presto, there is another \$10 billion that comes into the system and plugs part of the gap. That is perhaps a little bit simplistic. Broadly we are with the view to exploring how you could broaden the amount of capital that could come in to help to meet that gap.

Anna Wechsberg: The only thing I would add on that is that we do agree we are going to have to find some innovative way of financing the education needs in poor countries, because they are so enormous. We have already discussed the figures. The advantage of a proposal of the sort that is on the table now is that it leverages other money in a way that you cannot do with straight grant funds. Absolutely, from that point of view, we are interested and we want to see it work.

Q218 **Chair:** Save the Children in their evidence have suggested that DFID appoint a special representative for education to engage with Governments and others around the world. Is that something that you would consider?



Lord Bates: It is not something that we have considered up to this point, but as always we are open to looking very carefully at the recommendations of this Committee in particular, and others. We do have some great ambassadors out there that are doing some tremendous work in this field. Gordon Brown of course gave evidence to this Committee in terms of Education Cannot Wait. The Secretary of State is part of the high-level group on education around the world. Again, we do not have a committed view against it, but we would need to be able to justify that it was really going to add value.

Q219 **Pauline Latham:** You mentioned Gordon Brown there. DFID currently spends around 7% of its budget on education, which is less than the US, France and Germany. He said then that it was far too small. The Malala Fund called for the Department to increase its funding to 15% of all aid spending. Given the magnitude of the global learning crisis, will DFID be increasing its spending on education in the coming years?

Lord Bates: Let me start with the premise that you put forward there, in terms of the numbers, and perhaps give the Committee some specific numbers that we have. DFID spent an average of 10% of our in-country spending on education in 2014 and 2015.

Pauline Latham: That is in-country spending. I am talking about 7% of its budget, not in-country spending.

Lord Bates: I am going to come on to that in just a second because there are two elements to it—the bilateral in-country and then also the multilateral elements. The UK spent £652 million on education directly in 2015, 8.5% of gross UK bilateral aid. The UK spent an additional £227 million on education through multilateral contributions in 2015. That is 5% of total multilateral ODA. This totals £879 million of UK aid on education in that area. That would be our starting point for this.

Q220 **Pauline Latham:** What is that as a percentage of DFID's spending?

Lord Bates: It is around 8%.

Pauline Latham: But it is not 15%.

Lord Bates: No, it is not 15%.

Pauline Latham: It is still less than America, France and Germany.

Lord Bates: I am about to come onto the reason why I believe DFID's spending is more effective than many of the comparator countries. A lot of the countries like Germany and France spend a very high proportion on granting scholarships to come and study in their university institutions. We spend a significant amount of our resources on primary and also on secondary—we are second only to the United States in doing that—and also, increasingly, on preschool. We believe that a lot of our spend on education, in terms of where it is focused, is a very significant contribution to the overall targets.



Q221 **Pauline Latham:** As a percentage of DFID's budget, how much of an increase will we see over the coming three years, for the rest of this Parliament?

Lord Bates: There are some figures that are going to be announced fairly shortly on that, in terms of us going through our resource allocation programme, which will be announced for 2018-19. It will be around the current level.

Q222 **Pauline Latham:** Can you confirm that DFID's education budget will not be cut?

Lord Bates: It is a very good question to ask. One of the things that we are doing at the Department for International Development at the moment, as you are well aware, is wrestling with two of the greatest crises that the international community has ever faced on a humanitarian level. There are the famines that are currently on verge of, if not happening, in Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria. The second thing is the displaced persons and refugees. This is the greatest movement that we have seen of those numbers. There are increasing pressures on our humanitarian budget, and that is the reason why we have to look very carefully at everything that we spend.

All of that said, we have clear manifesto commitments as to what we have to deliver in terms of the number of places that we have—11 million in decent education, and the number of school places particularly for girls that we have to deliver. There is the amount of money we spend on fragile and conflict-affected states. If you put that all into the mix, those are the types of elements that we are having to work on at the present time.

Q223 **Pauline Latham:** I do not think that quite answers it, but never mind. We are aware that aid is being spent on education programmes in middle-income countries. In places like Lebanon and Jordan we understand exactly why, because of the refugee crisis. There is also Egypt and Algeria where money is being spent through other Government Departments, and possibly even through cross-governmental funds. Is it a trend that you think we are likely to see continue in the future?

Lord Bates: I would begin by saying that we are seeing these cross-Whitehall funds such as the Prosperity Fund, the CSSF and the empowerment fund, which are now coming into play. There is education spend that comes out of the Prosperity Fund in building economic development, and in CSSF through strengthening systems in security and situations. Is that something that is going to gather pace? I would guess that in the future it will be the case that there will be a greater proportion than currently is the case being spent through those additional funds. I think the target is around about 27% of overall spending is going to be through cross-Whitehall funds.

Q224 **Chair:** To reinforce Pauline's point, the concern here, which is reflected in the report that we have published today, is that there are a lot of



pressures on the budget and there is a shift away from DFID to other Government Departments. Where other Government Departments are spending money, including on education, it is often in middle-income rather than low-income countries. That makes it very challenging, does it not, for you to achieve the manifesto commitments that you rightly reminded us of for more children to get the opportunity to go to school in the poorest countries?

Lord Bates: Yes.

Anna Wechsberg: The manifesto commitments are for the DFID budget. You are right to point out that the share of the DFID budget in the Government's overall aid expenditure is falling slightly.

Q225 **Chair:** It is falling significantly, Anna, is it not? It is not slightly.

Anna Wechsberg: It is also correct to say that the geography of the cross-Government funds—for example, the Prosperity Fund—is not the same as the geography that DFID has. We are much more focused on the poorest places. Having said that, where there are cross-Government funds or where we can provide advice and evidence to other Government Departments on how to spend that money in a way that achieves best impact we absolutely do that. We are very committed to that.

Q226 **Wendy Morton:** You will be aware that, as part of this inquiry, the Committee is looking at education in emergencies, and at the end of last year we visited Lebanon and Jordan. Education is a top priority for children affected by conflict, and yet it makes up less than 2% of humanitarian funding. The UK showed leadership in establishing the Education Cannot Wait fund. I wanted to ask what more DFID could be doing to secure the money that is so urgently needed to provide an education to these children living through conflict or fleeing from conflict.

Lord Bates: It is a very good point. I am grateful to you for pointing out, in terms of the Education Cannot Wait fund, which was announced at the World Humanitarian Summit last year, that the UK was the largest founder donor of that fund. Also, as part of the Syria conference commitments that we gave and the No Lost Generation initiative, that is another contribution that we are making. I do think that for refugees, looking at the big picture, because we are focusing our efforts on the most marginalised and the most hard to reach, that is what we believe our remit is. We are looking increasingly at refugees and displaced persons, we are looking at people with disabilities and we are looking at girls as being our primary focus in where our education spending is.

A lot more needs to be done, but the UK is leading by example in this area.

Q227 **Wendy Morton:** The work in terms of the Syria conference is a good example, but despite performing well in this area, the Malala Fund say that DFID's allocation to education in emergencies still falls far short of the amount that it should contribute. Are there any plans for DFID to



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increase the proportion of its humanitarian funding that is dedicated to education?

Anna Wechsberg: If you are talking about whether, in a humanitarian appeal, we would prioritise education further than we are at the moment, I do not know the answer to that. I am not aware of any plans.

Q228 **Wendy Morton:** It is in terms of either a humanitarian appeal or just general allocation of budget into areas of conflict. Would you consider putting more into education?

Anna Wechsberg: There are two additional things to say. On Education Cannot Wait, as the Minister says, we have been a very major leading donor. We have programmes about to start in Chad, Yemen, Ethiopia and Syria, and those are just about to begin now. If this works well, absolutely we will want to look to others to expand the fund.

The other area that we are looking at is on the Global Partnership for Education, which I imagine you will want to ask about separately. We are actively pushing them to look at how their model applies in more fragile settings and to make sure that they can reach out and be able to commit money in places where having a formal education sector plan is more difficult, where you do not have a Government that is very firmly in control.

Q229 **Chair:** Anna, can you tell us a bit more about the programme in Yemen that you just mentioned?

Anna Wechsberg: I can tell you a very small amount, which is that it is working through UNICEF. It is involved in teacher-training and possibly some construction, but if you want to know more we could write.

Q230 **Chair:** Could you write to us with more information across all those countries that you mentioned? We have a debate on Yemen later this afternoon, so I was asking to help me with my preparation.

Anna Wechsberg: We will try to get something to you by then.

Lord Bates: One other thing to mention, of course, is they were funded with a Humanitarian Education Accelerator, which is researching new and innovative approaches for reaching refugee children with good-quality education. That is another contribution that we are putting in.

Q231 **Paul Scully:** Anna, you are totally right that we want to ask about the Global Partnership for Education. It is seeking its replenishment towards the end of the year. Were you happy with the GPE's performance in the multilateral development review? Can you confirm that DFID will maintain or even increase its current financial commitments to GPE in the next funding period?

Anna Wechsberg: I am going to ask Ian if he wants to come in. This is Ian Attfield, who is one of our senior education advisers, and he might want to come in also. Broadly, we think the GPE is going in the right



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direction. We think there is still work to do in terms of its reform. We have pushed very hard on them having a results framework, which they now have in place. We want to see that used. I have mentioned already wanting to see GPE work out models for being able to operate in fragile places.

It is absolutely not a completed project yet, but the direction of travel is positive. In terms of plans for the next replenishment, it is too early to say or to make any commitment as to what our level would be at this stage. Obviously Ministers will want to think about that.

Ian Attfield: The GPE went through a major review and restructuring. It was formerly known as the Education for All Fast-track Initiative. In 2011 it remodelled to become, as we know it, the GPE. It has stepped up both its level of funding and its core systems. Increasingly we are driving it to have a focus on learning assessments and to make sure that any country that it operates in has vigorous learning assessments. As well as having children and being supportive of education, it is possible to see what learning is going on.

We are very much supportive of the GPE's approach to the A4L Assessment for Learning initiative, which is helping countries drive on learning gains. As was said earlier, it is also branching more widely into the education in fragile contexts, because a former problem was that the GPE could not effectively support countries that did not have a robust education sector plan.

Lord Bates: In addition to the structure, I would add that I see the incredible value of the GPE being in co-ordinating the spend that is happening in-country. The fact that it has all the major donors coming together multilaterally and bilaterally and looking at particular countries is incredibly valuable, as is working with the Governments and ministries for education themselves in those countries. That is where it adds a huge amount of value, but, as Anna has said, we set some pretty tough targets before the last funding round as to what improvements we wanted. They have made progress down that route.

Q232 **Paul Scully:** DFID used a cap in the last replenishment to incentivise other donors. Do you think that was successful? Is it something that you might use again? There are some organisations that have called for that to be removed. Do you think that is an effective way of approaching this?

Lord Bates: There is a general point, and this relates to the answer that was given before. We think that we do quite a bit in the UK in this area. There is always a tendency, at these international gatherings or pledging conferences that happen, for people to sit back and see where the UK is going to come in, and then adjust their funding pledges accordingly. We do not want that to be a negative incentive. We want to say, "This is important", and it is also to target spend where we think it can have



greatest effect—namely in fragile communities and in targeting the most marginalised.

Q233 **Paul Scully:** Are you confident that GPE will achieve its more than £2.1 billion that it got back in 2014? What are you going to do to encourage other donors to increase their support?

Lord Bates: There is an ongoing discussion, it is fair to say, leading up to that conference that will take place later in the year, and we are involved in that. We have a DFID representative who sits on that board, and that is an ongoing dialogue that we will be having. That will be informing Ministers' decisions.

Q234 **Chair:** There are worrying indications that the Trump Administration is generally inclined to cut its funding for various multilateral bodies. Are there any indications of its attitudes to the Global Partnership for Education?

Lord Bates: There are rumours that are coming out. We are working very closely with the USAID because they are a major donor in this area. There is also the major private philanthropy that goes on from the US in education, which is huge. The budget that has come out is clearly in draft form. It becomes formally presented in May, and then it has to work its way through Congress, and we will be watching that progress very carefully indeed, because they are such a heavy investor in primary and secondary education in developing countries. If we saw any retreat in that, we would be very concerned indeed.

Chair: I share your concern.

Q235 **Mr Lewis:** Good morning. The Education Commission said that multilateral organisations generally, the World Bank being one example, are also not spending an adequate amount on education in terms of their overall spend. Does DFID have a strategy to try to influence multilateral organisations, where we are contributing a significant amount, to raise the amount of investment in education?

Lord Bates: That is another example where the Global Partnership for Education is having a great effect in the multilateral institutions, because it has a very powerful voice in that area, along with Education Cannot Wait. There is also an IDA replenishment that is due in 2018 as well. Education commitments will be to the fore in that as well.

We also have a different, new level of ambition from the last time that we had these replenishments for GPE or for the IDA. That, of course, is the sustainable development goals. We have a very clear commitment there, which individual countries have made as well as the UK and the international community. It is very clear what we have said we are going to do by 2030. The funding needs to be there to make sure that it happens.

Q236 **Stephen Doughty:** What proportion of our education spend is via the



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EU institutions? How much of the spend is imputed as part of our contributions?

Lord Bates: In terms of the European Development Fund, I do not have that number to hand. I do not know if any colleagues have that.

Q237 **Stephen Doughty:** Is it significant? Is it minor?

Lord Bates: It will not be minor because our overall contribution to EDF is not minor; it is quite significant. I will certainly get that number for you.

Q238 **Stephen Doughty:** We have heard different things from Ministers about continued possibilities of funding via the EU institutions post-Brexit. The EU institutions came out very strongly in the multilateral aid review. Would you be willing to leave open the possibility, where there was a worthwhile project—something that we should be contributing to—that we should consider doing that?

Lord Bates: Yes. There is a clear Government position on this: that all of these elements are things that need to be dealt with as part of the negotiations for exiting the European Union. I would stress again what has been said many times: that in the area of development, it applies very strongly. We are leaving a political institution; we are not leaving Europe. European colleagues are doing tremendous work and we work very closely with them around the world. I cannot see that that is going to change. We have to work together to address the challenges that we face. It is very important for the development community that we do that.

The actual vehicles and numbers that go beside the vehicles will be something that will be determined through the negotiating process, but the fact that we continue to have strong working relationships with our European colleagues beyond the exit is very, very important.

Q239 **Paul Scully:** DFID closed its bilateral agreement relating to a programme in Kenya and soon after opened one in Uganda, which I know from when we were there recently was very well received. I am wondering if you can explain the decisions on how you open and close bilateral programmes, with particular reference to those two countries?

Anna Wechsberg: It is a country-driven process. As you know from other discussions you have had, including on resource allocation, we have a process that requires countries to do a country poverty reduction diagnostic and, on the basis of that, to make some proposals about where DFID should be intervening. That will be a function of where we think we can be effective, what everybody else is doing, what the multilaterals are doing and, indeed, what we are doing centrally—for example, through the Girls' Education Challenge we are operating in Kenya. The way we are set up is a very country-driven process. What we will then do is look across the piece and say whether the whole offer on education looks like the right one or not. There will then be a



dialogue. That is the process that happened in the run-up to the publication of the bilateral development review at the end of last year.

Q240 **Paul Scully:** When you have the centrally managed programmes, such as the Girls' Education Challenge, how do you ensure you are getting the national plans and the other daily activity aligned, especially if you do not have a dedicated education adviser?

Anna Wechsberg: We will always involve the DFID country team in discussions on centrally managed programmes like the Girls' Education Challenge and seek advice from them on what they think is and is not going to work. Ian may want to add on how that operates in practice. As the Minister said, GPE also is very helpful in that regard because its whole way of working is to support countries to develop a central education plan, which all donors can then get behind. It provides some co-ordination within which all donors can operate, including ourselves.

Lord Bates: I was going to add to that to say that this area is extremely important: that where you have central managed programmes, they work well. Take learning: where you have innovative programmes in-country, one of the strengths of the centrally managed programme is that that learning is fed directly into strengthening the education system within the country itself. Local education and practice groups, and our education advisers that we have in country, all play a very important role in ensuring that we have a co-ordinated voice, as well as our country programme business plans, which are signed off country by country.

Q241 **Paul Scully:** When you do not have a bilateral programme or a dedicated education adviser, how do you keep good relationships with the education ministries in particular countries?

Lord Bates: In most of the countries in which we operate, we have at least one education adviser.

Ian Atfield: It is normal practice. I used to be the adviser to Tanzania up until last year. On the visits, you would have met my colleagues, Sandra in Kenya, Ed Barnett in Uganda and Tanya Zebroff in Tanzania. They really play this key role in-country. There is a certain amount of cover-across between countries. For example, the adviser in Zimbabwe will cover Zambia where there currently is not an adviser seconded.

With the GPE, it is also worth pointing out that the GPE only has a very small, central secretariat based in Washington. They do not have any country or regional offices. In a sense, they are reliant on what is known as the local education groups. The DFID education advisers play a key role in the countries where they are based to try to get some of that coherence between the central programmes, the GPE and the DFID bilateral portfolio.

Equally, in countries where DFID does not operate—for example, in many francophone African countries—those resources that come from DFID through the GPE give us influence to reach into those countries. The



local education groups have different representatives; USAID, for example, will be strong in Mali and various other countries, such as Chad in west Africa, where they operate. We do have a lot of informal communications and collaboration that helps to make things fit.

Q242 **Chair:** Anna, in your earlier answer you mentioned the decision on Kenya was based partly on the poverty diagnostic for Kenya. These are not published. Would it be possible to send that to us?

Anna Wechsberg: I will if I can.

Q243 **Stephen Doughty:** Minister, can you explain what DFID is doing in the current programme to strengthen Government capacity in education in the priority countries? Do you think the decision to move away from general and education sector support was the right thing?

Lord Bates: It was the right thing to do: to move away from general budget support to specific programmes where there are specific outcomes and outputs that we were targeting. This is a general direction of travel that we wanted to head down the road to. That is there.

We also know from experience that it is absolutely critical that we work within the country. If we distil it all down, most of the funding that is going into education in any of the low-income countries—or certainly the vast majority—is coming from the Government themselves. They are the lead actors in this area.

They also understand their culture and their particular needs better than anyone else. It is absolutely critical that we work through them in a constructive way. We are part of building evidence in education, which is a link with the World Bank, UNICEF and USAID, which is a way of sharing best practice. We are also commissioning an increasing amount of work in research as to what works, particularly in getting marginalised children and young people into school. We are sharing that information through our education advisers and through the Global Partnership for Education with the providers of education in those countries.

Q244 **Stephen Doughty:** Do you accept that there is a risk, though, in moving away from strengthening national education systems? There is that contract between Government and citizen: that they should be providing education, health and many other things. By putting more focus on, for example, funding for-profit schools, like the Bridge academies, or other NGO-funded projects, you may be potentially undermining national education systems and the provision of public education for all.

Lord Bates: I will defer to my colleague in just a second on that, but in some of the countries, when we look at the largest programmes we have—in Pakistan, for instance—we see a high proportion of the decision-making policy is practised at provincial level, in Punjab, for example. Building good working relationships, not just with the central Government but with provisional Governments, is very important. In



rural areas, building strong links with the local community is there. I totally buy into the importance of institutional capacity-strengthening in education and working in partnership. I totally get that.

Q245 **Stephen Doughty:** Why did we move away from doing it?

Lord Bates: We only moved away in this sense: rather than writing out a big cheque and dropping it internally in the national exchequer, we are simply saying that we want to attach to that some specific agreements as to where that money should be spent and how it should be spent. We do not tell them what that should be; we work with them in partnership to agree what that should be. We then monitor it to make sure that they deliver on it. That is a better way forward. Other colleagues who have worked in country might want to add a little bit more.

Ian Attfield: I was administering some of the budget support that the UK Government provided in Tanzania. My experience there and elsewhere in Africa was that often the rules governing were relating to partnership principles and whether there were any breaches of partnership principles related to corruption, human rights abuses and value of commitment to the MDGs as they then were. We had the practice where often those sort of macro issues, in the education sector at least, would mean that you would get funding being turned off. This was quite destructive to the relationships and the ability to effectively support the strengthening of the Governments in education.

Q246 **Stephen Doughty:** What about where there are not breaches of the partnership principles?

Ian Attfield: This is the thing. Those were the higher-level principles that govern, but when you asked how effective they were in supporting the strengthening of education sectors in systems governance, then the fall out at the top level would mean that the financial instruments would jam and this would cascade problems down.

The Committee saw the Equip-T programme in Tanzania, which is a great example of institutional strengthening to the local governments' regional and district structures. Some of the modality has switched to more programme delivery or results-financed initiatives, which to some extent are more nuanced alternative models to budget support. Certainly the strengthening of Government in education systems is very much at the forefront of what we do through the bilateral programme.

Q247 **Mr Sharma:** Some organisations are calling for an updated education strategy from DFID. Are you planning to update DFID's 2013 position paper? How would it differ and what would it focus on?

Lord Bates: I was looking at this document this morning, including the learning on expanding opportunities. It was from July 2013. When you look at it and see the three core elements that we were aiming at in 2013, they were to improve learning, to reach all children and to keep girls in school.



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In a sense, that was our mission then and is pretty close to what our mission is now. A lot of the examples in that paper could clearly be updated with other examples and some of the language could be updated. Perhaps rather than a vaunting new strategy that may raise expectations and potentially distract us from our very important course, a better word might be to look at whether there is a case for a “refresh” of that document. That is certainly something that I know the Secretary of State would be interested in us exploring, as to whether that is necessary. I do not want to exceed my pay grade. That is something that I would be very happy to discuss with the Secretary of State further.

Q248 Mr Sharma: You said that it would be the Secretary of State looking at if there is any possibility of publishing a refreshed paper. Do you think that you will be able to talk to the Minister and then give some timescale of when you think it should be done, because it was done in July 2013? It is about four years ago.

Lord Bates: It is. What I am trying to do is reassure you on one point. First of all, in terms of the target objectives that we had in that strategy document, they continue to be very relevant and pertinent to what we are doing. The second thing is that sometimes going off down a road of a strategic review can distract the Department at a time when we have so much that needs to be done; we know exactly what needs to be done and we need to be focused on it.

I know that this is something that the Secretary of State has expressed an interest in looking at and, also, we would be very interested to see how your Committee come out on this, in terms of the wider issues, and we can learn from the evidence-gathering that you have had and the recommendations that you will make. We may take that into account before we announce what we are doing with our position page.

Q249 Chair: In a previous answer, you rightly commended the work that the UK do, and that DFID in particular does, in terms of primary and secondary education. Can I ask you about pre-primary, so the early years? We know there is a lot of evidence about the benefits of investment in early childhood education and the impact that can have, particularly on those that are most likely to be left behind. Yet, as a proportion of DFID’s education spend, I understand it is 0.3% of DFID’s total spend. Is that something you are looking at changing in the coming period?

Lord Bates: Our spending pretty much reflects what is happening across the low-income countries we are involved in. It is a very, very small percentage, but we are seeing evidence, whether it is in Burma, Bangladesh, with the BRAC programme there, or Tanzania, with the school readiness programmes, which you might have visited when you were there.

What I particularly like about the Tanzania example—and Ian can talk at great length about this—is that it met two particular issues: there was



the preparation for school, with language skills, working in groups, sitting in a classroom and school readiness—all the things we know work here through early childhood interventions—but it had an added benefit, which was that geography is often one of the greatest barriers to participating in education. These school readiness programmes could be set up in more remote villages, before someone is old enough to be able to travel to school to participate in education. Therefore, it broadened participation as well. Certainly, we are seeing a growing body of evidence as to how important the early years are. We are looking at what more can be done on it.

Ian Attfield: On the rates of return, all the evidence says that you get the biggest bang for your buck if you invest in pre-primary education. We probably globally underrepresent the picture in terms of how much is spent, because traditionally most pre-primary classes are run out of the primary schools. They reach down and tend to use a mix of informal volunteers, assistants and temporary structures. How much money is actually being spent? We are improving our internal system in terms of being able to monitor what is spent on what. You see that there is an awful lot of unallocated spend sub-sectorally within our education spend. My guess would be that a fair chunk of that is spent on things like the school readiness programme, through the Equip programme.

Generally, there is a much larger provision of pre-primary education services in urban areas. Again, that is related partly to the provision that comes through a mix of philanthropic, mission and private providers. It is about trying to get effective strategies to reach further down, just as the UK has done.

Q250 **Chair:** To bear out your point, I was very impressed with what we saw in Kenya with the early-years education classes that were in primary schools. It would certainly be useful if you can share any analysis that you have of how much of the primary school spending is going on the early years. That is a fair point.

Can I move on to a slightly different point? We have had evidence from Cambridge University that says there is a strong case for DFID to support alternative or non-formal education for adolescents and young people who have dropped out of the formal system. Is this something that you are pursuing?

Anna Wechsberg: That is what we are trying to do, partly, through the Girls' Education Challenge, to reach girls who either have not been to school at all or who have dropped out and put them back into school. As you know, we extended that programme into a second phase with the Leave No Girl Behind window. We also have a huge amount of learning that has gone on from the first phase. We do not just want to put that on a shelf; we want to use that and take that into our own programming and internationally into GPE and other places, to show what we believe works, particularly in targeting girls that drop out. Yes, absolutely.



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Q251 **Chair:** What about boys that drop out, to ask the obvious supplementary?

Anna Wechsberg: Boys that drop out matter too, but, honestly, we think the return is highest on targeting girls: they are more marginalised, more likely to drop out and the broader returns are very high for bringing girls into education.

Chair: The focus on girls absolutely does make sense. We saw a fantastic programme that DFID is supporting in Kenya through Leonard Cheshire that was for disabled girls. One of the head teachers said to us, "We would love it if you could come up with a programme like this for the disabled boys as well". I know there are limited resources but where a child has a disability or they are dropping out of education, it would be good if it was accessible to boys as well as to girls.

Q252 **Mr Evans:** You talked about helping the most marginalised in education. That is something we all endorse here. There are fewer people who are more marginalised than the millions of people who are facing famine and drought in east Africa and other parts of that region at this moment in time. Are you really happy that the Department is doing enough to support people living in communities who can barely eat or get access to water in order that they can stay in the areas where they currently are?

Lord Bates: It is a good question and it would be a foolish Minister who would say that they were ever satisfied with what is going on. The situation on the ground is fast-moving and chaotic. We are responding as best we can through the international community. We announced additional funding. I know there will be questions about what proportion of that is going to go into education.

South Sudan is one of the ones that make me most angry, to be frank, because it is such a manmade catastrophe. As a result of that, we had some great programmes that were there, such as the Girls' Education Challenge. I was speaking to James Wharton, who was telling me how fantastic these initiatives were. Of course they are being driven out because, through the famine that is caused through the fighting, people are on the move.

Now you find that they are displaced into northern Uganda. We are doing some funding there in the camps but these are sticking plaster solutions. Sometimes in this job you understand that natural disasters happen and, in a sense, the global community responds to it but when those disasters are manmade, it makes you incredibly angry and frustrated. No, we could never say that enough is being done in places like Yemen because the security situation is so appalling there. The best we can do is to try to work to bring an end to the fighting.

Q253 **Mr Evans:** Fair enough. It makes you angry; it makes us angry as well. We saw aspects of it in northern Kenya, where they had to ship water in. You look at malnourished kids, half of whom do not have breakfast and only have one meal a day. What makes me really angry is that we give



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0.7% of our gross national income and yet there are so many other countries around the world that do not. They are not stepping up to the plate. Stephen O'Brien talked about this as one of the greatest humanitarian crises that the world has ever seen. Is there anything that you or the Department are able to do to help leverage more countries coming in? We are talking about colossal sums of money there. They are not drops in the ocean. Is there anything that the Department are doing to try to get the world animated to do more in order to help those that are most marginalised?

Lord Bates: The Secretary of State has been at the fore on this in voicing her frustration. She has spoken a number of times to various leading players in this. Just last week I was at the European Foreign Affairs Committee group of development Ministers. I raised the issue there, and I was not alone in raising this. The Germans raised it very strongly and very authoritatively as well, about the need for action. There has been some additional funding that has come in but nowhere near enough to meet the challenge that is there. This is a real test for the international community.

Stephen O'Brien's words on 10 March before the Security Council ought to be pasted and translated into every language and be at the fore of every Government leader around the world. This is a real test for us. How do we respond? I can say with no sense of piety that you can take some pride in the way that the UK have stepped up very quickly on this. We also know, in the same way that Ian was talking about the pound spent in early years, the pound spent in early days of famine yields a huge result compared to something that comes in when people have been beaten into the ground three months on and the peak of mortality has passed.

Chair: We are having a session straight after the Easter recess on this crisis.

Ian Attfield: I was going to give the example, back on education, of the Girls' Education South Sudan programme. It was not part of the Girls' Education Challenge but it was a major programme that focused on girls' education. When the civil war in South Sudan came into being, it quickly morphed into a transformative database programme that kept schools open by giving girls stipends, by providing school grants through mobile money transfers and gave what Government existed a heat-map of what schools were open. That contributed to increasing overall enrolment, which had dropped significantly, by 30%, in 2014-15. That is a way of getting money, just as DFID gets a lot of funds out through cash transfers.

Q254 **Mr Evans:** We all share the same thing here, which is that the vast majority of people who give money give it privately and clearly support the 0.7%. This is where they think the money is going: to save children from dying, to save communities throughout the world in the most impoverished places. It is very difficult for people to imagine the



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suffering that is going on on a daily basis in this area. I look forward to listening and seeing what the Department is doing in more detail. We can only touch the surface of it here, but today thousands of people—if not tens of thousands—are dying now because they are not getting food and water.

Lord Bates: There is also a general mood in some quarters where there is some scepticism about whether people are committed to 0.7%. I hope that they have been silenced by seeing the British people's response to the Disaster Emergency Committee's appeal, which has been extraordinary. That is on top of what we are giving. That is a point about where British people's hearts are on this.

Q255 **Mr Evans:** You have already touched on the other aspects, such as the Girls' Education Challenge. If children are dying or communities are being racked, then the one thing we saw is that their animals were dying and then they would move away from the school. They would move away from the area so they were not getting any education at all, because they were basically looking for water or food.

Looking at the other aspects, such as the girls and disabled people, we saw a brilliant school in Kenya where they were looking after disabled children. You cannot get much more marginalised than that: living in a poor community and being disabled. What sort of targeting—specific targeting—are you doing on the most marginalised?

Lord Bates: With the disability framework that we have, we have set that out. In the Girls' Education Challenge we had a target of 15% that we set out of that budget. That is one of the reasons we have seen those great examples that have been referred to, such as those operated by Leonard Cheshire, which are providing hope. There is more to be done.

Sorry to come back to the pre-school and early-years point, but there are more examples here. In the early years, with those school preparation and school readiness programmes, where they can pick up whether someone needs new spectacles or an additional hearing aid, they can get some help at that point, which can enable them to enter the main school stream in a productive way. It is important but it is also more costly.

Following my last appearance before your Committee, I provided a table of the cost per girl on the Girls' Education Challenge. There is a marked difference between £1,200 and £200 when you are looking at people who have complex needs. In terms of the target for tackling those who are hardest to reach and the marginalised nature of it, it is a very strong investment. We ought to be aware that that comes at a cost when we have our other pressures as well.

Q256 **Paul Scully:** A mixture of public and private schools is the reality in many of the countries that DFID operates in. DFID's support has been controversial in some quarters for low-fee schools. Can you explain the evidence base for DFID's support for low-fee private schools?



Lord Bates: It would be wonderful to think that we lived in a utopian situation where there was 100% state provision and the question should be whether we support or put money behind a state school or a low-fee school. We are not in that position yet. That is the aspiration clearly set out in the SDG goal 4—that there should be free education available to people—but that is not there at the moment. The example was given of Nigeria, but in a lot of places these low-fee schools are in the majority. Therefore, if you want to reach people you have to work with them.

I would add in one other element about our approach to low-fee schools. I am sure others will come in on this. There are some criticisms, but one of the advantages in the ones that I have looked at is that they often come from within the community. They come from within the community and are started up by entrepreneurial people that set up these schools and therefore have strong roots in the community. They are culturally contextual in terms of the education they deliver, and for many people, particularly in urban areas, they are the only choice that is available.

So long as the international education base is not universal in terms of state provision, there will always be a place for these low-fee schools. Therefore, as an actor in this area wanting to tackle the most marginalised, in some cases that will have to be. However, 95% of our funding from DFID goes into the state sector.

Ian Attfield: More.

Lord Bates: More than 95%.

Q257 **Paul Scully:** One of the interesting things we found when we went to Kenya and Uganda was, when you are looking at fee-paying schools and free schools, that there was always a charge involved. It was very difficult to get the actual amount that people were going to pay. In the state schools, you are still paying for school uniforms, meals and even water and electricity in one school. It is hardly free, albeit at a state school. There were a lot of hidden costs, effectively. I wonder if you can tell us how you look at those hidden costs and overall costs when you are coming to support schools. Could you also talk about whether you are confident that low-fee schools are getting to the most marginalised children?

Ian Attfield: DFID's policy on education is not in any way to actively encourage the growth of the non-state and the private sector. World Bank data over the last 30 years has shown an increase in least developed countries from 7% to 14%. It has doubled over that period. If you focus on the urban areas, which is where you have predominantly seen DFID's involvement in the non-state sector, in these huge urban cities that have emerged in Africa, like Lagos, Nairobi, Kampala and elsewhere, you typically have 50% or up to two-thirds of children attending them.



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One of the great productivity gains you get from them is that teachers are generally always present and teach. As Lord Bates has outlined, they are very much linked to the communities. You heard earlier examples from Bridge, which established 23 schools in Lagos. There are at least 4,000 to 5,000 low-cost private schools. The vast majority of them are run by individual operators. Although they have those community benefits of being linked in locally, what they do not have is any of the economies of scale or the ability to improve their teaching practices to collect evidence on their performance and to promote learning.

Generally, DFID's approach in this area has been to work with Governments to try to improve the regulation of the whole marketplace for schools. That was in particular the ethos of the DEEPEN programme in Nigeria that has been referenced. Increasingly, we are expanding operations with these sorts of programmes. In Uganda, you may have come across the programme there that is being developed, which is an example of the PEAS affordable schools, which are low-cost private but very much with an equity-driven model behind it.

In terms of the evidence, generally low-cost private schools have better learning outcomes and better examination performances for the children. What is quite difficult is to control for the parental wealth and income background. Some studies suggest that you may still have a 0.1 standard deviation better learning outcome, but obviously that is small, and that is an area where we continue to work to build the evidence base.

Q258 Paul Scully: We did see PEAS and it was a brilliant example of so many great things that we saw individually that formed a great example. You talked about working with Governments on regulation. I wonder if you can go into a little more detail about how you might work with Governments in terms of regulating and improving the private education sector. Funnily enough, Mrs Museveni had been in the UK prior to our visit and was very interested in our inspection system, which she was taking back to try to learn more from. I wonder if you could talk about regulation, inspection and making sure the private education sector meets requirements.

Ian Attfield: A generic problem is that in some countries, because there is often a practice that private schools need to pay for an inspection by a government inspectorate, private schools can often get inspected more and public schools do not live up to those because there is no effective check, balance or measure that can be taken. We often present the UK Ofsted model of inspection as a best-practice case. There have been a number of examples, with the support of the Ark academies group, to get more exchanges going on.

The first thing to say is that we promote a level playing field to try to get an appropriate inspection regime and one that is not overtly punitive. From personal knowledge, in Tanzania the Government there used to employ 2,000 school inspectors. The reality was that they often could



not inspect schools because of resource constraints, but when they did nothing was ever taken forward from those findings. In a sense, a lot of our subsystem strengthening programmes in education work with government inspectorate departments and local government quality assurance officers who can work with head teachers and teachers to try to improve what is going on. It is a complicated area.

Private schools should be covered within those, certainly on inspection standards. Some of the problems that were alluded to in Uganda were related to a very uneven application of standards. That was the cause of some of that discontent.

Q259 Paul Scully: Going back slightly—you have answered a lot of it—we had some evidence earlier from Professor Rose from Cambridge University who believed that a better use of DFID’s resources would be placed in strengthening government systems, going back to state education and free education, because she believed that the vast majority of the most marginalised boys and girls were within that area. How do you respond to that?

Ian Attfield: The volume of resources that are spent on the Government’s public education systems, which would include the regulation systems, is more than 95%. We are aware of the number of quite specific programmes that support the non-state sector in Pakistan and the examples you are more familiar with in east Africa. We are probably spending on average £5 million—certainly no more than £10 million—a year in the non-state sector.

You also have examples in Bangladesh, like BRAC, where we are giving large support to programmes. BRAC run 49,000 community schools, of which maybe 7,000 have some form of fee themselves, because the communities want a level of fee. They make them fee-free in the absolute poorest, most marginalised areas, but it is very context-specific as to what is the optimal balance of provision.

Lord Bates: Right at the beginning we were talking about the financing gap and funding gap in education. Let us remember: this is all investment in education; it is all part of that contribution. We do not necessarily want to remove it until we have something better to replace it with.

Q260 Wendy Morton: I wanted to ask you a bit more on the private schools’ role and touch on Bridge as well. We had evidence in the previous session from Bridge. A DFID-funded rigorous review on the role and impact of private schools in developing countries in 2014 found there was no research on the effect of international companies or chains of private schools. If there was no evidence to determine the effect of international companies or chains, be it positive or negative, can you explain why DFID, both directly and through CDC, invested millions of pounds in one particular international chain—Bridge—that same year?



Lord Bates: Let me just take the investment from CDC first. CDC make their own investment decisions on that. They have a target or rate of return, which is, if you like, patient capital. Their target is around 3.5% per annum that they have to make, but they are encouraged to make long-term investment decisions, and they chose to do that with Bridge, along with the Gates Foundation and other respectable international operators in this area.

They take that decision based on that evidence at that time. Remember, we are also talking about one of the things that the schools bring in this area. I was looking at the evidence that Professor Pauline Dixon was giving to your Committee earlier on: that there is that additional element, where the private sector can bring innovation. You may not like the tablet or reading out from a screen, but innovation in education is undoubtable. That is one of the things that they can bring at their best. We have looked at that and that is one of the reasons that CDC took the investment in Bridge.

Q261 **Wendy Morton:** Why did DFID take the decision to invest in Bridge? If the tablet was one reason, you suggest there might be other reasons why Bridge was chosen.

Lord Bates: DFID did not invest directly in Bridge. Ian can say more about the specific programme that we work with them on.

Anna Wechsberg: He is an absolute expert on this.

Ian Attfield: In the earlier session that Anna alluded to, DFID issued a request for proposals at tender, precisely because of your point that there is a very weak evidence base about the difference made by establishing chains of schools that have scales of economy. The programme issued a bid—a competitive bid—that Bridge then subsequently applied to and was awarded. There was a strong hypothesis there, although, as you say, the evidence base was weak. Where you have a market with hundreds, sometimes thousands, of individual operators, none of them was able to improve the quality of education that was being offered because they did not have the systems, the curriculum, the development and the like.

In terms of the technology element, about having scripted lessons and reading them off a tablet, a benefit with poorly trained or poorly motivated teachers is that it provides you with a basis to deliver at least a reasonable level of pedagogy and make sure that there is structure to it. There was some quite seminal research done by Sir Michael Barber together with a team from McKinsey about the great education systems of the world. It came out in 2010 and tracked across the globe any countries that had made some step changes and major gains in learning. It categorised four transitions from poor, to good, to great and to excellent.

All the schools, countries and contexts we are dealing with are at the bottom: how do you take a system from poor and make it at least fair,



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reasonable or satisfactory? Scripted lessons—saying, “Let us focus on, in early primary, the foundational numeracy and literacy”, and having scripted approaches to do that—was seen to be one of the key, common characteristics in countries that had made that gain. So those are the elements—and to some extent Bridge is disruptive in an innovation ecosystem—that we thought were worth looking at to give it that potential to test it.

As has been pointed out, there is a lot of research and evidence, particularly the Center for Global Development evaluation that is ongoing with Partnerships Schools for Liberia, which is contrasting the operations of Bridge, which are running 10 or 15 schools, with seven other operators, including BRAC, and some for-profit and some not-for-profit chains. We are doing a lot to try to understand what works in these contexts.

Q262 **Wendy Morton:** On that specific point about quality, the quality of teaching in the Bridge schools that members of this Committee have visited in Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria, was, I think it is fair to say, mixed. Are you confident in DFID that the quality of the education that children are receiving is consistent across all schools?

Lord Bates: Nobody could give the commitment that we are content with that. There are 215 million people who conclude their primary school studies without being able to read or write. That includes 130 million who have been in education for four years. There are major problems in terms of teacher quality. In terms of the low-fee schools and state provision, there are some elements where, in the example of Bridge, the scripting would not be the most popular form of teaching, for teachers to have to follow a script.

The other thing is, of course, that salary levels can be significantly lower in the low-fee schools. If they were to put up their salary levels for teachers, that would mean they would have to put up their fees as well, which might then reduce their numbers. They are more constrained at a number of different levels but they are part of the education picture and part of the mix that is out there. We need to work with them to try to improve standards overall.

Ian Attfield: There is also the drive about value for money. It might be interesting to look at some of the evidence that the World Bank has accumulated, and DFID has supported and co-financed in some countries, in the service delivery indicator—SDI—work. They have a methodology there where they do random representative samples of countries, and look at teachers’ presence in the countries and time on tasks. They do similar work in health. Those are predominantly in the public sector. In many of the typical countries you have been visiting, you will see data from these surveys. A typical teacher is absent from the classroom up to 50% of the time in public schools, despite the fact that the salaries are often considerably higher.



A lot of the low-cost private schools are delivering education at considerably lower price, which also throws in a number of uncomfortable truths about the potential of the public sector to grow to the extent that we need to. The projections for the teacher shortages to meet the SDG goals show we will need 69 million more teachers by 2030. There are questions about alternative and variant models of delivering education from a 20th century paradigm, which is where many countries still currently are.

Q263 Wendy Morton: Can I come back on the funding side briefly? CDC invested £6 million directly into Bridge and a further £15 million in a venture capital fund, Novastar, which has invested substantially in Bridge. Bridge has so far not proven that it can create a profit, and is reportedly losing £1 million a month. Are you confident that CDC will ever see a return on its investment?

Lord Bates: That is something that CDC have to answer for. HMG are the shareholder but they have the strategy. They are held to account for their investment strategy. They have done extraordinarily good work in a whole range of areas, focusing on very difficult markets; they have really narrowed down the markets in which they are involved in to the most difficult areas. They have been doing good. Until proved otherwise, I would trust their judgment in this: that they have looked at it carefully before investing in the fund and investing directly, and that they believe that that investment will yield over time.

Q264 Wendy Morton: We have spoken about SDG 4 quite a bit this morning, understandably given that it is about education. It not just on access but on quality education as well, as we would all recognise. How is DFID developing its education programming to ensure it is focused on learning outcomes?

Lord Bates: Our focus starts with moving very much towards the earlier years: primary and secondary. That will be one element of it. A huge element going forward has to be the quality of teaching and of teacher-training. Ian has mentioned the number of additional teachers that are going to be required and we have been working with a lot of teacher-training programme. In Kenya, we have a programme of more supportive operations where, rather than inspectors going in, there will be teacher-trained support officers going into classrooms to work with teachers to improve their performance in front of class. Testing will be an important part of that going forward. These are all areas in which we will try to improve that overall performance and outcome.

Anna Wechsberg: The most striking statistic in the Learning Generation report is this one that developing countries spend 2% of their GDP—that is a lot of money—on education that does not lead to learning. Of all of those extra numbers of extra money, this is the one that we need to focus on. In addition to what the Minister said, we are also making some quite significant investments in data systems. We have a relationship with the UNESCO data people and with the World Bank that is all about



trying to monitor what is happening. The truth is that, very often, we do not have good information on whether children are learning and at what rate. When we are more directly involved, say through Girls' Education Challenge schools or through the Bridge schools, we have that information. Where we are a small part of a much bigger education system, it is very hard.

Q265 Dr Cameron: Sorry that I came in a bit late this morning. I was in a debate already. I want to follow up with a question on teacher-training. When we were in Kenya there was a push to have inclusion schools, particularly for children with disabilities. It will be key in terms of specialist teacher-training for children who have perhaps sensory impairment or other forms of disability. I am wondering if you can comment on the type of work you might be able to do in that area.

Lord Bates: We have a number of pilot programmes that are working in that very area. Ian can respond on those.

Ian Attfield: There are two distinct issues there. One is about getting general inclusive principles into core teaching-training and pre-service, and the whole ethos in schools—the idea that children should not be excluded and that, even if you are trying to define a child as disabled or not disabled, that is a false dichotomy. There is a whole range of spectrums and needs. That ethos is something that we do in our work in any countries where we engage with teacher-training systems. There is generally a movement; there has been some really good work from Bob Moon from the Open University that shows that the models of teacher-training where everything is delivered in your teacher-training college in pre-service days, and you do that for three years and then go off and teach for 30 or 40 years, are over.

The teacher shortage also means there is much more of, to use a UK example, the Teach First or School Direct model coming in, where teachers need to develop in schools, so it is about the ability to support school head teachers and senior teachers to keep that inclusive ethos. There are often depressingly higher rates of violence against disabled children in schools, but that general push against violence, which is one of the Secretary of State's priorities, is another area where it is a sign of inadequacy in teachers' attitudes in school management where they resort to frequent corporal punishment. We do a lot of work and there has been a lot of work in teacher-training to get those general inclusion principles, and the Committee will probably have seen examples of that in some of their country visits.

More specifically on sensory deprivation and special needs, we have done quite a lot of work with Sightsavers and with Leonard Cheshire in pursuit of programmes. One thing I have noticed is that often parents of children with sensory deprivation want to keep their children in special-need schools or units. Often there simply is not the reach to provide them as they are only located in central urban centres. There has been some experimenting with outreach models that can try to



provide that. There is also some good work going on in terms of adapted learning assessments to have them with braille or technology-based.

It is a difficult area and an area in which we are trying to do more. We have been in the process of updating some of the Costing Equity value-for-money guidance. I was at the launch of the IDDC disabled group and Light for the World just last week. That was where they released the Costing Equity report, which we would really endorse, about higher costs and the need to try to get better service provided. We acknowledge that some of those extra services will cost money. In very resource-constrained public sector systems it is quite difficult to do. Tanzania had a great inclusive education policy that was drafted with the help of the ADD, one of the UK NGOs, but to implement it was problematic.

Q266 Dr Cameron: One of the things that did strike me was the mismatch in that it seemed to be secondary teachers that were getting specialist training in inclusive education and in helping children with special needs. However, we were told that most of the children with special needs went to primary school but many did not reach secondary school. While we want to change that, it seems that teachers who are in primary school should also be having that training. I wonder if that is something we could do.

Ian Attfield: Those mismatches are something you will often observe. That is not something that we have any direct control over. The point about data is absolutely vital, because one thing we have been doing is working with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, which is based at University College London, at the Institute of Education, as the Secretariat. That has devised a really simple technique of six functional questions that can be added to any census and survey. It is only with that better data that you can demonstrate what the needs are and make the case to direct the teacher-training where it is most needed.

Dr Cameron: Perhaps we can be feeding that back, making sure that the Ministers are aware of that in the countries where that is occurring and that we are working on it.

Q267 Chair: We know the Secretary of State has a great personal commitment to nutrition and that is forming a greater part of the Department's work. In the light of that, will DFID be supporting more school feeding programmes in the future?

Lord Bates: Centralised school feeding programmes at scale are not a priority intervention for DFID. That is not to say that they are not important, but there are other organisations—some great organisations—such as Mary's Meals, which does some tremendous work in Malawi in this area. We have said that the evidence shows that these programmes are not the most effective or cost-efficient way of achieving education and nutritional outcomes in the countries where they work. We have looked at this closely but we have not seen the evidence to say that this



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is where we should be investing our money ourselves. Of course, when you base decisions on the evidence, you are always open to new evidence coming to say that that is not necessarily the case.

Chair: That is a very fair answer. On that note, can I say a big thank you to all three of you for a tour de force, covering everything over the last hour and a half very comprehensively but concisely@ We got through all the questions. Thank you very much, Minister, and to Anna and Ian as well, for joining us today.