Partnership and ownership:

Interaction between government and funding agencies in education policy processes in Uganda 1997-2009

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Abstract

The target of this study was to analyse how development partnerships influence government ownership in education policy processes. Ownership has been emphasised as an important partnership commitment during the last decades. It has, however, often been understood as a mechanism for increasing aid effectiveness rather than a target of its own.

In this study, the education partnership between funding agencies and the Government of Uganda, during 1997-2009, was selected as a case. Three education sector plans were developed during this period. The study was based particularly on the analysis of the related processes of setting the education priorities.

To guide the analysis, world systems theory was chosen as the analytical framework because of the complexity of development partnerships, including both international and national actors as well as international and national commitments. The study relied on a qualitative research design. The data was gathered during a 6 weeks' fieldwork, including interviews with 12 purposefully sampled participants and a document analysis.

The main findings of this study are related to the enhancement of partner roles. The leadership role of the central Government has been strengthened by capacity development. At the same time, the donor harmonisation process and the inclusion of funding agencies in governmental policy processes have both strengthened government ownership in formulating education priorities as well as resulted in new channels of influence for the funding agencies.

The study provides three perspectives on the current use of the concepts of partnership and ownership. Firstly, it is the dilemma between the equality of partners implied in the concept of partnership and the emphasis on government leadership implied in the concept of ownership. Secondly, it is the weakness of the ownership definition used in international normative frameworks, which fail to include capacity issues. Thirdly, concerns the different primary commitments of funding agencies and governments, and how this influences policy dialogue.

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Abbreviations

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
BTVET	Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (of the United Kingdom)
EDP	Education Development Partners
EFA	Education for All
EFAG	Education Funding Agency Group
EKN	The Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
ESCC	Education Sector Consultative Committee
ESIP	Education Sector Investment Plan
ESR	Education Sector Review
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GBS	General Budget Support
GoU	Government of Uganda
GWP	Government White Paper on Education
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
IA	Irish Aid
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDT	International Development Targets
IMF	The International Monetary Fund

LRA	Lords Resistance Army
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports (in Uganda)
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (in Uganda)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NMFA	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NRM	National Resistance Movement
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SFG	School Facilities Grant
SWAp	Sector -Wide Approach
UBS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UJAS	Uganda Joint Assistance Strategy
UN	United Nations
UNATU	Uganda National Teachers' Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All

1 Introduction

During the last two decades, partnerships have been emphasised in the Education for All (EFA) frameworks and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a major strategy to work towards international educational targets (UN, 2009; UNESCO, 1990a; UNESCO, 2000). At the end of the 1990s, the Government of Uganda[1] and educational technical assistance and funding agencies[2] established a framework for a new partnership. This new partnership will serve as a case in this study to discuss ownership of educational priorities in Uganda that result from the interaction and negotiations between the agencies and the Government during policy processes.

1.1 Rationale for the study

1.1.1 The concepts of partnership and ownership in the development discourse

The use of the concepts of partnership and ownership in the development discourse emerged in the 1990s. The poverty orientation during that time, contributed to a turn of focus of development aid. Project support, which was a common funding modality, had led to an emphasis on technical assistance from the funding agencies, often resulting in a dominance of funding agencies in policy processes. The poverty orientation moved the focus towards capacity building and institutional development of national governments. This in turn, resulted in a broader interest of funding agencies in national democratic processes and "good governance" issues (McGee, 2004). As a part of building national institutions, the focus turned to how funding agencies could channel their funding into government budgets, resulting in the development of additional funding modalities such as General Budget Support (GBS)[3] and Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAp)[4]. In 1999, the World Bank and the

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[1] Hereafter referred to as the Government.

[2] Terms to describe the various bilateral and multilateral actors involved in development aid include for example donors, technical assistance and funding agencies, and more recently development partners. All terms can be said to be biased. In this thesis funding agencies will be used with reference to both bilateral and multilateral organisations and institutions providing aid through grants or loans or technical assistance. Donor/donor community will be applied when referring to their use in international frameworks and declarations, for example donor harmonisation (UN, 2003; OECD, 2005a).

[3] General Budget Support is support provided by funding agencies when the government has a long-term plan and commit to mid-term budget evaluations. "General Budget Support (GBS) is aid funding to government that is not earmarked to specific

International Monetary Fund (IMF) introduced the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), a model built around the idea of partnership between governments and funding agencies. The replacement of the term recipient country by "partner country" in the PRSP reflected the partnership focus that influenced the development discourse. The PRSP model also highlighted the importance of country-driven processes, as opposed to donor-driven projects (Jerve, 2002; Murphy, 2005).

Several international conferences on aid financing and aid effectiveness, arranged by the United Nations (UN) or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), continued the focus on development partnerships and country-driven processes, reflected in the related concept of ownership. The issues of partnership and ownership were on the agenda in Monterrey 2002, Rome 2003, Paris 2005 and Accra 2008, resulting in formulations that have become normative for the development community (OECD, 2003; OECD, 2005a; OECD, 2008a; UN, 2003). Examples are:

> **The Monterrey Consensus**: Effective partnerships among donors and recipients are based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development plans and, within that framework, sound policies and good governance at all levels are necessary to ensure ODA[5] effectiveness (UN, 2003, p. 14).
>
> **The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**: ...we believe they [the partnership commitments] will increase the impact aid has in reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating achievement of the MDGs (OECD, 2005a, p. 1).
>
> **The Accra Agenda for Action**: We are committed to eradicating poverty and promoting peace and prosperity by building stronger, more effective partnerships that enable developing countries to realise their development goals (OECD, 2008a, p. 1).

As indicated in the quotes, the concepts of partnership and ownership are used in development discourse based on "the assumption that there is [a] causal link between the effectiveness of aid and the way it is delivered" (Jerve, 2002, p. 1).

Although the use of the concepts was introduced the last decades, their concerns have always been part of development discourse. The concept of ownership highlights the complexity that

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projects or expenditure items. It is disbursed through the government's own financial management system" (DFID, 2007, p. 1).

[4] SWAp implies that "...all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds" (Brown, Foster, Norton and Naschold 2001, p. 7).

[5] ODA: Official Development Assistance.

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exists in all development partnerships: the balance of power and influence in formulation and implementation of plans, policies and priorities. Historically, there has always been an inevitable imbalance between funding agencies and partner countries in development aid co-operation (Jerve, 2002). Funding agencies on one hand will expect various levels of control and influence linked to their support. On the other hand, countries in the South[6] have criticised the donor community for continuing to take the lead role and not supporting developing countries enough in their efforts to gain leadership, and thus ensuring ownership of their national and sectoral strategies and goals (OECD, 2008b). Developing countries' capacity to formulate national plans and sector policies is often lacking. Therefore, the process of producing policy frameworks usually involves both policy consultancy and technical support from funding agencies, which affects the partner countries' independence in their development (UNESCO, 2008). The use of the concepts of partnership and ownership are therefore related to the nature of the interactions between the partners.

The link of ownership to power is also reflected in the power to take decisions, to make the rules, to sanction and control, and the power over knowledge and experience (Borren, 2003). From the perspective of a partner country, ownership is in other words linked to independence. Tandon, being a controversial critical voice on development aid, including the Paris Declaration, argues that aid exit rather than aid effectiveness is the way forward to achieve ownership in development co-operation (Tandon, 2008). According to Tandon (2008), the partnership model used today results in budgets built to please donors, and therefore genuine ownership cannot be obtained as long as there is an aid dependency. According to Fraser (2008), the rhetoric of ownership used in the PRSP process as well as in the Paris Declaration is built on a wrong assumption that "the very real conflicts of interest and ideology that historically divided aid recipient countries and their donors are dead and buried" (Fraser, 2008, p. 2). The ownership agenda can thus contribute to hiding tensions in the interactions between governments and funding agencies, resulting from an imbalance of influence within development partnerships (Fraser, 2008).

In development partnerships the process of defining each other's roles and responsibilities has often led to demands from funding agencies to recipient governments to adjust to certain political goals, such as democratic governance or freedom of expression. It is in this process

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[6] The terms North and South will be used in this study to distinguish between nation-states often described as developed or developing countries. The terms developed and developing refer to industrial, technological and democratic development, although all countries are in constant change and development.

that the tension between sensitivity to local context on one hand, and the commitment to universal values on the other arises. According to Jerve, it is also in this process that it becomes clear that partnership and ownership commitments can lead to contradictions (Jerve, 2002).

1.1.2 Global partnerships in education

It was the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 that brought a traditionally fragmented group of development actors together, including multilateral and bilateral agencies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government representatives from 155 countries. The WCEFA resulted in an agreement to "…meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults." (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 2) expressed through six goals, known as the EFA goals[7]. The main actors in educational development had previously not reached a common consensus on educational priorities and goals, and funding agencies had constantly changed their educational targets and aid commitments (Mundy, 2006).

The human capital theory and the human rights approach represented two contrasting perspectives on educational development. Human capital theory argued for the investments in the education sector based on an economist perspective of rates of return, and the cost effective use of funds (Brock-Utne, 2006). The human rights approach on the other hand, argued for education as a human right and thus a moral obligation for the global community to provide.

The emphasis on poverty reduction in the 1990s made it possible to include rhetoric from both discourses. The Bretton Woods institutions' human capital rhetoric on one hand, and the human rights based approach on the other, merged in a common development compact reflected in the inclusion of rhetoric from both discourses in the EFA goals (Mundy, 2006). Education was seen to result in poverty reduction and the support particularly of the primary levels was therefore argued to be an effective use of funding (Brock-Utne, 2006). Education goals were already part of the emphasis in human rights based organisations, whose rhetoric underpinned education as empowerment of developing countries (Mundy, 2006). The merge

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[7] 1. Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities. 2. Universal access and completion of primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as "basic"). 3. Improvement in learning achievement. 4. Reduction of adult illiteracy by one-half. 5. Expansion and provision of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults. 6. Non-formal education to individuals and families (UNESCO, 1990a, n.p.).

resulted in what Mundy (2006) has called the "new EFA multilateralism" reflected in five dimensions:

1. Embedding education in a new consensus on global development;
2. International consensus about selected education priorities;
3. New forms of donor coordination and target setting at country level;
4. New partnerships;
5. New aid flows and aid modalities (Mundy, 2006, pp. 25-44)

The WCEFA can, in other words, be seen as marking the beginning of a global consensus on education development goals.

At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, the EFA goals were re-adopted, although the formulated goals were not identical with those from Jomtien[8]. However, the broad perspective on education reflected in the EFA goals, has received less attention than the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in the Millennium Summit later in 2000. The MDGs included universal primary education (UPE), contributing to an international focus on primary education. The new "development compact" (Mundy, 2006, p.1) emerging has thus created a common international commitment to prioritise certain goals, such as UPE and the elimination of gender disparities. International funding agencies have aligned their education development policies accordingly, and national governments have incorporated them in their education priorities in national plans and frameworks (IA, 2008; Mundy, 2006; NMFA, 2007; UNICEF, 2008; World Bank, 2008).

The partnership focus in education development can be seen as beginning with the WCEFA in 1990 (Mundy, 2006). As stated in the Declaration resulting from the conference:

> When we speak of "an expanded vision and a renewed commitment", partnerships are at the heart of it (UNESCO, 1990a, article 7).

The focus on international co-operation was further underlined in Dakar, relating partnership to other international frameworks for development:

> New ways of working that are emerging within the wider development context also represent opportunities for achieving EFA goals. Greater co-operation between

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[8] 1. Early childhood care, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. 2. Free and compulsory primary education of good quality. 3. All young people and adults have access to learning and life skills programme. 4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy by one-half. 5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education. 6. Quality education, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2000, n.p.).

national and international agencies at the country level, through structures and mechanisms such as Comprehensive Development Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, offers the potential for resource-related partnership for basic education[9]

Global partnerships with "…a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally" (UN, 2000, n.p.) was also emphasised in the eighth MDG, considered essential to achieve all the other goals.

However, these education frameworks did not include the concept of ownership within their partnership rhetoric:

> The primary purpose of bilateral and multilateral co-operation should appear in a true spirit of partnership, it should not be to transplant familiar models, but to help develop the endogenous capacities of national authorities and their country partners to meet basic learning needs effectively (UNESCO, 1990b, p. 5).

> …broad-based and participatory mechanisms at international, regional and national levels are essential (UNESCO, 2000).

Although the underpinning of a "spirit of partnership" implied a different approach by the funding agencies in terms of educational development, and a focus on "broad-based and participatory" processes, the international education frameworks did not directly address the challenge of a possible imbalance in such partnerships (UN, 2000; UNESCO, 1990a; UNESCO, 2000).

1.2 Uganda as a case study

The development of the Government-funding agency partnership in Uganda reflects in several ways the development of global partnerships in education. In the wake of the EFA goals in Jomtien in 1990, Uganda launched its first SWAp for the education sector in 1997 including an overall goal to achieve UPE (GoU, 1998). The introduction of the SWAp led to harmonisation of the education funding agencies support, aligned with the Government's education sector plan and a change of funding modality from project support to budget support. A formal partnership between the Government, represented by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), and the education funding agencies was established in 1999

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[9] Source: Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework of Action. Retreived 01.03.2010 from: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/dakfram_eng.shtml

when the funding agencies formed the Education Funding Agency Group (EFAG) (Eilor, 2004).

This partnership has further evolved during the last ten years, with roles and responsibilities for both the central and the local Government and the funding agencies. The partnership has, so far, included collaboration in the planning, monitoring and implementation of three education plans over a ten-year period[10]. Several actors have been a part of the partnership since the beginning, both as institutions and as individuals, which makes the case of Uganda particularly interesting. Although the partnership became more structured after the establishment of EFAG in 1999, it was the SWAp in 1997 that initiated the partnership. Therefore the year 1997 is the starting point for the analysis in this study.

Development partnerships typically involve eight kinds of partners: the recipient government, the funding agency governments, other funding agencies, the recipient ministry, the aid agency, contractors, civil society organisations and the beneficiaries (Jerve, 2002). In this study, the partners are limited to the Government of Uganda, represented by the MoES, and the multilateral and bilateral partners in the group that changed its name from EFAG to Education Development Partners (EDP) in 2009.

1.3 Focus of research

The following main issue has guided the study:
In the process of setting the education priorities in Uganda, how did the partnership between the Government and the funding agencies influence government ownership?

The concept of ownership is analysed in line with the defined partner commitments from the Paris Declaration:

> Partner countries commit to: Exercise leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies through broad consultative processes, including the development of operational programmes, mid-term frameworks and annual budgets, and the co-ordination of aid at all levels.

> Donors commit to: Respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it (OECD, 2005a, p. 3)

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[10] The three plans are analysed in this study. The third education plan is a revised version of the second plan, but the changes are extensive and it has therefore been included.

Ownership in this study is therefore linked to the central Government's leadership in the development of education priorities as expressed in education sector plans and sector budgets. Ownership is also related to the funding agencies respect for country leadership and how they support capacity development. Included in the analysis are the partner experiences with the nature of the partnership and how the development of their partner roles has influenced the interaction in policy processes.

The setting of education priorities is the particular focus of this study, because they result from a process involving many actors in policy dialogue, planning processes, budget priorities and implementation. It is the responsibility of the central Government in Uganda to steer these processes. The discussion of ownership will therefore primarily relate to the role of central Government. The implementation of the education plans and policies is the responsibility of local Government and it will be included in the discussion only when related to the central Government's leadership role.

The education sector plans included in this study each address the entire education sector. But since primary education has been prioritised since 1996, UPE will be the particular focus.

1.4 Research questions

The analysis of the partnership between EDP and the MoES and government ownership was guided by three specific research questions:

1. **How has harmonising of funding agencies in EDP influenced the interaction between the Government and the funding agencies?**

2. **What was the interaction between the Government and the funding agencies in the process of setting the education priorities?**

3. **How has the partnership between the Government and the education funding agencies influenced government ownership of UPE?**

This study relies on a qualitative approach and the research was conducted in three phases: first a general document analysis of the documents that were accessible before the fieldwork; second, from July to September 2009 a six weeks' fieldwork, in Kampala, Uganda to conduct interviews with Government officials, the partners in EDP and other stakeholders in the

education sector, gather other relevant documents, minutes and reports and participate in relevant meetings; third, data analysis and writing of the thesis.

1.5 Outline

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to present the analytical and methodological framework for the research. World systems theory was selected as the theoretical framework for the research and a qualitative research design and methodology was developed to answer the research questions. The concepts of partnership and ownership are defined and considerations for their use are put forward. The data collection methods and the analysis process are also outlined.

Chapter 3 provides the stage for the analysis in Chapter 4. It includes a brief outline of the historical and political context in Uganda, the history of the educational development and the role of external agencies in the education sector.

In Chapter 4, the data from the research conducted in Uganda are presented and discussed. The analysis revolves around the development and implementation of three education sector plans, and the processes related to the priority of UPE. The chapter is structured according to two time periods, providing a comparative perspective on the development of the education priorities and the nature of the partnership.

Finally, Chapter 5 draws conclusions on the interaction between the funding agencies and the Government in the policy process. This leads to outlining perspectives on the current use of the concepts of partnership and ownership in the development discourse and having policy implications for how they are used and interpreted.

2 Analytical framework and research methodology

This chapter presents the analytical framework and considerations concerning the research methodology. World systems theory was selected because of the understanding it provides for the relationship between global and national processes. The first part of the chapter outlines world systems theory and three key concepts that will help explain the findings of the research, namely isomorphism, decoupling and rational actorhood. The second part of the chapter presents the qualitative research design and the data collection methods, as well as the methodological reflections related to their application.

2.1 A world systems theory perspective

World systems theory represents an holistic approach in development theory, and is concerned with systemic patterns and relations in a world perspective on regions and nation-states. The theory is rooted in a Marxist tradition and is critical of global inequalities, similar to dependency theories (Conwey & Heynen, 2002; Klak, 2002; Potter, 2002). The theory can be divided into political-economic world system and institutional world system theories. The political-economic approach argues that it is competitiveness and the drive for economic growth that results in the global processes shaping the development of nation-states (Elwell, 2006; Wallerstein, 1991, 2006, as cited in Daun, 2009, p. 283). It further argues that this has caused an international interdependency between nation-states in areas of production, consumption and prices, leading to a more vulnerable world market. The institutional world systems theory, on the other hand emphasises the existence of a world culture (Daun, 2009).

According to institutional world systems theory there is a world culture constructing:

> ...cognitive and ontological models of reality that specify the nature, purposes and technology, sovereignty, control, and resources of nation-states and other actors (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997, p. 149).

These constructed models of reality are reflected in internationally adopted frameworks and policies, created within international organisations such as UN bodies and OECD, and influence the development of nation-states (Daun, 2009). "Universal" values, such as equity or socioeconomic or human development, are often highlighted in such models, like for

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instance citizenship or rationalised justice and are, according to Meyer et al., (1997, p. 145), in most cases "surprisingly consensual". Instead of rooting the development and construction of a nation-state in national and local traditions and needs, ideas originating from world culture have influenced the perception of how a nation-state should be organised and are often adopted as common sense (Meyer et al., 1997).

The process of world cultural influence is illustrated in Figure 2.1.
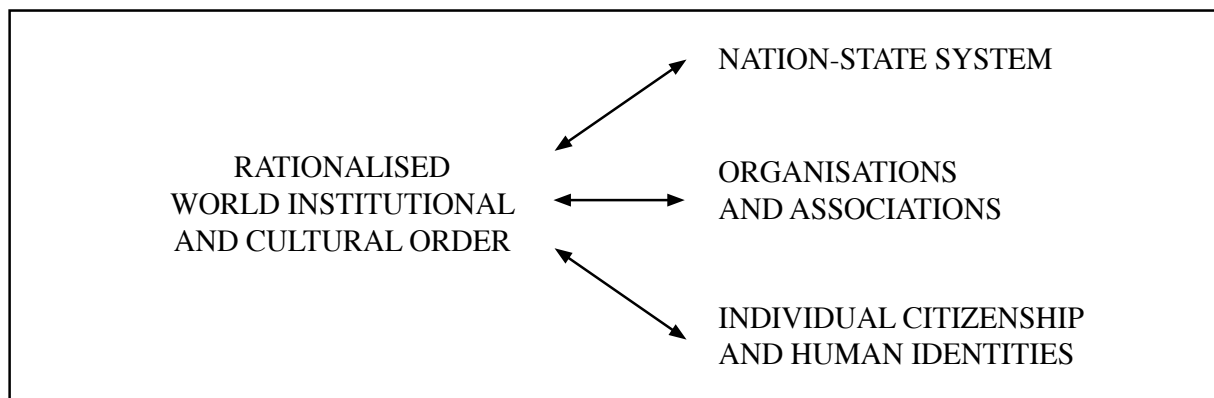
Figure 2.1 The world as enactment of culture

Source: Meyer et al., 1997, p. 151

As indicated in Figure 2.1, the actors in world society, nation-states, organisations and associations and individuals, are both influencing and being influenced by a rationalised world institutional and cultural order. However, according Meyer et al. (1997), the world order is the core of influence in global processes.

The idea of an influential world order, shaping the development of nation-states, is rejected by some globalisation theories, rather explaining global processes as resulting from informal networks with actors trading ideas independently and autonomously (Jacobson 1979, as cited in Meyer et al., 1997, p. 147). According to Steiner-Khamsi (2004), an international community of experts agreeing on a common model, for instance in education is therefore imagined. According to world systems theory, the homogenous development that often occurs between and within nation-states across the world, despite national differences, can only be explained if originating in a world culture (Meyer et al., 1997).

> Worldwide models define and legitimate agendas for local actions, shaping the structures and policies of nation-states and other national and local actors in virtually all of the domains of rationalized social life – business, politics, education, medicine, science, even family and religion (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 145)

This massive world cultural influence of all levels of society is, according to Meyer et al., (1997), made possible because of the statelessness of the world society. Its role and influence can be both extensive and overlooked at the same time, because it is not caused by an institution or a political entity (Meyer et al., 1997).

Nation-states are expected to conform to world culture by adopting so-called "modern" forms of society, exemplified by Meyer et al. (1997) in the idea of mass schooling and the "universalised" understanding of its benefits for a society. This is despite the fact that the benefits of such reforms are not necessarily confirmed by research-based studies. According to world systems theory, the construction of a nation-state, including its national plans and sector priorities, does not primarily result from national factors and a government's autonomous decisions. The nation state is rather understood as a:

> …worldwide institution constructed by worldwide cultural and associational processes (Meyer et al. 1997, p. 144).

This view is opposite to a microrealist argument of a nation-state responding to a global network as a purposeful actor (Meyer et al., 1997). In a world system's theory perspective an analysis of a national government's actions must take into consideration how the nation-state has been influenced by the world cultural order. According to Meyer et al. (1997) the nation-states develop three distinct properties resulting from this influence. These are: isomorphism, decoupling and rational actorhood (Meyer et al., 1997).

2.1.1 Isomorphism

Isomorphism relates to the homogenous development of nation-states and an emphasis on, and priority of, the same values and ideas in apparently different contexts. Examples of such values and ideas impacting priorities of nation-states are according to Meyer et al. (1997, pp. 152-153):

- Mass schooling systems organised around a standard curriculum[11]

- Equalised female status and rights[12]

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[11] Meyer, Kamens, and Benavot 1992; Meyer, Ramirez, and Soysal 1992, as cited in Meyer et al., 1997, p. 152

[12] Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan, in press; Ramirez and Weiss 1979; Berkovitch 1997; Charles 1992, as cited in Meyer et al., 1997, p. 153

- Universalistic welfare systems[13]

Isomorphic development is, according to Meyer et al. (1997), only reasonable if caused by dominant "world forces". Independent national policy development based on internal factors and context would necessarily have led to variations.

2.1.2 Decoupling

Decoupling relates to the distance between formulated national policies and plans and their implementation, due to a disengagement of "paper and reality". This can be a result of policies serving as ideals without being possible to achieve in a local context (Meyer et al., 1997). The decoupling can be seen as an evidence of failure, but, according to Chabbott (2003), it can alternatively be explained as a result of local resistance to adapt to world culture. For instance, the relevance of a curriculum may contrast with the needs of a rural village, or if the chances of entering the labour market after schooling are considered low, district governments may prioritise to strengthen other sectors before increasing funding for education services. Repeated decoupling is endemic for many countries which according to Chabbott (2003), can be explained by the fact that national policies and plans often respond to international standards rather than the national context.

2.1.3 Rational actorhood

Rational actorhood relates to nation-states' uniformity of purposes and goals, often expressed in government policies. According to Meyer et al. (1997), rational actorhood is a common response from governing bodies to decoupling.

> Repeated rounds of planning and policy-making would occur as it [becomes] clear that the idealized rational models [are] far from effective implementation…its main result would be still more planning and reform (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 155)

On the global arena, the EFA goals and the MDGs are examples of global policies that are unfulfilled. According to Klees (2008), the response is to constantly develop new policies to re-gain legitimacy.

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[13] Abbott and Deviney 1992; Thomas and Lauderdale 1987; Strang and Chang 1993; Collier and Messick 1975, as cited in Meyer et al., 1997, p. 153

2.2 World culture and the global education agenda

Chabbott's (2003) model (see Figure 2.2 page 15) on global processes in education has been developed based on the thinking of Meyer et al. (1997) and on organisational theory. As can be seen in Figure 2.2, "World cultural blueprints of development" deriving from international discourse, international organisations and international professionals, set the education development agenda and discourse. This agenda and discourse are reflected in the focus and priorities at international conferences and in the declarations and frameworks they produce. What is produced at the international level impacts national plans and governments' attention to for example human rights and education and are reflected in national and local implementation processes (Chabbott, 2003).

The focus on primary education in the MDGs and the EFA goals from Dakar can be interpreted in relation to Figure 2.2. The universal idea of "mass schooling" emerged as a "blueprint of development" within world culture, and became part of the international development discourse rationalised by international professionals. Through the EFA and MDG conferences, the priority of primary education became part of international frameworks and declarations and normative for development partnerships. This further influenced the formulation of national plans and local implementation. The result is what Mundy (2006) calls the "new EFA multilateralism" with reference to the global consensus on education, which has particularly emphasised universal primary education.
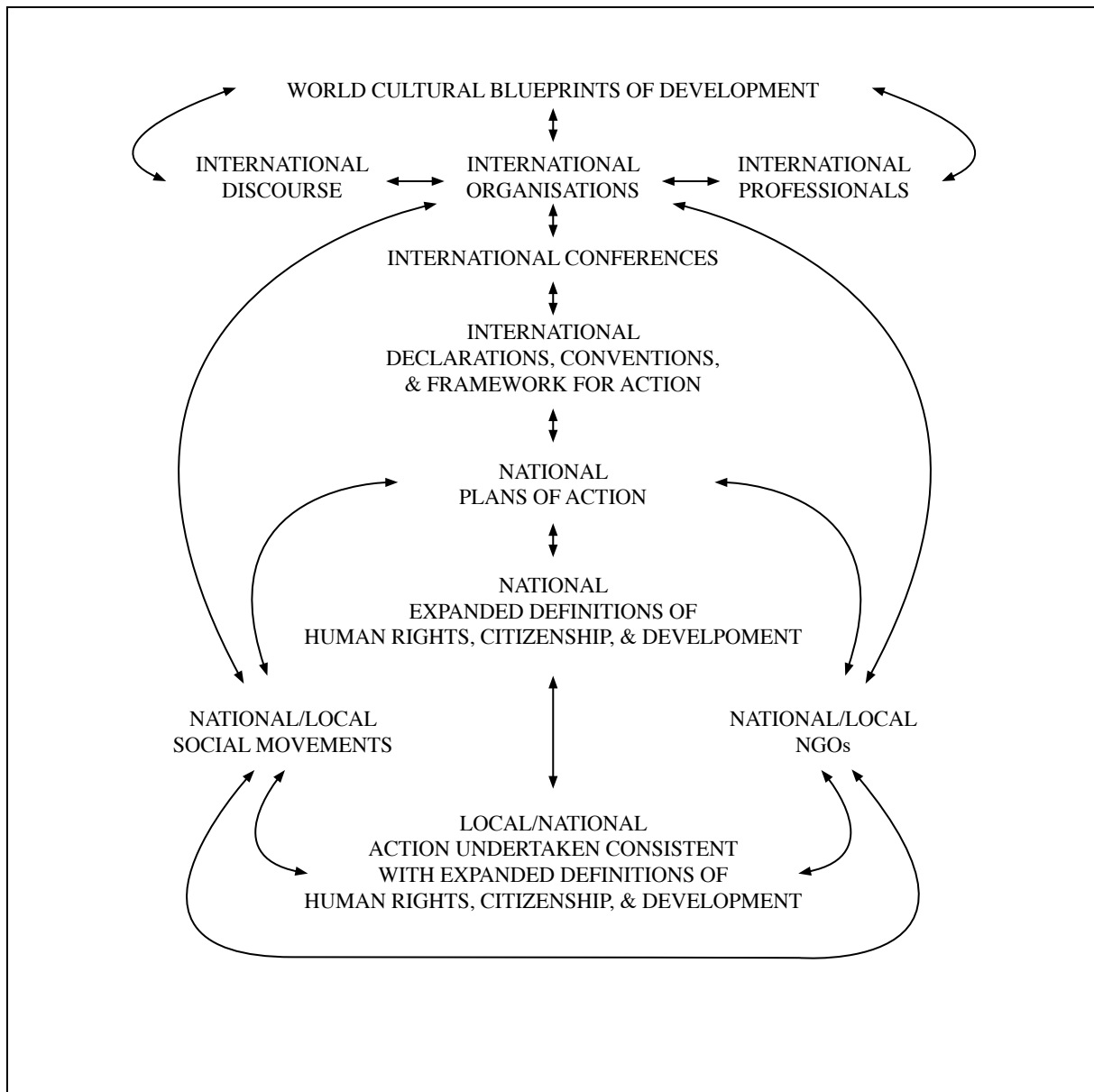
Figure 2.2 Mechanisms for constructing and disseminating world cultural blueprints of development

Source: Chabbott, 2003, p. 9

2.2.1 A global consensus on prioritising primary education

It was the WCEFA in 1990 that established the first global consensus on education (Mundy, 2006). Education researchers have, however, criticized the process leading to the formulation of the EFA goals and the MDGs, and therefore also their legitimacy as international priorities (Brock-Utne, 2006; Chabbott, 2003; King, 2007). The WCEFA in Jomtien was a funding agency initiative sponsored by UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank. King (2007) is critical of the fact that the process was steered by leading international funding agencies

such as UNICEF and the World Bank and that "the core drafting personnel were drawn from the multilateral agencies" (King, 2007, p. 381). Brock-Utne (2006) is also critical of how constructive initiatives from African and Asian countries were neglected in the Jomtien process. According to King (2007), the role of governments from the South, researchers, NGOs, and the multilateral organisations have not been sufficiently documented to confirm a balanced degree of influence by the participants on the consensus reached in Jomtien.

Another significant process influencing the global education agenda was the six International Development Targets (IDTs), put forward by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD in 1996. The IDTs included two targets addressing education: primary education by 2015, and gender equity in primary and secondary education by 2005 (OECD, 1996). King (2007) criticises the lack of information on the development process that led to the IDTs, and points to the fact that the two IDTs concerning education reflect the preference of the World Bank and UNICEF that had made it clear already in Jomtien that their funding would be focused on primary education (Chabbott, 2003; King, 2007).

When the international commitment to achieving the EFA goals was reaffirmed in Dakar in 2000, the targets were the same target dates of the IDTs (UNESCO, 1990a). Later the same year, the MDGs established the same time-bound target dates for goals that were almost identical with the earlier IDTs. Because the countries of the developing world are not members of OECD, they did not participate in the setting of these targets (King & Rose, 2005; UN, 2000). The legitimacy of what King (2007) calls the "global education architecture" reflected in the EFA goals and the MDGs, can therefore be questioned due to an imbalance of influence in the formulation processes (Brock-Utne, 2006; King, 2007). However, the goals and frameworks of EFA and the MDGs were created in processes where Southern governments were represented and were part of the adoption of the final documents.

The MDGs have received more attention by most international organisations than the EFA goals, and have contributed to a narrower interpretation of global education priorities. After the launch of the MDGs, the development community's interpretation of global education priorities has, to a large extent, been limited to the two MDG education related goals: universal primary education in 2015, and gender equity in primary and secondary education in 2005. These priorities have influenced the agenda for education partnerships (Mundy, 2006).

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2.3 The concepts of partnership and ownership as world culture constructions

The partnership discourse in development aid, including its use of the concept of ownership, can be understood as constructions of world culture through the mechanisms illustrated in Figure 2.2. Historically, partnership purposes and goals have not emerged from the partner countries' needs according to cultural traditions, religion or history. They have rather been constructed according to an agenda shaped by funding agencies that, in most cases, have designed their development priorities and funding modalities according to international frameworks and declarations. Development partnerships can therefore be understood as exogenously derived, rather than being an autonomous response by a nation-state, which is in accordance with the ideas of world systems theory.

2.3.1 The value of equality and the concepts of partnership and ownership

The concept of partnership can be understood as originating in what Chabbot (2003) calls "world cultural blueprints of development", such as the value of equality. The idea of development aid as contributing to progress on global equality, was in the first decades of development aid, accepted as a "universal truth" and a moral obligation of the North towards the South (Chabbott, 2003; Crossley & Watson, 2003). This universal acceptance of "reality" is, according Meyer et al., (1997), a typical world cultural phenomenon. Having its roots in the European enlightenment, and later underpinned in 1948 in the Human Rights Declaration, equality can be considered as a fundamental world cultural value, and a value that has been emphasised in the partnership discourse. Equality has been driving global development in many areas related to for example gender issues, labour rights or minority issues. Equality-related themes have often taken centre stage on the agenda of international organisations working in all fields of development (Chabbott, 2003). Equality has also been highlighted in the partnership concept that is part of development discourse (Jerve, 2002).

According to Browne (1999), the partnership model had the potential to create equal opportunities for all countries to participate in the global economy, exchange of information and global governance and it represented a new, better and more equal way to conduct aid co-operation. By emphasising the value of equality, Browne (1999) ties the emerging partnership

discourse in the late 1990s with the issue of ownership. According to King (1999), a similar tendency was evident among development actors, quoting DFID and Sida, King argues:

> The thrust of these initiatives is to imply that beyond the older world of agency conditionalities and forced structural adjustment policies, there is a brave new situation where "genuine" partnerships (United Kingdom. DFID, 1997) and a "more equal and respectful relationship" (Sweden. Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1997a, p. 22) between North and South can be anticipated. This new language of symmetry suggests that the aid relationship is going to change (King, 1999, p. 15).

King (1999) further argues that the new partnership discourse was built partly on an argument of "equal and respectful relationships" and a "language of symmetry", thus underpinning a focus on equality. Partnership was introduced as a new model, and the rhetoric was meant to mark a move from the post-colonial terminology of donor and recipient imbalance of power (Crossly & Watson, 2003).

When the World Bank introduced the PRSPs in 1999, the Bank's President at the time, James Wolfensohn, coined the term ownership in development partnerships (Taylor, 2009). According to Wolfensohn ownership meant that:

> Countries must be in the driving seat and set the course. They must determine the goals and the phasing, timing and sequencing of programmes (Wolfensohn 1999, as cited in Taylor, 2009, p. 166).

According to Jerve (2002), it was the need to strengthen the emphasis on equality within aid cooperation, that was behind the emerging partnership discourse:

> With the increasingly globalised world and the end of the Cold War, there was a need to define country-to-country relationship in equality terms, as had been laid down in the principles of the UN Charter (Jerve, 2002, p. 10).

The concept of ownership can thus be interpreted as a further elaboration of constructing equal development partnerships. Equality amongst partners is essential for a genuine partnership. Country ownership of the outcomes of a partnership therefore, contributes to a partnership's legitimacy. Against the historical backdrop that recipient countries negotiate from a vulnerable position with dominant donors, ownership as empowerment of partner countries to control the development of their national policies and plans can be understood as originating in the world culture value of promoting equality. The world culture pressure for progress on equality is further reflected in the agendas of international conferences on development partnerships and the frameworks they have produced.

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2.3.2 Partnership, ownership and international declarations

Partnership and ownership issues have been emphasised at several international conferences, gathering broad groups of development actors and institutions and government representatives from the North and the South. The following three frameworks have been selected because they have been developed successively and have become normative for the development aid community.

The Monterrey Consensus in 2002 was a result of the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development, outlining major commitments on development aid including debt relief and policy coherence (UN, 2003). It emphasised partnerships as the way forward:

> A major priority is to build those development partnerships, particularly in support of the neediest, and to maximize the poverty reduction impact of ODA. The goals, targets and commitments of the Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed development targets can help countries to set short and medium term national priorities as the foundation for building partnerships for external support (UN, 2003, p. 14).

This quote reflects a world order influence on how the concepts of partnership and ownership are used in international frameworks for development cooperation. According to the Monterrey Consensus, the nation-states' goals and targets are expected to derive from international development targets while building development partnerships in accordance with international declarations (UN, 2003).

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PAC) from 2005 was built on the Monterrey Consensus as well as the OECD High-Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome 2003 that resulted in a commitment to increase donor harmonisation. The purpose of PAC was to increase aid effectiveness and "…to take far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the ways we deliver and manage aid (OECD, 2005a, p. 1)". To achieve the targets in PAC, five partnership commitments were signed: Ownership, Alignment, Harmonisation, Managing for Results and Mutual Accountability (OECD, 2005a). Funding agencies and partner countries signed sub-commitments to achieve the partnership commitments. To achieve country ownership, partner countries committed to:

- Exercise leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies through broad consultative processes;

- Translate these national development strategies into sector programmes as expressed in mid-term expenditure frameworks and annual budgets;

- Co-ordinate aid at all levels in dialogue with donors and encouraging participation of civil society and the private sector (OECD, 2005a).

In PAC, the donor commitment to achieve country ownership was articulated in one sentence: "Respect country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it" (OECD, 2005a, p. 3). In the PAC commitments country leadership was thus underpinned to ensure country ownership in development partnerships. However, the list used to measure progress on ownership only included one indicator on ownership, namely that "Partners have operational development strategies (OECD, 2005b, p. 1)". In most cases this means a PRSP (OECD, 2005b).

The High Level Forum in Accra in 2008 aimed at further progressing on PAC and addressed ownership as essential to succeed (OECD, 2008a). During the Forum, there was a discussion of how to deepen the implementation of PAC, also in the area of ownership. PAC linked country ownership mainly to central government, excluding Parliament, local government and civil society. PAC also failed to address the issue of donor conditionalities. Another weakness of PAC debated in Accra was the indicator of progress on the ownership commitment and how it could be complemented (OECD, 2008b). When the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) was endorsed, it did in some areas provide a deeper meaning of country ownership than PAC. The democratic perspective of country ownership is included in AAA, as country governments commit to:

> …work more closely with Parliaments and local authorities on preparing, implementing and monitoring national development policies and plans. They will also engage with civil society organisations (OECD, 2008a, p. 2).

Funding agencies committed to supporting a broader involvement of all stakeholders and to linking conditions to national strategies. The indicator for progress on ownership was, however, not changed in Accra (OECD, 2008a).

2.4 A qualitative research design

Because of the central focus on partnership and ownership in this study, a qualitative research design was selected. In order to achieve a deeper meaning of the two concepts, experiences

and perspectives from actors and stakeholders were analysed. A qualitative approach allows the participants to tell their story and draw meaning from it, without having to adjust to a prefixed format of a scheme or table. Since the study involved a broad and varied group of actors the adaptability of qualitative methods was considered important (Bryman, 2008).

Yin's (1993) model for a case study of educational partnership was used in the research design. The model emphasises the need to look at both the educational outcome and the partnership outcome. Focusing only on the education outcomes is described by Yin (1993) as a "simple process-outcome-framework". The case study was therefore designed to analyse both the development of the partnership and its relation to the parallel processes of formulating education priorities (Yin, 1993). Data was collected about these processes, and a narrative of the chronological development was constructed and used in the data analysis (Patton, 2002).

2.4.1 Definitions of partnership and ownership

The concept of partnership is used with reference to the formal partnership between the funding agencies harmonised in EDP and the Government represented by the MoES, as guided by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) first issued in 1999 and later revised in 2009 (MoU, 2009)[14]. Partnership is used as a concept to describe a formal agreement to co-operate, but without a preconceived position on how the partners perceive the nature of the partnership and their partner roles and responsibilities.

Because the partners were committed to PAC, the PAC definition of ownership has been applied as follows:

> Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions. (OECD, 2005a, p. 3).

In PAC, ownership is linked to leadership in policy processes. Therefore, the focus of the research has been the central Government's leadership in the process of developing education priorities, and other education stakeholders' perception of Government and funding agency influence in these policy processes. Leadership is thus related to the central Government's

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[14] I could not access the Memorandum of Understanding from 1999. I was informed by the EDP Chairman that there were no major changes in the revised MoU from 2009 used in my study. The document was never officially published, but it is acknowledged as a formal agreement guiding the partnership.

role in policy dialogue and its control over the formulation of education priorities in the education plans, which is reflected in budget priorities and implementation processes.

The second part of the PAC definition of ownership, namely the government's co-ordination of development actions, takes in Uganda primarily place in the Government's partnership with EDP. Ownership in this study will therefore be limited to the central Government's role related to EDP's support in the form of both funding and technical assistance.

The AAA linked country ownership to the inclusion of parliament and civil society in contrast to solely government ownership of national development processes (OECD, 2008a). The Accra focus is important, particularly in a young democracy such as in Uganda. The role of Parliament and civil society is therefore included in the discussion when related to findings in the research, although the primary focus is the role of the central Government as an elected representative for the Ugandan people.

2.5 Interviews

To access the rich experiences and meaning that the varied group of actors held, interviews were conducted as one data collection method to access data that were unavailable through other sources. In particular, detailed information on events and processes was sought and, what Rubin and Rubin (2005) call "topical interviews" were undertaken. The interview guide was divided into three themes to make it easier to manage the flow of a conversation, and continuously evaluate whether one theme had been sufficiently covered before moving on to the next (Seidman, 1998). The themes were drawn from the research questions and were:

1. The process of developing education plans and priorities
2. The education priority of UPE
3. The partnership between the Government of Uganda and EDP

All questions were related to the PAC definition of ownership and donor and partner country commitments to achieve ownership. Because the questions covered broad themes and several processes during a ten-year period, I summarized what the interviewee had said to get verification by the participant before moving on to another topic.

A standardized open-ended interview was combined with an interview guide (see Appendix 1). The wording of the open-ended questions ensured that all interviewees were asked the

same in each interview. In this way the interviewees had what Patton (2002) calls "the same stimuli" (p. 344), which made the interviews more comparable and eased the analysis. The written questions provided a structure during the interview to which I could return to keep the focus and reduce possible biases that could impact the interview situation (Patton, 2002). Since I also wanted the freedom to explore answers during the interview and ask additional questions, an interview guide was included. The open-ended interview served as a base, but the answers from the participants also influenced the flow of the interview.

The interview guide was pilot tested with the assistance of a contact in an NGO who had experience from policy and planning processes in Uganda. The pilot test gave useful insights, and resulted in structural changes and more focused questions. For instance questions that were too broad were divided into two or three questions in the final version. Other questions that were too specific, on for instance the priorities of the organisation/institution, would produce information I already possessed through for instance policy documents, and were therefore rephrased. The pilot test also gave me the opportunity to practice and evaluate my role as an interviewer.

2.5.1 Purposeful sampling

The sample of interview participants was based on purposeful selection of representatives from a broad range of actors involved in the development of education policies in Uganda. There were a total number of twelve interview participants. Actors included in the sample were the central Government, multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, NGOs, the teachers union and one education researcher (see Appendix 2). I had to eliminate representatives from local Government and beneficiaries of education, such as parents and students, because of limitations of time and logistics.

The representatives from each development actor were purposefully selected because they were what Patton (2002) calls "information rich". The sampling happened gradually as I was able to meet with "gatekeepers". A contact in Save the Children had the majority of the EDPs and the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) leaders in her network and provided contact details, and I was able to use her name to establish trust when contacting them. The sample of interview participants reflects the variety within the group of actors from whom I could select, and I therefore considered twelve interviewees as a sufficient number (Seidman, 1998). All participants were on the senior level in the different organisations and institutions

they represented, and therefore carried an insight experience from the partnership. One of the interviewees also served as chairman of EDP. Six of the participants had been in their position for ten years or more, and two had been in their position between six and eight years. Five Government and funding agency participants had been involved in the partnership since the beginning.

The interviewees from central Government were selected based on their position and experience. I aimed at interviewing four representatives from the Government, but only managed two. One interviewee was a commissioner from the Department of Basic Education, who was politically elected, and one interviewee was a civil servant from the Education Policy and Planning Department, where most of the direct co-operation with funding agencies is organised. The total number of participants from the MoES was smaller than I planned for and the perspective of the Government is therefore less represented than that of the funding agencies.

Within EDP there are seven funding agencies in the working group for primary education, and four of them were interviewed[15]. They included one development bank, one UN body and two bilateral organisations. The interviewees therefore represented different organisations and institutions with different mandate, policies and priorities. The interviewing was therefore a triangulation of sources as they represented a variety of funding agency perspectives.

Two participants from the NGO community were also included. One interviewee was the national coordinator of a forum of education policy NGOs, and one was the chairman of a cluster of 31 NGOs providing education services. The inclusion of NGOs in the study brought an external perspective on the Government's partnerships with EDP from stakeholders in the education sector.

In addition to the General Secretary, two representatives from UNATU were interviewed. Because I was not able to conduct fieldwork in the districts, I considered it important to interview representatives from UNATU. The UNATU board members had experience with the relevance and implementation of education policies in Uganda and provided a close link

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[15] I chose not to include USAID who had just replaced their former education specialist and the new one had no experience from EDP in Uganda. Two UN organisations in EDP, UNFPA and UNHCR were not selected because they are mainly involved in specific services like provision of statistics, or the delivery of education in the Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in Northern Uganda. (IDP is a term used for a person who is a refugee in his/her home country.)

to the beneficiaries in the schools. The inclusion of UNATU thus supported the validity of the findings.

One education researcher was interviewed who represented a professionally based perspective from the academia. The interviewee had more than ten years' experience as a team leader/member of various committees working on education policies and plans for the Government during its partnership with EDP.

Eight of the twelve interviewees were members of the Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC), a government body in which education policies and plans are monitored in dialogue with a broad group of stakeholders. Initially, I planned to attend an ESCC meeting to observe the roles and dynamics of the partnership in policy dialogue and negotiations. I had an invitation to attend in August 2009, but the invitation was cancelled the same day, due to an internal debate in which external visitors could not attend.

2.5.2 Interviewing experts

Usually in an interviewer-interviewee relationship, the researcher has to be careful to avoid the misbalance of power that could be caused if the interviewer is perceived as representing the elite or experts. However, when interviewing elites or experts the situation can be the opposite (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). My experience as a student interviewing senior leaders was to some extent an asymmetrical relation. Their understanding of the field, based on their knowledge and experience, was naturally deeper than mine and I could potentially have lost out on important information. On the other hand, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) point out, a researcher interviewing experts can allow herself to ask more provocative questions because the interviewee has a stronger status. People in expert positions are also used to be vocal about their opinions and reflect on processes of which they are a part (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The role of the interviewer can then perhaps be easier.

There is a challenge in interviewing experts or the elite because they might have preconceived preferences of how they want to communicate on certain themes, for example sensitive or conflict affected subjects (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Before going to the field, I had read Vestbø's (2003) experience with interviewing Ugandan Government representatives in 2003, who were careful in articulating their answers. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the interviewer needs to distinguish between the "public voice" and "the inner voice", i.e. the

difference between what the interviewee prefers to project and the interviewee's genuine belief and opinion. My role as an interviewer was to find the "inner voice" to access the participants' stories and experiences.

At the beginning of the fieldwork, I made an effort to meet the participants before the interview to establish contact so that the interview would flow better (Seidman, 1998). But this was difficult in most cases. Instead I sent an introduction email to the interviewees about the study and my fieldwork, which was followed up with a phone call to answer questions and clarify misunderstandings. The majority of the participants had limited time and preferred to prepare for the interview through the phone. Because the participants were interviewed based on their professional opinions and experiences, I gradually considered an informal relationship unnecessary and that the more formal approach in the interviews worked better.

All the interviews were conducted in the interviewee's environment where we were undisturbed. Most of the interviews had a time frame of forty-five minutes because of the tight schedules of the participants. This was short but sufficient time to cover the interview guide. However, more time could have resulted in more perspectives and more time to discuss. The interviews were recorded. One participant indicated that the recording would make her careful in her responses, and one did not want the interview to be recorded. In the latter case I took hand written notes instead.

The interviews were conducted in a foreign language both to the interviewee and the interviewer, as English was not the mother tongue to any of the interviewees. Even though English is the official language in Uganda, and the interview participants used English in their daily work, an interview conducted in a foreign language for both parts can to some degree affect the interview. Nuances and preciseness could be lost and the chance of misunderstandings increases in a foreign language. I noticed this when transcribing the interviews, when it became apparent that the English language is sometimes used differently in an African than an Anglo-Saxon context. The participants received a written summary of the interviews for feedback, which helped minimising the risk of misinterpretations.

2.5.3 Categorising data

The process of analysing data from the interviews started already when the data had been gathered and transcribed, usually the same day. Field notes taken during and directly after the

interviews were also part of the data processing, and provided the first understanding of patterns and links. The raw data were ordered and processed according to categories useful for the analysis in the study.

The main concepts and the problem statement that informed the organising of questions in the interview guide were used in a first draft of categories for the data. These were: the process of formulating the education plans and the partnership between EDP and the MoES. One other data category addressed the future of the partnership and an additional one the partners' future priorities concerning UPE.

For each theme, sub themes were developed inductively from each interview by summarizing paragraphs. When all sub themes had been finalised, I looked for patterns. I related these patterns to the agency, organisation or institution that the interviewee represented. When the data had been categorised by themes and sub-themes, I organised them in a time line, providing a narrative chronological description of the development of education priorities in Uganda, including the parallel description of the development of the partnership with EFAG/EDP. I finally included major international policy frameworks that influenced both the education priorities and the partnership. The picture emerging was used to discover connections between the international and national processes. Finally, I did an additional analysis, which opened for a deeper understanding of connections and messages that the interviewees articulated. The final categorising of data is illustrated in Figure 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5.
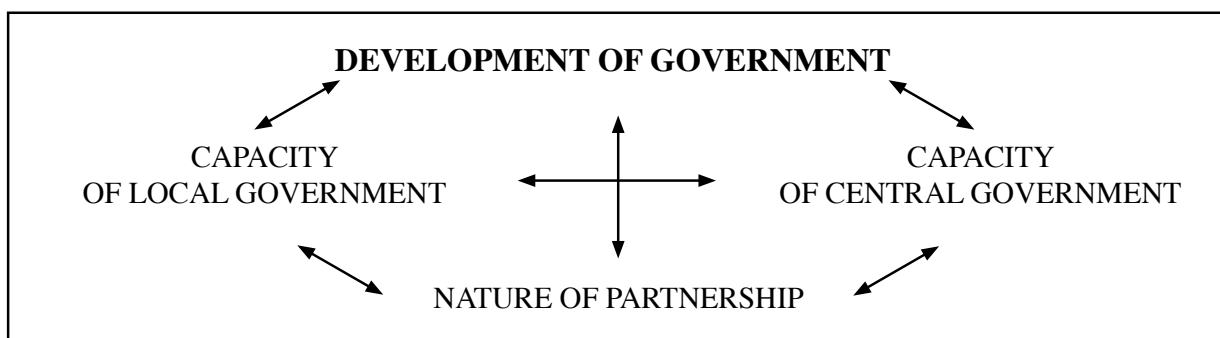
Figure 2.3 Development of government and the influence on partnership interactions

NATURE OF PARTNERSHIP

DEVELOPMENT OF FUNDING AGENCIES

DONOR HARMONISATION   FUNDING MODALITIES

NATURE OF PARTNERSHIP
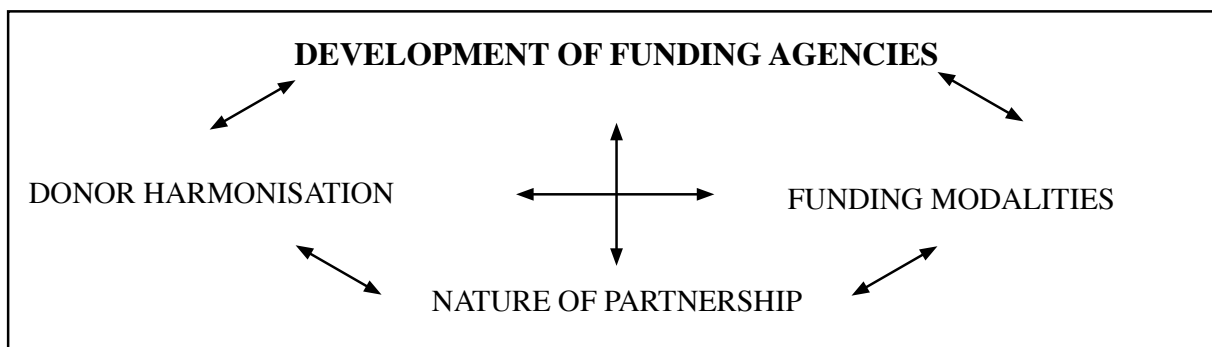
Figure 2.4 Development of funding agencies and the influence on partnership interactions

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL   INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION PRIORITIES   PARTNERSHIP DISCOURSE
INTERNATIONAL   INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION PRIORITIES   PARTNERSHIP DISCOURSE

NATURE OF PARTNERSHIP
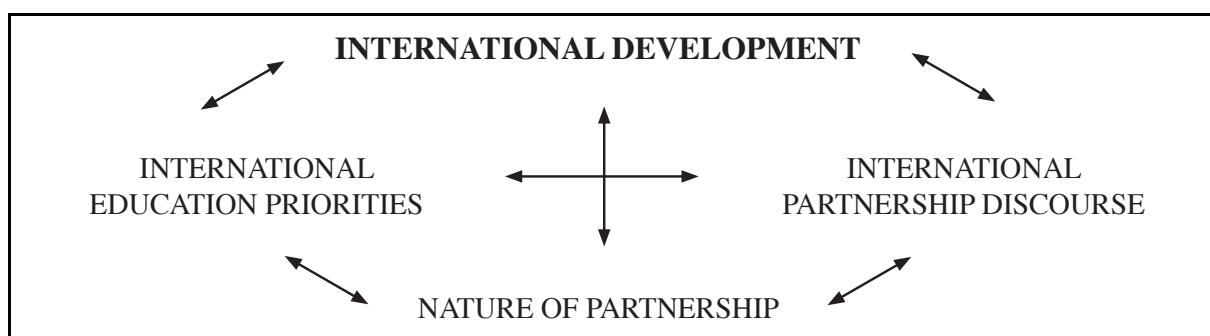
Figure 2.5 International development and the influence on partnership interactions

The figures highlight three different parallel processes that influence government ownership of education priorities in Uganda: the development of the Government, the development of the funding agencies and international development. Each of these processes is also influenced by other factors included in the figures. All factors in each figure mutually influence each other as illustrated by the arrows. Figure 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 therefore give insight into the complex field of an education development partnership and some of the many processes that impact ownership in education priorities in a Southern country like Uganda.

NATION-STATE SYSTEM

RATIONALISED   ORGANISATIONS
WORLD INSTITUTIONAL   AND ASSOCIATIONS
AND CULTURAL ORDER

INDIVIDUAL CITIZENSHIP
AND HUMAN IDENTITIES

2.6 Document analysis

The documents selected were government national education plans and policy documents of the multilateral and bilateral organisations in EDP that guided their education priorities and partner roles. The government documents were selected because they have been instrumental in the process of developing the education priorities in Uganda. The funding agency documents were selected because they show the commitments of each agency according to their mandate and organisation. The guideline for the partnership between the Government and EDP, the Memorandum of Understanding from 2009, was also included.

The document analysis was undertaken according to the themes of the research questions. The analysis process started with an "internal analysis" to access the reality of the text before establishing a focus (Silverman, 1993). My focus in analysing the government documents was the description of the planning process, the education objectives and priorities for the period the plan covered, and the actual budgetary priorities. The second focus was partnership and how the government's relationship with international agencies was addressed. In the analysis of the funding agency documents, I focused only on the agency's policy on partnership, or aid co-operation, and on its education priorities. Due to limitations of time, I did not include the process of developing the funding agency documents. However, in most of the policies references were made to international declarations and frameworks, and the link to the global community was therefore evident.

Accessing public documents was more difficult than I expected, and several relevant documents are not included which could have provided a more detailed picture of the debate between the Government, EDP and other stakeholders[16].

2.7 Trustworthiness of research findings

Trustworthiness is an alternative verification of the validity of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Validity is linked to the philosophical understanding of truth and reality, which is commonly understood as social constructions in postmodern thinking (Kvale, 1996). Trustworthiness in the research of this study is not based on the positivistic idea of objective truth or reality as accessible, but rather as an argument being "sound, well grounded, justifiable, strong and convincing" (Kvale, 1996, p. 236). I have intended to provide a rich description of the research process to build trustworthiness of its findings (Kvale, 1996). Trustworthiness is verified by providing arguments for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the findings.

2.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is the means to confirm that the conclusions are believable and is parallel to internal validity in conventional social research. Patton (2002) indicates that "rigorous

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[16] These documents include for example the Aide Memoires from 2003 to 2005 and Minutes from EDP meetings.

methods for doing fieldwork" (p. 552) is an important element of credibility, something I have tried to incorporate. During the interviews I took notes in addition to the recording, so that I could return to answers I wanted to clarify to see whether I had understood them correctly. On certain themes I also repeated to the interviewee the summary of what he/she had said, and asked if I had drawn the correct conclusion. I made an effort to transcribe the interviews immediately, while I still had the flow of the interview fresh in my mind. The participants also received an extensive summary of the interviews on which they could give feedback, and one responded with comments for minor changes that I incorporated. The presentation of the data analysis process and the categorising of data outlined above have also been included to provide credibility of the conclusions presented in the analysis. The low representation of the Government in the data collection, to some degree, weakens the credibility of the findings.

Triangulation is part of establishing credibility of research. It can involve using different methods, different sources, and multiple theories or perspectives in analysis, to test whether the data correspond or not. I used two kinds of triangulations. First, I used different data collection methods of open-ended interviews and document analysis. Second, I selected a variety of organisations and institutions that the interviewees represented (Patton, 2002). Because of the focus on partnership, it was important to include the variety of actors within and outside the partnership, each one providing his/her perspective. According to Bryman (2008), a study has credibility if the conclusions are representative for the social relation being studied, and the purposeful sampling of interview participants thus strengthened credibility.

2.7.2 Transferability

Transferability means that conclusions can be applied in another context, as in the case of external validity. A broad description of the context of the research can assist future users of the findings in deciding whether the results can be transferred to other contexts. Chapter 3 therefore contextualises this study further. Another means to ensure the transferability of the conclusions is the use of purposeful sampling previously presented.

Transferability can also be understood as linked to the ability to make generalisations. Patton (2002) however, argues that the term extrapolation can be more useful when the study is built on information-rich cases such as this study:

...that is, studies that produce relevant information carefully targeted to specific concerns about both the present and the future. (…) Sampling strategies in qualitative evaluations can be planned with the stakeholders' desire for extrapolation in mind (Patton, 2002, p. 584).

This study does not intend to make broad generalisations, but rather contribute to "learn a great deal about issues of importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton, 2002, p. 46).

2.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is the qualitative term used to define the consistency of a study. Bryman (2008) recommends keeping a complete record of all the phases of the project such as documents, critical incidents, and a running account of the process of the inquiry. Based on that, an external person should be able to determine how far proper procedures have been followed. I have kept track of how the research has developed, and the communication by e-mail with my supervisors also provides documentation of the research process.

2.7.4 Confirmability

A researcher conducting fieldwork will inevitably influence the study. Selecting the research design, creating the research questions, conducting the data collection and the data analysis are all processes that the researcher impacts. Confirmability means that the researcher can establish reasons to believe that this influence was minimal and that the conclusions are close to "reality". Confirmability in qualitative research is therefore a dilemma, because the researcher is on one hand an important tool for the data collection, but on the other hand she must minimize her influence (Kvale, 1996).

Entering the field I had personal biases that might have influenced the research. All interpretation of data in a research is to some degree affected by cultural background and my European status could therefore have been a bias. For instance, common Western generalisations of African societies as less developed and in need of external experts, could subconsciously have shaped some of my data collection processes, for example the analysis of the development of public documents (Baaz, 2005). During recent years, I have become more critical of the development aid community and the influence from western donors. I was aware that this could affect the study, and I am therefore transparent about it. The description

of each process that was part of this study is included to provide insight into its confirmability.

2.8 Ethical considerations

Generally, one can say that ethics in research means keeping the participants' best interest in mind. "Words that lie close to ethics are responsibility, respect and morals (Rhedding-Jones, 2005, p. 86)". This includes both the initial meetings with participants, the data analysis and the writing process (Rhedding-Jones, 2005). The participants in my study gave of their time and information from work related experiences, and I have intended to write with respect for the work and processes they have shared. To show the participants my gratitude for giving of their time, I gave them small token gifts and the thesis will also be made available to those who want a copy.

In this study all participants were in public positions, and the case and concepts being discussed are public matters. Therefore I decided not to promise anonymity, although names are not revealed, something the participants were informed of and consented to. According to Seidman (1998), anonymity is not required as long as the participants are informed. The recorded material has been kept confidential.

I decided to ask for an oral participant consent from the interviewees (see Appendix 3). Because of the public positions of the participants, I considered that a written consent could hinder trust, rather than protect the participants. According to Seidman (1998), the ethical considerations required by a researcher are not limited to how the consent is given, but that participants understand and agree to its content. The consent used refers both to the purpose and use of the research and the independence of the study.

3   Setting the stage for a partnership in Uganda

Chapter 3 presents the context in which the partnership analysed in this study developed. This includes a general introduction to Uganda and its people, the development of education and the Government's current education priorities. Finally, the chapter portrays the role of development aid and the funding agencies in the education sector, including their involvement in the development of plans and structures that guide the Government-funding agency co-operation.

3.1 The geographical and demographical context

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa bordering Sudan in the north, Kenya in the east, the United Republic of Tanzania in the south, Rwanda in the southwest and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. Uganda is an agrarian economy, with 69 percent of employment in agriculture and only 8 percent in industry and 22 percent in economic activity. This is also reflected in the demography, with only 13 percent of the population living in urban areas[17].

On a surface of 241,550 square km and with a total population of 30.7 million people in 2009, Uganda is facing one of the world's highest annual population growths of 3 percent (UBS, 2009). Similar to the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda has a young population with 49 percent being 15 years or younger and a life expectancy at birth of 50 years[18]. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is strongly affecting the social conditions of children and is the main reason why 17 percent of primary school going children are orphans[19]. Currently it is estimated that 8.4

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[17] Retrieved 03.01.2010 from: http://www.sacmeq.org/statplanet/
A webpage of UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

[18] Retrieved 03.01.2010 from: http://www.sacmeq.org/statplanet/
A webpage of UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

[19] Statistics from the Ministry of Education and Sports. Retrieved 13.01.2010 from:
http://www.education.go.ug/Fact_Booklet.htm

million Ugandans live in poverty[20], but the proportion decreased from 39 percent in 2002/03 to 32 percent in 2005/06 (UBS, 2009).

There are more than twenty ethnic groups in Uganda, the largest being Buganda that constitutes 17 percent of the population. The other ethnic groups are each between one and eight percent of the population. The multi-ethnicity of Uganda is reflected in a multitude of mother tongue languages, but English is the official language, and the language of instruction in school[21]. Luganda is the most widely spoken, but Swahili is also used and understood because of trade relations with bordering countries. The majority of Ugandans are of Christian faith, whereas 18 percent are Muslims and 16 percent of indigenous beliefs (UBS, 2009).

The great contrasts between regions contribute to the diversity of the population. Kampala is the capital of Uganda and the only large city with 1.4 million inhabitants situated in south-central Uganda not far from Lake Victoria. Karamoja in the east is the home of the nomads. Over 80 percent of the population in this region live below the poverty line and the education services are very poor (UNICEF, 2008). Northern Uganda has been heavily affected by the atrocities inflicted during the last decade by the rebels of the Lords Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony. The region has been left at peace only since the peace agreement in 2003. More than thirty thousand former child soldiers have returned from the bush, and the community faces many challenges in the process of re-integrating these children into society and into the education sector in particular, since thousands of people in the northern region still live in IDP camps (NMFA, 2008; UNICEF, 2007)

3.2 The historical-political context

Prior to colonial times East Africa was ruled through various kingdoms such as the Ankole and the Buganda kingdoms, which still play a part of modern Uganda. The name Uganda derives from Buganda. In the late 19th century, Uganda became a British colony, and during

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[20] Poverty defined as living on less than 1US$ a day (UNESCO, 2008 as cited at http://www.sacmeq.org/statplanet/).

[21] The new Thematic Curriculum launched in 2009 introduced a policy preference for mother tongue instruction in primary levels 1-3, but due to lack of instruction material, the implementation has been minimal (int1/UNATU).

that period all policies were developed and approved in London[22] (Nzita & Niwampa-Mbaga, 1997).

Uganda gained political independence in October 1962 and Milton Obote, leading a coalition government, became the prime minister. The country retained a unitary system of government as Obote abolished the kingdoms, and the districts had restricted power to initiate their own policies or programmes. During his political rule, Obote increased his control over the party and transferred all executive power to himself. Obote was replaced by Idi Amin in a military coup in 1971 and Amin's military dictatorship lasted until 1979. During this period the country suffered unrest and economic collapse. For a short period after Amin's removal, the Uganda National Liberation Front formed an interim government, but in 1980 the military regained power and Obote regained position (Mutibwa, 1992; NMFA, 2008). During his rule until 1985, Uganda suffered one of the world's worst human rights records (Amnesty International as cited in NMFA, 2008, p. 37).

In 1986 the National Resistance Movement (NRM), led by Yowri Museveni came to power and restored political and economic order throughout the country. The socio-economic situation of the country was desperate, and it has been estimated that more than 56 percent of the population was living in poverty, lacking basic needs like education, health services, water and sanitation (UJAS, 2006). Local government was emphasised in the new political system, and was underpinned in the new constitution legislated in 1995 and later in the Local Government Act of 1997, establishing districts as part of local Government, and transferring the responsibility for primary and secondary education to local Government (MoES, 2001; NMFA, 2008). President Museveni is still head of state after the country's first multiparty election in 2006.

3.3 The development of education

3.3.1 Historical background

It was primarily the Christian missionaries who provided the education services in Uganda since their arrival in 1877 and during the colonial period. The schools were usually available

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[22] The United Kingdom placed Uganda under the charter of the British East Africa Company in 1888 and ruled it as a protectorate from 1894 (Nzita & Niwampa-Mbaga, 1997).

only to the elite and the mass of the population was therefore largely illiterate. After independence in 1962, the education sector was affected by the political instability and although several educational policies and plans were initiated, implementation and evaluation were continuously interrupted by misrule and conflicts (GoU, 1992). In the late 1980s, enrolment at primary level was only 50 percent or less with a completion rate of only 35 percent (MoES, 2001). More than half of the teachers were untrained and basic teaching materials were lacking. The school facilities had deteriorated and many classes were held under trees or in shelters (NMFA, 2003).

3.3.2 The education system

Due to its colonial history, the education system has been structured like the British system with 7 years of primary level, 4 years of secondary level and 2 years of advanced level. Alternatively after primary level, one can attend technical training. Pre-primary is still non-formal and only exists on a limited scale and is usually provided by private or religious institutions. There is a current political debate on the need to include pre-primary into formal education because pre-primary has been argued to be a key to achieve UPE. In the Education Act of 2008 the education system redefined the levels into: pre-primary, primary, post-primary and tertiary and university education. Pre-primary was given new focus by the Government's commitment to provide for teachers training, a new curriculum, an official register and the inspection of pre-primary schools (MoES, 2009).

The MoES was initially very complex in how it organised the delegation of responsibility for primary education, and has been criticised because the bureaucracy between policy makers and implementers contributed to lack of transparency (Hallak, 2000). Major changes have been implemented during the last decade, and in January 2009 the education sector was restructured. The education sector is currently administered by the MoES whose decision making body is the Ministry's Top Management Meeting under the leadership of the Minister for Education and Sports (Ward, Penny & Read, 2006). The Ministry has one Directorate of Basic and Secondary Education, one Directorate for Higher, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and other Directorates for specific areas in the education sector. Basic and Secondary Education has eight sub-departments, such as the Department of Pre-Primary and Primary Education and the Educational Planning and Policy Department. The MoES focuses on plans and policies, and monitoring and evaluation of national programmes, while district Governments have full authority and responsibility for implementation.

According to the Local Government Act of 1997, the District Council has a District Council Standing Committee responsible for education that delegates its mandate to District Education Officers who oversee and inspect schools and head teachers. Each school and institution is entitled to a School Management Committee approved by the District Education Officer (GoU, 2008).

3.3.3 The development of UPE

Because of the devastating situation in the education system, the NRM set up an Education Policy Review Commission in 1987 consisting of members representing the education sector, the private sector and a representative of the NRM secretariat. The teachers association, religious groups and parents were not included (Evans & Kajubi, 1994, as cited in Vestbø, 2003, p. 90). The Commission was mandated to review the education sector and provide recommendations for new education policies. The Commission's secretariat was funded by the World Bank and consisted of senior officials from the MoES and local and foreign consultants. The consultancy process took place mainly in urban centres in Uganda, and key stakeholders like teachers and rural communities were never directly involved (Wa Irumb, 1995, as cited in Vestbø, 2003, p. 90).

The Government appointed a White Paper Commission to work on the recommendations of the Commission. This was a broader group of participants including teachers, politicians, trade unions, student and youth groups, parents and religious groups and others (Wa Irumb, 1995, as cited in Vestbø, 2003, p. 91). The Commission's work took two years, and the processes were neither coordinated nor structured, leaving little track of what actually took place. The Ministry's capacity to manage and lead the negotiating of the implementation phase has been criticised as weak, giving the funding agencies an influential role (Evans & Kujabi, 1994, as cited in Vestbø, 2003, p. 94). The process ended with the launch of the Government White Paper on Education Policy in 1992 (GWP), which set direction and priorities for the education sector. The policy principles from the GWP have remained the foundation for later education plans and policies (MoES, 2001).

The education policy principles of the GWP

According to the GWP, the broad aims of education relate to the building of national unity and "an integrated, self-sustaining and independent national economy" (GoU, 1992 p. 8). At

the individual level, education is to contribute to moral values, literacy, skills and knowledge for improving the quality of life (GoU, 1992).

UPE was one of the main recommendations of the Commission in 1989, and became one of the education priorities in GWP. The other policy principles related to primary education in the GWP were: vocationalising education, improvement of quality, and a language policy on the use of the mother tongue as the language of instruction up to primary level 4. The Government argued strongly for the use of local languages:

> Government endorses the view that in Africa, African languages should be developed as national media of communication and, as much as possible, also as the media for instruction, for pedagogic and cultural reasons and benefits. (GoU, 1992, p. 16).

English should be taught as a subject from primary level 1, and only be used as the language of instruction from primary level 5 (GoU, 1992).

The launch and development of universal primary education

During Museveni's election campaign in 1996, he gave a presidential promise of free access to primary education, limited to four children per household. After he gained position, the four-child limit was difficult to manage and was changed to regard all children enrolled in government-supported primary schools. In 1997 free universal primary education was launched and the education sector enrolled an additional 2.5 million pupils, making a total of 5.4 million pupils at the primary levels, followed by an additional rise to 6.8 million in 2000 (MoES, 2001).

The education sector budget as a proportion of the total government budget rose from an average of 14-16 percent during the first six years of the 1990s to 35 percent in 1999 (MoES, 2001). Since the launch of UPE there has been a stable government commitment to the priority of primary education which has received more than 60 percent of the total education budget, with a peak of 71.5 percent in 2000/2001, followed by a drop to reach an average of 66 percent during 2004/2005 - 2006/2007 (MoES, 2001; Ward et al., 2006).

The massive growth in enrolment meant that thousands of new school buildings and classrooms had to be built at an intensive rate. Between 2000 and 2005, the total number of classrooms increased by 60 percent (NMFA, 2008). The need for new teachers also grew dramatically. Several government initiatives were made to recruit new teachers and train untrained teachers, later to be incorporated into the Primary Teacher Development and

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Management Plan. Distance-learning modules were used to train teachers cost-effectively and between 1995 and 2006, the total teacher body doubled. The number of untrained teachers declined from 20 percent to 11 percent between 2003 and 2006 (NMFA, 2008).

The lack of qualified teachers has, however, continued to be enormous and in 2006 37,425 teachers needed to be recruited (Ward et al., 2006). The Government, therefore, has a 100 percent sponsorship policy for students at Primary Teachers Colleges (MoES, 2008). The pupil-teacher ratio is high, though the curve has been dropping. The most recently published pupil-teacher ratio is 59.4:1, but there are great differences between private and public schools and between rural and urban areas. Private schools have a ratio of 26:1, while that of public schools is 60:1 (SACMEQ). Urban schools have an average of 38:1 while that of rural schools is 53:1 (NMFA, 2008).

The gender gap in education is also a reality in Uganda, but it differs in rural and urban areas. The percentage of girl pupils in rural areas is 42.9 percent while in urban areas the percentage is 50.7 percent (SACMEQ). This is due to several factors. In rural areas traditional gender roles and religious beliefs have been an obstacle to achieving gender equity, and cultural practices in all regions of the country give men more power than women. An agrarian household is often dependent on children taking part in the work, and parents choose to hold their children back from school to attend cattle or to help in the field. The understanding of the value and need for basic education is also weak in some traditional communities (Kasente, 2003).

Despite the many challenges, the net enrolment ratio in primary education was 89 percent in the school year of 2008/09 (UBS, 2008). In the same year, the gross enrolment ratio in primary school was 108 percent. The high number is due to a large group of pupils enrolling in school before or after their proper age group (UNESCO, 2008). Furthermore, 52.9 percent of the pupil body has repeated a grade (SACMEQ). There are no official data on the completion rate at primary levels in Uganda, but the average dropout rate at primary levels is 13.9 percent, with the highest being in the first grade namely 31.6 percent (UNESCO, 2008). In the estimated budgets in the last education plan covering the period 2007-2014, the provision of primary education continues to be a priority. Primary education is currently

budgeted to receive 59 percent of the education budget, secondary 23 percent, tertiary 10 percent, and BTVET[23] and others 8 percent (MoES, 2008).

A change in the Constitution in 2008, for the first time stipulated a legal right to free primary education for all. The Constitution specifically stated that no school could deny access to a pupil because of inability to pay any contribution (GoU, 2008). However, there continues to be a long way to go to achieve that goal since most schools or teachers still charge some form of a fee, and the cost of uniforms, textbooks and meals are to be provided by the parents. Pupils who have failed to pay have been forced to drop out (NMFA, 2008). Only 14.7 percent of the pupils are able to buy their own reading textbook, which reflects the economic pressure that education costs represent for many households (SACMEQ).

3.4 The role of development aid to education

With the new political leadership under Museveni, international institutions also re-established their involvement in development aid in Uganda. In an effort to rebuild macroeconomic stability, the Government entered a three-year Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and received a second Structural Adjustment Credit from the World Bank in 1994. In 1997, this was followed by a new ESAF and a third Structural Adjustment Credit from the World Bank (Atingi-Ego, 2006). These reforms included privatization of public services and economic liberalization.

The annual growth rate of GDP increased from 0.3 percent in 1986 to 6.9 percent during the 1990s. It has continued to be strong and was on average 5.5 percent during 2000-2005. Uganda is recognised to be a ''success story'' as neighbouring countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had an average growth of only 2.2 percent during the same period (UJAS, 2006). Nevertheless, Uganda is highly aid-dependent. Funding agencies and multilateral organisations contribute to a large part of the state budget and in 2007 external funds provided for more than 50 percent of the total education budget (NMFA, 2008).

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[23] BTVET: Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training

3.4.1 Plans and structures guiding development aid co-operation

The Government White Paper (GWP)

During the 1990s, development aid to education in Uganda was dominated by the funding agency conditionalities that project support often implied (NMFA, 2008). GWP in 1992 included the Commission's concern for a need to transform the co-operation with funding agencies:

> (…) the existing procedures for negotiating, sanctioning, processing and administering aid that are followed by many international agencies are rather rigid, complicated and time-consuming. Quite often, in spite of the willingness of the donor agencies to provide aid, the bureaucratic procedures employed by these agencies discourage the recipient country from continuing with the process of aid (GoU, 1992, p. 225).

During the 1990s, there were more than one hundred projects, assisted by twelve funding agency countries, four UN agencies, three major multilateral financial institutions and a large group of NGOs co-operating with the education sector in Uganda (Ward et al., 2006). In GWP the Government proposed four amendments concerning aid procedures:

1. A Government unit would be responsible for identifying and preparing projects;

2. The implementation and management of projects would be undertaken by a new directorate;

3. The donor procedures would be investigated to eliminate "unnecessary elements";

4. The Government unit should contribute to donor harmonising of efforts and:

> (…) arouse the sensitivity of the donor community to the development needs of Uganda so that all the projects they support are adequately and effectively related to those needs (GoU, 1992, p. 227).

The GWP further expressed a need to strengthen the technical capacity in the MoES, and for donors to assist in this development, in order for MoES to manage the areas "…which are essentially the responsibility of the Ugandan Government" (GoU, 1992, p. 226). These statements underpin an advocacy to gain more control and leadership in the education sector.

On the international arena, the World Bank and the IMF simultaneously designed the PRSPs as a new development framework for ODA. One element of the PRSPs was the focus on poverty reduction that should be prioritised in national programmes and policies, and another was partnership, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)

In 1997, Uganda adopted the PEAP, which was later revised in 2000 and in 2004. PEAP has become the main national development framework and a medium-term planning document for the Government. PEAP has been accepted as a PRSP, and the funding agency community in Uganda has aligned their support programmes with PEAP. It therefore plays a central role in relation to external funding to education (MoFPED, 2004; UJAS, 2006). "Universalizing Primary Education [as the] Government's chief education priority" (MoFPED, 2004, p. 154) was established in the first PEAP. The prioritising of primary education was based on the argument that it is effective in poverty reduction (MoFPED, 2004).

According to the funding agencies, the PEAP process was clearly government driven:

> Preparation of the PEAP was clearly a government-driven process, and included broad participation by civil society, local Government and the private sector (UJAS, 2006, p. 13)

However, in 2000, the revision of PEAP included adjustments to the Government's application to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), an initiative launched by the World Bank and the IMF to eliminate unsustainable debt in the most indebted countries. The debt relief in 2000 was promised provided that the PEAP was adjusted to the requirements of the IMF and the World Bank[24], adjustments that the Government implemented in the national development policies in PEAP in 2000[25]. PEAP can therefore not be seen only as a government owned document. Although developed by the Government, it includes adjustments to external policies of funding agencies.

Sector-Wide Approaches

Within the framework of PEAP, Uganda adopted SWAp in 1997, which affected the delivery of external funding to the education sector. SWAp is a model for a government to initiate donor harmonisation in line with government plans. It often includes the government's preference for aid modality. Instead of constant negotiation with funding agencies for disbursement of funds, the government provides long-term sector-wide plans, and the funding

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[24] International Monetary Fund, Press release No. 00/6, February 8, 2000. Retrieved April 6th 2010 from: http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2000/pr0006.htm

[25] Letter of Intent send to the IMF by GoU when applying for the debt relief. Retrieved April 6th 2010 from: http://www.imf.org/external/np/loi/2001/uga/01/index.htm

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agencies are expected to harmonise their funding to support these plans (Eilor, 2004). Among the objectives of the SWAp in Uganda were:

   a) Increased national ownership;
   b) Improved aid delivery;
   c) Reduced dependence on aid;
   d) Enhanced stakeholder participation in education (Eilor, 2004, p. 79)

With the introduction of SWAp, the education funding agencies began a harmonisation process. In 1999 they formed EFAG. Six funding agencies were part of the initial phase: DFID, the European Union (EU), Irish Aid (IA), the Netherlands (EKN), USAID and the World Bank (Ward et al., 2006). The purpose of the harmonisation was to align their efforts with the planning and budget cycle of the Government as expressed in the education sector plan (Eilor, 2004). Coordination of funding and technical assistance was part of their common aim, and EFAG grew to 15 partners before 2001 (Ward et al., 2006).

In February 2009, EFAG changed its name to EDP, guided by the MoU which included an overall commitment to PEAP, the National Development Plan, the MDGs and the EFA goals (MoU, 2009). In 2009, EDP consisted of thirteen partners: four UN bodies, three multilateral and six bilateral agencies[26]. The partners in EDP have organised themselves in working groups for specific parts of the education sector, such as the working group for primary education, consisting of EKN, USAID, IA, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNHCR and UNFPA[27]. The Chairmanship of EDP is rotating and was held by the Netherlands in 2009. The working groups of EDP are open and report monthly to EDP.

Parallel to donor harmonisation, the Government created two technical bodies: ESCC and the Education Sector Review (ESR). These bodies included EFAG in government led policy processes in the education sector (see Figure 3.2). The EDP meetings draw up a list of key issues for discussion in the upcoming ESCC meetings and the ESR (Eilor, 2004).

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[26] EDP currently includes: multilateral organisations: UNICEF, UNCHR, UNFPA, World Food Programme, EU, and bilateral agencies: IA (Ireland), EKN (Netherlands), JICA (Japan), USAID (United States), BE (Belgium), GTZ (Germany) and two lending institutions: the African Development Bank, the World Bank.

[27] Source: the Education Development Partners Division of Labour Matrix 2009-2011.

Table 3.1 Technical bodies in the education sector

The Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC)	**The Education Sector Review (ESR)**
The ESCC is the highest consultative body for the education sector and a consultative forum on education plans and policies and financing. It meets on a bi-monthly basis. It is under the leadership of the Permanent Secretary of Education and Sports and reports to the top management of the MoES. Participants are the MoES, relevant line ministries and working groups, local Governments, bodies of schools and institutions, civil society, the private sector, education NGOs, UNATU[28] and representatives from EFAG.	The ESR conducted a bi-annual evaluation of the performance of the education sector during 1999-2003, and has since 2004 conducted an annual one. It is under the leadership of the MoES and is monitored by ESCC. During the ESRs, priorities and budgeting cycles are identified. General and critical undertakings are established. Critical undertakings include government performances required for mid-term disbursements of funding. Participants are the same as in the ESCC.

Source: Eilor, 2004; GoU, 1998; NMFA, 2008.

3.4.2 External funding for education

In the early 1990s, budget and project support had equal shares of the total ODA in Uganda. Throughout the 1990s, project support increased, while budget support decreased. Although this started to change after the first PEAP, budget support did not exceed project support until three years later in 2000 (NMFA, 2003). Of the total education sector budget, the bilateral share of budget support amounted to 20 percent in 1993, but increased to 60 percent in 2003, clearly showing a change by the funding agencies (Atingi-Ego, 2006).

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[28] In the initial phase education NGOs and the teachers associations were not included. According to UNATU, it was a proposal from EDP to the Government that led to their inclusion (int1/UNATU).
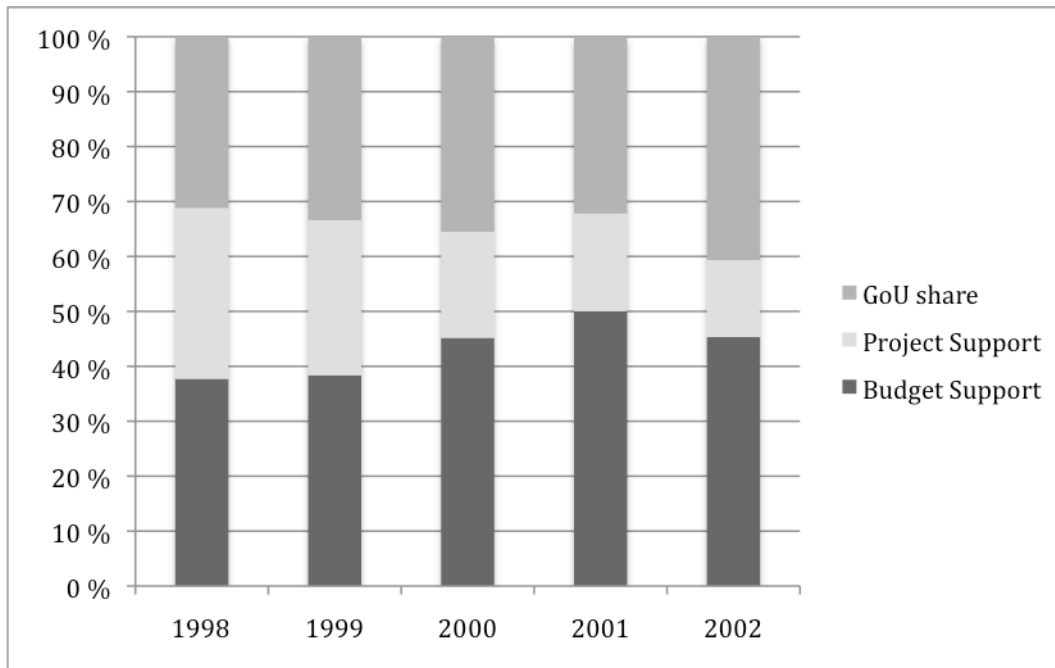
Figure 3.3 Total basic education expenditures, 1998-2002

Source: Medium Term Budget Frameworks as cited in NMFA, 2003, p. 20.

Figure 3.3 shows that the government (GoU) share of the total education expenditures increased during 1998-2002. During the same period the most remarkable trend was the increase of budget support at the expense of project support. This development can be related to the introduction of SWAp and donor harmonisation in 1997. Figure 3.3 also shows that external support for basic education remained stable, around 60 percent or more (NMFA, 2008).

This trend shows that dependency on aid has been constant in the education sector, and that funding agencies play a critical role in achieving education goals in Uganda. The role of external agencies in national development has long roots in Uganda and the Government's partnership with the education funding agencies can be seen as a part of this historical pattern. The partnership formed in the late 1990s, however, marked a change in aid interactions in the education sector. The following chapter will discuss the development of this partnership and the partner roles in the formulation and implementation of education priorities during the last ten years.

4   The changing role of partnership and ownership in education priorities

The previous chapter provided insight into the dramatic changes that Uganda has undergone during the last decades. Despite the hardship, and in contrast to neighbouring countries, Uganda has been able to rebuild a stable economy and progress on many national development goals such as access to primary education. It was in this context that the new Government-funding agency partnership in education emerged. Chapter 4 provides the findings from the data collected during the fieldwork and the document analysis.

The chapter is divided in two sub-periods, 1997-2001 and 2002-2009. A conflict in 2001, which led to the partners developing a guide with partnership principles, marks the two phases of the partnership. The discussion has been organised according to the research questions and is analysed from a comparative perspective in the two periods and respond to Appendix 4 which summarises the national and international milestones affecting the partnership in Uganda during the overall period.

4.1 The evolvement of the partnership 1997-2001

As presented in Chapter 3, the funding agencies had an influential position in educational development in Uganda at the beginning of the 1990s, including the priorities in the education sector through project support. In 1997, SWAp was designed to establish new modalities in the Government-funding agency co-operation. During 1997-2001, new partner roles evolved, resulting in new patterns for interaction in the co-operation processes of implementing the Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP).

4.1.1 Donor harmonisation and new partner roles

The donor harmonisation, beginning with SWAp in 1997, affected the roles of both the Government and the funding agencies. In ESIP 1998-2003 launched in 1998, the Government addressed the co-operation with international agencies, and expressed the aim of changing the previous patterns: "New approaches will be developed to enhance the Government's co-ordination function as ESIP-driven policies replace the previous funding-agency-driven tendencies" (GoU, 1998, p. 18). The Government wanted to replace "funding-agency-driven

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tendencies" and move to structures that would ensure that "Government takes the lead role in ESIP management" (GoU, 1998, p. 17). To establish this new leadership role, the Government wanted to establish new patterns in the funding agency co-operation. This included the interaction in policy processes, in the arrangements of funding modalities, and the development of a new balance between the partners in technical capacity and "expertise" (GoU, 1998).

The fourth policy thrust of ESIP was to strengthen the role of the central Government in negotiating with funding agencies, by "Improving Government-funding agency partnerships and consultative mechanisms" (GoU, 1998, p. 17). ESCC and ESR can be understood as such mechanisms, and were designed to ensure that the Government had the leadership role in setting the education agenda in Uganda. These forums replaced the previous separate meetings between MoES and the individual funding agencies that took place during project support, when the funding agencies would approach the Government with their ideas and projects. ESCC and ESR included the funding agencies in government led educational development negotiations which resulted in the Government establishing a new position in policy processes (GoU, 1998).

The MoES was in a position to end the separate meetings with each agency which eased the co-operation processes for the Government (int1/MoES). This resulted in a dramatic change for the MoES that, during project support, experienced aid co-operation as an administrative drain (Eilor, 2003). For the relatively new education system experiencing both a rapid growth in responsibilities as well as limited capacity and resources, a more effective use of time and staff was important. ESCC and ESR also made the Government-funding agency partnership more transparent, as other stakeholders in the education sector were included in the negotiation processes. The democratic aspect of educational development was thus strengthened.

According to the Paris Declaration, donor respect for country leadership is critical to achieve ownership (OECD, 2005a). The donor harmonisation and EFAG's alignment with the Government plan, ESIP, as well as the participation in ESCC and ESR, could be argued to indicate respect for government leadership. The funding agencies' new partner role, including harmonising and alignment to government led policy papers and processes, was a distinct step away from a donor-driven agenda. The SWAp processes in Uganda were thus, according to

the PAC commitments, strengthening government ownership of policy processes (OECD, 2005a).

Donor harmonisation can, however, at the same time be argued to have made the Government's role less powerful. Prior to negotiations in ESCC and ESR, EFAG would harmonise its position on education priorities in separate meetings. In ESCC and ESR, EFAG would thus "speak with one voice". Negotiations in these forums concerning government performances that were to be included in the conditions for disbursement of funds from EFAG, could thus easily lead to an "all or nothing" situation in terms of funding for the education budget. The Government could no longer turn to another agency for funds if it wanted to reject certain conditions. Because the education budgets depended on external funding, the Government's position in policy processes continued to be vulnerable.

Moving the management of funds to the Government was perceived as key to achieve increased country ownership in accordance with the introduction of the SWAp (Eilor, 2004). "The over-arching principle will be to strengthen existing Government systems rather than the creation of independent, parallel project-driven management procedures" (GoU, 1998, p. 20). ESIP did, in other words, include a Government preference for budget support. The budget support funding modality increased the predictability and the Government's control over the funds, which are important elements in leadership responsibilities. On one hand, budget support contributed to strengthening the Government leadership role. However, budget support also demanded a higher technical capacity from the MoES than during project support, when funding agencies would manage the budget frameworks, the formulation of policies and the monitoring role during implementation and evaluation. The capacity to fill these functions had not been systematically built in the MoES prior to the launch of the SWAp, leading to results that are addressed in the following.

4.1.2 "This is what we intend to do" – new patterns in partnership interactions

The emerging partnership was instantly involved in the huge reform of UPE, a reform that had been given national priority in accordance with PEAP from 1997. The initial partnership interactions took place during an intense historical period in Uganda, affected by both the development of the new partnership and new partner roles, as well as the implementation of one of the largest education reforms in Uganda.

ESIP provided a framework for short and long-term education priorities and became an important negotiation tool for the Government. The education priorities were set, and negotiations would take place within the ESIP framework (GoU, 1998). One Government interviewee described how ESIP changed their interaction with funding agencies:

> Interviewee: …it was really difficult because the World Bank for instance would say do this, do this. If you don't, then you don't access the funding. (...)
>
> Interviewer: When did this change?
>
> Interviewee: From when we formulated ESIP one[29]. Because what ESIP one did, was that the Government laid down a coherent policy framework, and asked whether the partners wanted to buy into that. But prior to that there was no coherent policy framework, so it allowed anybody to come in to say I want to assist you or support you in this, so let's do this. But because we don't have a coherent policy framework you cannot resist. But now, Government was very proactive and said, this is what we intend to do [Holding a paper to illustrate the policy framework] so whoever wants to support us must support us within this framework. So that improved a lot of things (int1/MoES).

The Government's use of ESIP as a tool to negotiate with powerful actors, such as the World Bank, affected their experiences of their partnership role (int1/MoES). The Government's use of the education sector plan, resulted in a new approach to its partners as expressed in the formulations: "This is what we intend to do" and the Government "[asking] whether the partners wanted to buy into that" (int1/MoES). These statements are a definite step away from the "funding-agency driven tendencies" described by the Government in ESIP (GoU, 1998). Instead of being limited to a recipient role, the Government became what the interviewee named "very proactive", which could be interpreted as an experience of a new government role in interaction with its partners. The Government's experience of the interaction in aid co-operation thus started to change with the introduction of the SWAp.

The funding agency interviewees had a different perception of the interaction pattern in the early days of developing and implementing the ESIP:

> Interviewee: Before then it was really World Bank [dominance in influence] (…) and the big American project called the Super Project in 1993-1998/1999, and a merge with World Bank and USAID. It was a huge problem. It was terminated in 1998. Out of that, then we developed the ESIP programme. The first meeting with all donors together was some time in 1999. Then it was the strategic plan covering the period 1999-2004 [referring to ESIP 1998-2003]. It was really driven by DFID and the EKN.

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[29] ESIP is sometimes referred to as ESIP one, and the following plan, ESSP, as ESIP two.

Interviewer: Do you talk about the plan or the harmonising?

Interviewee: The plan. And that was harmonising actually. Michael Ward [DFID] was very instrumental in that plan (int3/FA).

The funding agencies experienced their own role during ESIP as influential. According to the EDP[30] Chairman, the development of the ESIP was, among other factors, a result of several unsuccessful funding agency projects. The development process of ESIP is described as driven by two major international agencies: DFID and EKN. The donor harmonisation process is partly referred to as funding agency initiated, or at least funding agency inspired (Eilor, 2004; int3/FA).

The partners' different experiences of this process could be related to the difference in capacity among the partners which was more emphasised by the funding agencies than by the Government. The technical capacity of the funding agencies was superior at the time, and their "experts" were used by the MoES to fill in the gaps in their own institutional capacity:

…there were capacity issues, key positions in the ministry that were not filled. (...) At one point they only had one director and that position at one point was not even filled. (...) There were gaps, lacking planning (int2/FA).

...we moved away so much from donors bringing in consultants to write reports, to write policy documents, now the Ministry is doing that itself, with their own staff. It has come a long way from the previous way it used to work (int1/FA).

The interviewee in question described the situation during ESIP, while articulating how capacity has grown (int1/FA). The funding agencies thus recognised the weak technical capacity in the MoES, both institutionally and among the individual staff during ESIP. A Government interviewee confirmed such a description: "We used to have so many technical assistants all over the place" (int1/MoES).

Technical capacity or the provision of technical assistance, referred to by the interviewees, are terms commonly used in development partnerships. They often include "the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives" (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes & Malik, 2002, p. 8). The importance of building capacity is, therefore, according to Smith (2005), more critical than the focus on ownership, because without capacity there is no real power to implement the national education plans.

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[30] EDP Chairman 2009, but EDP in 1998 was still called EFAG.

Discussing government ownership can therefore not be done separately from the MoES' capacity to function in its leadership role, and its ability to perform according to the responsibilities that followed with the move to SWAp. The capacity to steer policy processes, such as setting objectives, developing strategies, drawing up action plans for an education sector, are demanding capacities for a government (Browne, 2002). In Uganda, these processes took place within newly established partner roles, and the capacity of the MoES to build and to manage the partnership was also at an early stage. This could explain why the partners' experiences from this period differ.

Another reason why there is a contrast in the Government's and the funding agencies' experience of the co-operation during ESIP could be related to the Government's experience of having a more powerful position. The new government role was in a sense a "step up" in terms of leadership and control of policy processes, which could have influenced their overall experience as being an empowering process. This could explain why the influence of the funding agencies was minimised in their description of the nature of the interaction. The funding agencies, on the other hand were in a process of "stepping down" in terms of harmonising their support to government plans rather than initiating their own projects. Their focus on the lack of capacity in the Government can be seen in relation to the funding agencies' decreasing control over central functions.

SWAp established new partner roles and new patterns for interactions in 1997, and the Government's leadership grew by using ESIP in negotiation processes. However, the findings indicate that the initial changes were more emphasised by the Government than by EFAG, and that the funding agencies seemed to continue to act according to the old patterns, although the data insufficient to draw a final conclusions. The real "test" for the new partnership came with the implementation of ESIP.

4.1.3 "Implementation has always been difficult" – education priorities in partnership

New partner roles had evolved and the framework for education priorities had been agreed. ESIP focused particularly on access to UPE, which was the biggest challenge with the UPE reform because of the general state of the education sector, but issues of quality were also emphasised (GoU, 1998). The financial priorities stated in ESIP were presented in seven categories of which two concerned UPE:

a) Classroom construction, teacher training, instruction materials, integrated practical skills and quality improvement;

b) A front loaded high development share for primary education reaching 70 percent in 2000 (GoU, 1998, p. 26).

The 70 percent budget share for primary education was argued for in ESIP because it "…demonstrates the highest priority to primary education to secure high quality UPE" (GoU, 1998, p. 24).

The implementation of the UPE reform was structured through the modalities of the UPE Capitation Grant and the existence of the School Facilities Grant (SFG) and, except for salaries, the majority of funding to primary education was channelled into these two initiatives (Ward et al., 2006). The UPE Capitation Grant supported the Government's provision of free primary education. The central Government transferred funds to the districts to compensate for fees. The SFG was established to meet the extensive need for new schools, classrooms and sanitation services following the new cohort of students. The total number of classrooms increased by 60 percent during the SFG, and in 2003 this meant about 30,000 new classrooms (NMFA, 2008).

As a result, the focus on facilities dominated this period, which was one of the ESIP priorities, and a Government approved priority. On the other hand, the ESIP goal of "Quality improvement" (GoU, 1998, p. 26) lay dormant and education quality issues were neglected during the same period. The quality targets in ESIP included programmes focusing on curriculum, instructional materials, teacher training and inclusion of disadvantaged children (GoU, 1998). The EDP Chairman interviewee described his experience of this process:

> [ESIP] is designed to ensure maximum ownership of the Government, that's how it is structured. However, implementation has always been difficult. The idea was to use existing structure and framework of Government, strengthening them to deliver (…) efficiently and equitable. That was the intention. But what happened? (…)
>
> A lot of focus and energy went into removing these bottlenecks, ensuring classrooms being built. Actually that has nothing to do with teaching, so we were side tracked to focus on areas where we had limited competences. In the end (…), we did focus on classroom transactions, which is what we should do. (…)
>
> We completely missed that trail of thoughts, until recently. We focused on facilities. That took us a long way off track, all of us. Donors came in with money, classrooms would be built, and they would be educated, and be better farmers and better whatever. We lost. The statistics are there (…) when you look at completion rate, the certificate

at the end of the cycle, the first cohort of UPE in 1997, it was 2 million enrolled, and 250,000 completed. We lost very many, and that trend continued (int3/FA).

What the EDP Chairman points out is the gap that occurred between the ESIP priorities and the priorities that were implemented in practice. The Aide Memoires, reporting from the ESRs during this period, do not include the underlying discussions, but the budget allocations during the implementation processes were done in close dialogue with EFAG. DFID and EKN focused on facilities and therefore funding was made available to implement the SFG (NMFA, 2008; Ward et al., 2006).

The loss of the quality priority could be explained by a strong EFAG focus on classroom construction, on available funds for SFG and the lack of capacity in MoES to develop and follow up on strategies to implement education priorities. Several key positions in the Ministry were not filled which often meant that external consultants would do the job (int2/FA). During the first three years of ESIP, the education sector received the second largest bulk of technical assistance in the public sector in Uganda. The majority of such technical assistance was characterised by the use of foreign experts, often meaning external professional policy makers and consultants provided by EFAG (Balihuta, Mugambe, Nuwagaba & Nyamugasira, 2002). The challenges for the MoES during this period have been listed by Malinga (2002, as cited in Smith, 2005, p. 451):

- Ministerial restructuring revealed inadequacies, particularly given the increased volume and complexity of work and shortage of personnel;

- Staff did not possess all the necessary skills;

- Institutional insufficiency in co-ordinating government-wide undertakings such as sector-wide auditing.

These findings thus indicate that the MoES lacked capacity and experience in critical areas to interact with EFAG from a strong leadership position during the implementation of ESIP. The growth in MoES responsibilities was in other words not matched by a similar growth among its staff. In the implementation processes there was therefore an imbalance of capacity in the partnership in terms of planning and co-ordinating of the entire education sector. Vestbø (2003) indicates, based on her research from 2002, that the focus on facilities and access instead of quality could have been influenced by the funding agencies due to weak government leadership and control. This could explain why access was prioritised over quality in the implementation of ESIP. However, based on the findings of this study, the insufficient government capacity was not static, as the partners refer to a gradual development

of government leadership as discussed previously. But the new partner roles and the new patterns for interaction during the implementation of UPE were demanding for the partners and resulted in a conflict in 2001.

4.1.4 "Too many cooks in the kitchen" – tensions in the partnership

The negotiation between the Government and EFAG collapsed in the ESR during spring 2001. After a series of occasions with "all kinds of very acrimonious debates between donors and Government" (int3/FA) concerning teacher payments and procurement of textbooks, it escalated into a debate on external or internal auditing. The Government refused to accept external auditing, and when EFAG repeated its demand, the Government left the meeting, and the process had to continue at a later stage with a mediator from Kenya (int1/FA and int3/FA and int1/MoES). A final agreement was reached to use a government appointed auditor as fiduciary assurance for all education programmes rather than relying on external consultants (int1/FA). Since 2002, the main funding agencies have used the Government's reporting system as the sole means of monitoring activities in the education sector (Ward et al., 2006). The crisis in 2001 led to mutual understanding of the government leadership role in the education policy and planning processes. Both the MoES and EDP interviewees refer to this event as a turning point for the funding agencies' attitude to government leadership in the education sector (int1/FA; int2/FA; int3/FA; int1/MoES; int2/MoES).

The interviewees shared their experiences:

> Then we said "No. Partners don't give each other ultimatums". Because it is not a true partnership, [in] a true partnership [partners] would be willing to understand [each other]. You don't just set conditions like you are from space. We tell you that sometimes we have specific challenges, then you should be in the spirit of partnership, we should be able to understand. If you are not willing to understand, then there is not a partnership. So we suspended the negotiations (int1/MoES).

> When the Government thought the donors were coming into their kitchen, and they said there can't be too many cooks in this kitchen, (…) kind of said look this is our sovereign government programme, please, we need to be in charge here (…) Government put their foot down and said no, we have audit (…) So they can stand up and put their foot down (…) the Ministry has shown leadership, it really has (int1/FA).

Compared to other areas of negotiation with which the partnership was concerned, external or internal auditing may seem like a minor issue to have caused such a conflict. However, the interviewees interpreted the situation, as "Government put their feet down", and that it expected a more balanced and "true partnership" (int1/MoES; int1/FA). The concerns were, in

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other words, not only related to the actual case of auditing, but it was the "spirit of partnership" among the funding agencies that was questioned by the Government (int1/MoES). The response from EFAG, when the interviewees saw the conflict in retrospect, was that it created a respect for Government leadership: "the ministry has shown leadership, it really has" (int1/FA) and, in the words of the EDP Chairman, it resulted in recognition "Everybody appreciated that the Government had the lead role" (int3/FA). These findings reflect a conflict that can be interpreted as the culmination of a tension in the partnership. New roles in the interaction amongst the partners had been adopted without establishing a formal agreement on mutual expectations and partnership principles.

As a result, a Memorandum of Understanding for the partnership between EFAG and the MoES was written and adopted in 2002[31]. The MoU was the first written agreement on roles and responsibilities and expectations regarding the nature of the partnership. It included a mutual agreement to make multi-annual plans for the education sector, to provide more predictable funding, and for funds to be released based on the results provided at an annual evaluation (Eilor, 2004; NMFA, 2008; Ward et al., 2006).

4.1.5 Conclusions on partnership and government ownership in UPE 1997-2001

The SWAp in 1997 was a government initiative to change the interaction with the funding agencies in the education sector, and part of its purpose was specifically to strengthen ownership. Based on the findings presented at the beginning of this chapter, the Government could be seen as having succeeded (Eilor, 2004; GoU, 1998). The policy on partner roles and responsibilities that was framed in ESIP made the funding agencies and Government swap roles in three important areas in educational development: the role of setting the education agenda, of formulating educational priorities and managing of funds. During project support, it was the funding agencies that tended to dominate. After SWAp in 1997, these policy processes came under government leadership in the following ways.

First, the new government leadership role could be said to have increased government ownership in education development in Uganda. Particularly by using ESIP in negotiation

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[31] The Government did not sign the MoU because it could not reach an agreement as to whether it was the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Planning or the MoES who should sign, but it has been recognised as accepted by the Government (int3/FA).

processes, the Government began to control the education agenda and priorities differently from before. Second, the move from project to budget support generally meant more predictability and government control over the funds, which can be argued to have increased the Government's responsibility and therefore its leadership. This conclusion was supported by the UNATU interviewee:

> Project support was more donor-driven. Secondly the Government had no choice. NORAD[32] would come saying "We are more interested in structure", then EKN says "For us we can only support primary", and USAID "We also want to work in primary", and DANIDA[33] "Also primary". And you find some sectors have no support, no resources. Because the donors wanted their projects, it was very uncoordinated and the Government, including the structure of the officials would see performance and accountability only in sectors where there is a project, a donor project. It was really dangerous (int1/UNATU).

UNATU described the move to SWAp and budget support as a definite change in the Government role, and in the partnership interactions.

In relation to the effective use of resources and capacity in the MoES, donor harmonisation can be seen as having increased the ability of the Government to function in its leadership role. On the other hand, when looking at the implementation of the partner roles in this period the picture is more mixed. Because of lack of capacity in the MoES, funding agencies, continued to fill functions through technical assistance that had been transferred to the MoES. This imbalance of technical capacity was part of the reason why the Government perceived the partnership as unequal.

Access to primary education was the main goal of ESIP and was built on the Government White Paper from 1992. During ESIP the sector experienced tremendous results (GoU, 1998; NMFA, 2008; Ward et al., 2006). Because the funding agencies aligned their priorities with ESIP, the partnership can be argued to have contributed to government ownership in the education priority of access to UPE. On the other hand, when ESIP was launched the Government expressed a concern for the "funding-agency-driven tendencies" (GoU, 1998, p. 18), and EFAG refers to the plan as "It was really driven by DFID and the EKN" (int3/FA). Because the Aid Memoires from this period do not include detailed discussions, and the literature available on these processes are provided by either one of the partners, it is difficult

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[32] NORAD: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

[33] DANIDA: Danish International Development Assistance

to make a final conclusion on the nature of the interaction, and how education priorities were set during negotiation processes. However, the donor-driven tendencies described by the Government and EFAG were unlikely to instantly disappear with the introduction of SWAp. Patterns of unequal power in the co-operation can be found in the interaction described by Government and EFAG interviewees, and in the tension that escalated in the ESR in 2001. On the other hand, the influential partner position of EFAG must be seen in relation to their responsibility: to fund more than half of the education budget. The funding agencies' aim of controlling the disbursements of funds could therefore be seen as reasonable. At the same time, the education budget is a national affair, and thus a Government matter. The conflict in 2001 thus highlights the complex matters of influence in a partnership. To what degree should funding legitimise influence? And how can a partnership avoid that capacity differences reinforce inequalities? Defining partner roles in the MoU was therefore key to a credible partnership that could continue to develop.

4.2 Enhanced partner roles 2002-2009

During 2002-2009, the Government and EFAG co-operated in the final implementation of ESIP as well as in new sector plans. While the implementation of ESIP was discussed earlier, the following will focus on the development and implementation of the new education sector plan launched in 2004 and the revised version launched in 2007.

4.2.1 Partnership interactions in setting education priorities

The process of developing the ESSP 2004-2015 was presented in the introduction chapter of the plan. Each Government department had submitted logical frameworks to a consultancy team in the Policy and Planning Department in the MoES: "These frameworks became the basis of a logical framework in the PEAP and of the policy objectives and strategies of the ESSP" (MoES, 2004, p. 4). Discussions were then initiated in the Ministry's Monitoring and Evaluation Group, the Sector Policy and Management Working Group, the ESCC and the Ministry Top Management. Based on these meetings a first draft was revised and presented in a National Consultative Workshop. Once the first draft was finished, other stakeholders were invited to participate and give their comments. The representatives from District Government and EFAG were listed as participants in the final part of the process (MoES, 2004).

The process of developing the ESSP was described as more government driven than in the case of ESIP, including a broader involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries. The Government described its own leadership role: "The Ministry's capacity to plan, implement and monitor programs has grown significantly during the period of ESIP 1" (MoES, 2004, p. 10). The Government's presentation of its role in 2004 thus included increased capacity in the MoES. The third policy objective in ESSP is a further development of "An effective and efficient education sector" (MoES, 2004, p. 5) and part of it involves "strengthened capacity of the Ministry – its agencies and its institutions – to provide leadership and management" (MoES, 2004, p. 11). In other words, the Government recognised the impact of a strengthened capacity and how this led to a stronger leadership role during the partnership interactions related to ESSP (MoES, 2004).

Concerning the co-operation with funding agencies, ESSP has a different rhetoric than ESIP. To reach the third policy objective in ESSP, which is an effective and efficient sector, part of the strategy is presented as follows:

> The Ministry expects to continue its professional relationship with the Education Funding Agencies Group (EFAG) to look to this group from time to time for technical support (MoES, 2004, p. 25)

The Government's description of the aid co-operation as having "funding-agency driven tendencies" in the development of ESIP (GoU, 1998, p. 18), changed to the partnership being a "professional relationship with the Education Funding Agencies Group (EFAG)" in the ESSP (MoES, 2004, p. 25), which reflects a more nuanced perception of the nature of the partnership.

The Government's concern for ownership in ESSP was written in a different context than ESIP. The partnership had become formalised, and while ESIP tried to change the partner roles and responsibilities, the purpose of ESSP was:

> To help the Ministry of Education, as sector coordinator, negotiate with other government agencies, other actors in the education sector, and external funding agencies the scope and use of their investments in the education sector (MoES, 2004, n.p.).

The Government's reference to negotiations with EFAG on "the scope and use of their investment" is linked to the policy processes in ESCC and ESR. The quote reflects an established confidence of the Government in the use of ESSP in negotiations to ensure government leadership, and thus support government ownership. This statement reflects a

development of partner roles, without necessarily concluding that it is the full picture of practice.

In ESSP, the internal mechanisms within the MoES are presented as the key forums for influence in the development process of the plan. The funding agencies' influence is not given a dominant role in the Government presentation, but the agencies are included as participants towards the end of the process (MoES, 2004). The MoES interviewees confirmed this government position. They explained that the ESSP policies and targets were not donor influenced (int1/MoES; int2/MoES). The funding agency interviewees agreed with this position, and described the final result of the ESSP as "The Government's vision and intention" (int2/FA). However, the funding agencies were also active in the initial processes leading up to the National Consultative Workshop, and EFAG members were represented in both the consultancy team leading the process, in several of the technical working groups and in the ESCC (Eilor, 2004; int1/MoES). Because it was impossible to access any documentation from these processes, a conclusion on partner negotiations cannot be drawn and the level of influence from the Government and the funding agencies can therefore not be determined. But it is clear that the funding agencies had more channels of influence in developing ESSP than what is portrayed in the plan.

The education priorities in ESSP and the Revised ESSP

The ESSP stated that it marked a change from ESIP in terms of the previous single focus on UPE "…to a more balanced concern for post-primary and other sub-sectors as well as primary. Above all, it aims at improving the quality of education" (MoES, 2004, p. 5). UPE was, in other words, not presented as a major priority in ESSP which represents a distinct change from ESIP. Instead ESSP had three policy objectives, all aiming at quality improvement, which were:

> Objective 1: An education system relevant to Uganda's national development goals;
> Objective 2: Students achieving education goals[34];
> Objective 3: An effective and efficient education sector (MoES, 2004, pp. 7-11).

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[34] The education goal for primary levels included: Primary-level pupils mastering basic literacy, numeracy and basic life skills.

The priority objectives from ESSP thus highlight an holistic approach to the education sector that was not reflected in ESIP, and UPE was articulated as part of an interdependent sector. Figure 4.1 shows the education budget, in billions of Ugandan Shilling, by sub-sectors during 2004-2015, as projected in ESSP. The budget was prepared in consideration of the large UPE bulge of students moving through the education sector and shows that the secondary and tertiary levels were strengthened to receive the first cohort of the UPE reform. During the years 2008-2012, the secondary subsector is budgeted to receive a larger proportion, reflecting the new approach (MoES, 2004).
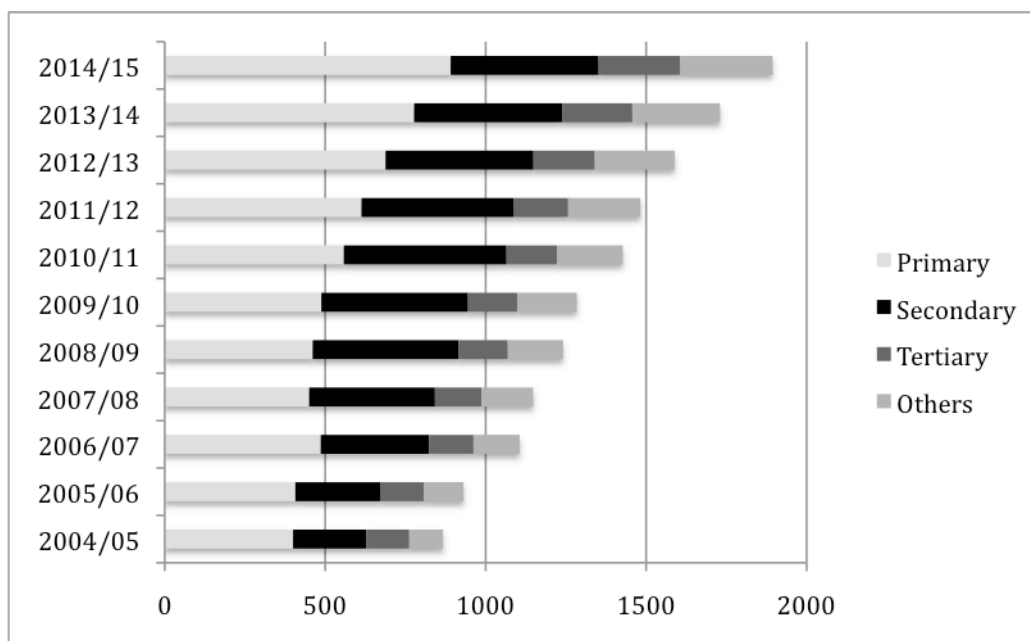
Figure 4.1 The education budget in ESSP 2005-2015, by sub-sector[35]

Source: MoES, 2004

Three years later, ESSP was revised and had a time span from 2007 to 2015. The Revised ESSP has eleven overall policy thrusts aiming at access, equity, quality, relevance and efficiency. Quality[36] continues to be the focus in the Revised ESSP. Three policy objectives were given highest priority and followed up with concrete strategies, namely:

    1. Increase and improve equitable access to quality education;

    2. Improve the quality and relevancy of primary education;

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[35] Others include BTVET and central and administrative costs. The numbers have been rounded. 1,000,000 Ush equals 508,95 US$ (convertworld.com).

[36] In the Revised ESSP quality in primary education relate to basic literacy, numeracy and basic life skills (MoES, 2008).

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3. Improve effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of primary education (MoES, 2008 p. 11).

Two of the objectives were exclusively related to primary education, which reflects the shift of priority back to primary education with the Revised ESSP. The priority of UPE is evident in the new budget (Figure 4.2). Comparing the budget of the first ESSP (Figure 4.1) with the budget in the revised plan, there is an increase for primary education. While the budget share for the primary sector in ESSP had a slow and steady increase, the comparative share in the Revised ESSP is budgeted to double in just five years (MoES, 2004; MoES, 2008).
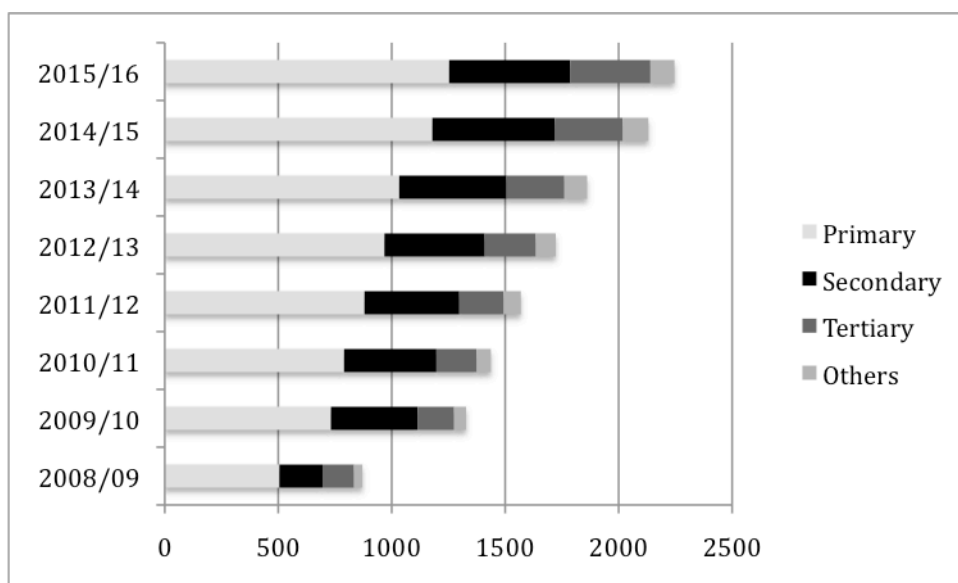
Figure 4.2 The education budget in the Revised ESSP 2008-2016, by sub-sector[37]

Source: MoES, 2008

Primary education is planned to receive around 60 percent of the education budget in the Revised ESSP, while the average for primary education in ESSP was less than 50 percent, even less than 40 percent when the first UPE bulk of student were enrolling at secondary levels (MoES, 2004; MoES, 2008).

The change of the budget and the education priority from ESSP to Revised ESSP, must be seen in relation to the purpose of revising the ESSP (MoES, 2004; MoES, 2008). In the Revised ESSP, the purpose for the revision is listed in six points, of which the first was "Bringing the ESSP into full conformance with EFA FTI goals" (MoES, 2008). The Fast

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[37] Others include BTVET and central and administrative costs. The numbers have been rounded. 1,000,000 Ush equals 508,95 US$ (convertworld.com).

Track Initiative was launched by the World Bank in 2002 to accelerate funding for governments to achieve universal primary education (World Bank, 2008). The renewed focus on primary education and the budget allocations in the revised ESSP must thus be seen in relation to the development of Uganda's FTI proposal[38]. In the development of the proposal Uganda had to adjust to certain FTI requirements. The World Bank interviewee considered its own role in the process of making the Revised ESSP as influential (int4/FA):

> So the issues were not only on costing but what policy measure are they taking on various levels. And that's where they needed education specialists with international experience, to see how other countries have been doing it (…) how Uganda can go about it to fit within the budget they have. I think I have been a key in that process (int4/FA).

The "education specialists" to whom the interviewee refers are likely to have been working in accordance with the World Bank's preference to support primary education. The role of the World Bank, and other funding agencies in the process of revising ESSP does not, however, appear from the document, in contrast to the detailed description of the development processes in ESSP and ESIP. It was also not possible to obtain information in the Government documents or in the interviews and why this was left out in the Revised ESSP. The degree of influence from the partners can therefore not be determined.

Nevertheless, a general influence from the international education agenda is more visible in the Revised ESSP than in the former education sector plans. International long-term commitments were given a separate chapter and included a full presentation of the two MDGs related to education and the six EFA goals, combined with statistics on Uganda's progress on each goal (MoES, 2008). The Government's reaffirmation of prioritising primary education in the Revised ESSP should, therefore, be seen in relation to the interaction with the funding agencies through technical assistance as well as the partnership's commitment to the international education agenda.

4.2.2 "Everybody says primary education, primary education" –different partner commitments

With the MoU in 2002, the MoES and EFAG committed to co-operate in accordance with PEAP, the National Development Plan, the MDGs and the EFA goals. This meant meeting

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[38] Uganda initially began its FTI proposal in 2002, but it was delayed, and a new proposal has been in development after 2008 (Vestbø, 2003; MoES 2008).

two international education targets and implementing two national plans which all emphasise UPE (MoU, 2009). ESSP and the Revised ESSP, which were developed within the partnership, were both designed to progress on the goals of these frameworks (MoES, 2004; MoES, 2008).

However, establishing the national priority of primary education in the GWP in 1992, and later in PEAP in 1997, does not necessarily imply that it should continue to be the priority in 2000 and beyond. A MoES interviewee expressed this concern:

> The problem is, it is still a pre-eminence of the donor policy. I wish we could narrow down and really say the policy that we pursue should be really absolutely aligned with the real needs of the country. Because the donors know the need of our country, they know. But like USAID would say, they only support UPE in Congress, but the Congress, the Congress…we cannot do anything. But we say if Congress wanted to help us, they should be able to say, yes they have the issue of primary education, but we also need to create skills, something like that (int1/MoES).

What the MoES interviewee is expressing is the core of the complexity of the partnership: the cross-commitments of the partners. The funding agencies are, as the MoES exemplified with USAID and Congress, not primarily committed to the Ugandan education sector plans or the MoU, but rather to the priorities and policies of their country Government or their institution, and thus leading to potential problems of "a pre-eminence of the donor policy" (int1/MoES).

Table 4.1 (page 64) presents what the EDP interviewees articulated as their current priority in the education sector in Uganda, and their priorities to achieve UPE in 2015. The interview answers show how the funding agency policy documents guide the agency perception of the priority needs in the education sector in Uganda. The obvious relationship between policy and practice can be expected, but Table 4.1 highlights that the priorities of funding agencies in Uganda are not "absolutely aligned with the real needs of the country" (int1/MoES). Instead the priorities of the funding agencies are primarily aligned with their own policy. The tendency for external influence on education priorities in Uganda was supported by the NGOs and UNATU:

> So the commitment of the financial agencies also affects what Government does (int1/UNATU).

Table 4.1 Education priorities of selected partners, as expressed in policy documents and interviews

	Policy documents		Interview answers	
	Education sector priority in Uganda	UPE priority	Priority in the education sector in Uganda	UPE priority in Uganda
World Bank	Primary education	Equitable access. Quality; basic literacy and numeracy skills	Reducing teacher absenteeism and provision of instructional materials.	Quality; instruction materials, curriculum and teacher training.
UNICEF	Basic education	Gender equality	Early childhood development	Timely enrolment
Irish Aid	Primary education	Quality; lifeskills including literacy and numeracy	Funding and community involvement	Quality; numeracy and literacy skills
EKN	Primary education	Equitable acces.s Quality; basic literacy and numeracy skills	Solve systemic problems to succeed with education plans	Quality; achieve basic literacy and numeracy skills

Source: IA, 2008; int1/FA; int2/FA; int3/FA; int4/FA; NMFA, 2007; UNICEF, 2006; World Bank, 1999; World Bank, 2008.

It was also emphasised by the Ugandan education researcher interviewee:

> In most cases no country or no funding agency will be giving you money unless that money will produce results that will contribute to the reasons why that organisation exists. And that one has not changed (int/Ed).

The principal external commitment of funding agencies can be a strain for the partnership, although an inevitable one.

The education policies of the funding agencies are also surprisingly similar, as can be seen from Table 4.1. Except for UNICEF's focus on gender equality, the education priorities in the funding agency policy documents are almost identical. Table 4.1 reflects the impact of

international education goals on funding agency policy documents, like the second EFA goal of free and compulsory primary education of good quality and the second MDG of universal primary education (UN, 2000; UNESCO, 2000). The link to the priority of the primary sector and of UPE, in particular, is obvious. The use of the concept of quality is also surprisingly similar. Quality education is used with reference to basic literacy and numeracy skills, which is an adoption of the international terminology used in EFA and the MDGs. An almost identical definition of quality education is found in the second MDG, which is "…that all children who attend school regularly learn basic literacy and numeracy skills and complete primary school on time"[39], and also in the Dakar Framework for Action (MoES, 2004; UNESCO, 2000). The same use of the concept of quality education is found in the Revised ESSP: "…primary-level pupils mastering basic literacy (reading and writing), numeracy and basic life skills" (MoES, 2008, p. 20). The current priority of primary education, and the quality definition on education, thus underpin the external influence on national education priorities in Uganda.

At the same time, ESIP, ESSP and the Revised ESSP have been developed according to the Government's commitment to national development frameworks. From a partnership perspective this could seem as if the priorities of the funding agencies and the Government are in accordance with one another. On one hand, the priority of UPE in Uganda was a result of a recommendation by a government appointed commission, which started working in 1987 resulting in the GWP in 1992. The later adoption of the international education goals can, therefore, be seen as the Government using the international education agenda to attract external funding for their own development goals. In that case the partnership has strengthened the Government's ability to progress on national goals. On the other hand, as presented in Chapter 2, the international education agenda can be seen as "donor-driven" and the massive priority of UPE as influenced by actors such as UNICEF and the World Bank (Brock-Utne, 2006; King, 2008; King & Rose, 2005). It is therefore a complex matter to evaluate government ownership of education priorities in the context of international education goals.

However, the renewed priority of primary education that appeared with the Revised ESSP in 2007 seems to result more from the commitments to the international education agenda, than from national demands and needs. The Revised ESSP articulated the goal of achieving UPE

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[39] Source: www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

in Uganda by 2015, a target date identical to the international goals. It can be questioned whether the target date springs from a realistic evaluation of the current needs of the education sector in Uganda, with an enormous lack of basic requirements to achieve the target, such as qualified teachers or instructional materials. One MoES interviewee shared his experience of the Ugandan UPE priority:

> But most of the agenda for instance to prioritise primary education is set, everybody says primary education, primary education…whether that makes sense…I know it makes sense to send children to school, but also to sustain that. You know you cannot sustain that if you don't make your country productive, if you can't create wealth (…) Primary education is important I agree, but you must keep an eye to sustain those gates, using the countries' own capacity (int1/MoES).

What the MoES interviewee expressed was the Government's expectation of a more holistic approach in support of the education sector, and for its partners to see the education sector as interdependent with other sectors in society to support sustainable national development. The development of one education sub-sector cannot be sustained without strengthening the whole sector, including local level service delivery.

4.2.3 "What we have on paper far, far differs from what we have on the ground" – challenges of decentralisation

Although this study did not include the perspective from local Government in the data collection, the issue of decentralisation became a central part of the findings from the interviews when government leadership was discussed. As is appears from one of the interviews, with reference to government ownership in the development of education policies:

> …in the end it is a government document, and a government brand and a government policy. So from that point of view, it increases [ownership]. But how much the Government believes in [the policy), [and] especially the implementation machinery [and] the civil service believe that this is theirs can be questioned. (…) My argument can be verified by what we have on paper far, far differs from what we have on the ground (int1/NGO).

The NGO interviewee articulated the contrast between the realities reflected in education policy papers and the reality implemented on the ground. The lack of coherence, according to the interviewee, reflects the degree of "genuine" ownership in the plans with a "government brand". The interviewee questions the legitimacy of government ownership in education policies and, in particular, the ownership of stakeholders in the "implementation machinery" (int1/NGO). The degree of inclusion of the NGOs and UNATU was criticized during the

development and implementation of ESIP (int1/NGO; int2/NGO; int1/UNATU). According to the interviewees this has now changed:

> Interviewee: We are out in the field and we are able to say, look here this is not working. In this and that district this is what we see. And often the Education Development Partners don't do that. They are really focusing on policy level and budgeting and financing. The NGOs are more implementers, and out in the field and at the district level. So they really know what is out there of practice and [can bring] evidence and feedback on how the policies work in the different contexts. The assumption is of course that such data should be used to influence policy and the focus of where funding should be.

> Interviewer: So how have you experienced your participation in ESCC, how much can you influence?

> Interviewee: What is amazing is, the Ministry is very willing to listen and take up feedback from NGOs and to act accordingly. The willingness is there. However, my feelings are that the things they can do at the centre they will do. The challenge really is at district level. That is where it actually happens. The decentralisation and the district office are really responsible for the implementation (int2/NGO).

The NGO articulates a new willingness from central Government to include other stakeholders in the policy processes and "take up feedback". However, the problem addressed is that "the challenge really is at district level", a perception supported by the funding agencies:

> The challenge is more on the implementation of policies, now it's a big, big challenge. Because the policies in Uganda are great, they are really great, with a lot of stakeholders' support. The challenges come on the ground to implement it (int2/FA).

The implementation difficulties can be multiple. UNATU addressed the political climate between the central and local Government:

> You know, policy, everybody tries to pull to his role and advantage, but also significantly, for the last ten years we have had single-party governance, and (…) to shift to what we call multiparty is also not well perceived. So those who call themselves the opposition, think they have to practically oppose every policy the Government has brought. That's how they think democracy is. So to the extent it takes longer to see what policies will benefit us all. So they do a lot of destructive criticism, instead of constructive (int1/UNATU).

This perspective was shared with other NGO and UNATU interviewees (int1/NGO; int2/NGO; int1/UNATU; int2/UNATU). In any democracy there will be a tension between central and local government and other stakeholders in the public sector. According to Wadala (2007), a tension between the local and central Government in Uganda has been an ongoing problem since the government decentralisation processes started in the 1990s. Local

Government has in many cases refused to acknowledge the authority of the central government representative, while central Government in return has increased the use of conditional grants, and reduced local political space (Wadala, 2007).

The difficulties with implementation were also articulated as being due to systemic and capacity issues:

> Because some of the issues are systemic, in terms of how the Ministry is organised or overall, with the decentralisation process. (…) When it comes to implementation, it's a huge, huge, huge, gap. So I think it needs to be a combination of strengthening the structures, both financial and in terms of people and looking at the culture of work and responsiveness and result focused interventions (int2/FA).

> There are many challenges on the ground. Decentralisation of education is a whole other topic, it is so challenging. At the centre it seems things are going well, the plans and policies are developed, but when money is sent down to district level, there are lot of challenges. We end up, of course kind of, limiting what we could have achieved (int2/FA).

The local Government capacity to perform in these specific areas, such as structure, supervision and financial governance in the implementation processes, was a concern for several interviewees (int/Ed; int2/FA; int3/FA; int2/NGO). Balihuta et al. (2002) support the stakeholders' perception of a lack of basic institutional and financial capacity in the districts. Capacity to implement education plans and to use mechanisms for inspection and auditing are critical for local Government to fulfil its responsibilities. Looking at the impact of decentralisation on government ownership, systemic weaknesses in the education sector can easily be seen to weaken the overall leadership capacity of both central and local government.

To ensure ownership of education priorities in policies and plans, the central Government is dependent on a correct picture of the situation in the districts. It is the responsibility of local Government to report the needs and demands of the beneficiaries to the MoES. In Mukunya's (2007) report from school management committees in the region of Kyaka, the members were not active because they did not understand their roles. The committees lacked training to function and contribute in important areas, such as demanding services, demanding accountability and promoting change and innovation (Kwemara, 2003, p. 5 as cited in Mukunya 2007, p. 243). An overall lack of capacity among local Government in Uganda, specifically in articulating the education needs in their district to the central authorities is, according to Mukunya (2007), a result of a weak decentralisation process. A successful decentralisation process in the education sector in Uganda depends on real power delegated to the districts from the centre, and according to Wadala (2007), this is not possible when the

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central Government is weak. The decentralisation in Uganda therefore, according to Wadala (2007), causes a general weakening of political leadership in both the formulation and implementation of policies. Although the decentralisation process was not included in the interview guide, the conclusions of Wadala (2007) and Mukunya (2007) were supported by the NGO, UNATU and the funding agency interviewees (int2/FA; int2/FA; int2/NGO; int1/UNATU). The MoES interviewee did not address decentralisation when asked about what needed priority in the education sector, but rather focused on the need for more funding (int1/MoES; int2/MoES).

The current weakness of capacity at local level can also influence the role of central Government. If central Government lacks knowledge on the current local situations, this affects its ability to take successful measures to achieve the purpose of the education policies and plans, and to function in a leadership role where the demands of the people are acted upon by its authorities. The decentralisation process in Uganda can therefore be seen as being a paradox in terms of ownership of educational development. While decentralisation can be argued to strengthen local involvement and thus ownership from a democratic perspective, systemic issues can make decentralisation weaken central Government and thus government ownership in developing education policies based on local needs and demands. A strengthening of local Government would thus be beneficial to the education sector, and also support government ownership in educational development.

4.2.4 A strengthened government leadership role

In the partnership interactions related to ESIP during 1997-2003, the MoES was described as technically weak and their leadership role in policy processes was therefore perceived as wavering (int1/FA; int4/FA). According to both the MoES and the funding agency interviewees, its current role is different. The MoES interviewee related the development of the Government role directly to its reduced need for technical assistance from the funding agencies.

> We have reduced our dependency on technical assistance. [Now] most things are done by us. We used to have so many technical assistants all over the place, but that has changed (int1/MoES).

The current status of "most things are done by us" is a development from the Government-funding agency interaction during the ESIP phase described as having "so many technical assistants all over the place" (int1/MoES). The funding agency interviewees confirmed the

development of the government leadership as related to an increase of technical capacity, sufficient staffing and to an increased ability in management and leadership:

> In terms of ownership, the Government through all these years has developed quite a bit of its own strength and capacity and we moved away so much from donors bringing in consultants to write reports, to write policy documents. Now the Ministry is doing that itself, with its own staff. It has come a long way from the previous way it used to work (int1/FA).

> Management in the education sector has come a long way. There have been so many different reforms that required staffing and management. Staff have actually grown from juvenile to now be seniors, and [they have] been stable [and] consistent. There has been a lot of growth, development. (…) Yes, they needed some support, and in the beginning the body attitude of the donors it was there. (…) So that attitude changed over time, because the leadership is quite strong (int1/FA).

Three of the four funding agency interviewees agreed with this development:

> …there were capacity issues, key positions in the Ministry that were not filled. But they have done great efforts to fill in and develop capacity. Because support of donors, we really kind of pushed, so the Ministry could get more staffing, a whole restructure was done, so we now have a Ministry that is much better managed, directorates, they have different directors for the different sub-sectors. At one point they only had one director and that position at one point was not even filled. We did a lot. Even we made it a critical undertaking to increase the capacity and key positions of the Ministry and in finance and planning (int2/FA).

> A lot has been done over the years to support capacity. The Ministry is better able to carry out its role (int3/FA).

The funding agencies have experienced an increased capacity in the MoES, particularly among individual staff, and in the structure of the institution (int1/FA; int2/FA; int3/FA), a capacity development also described by the Government in ESSP and the Revised ESSP. The increase of capacity among the MoES staff has, according to the Government, resulted in a current situation where the MoES is better able to solve the responsibilities that come with their leadership role, such as steering policy processes (int1/MoES; int2/MoES; MoES, 2004; MoES, 2008).

Both MoES interviewees articulated a strong sense of confidence in a government leadership role (int1/MoES; int2/MoES).

> …now the whole [policy] process is government driven, totally government driven, totally (int1/MoES).

> But sometimes there would be donors who would come in and take the lead. Then we said no, no, no, wait a minute, who is really the driver? And over time we have become more and more confident in our position, without fear of failure (int1/MoES).

The interviewee answers are in contrast to how the Government described the interaction during the development of ESIP, when education development had "funding-agency driven tendencies" and the Government established mechanisms intended to "assist the Government as it moves towards a stronger strategic role" (GoU, 1998, p. 18). The findings from the education sector plan from 2004 and 2008 and the interviewees thus support the MoES' perception that their current leadership role has been strengthened (int1/MoES; int2/MoES; MoES, 2004; MoES 2008).

The World Bank differed in the funding agency description of the technical capacity of the Ministry. According to their experience there are still weaknesses affecting the MoES partner role:

> One challenge I see is the weakness in technical teams. The various departments in the Ministry are weak. The bulk of them were teachers or tutors, and to further their careers they joined the Ministry, but they need a lot of training in policy analysis. Their thinking must change sitting at a policy desk. To be an advisor to the Government they don't have the lenses that the partners have, they have limited capacity. But if they are guided they get there eventually (int4/FA).

The World Bank is still critical of the level of capacity among staff in key positions in the Ministry. The MoES interviewees from the Department of Pre-Primary and Primary Education and the interviewee from the Department of Planning and Policy contributed to a varied picture. While the interviewee from Policy and Planning had deep insight into the interaction between the MoES and EDP, the other Commissioner did not participate in such discussions (int1/MoES; int2/MoES).

The experience with the level of capacity among the staff in the MoES is thus varied within EDP, but both EDP and MoES interviewees confirmed that an increase in leadership capacities had affected the interaction between the central Government and the funding agencies. This is supported by Balihuta et al. (2002) who conclude that a strengthened capacity in Ugandan public sector has brought new confidence in its donor relationship. The partners shared their perspectives on the current nature of the partnership:

> Interviewer: Would you say government ownership in education policies is strong?

> Interviewee: Extremely strong! Because as I tell you this relation has evolved. I think so far so good. I don't think there is one thing [in the partnership] I would say I am really dissatisfied with (int1/MoES).

> ...so in education I would very categorically say the Government is in the lead. It [the partnership] is family. The partners have been very supportive. It has developed into a more mutual, more trusting relationship (int1/FA).

> The Government sets the agenda, we are invited to participate to give our views and opinions, make technical input and give our advice, but we don't insist that they take our advice. (...) We do respect the decision they take (int3/FA)

The partners seem to agree that the current partnership has given the Government, represented by the MoES, the lead role in policy processes and that the funding agencies participate with "views and opinions" and respect the decision of the Government. The partners' experiences are articulated in positive terms, like the MoES quote "I don't think there is one thing I would say I am really dissatisfied with". The partners are content with the current nature of the partnership when asked if there is anything they would want to change to strengthen government ownership in educational development.

However, stakeholders outside the partnership were concerned about the asymmetry of the partnership in policy processes:

> (…) Government can hardly now play them up against each other, they speak with one voice "this we don't want, and this we want", and try to steer towards a certain direction, then the Government cannot go to another donor or a country, and just forget about the first one (int1/NGO).

> The funding agencies dictate the agenda either directly or indirectly. The funding agencies bring packages that can only work in their home country context, and are not applicable in Uganda. When the Government negotiate for funding, they don't present tangible packages to their partners. With the funding that they receive, there are conditions attached. This politics of funding has not changed (int/Ed).

The influence caused by donor harmonisation was further described as follows:

> Interviewer: So if I understand you correctly, you think that harmonising is not increasing ownership, more the opposite?

> Interviewee: I think harmonising can be the opposite, if someone says harmonising increases country ownership (…) even when the donors are writing the documents and negotiate hard, and it is going their way, in the end it is a government document, and a government brand and a government policy. So from that point of view, it increases, but how much the Government believes in [it], especially the implementation machinery, the civil service believes that this is theirs can be questioned. (…) My argument can be verified by what we have on paper far, far differs from what we have on the ground (int1/NGO).

Stakeholders outside the partnership understand the partnership and its influence on education policy development in the same way. They conclude that harmonisation overall has led to a stronger position of the funding agencies, and to a more vulnerable position of the

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Government in negotiations. This conclusion is based on the power attached to funding. However, harmonisation includes EDPs' commitment to support Government plans and can therefore also be seen as strengthening Government position in negotiations. Nevertheless, UNATU, the NGOs and the educational researcher defined EDP as more powerful than the Government in the final phases of negotiating education priorities in national plans and policies (int/Ed; int1/NGO; int2/NGO; int1/UNATU).

> And now to make policies and plans and so and so on is what the Ministry will do. Everyone gets involved, the involvement that we are talking about. Who now influences the second level, how to get there? (…) By and large it's the donors, because they have the power, they are the ones who are going to pay. Then next it is the Government who says we want this or that. Then NGOs come in third (…). At the end of the day you have something that is said to be owned by all (int1/NGO).

The NGOs and UNATU described the role of the funding agencies as the most influential because of their financial power. According to their experience the priorities in the education plans are defined by what the funding agencies are willing to fund (int1/NGO; int2/NGO).

The fact that it was the stakeholders outside of the partnership that expressed a concern regarding an asymmetrical partnership, and not primarily the Government or EDP, can be interpreted in light of their own roles. The NGOs and UNATU do not have the biases of the partners or the same interest in defining the partnership's success. At the same time, the NGOs and UNATU may be more critical towards the partnership because they want their organisations to have more influence. Furthermore, because they are outside the partnership, their perception may not be based on the experience of the partnership in the same way as the inside partners.

However, at the end of the interview one MoES participant added:

> We must discuss with other partners, with EDP for instance. They have their own agenda, they are supporting us in certain areas, and they cannot support without having their own agenda. You cannot just say, let's work together. (…) Let's say in marriage, you cannot say just let us marry. You still have to have some conditions (int1/MoES).

The partnership is, in other words, experienced as demanding for the MoES as well, and although its leadership role has developed and its capacity has grown, the negotiations with the funding agencies are still processes of compromise. Despite the challenges and the conditions, the partners are likely to prefer portraying the partnership as achieving and performing according to its purpose.

4.2.5 From funding agencies to development partners

The partnership discourse evolving in parallel with the development of the partnership in Uganda has influenced the funding agencies' perception of their partner role. In 2009, EFAG changed its name to EDP.

> Interviewer: What led to the change from EFAG to EDP?
>
> Interviewee: Yes, we wanted to stress the partnership. It is not the cheque that people write from various headquarters that really matters, it is the discussion and the engagement that really is most valuable. So we are partners. That's what we want to stress (int3/FA).

The term development partners is now preferred over the former term funding agency, and the focus has shifted to partnership instead of funders:

> The rebranding of EDP was taking the focus off the financial aspect of the group, we did not want to focus so much on financing the Ministry. We wanted to focus more on how we support the development of education. So again, there is that technical knowledge. It's that sharing, supportive kind of manner (int1/FA).

The change of name could be argued to be only rhetorical, and a result of the change in the international rhetoric on development partnerships. However, the EDP Chairman articulates a purpose behind it. The name change represents a change in their attitudes and interactions with the Government and was intended to imply a change in how their partner role was perceived. The funding agency role that developed based on SWAp could be interpreted as a "step down", from initiators of projects to funders of government plans. What the funding agencies articulate in the interviews, and with the name change, is that they want to be perceived not solely as funders. As partners, they want to have their influence in policy processes recognised as "support" and "engagement", instead of the previous conditionalities linked to the project support modality (int1/FA; int3/FA).

According to the revised MoU that was signed in 2009, the:

> …co-operation between the Government and the Development Partners [under this MoU] is to implement the national Education policy through a holistic and coordinated approach to the Education sector in policy development, planning, allocation of resources, implementation, monitoring and review (MoU, n. p.).

Literally, this means that the EDP is now active in all processes within the education sector. The current partner role of the funding agencies has thus come a long way from their role during project support. The education funding agencies are not only in charge of specific projects or just funders of government plans. During the last decade, EDP has been given

permanent seats in several influential support forums for the Ministry: in the technical working groups assisting the Ministry, and in the SWAp structures, including budget working groups and the Task Forces for curriculum development. Furthermore, their role in the ESCC and ESR includes:

a) Attending planning meetings before the ESR;

b) Drafting the joint position paper on undertakings for the ESR;

c) Participating in the review of the Aide Memoire;

d) Funding technical assistance requirements for the ESR process;

e) Providing advisory services to the Government on the entire management
   and funding of the reviews (Eilor, 2004, p. 113).

Measuring the impact of these structures is not possible, but they reflect a close involvement of the funding agencies in government responsibilities. In that sense, the new partner role could be described as having become more influential in terms of more channels of influence.

Harmonisation has generally led to an EDP consensus on policy matters before negotiations in ESCC and ESR. The Government therefore knows the EDP position before beginning the official education policy processes. This has influenced the interaction pattern:

> Ten years ago we were hiding everything, going to cabinet with secret decisions – but now we start our processes with the donors, they are involved from the start. (Representative from the Ugandan Government, as cited in Ssewakiryanga, 2004, p. 79)

The education sector plans were intended to give the initiating role to the Government, but currently the funding agencies are included from the start. EDP is involved in the Government's planning meetings before the official government policy is negotiated in ESCC and ESR. Due to the early involvement of EDP, its influence can be subtle, and the process of negotiations, with potential conflicts of interest and priorities, can be hidden (Ssewakiryanga, 2004). According to Ssewakiryanga the Government-funding agency relationship in Uganda has developed:

> …to the extent that sometimes a distinction between donor and Government position on a policy becomes indistinguishable (Ssewakiryanga, 2004, p. 79).

Jerve (2002) addresses the mixed boundaries of partner roles in development partnerships that can occur because external agencies are involved in national processes. To make a partnership work, according to Jerve (2002), partners need to frame and balance three sets of

responsibilities: the joint responsibility, the funding agency responsibility and the recipient responsibility. In a development partnership, agreed programmes and targets define the joint responsibility, such as the education sector plans. Since the introduction of SWAp, the joint responsibility has been framed. The MoU in 2001, and the revised version in 2009 led to a written agreement on the partners' responsibilities.

The MoU underpins the Government's responsibility to lead the policy processes. However, the MoU partner commitments limit the Government's responsibility to provide leadership to: "where practically possible" (MoU, 2009, n. p.). This means that conflicts of interest could possibly result between the partners from co-operation in areas which the Government could not actually lead, for instance based on technical capacity. The funding agencies' emphasis on aid effectiveness could put pressure on the Government to accept more technical assistance, whereas the commitment to strengthen ownership would emphasis Government leadership. The funding agencies commitment to support Government leadership in such a situation could easily be interpreted differently by each partner, and by stakeholders outside the partnership. The findings support such a mixed picture of the partners and stakeholders' experience of partnership and ownership in the policy processes in the education sector. However, if the partnership has kept the old patterns of power, the ownership agenda reflected in the MoU and the funding agencies' policy documents could be argued to only hide an existing imbalance of influence (Fraser, 2008).

The EDP participants in this study all referred to the Paris Declaration in their development partnership policy, and most of their principles are built around the PAC partner commitments (NMFA, 2007; IA, 2008; UNICEF, 2006; World Bank, 1999; World Bank, 2008). Although the partnership principles in the EDP partnership policies emphasise ownership, ownership has never been on the agenda in EDP meetings (int3/FA).

> Interviewer: Has country ownership of education plans and policies been discussed or evaluated within EDP?
>
> Interviewee: (…) we have not sat as a group, let me see if I get it right, to specifically address whether Government is in charge of the education programme of this country. If that is the ownership you are referring to (int3/FA).

A discussion of ownership does not necessarily reflect EDP's priority of the matter, and one could argue that it is not the EDP's responsibility to ensure ownership as long as the partners are aligned with the donor commitments from PAC: to respect country leadership and to help build its capacity (OECD, 2005a). On the other hand, it can be questioned how partner

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commitments can be of great importance in all the EDP agency policies, and yet never be addressed in the group's evaluations or discussions.

Another aspect of the development of the partnership is linked to the funding modalities and the funding agencies' harmonised disbursements of funds for budget support. All partners in EDP have currently moved to budget support except USAID. UNICEF and the World Bank practise both budget and project support. Two opposing tendencies related to funding modalities emerged from the data analysis: Project support can undermine the building of capacity of central Government, but can also support the building of capacity of local government.

> And yet, traditional project support undermines the system, and undermines that ownership. Because for instance that project which is a World Bank sponsored project [pointing to a meeting taking place on the second floor], you find that some of the people we have been working with, we have trained them here, now they join the project and get paid a hefty sum of 4000 US$, and me being paid… I'm the one who trained them for the work (int1/MoES).

One MoES interviewee was critical of project support because of the potential harm for the Ministry. Funding agency driven projects tend to recruit their staff among highly educated and trained personnel and are able to pay well, often meaning personnel from the MoES. Such capacity "draining" referred to by the interviewee can affect the Government's ability to manage human resources and build a strong and knowledgeable leadership, and thus affect its potential to strengthen ownership in policy processes through individual and institutional capacity building.

But in the experience of UNICEF, project support can also build capacity of local Government. Projects are often locally based and adjusted to local needs, such as education in the nomadic areas or activities to help girls stay in school (int1/FA). Because projects have more direct contact with the local context and the local needs, EDP can contribute to strengthening a decentralisation process in the education sector if they do not disapprove of project support (Cannon, 2009). Just as EDP budget support has contributed to strengthening central Government's leadership control and capacity, project support can build capacity at the local level (Cannon, 2009). Budget support and project support can therefore serve different purposes, while strengthening government ownership.

4.2.6 Conclusions on partnership and government ownership in UPE 2002-2009

The partnership interactions between the Government and the funding agencies changed during 2002-2009. In the development of ESSP, the Government describes "its professional relationship with the Education Funding Agencies Group (EFAG) [and that it will] look to this group from time to time for technical support" (MoES, 2004, p. 25). The strength of the MoES leadership grew during this period because of increased capacity, both institutionally and among its staff. The unequal influence in the partnership is not mentioned by the MoES in ESSP in contrast to ESIP (GoU, 1998).

However, other results from the harmonisation of funding agencies became clearer in the period 2002-2009 than during ESIP. On one hand, the increased effectiveness of the use of government resources, more government control over sector funding and a strengthened government leadership role were still part of the results. On the other hand, long-term tendencies also surfaced. Since the donor harmonisation in 1997, the funding agencies in EDP have gained more channels of influence. In the current partnership, the influence of EDP is somewhat difficult to measure and evaluate, but based on the findings it can be concluded that both Government and funding agency partner roles have been enhanced.

The period was also influenced by increased reference to the international education agenda in the national education plans (MoES, 2004; MoES, 2008). EDP's commitment to support national plans, such as the education sector plans in Uganda, could be expected to strengthen ownership, because funding would support government plans. However, through the partnership external and internal influences became intertwined because the funding agencies were involved in domestic policy processes (McGee, 2004). If the processes of making national plans and policies were strongly influenced by funding agencies and their use of the international education agenda, then one could argue that EDP's alignment with national plans does not support ownership, but rather plans which the funding agency community would approve (Rakner & Wang, 2007).

In the case of Uganda, the partner commitments to government plans, to agency policy documents, and to the MoU, as well as to EFA and the MDGs, add to the nuanced picture of ownership in UPE. UPE has been the priority in the government education sector plans for two decades, except for a short period of the ESSP, and can be seen as a government owned policy. The Government has increased its leadership and articulates a strong belief in its

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leadership and in government ownership of educations policies, elements that, according to PAC, support ownership (OECD, 2005a).

At the same time, both the MoES and stakeholders outside the partnership describe a situation in which the "government brand" does not necessarily legitimise the priorities set in education policies. The Government's continued priority of primary education must be seen in relation to its interaction with the funding agencies and to its commitment to the international education agenda set by the MDGs and the EFA goals. This commitment was deliberate and can therefore be seen as government owned. However, a commitment to the international agenda can also be interpreted as an effort to secure external funds to an education budget depending on support. In that sense, the commitment to progress on certain international goals could be seen as more than just a government owned policy. In the case of Uganda, the priority of primary education at the cost of other areas can therefore not be seen as only a home grown policy, although it is government approved. The international priority of primary education is influenced by strong development actors, such as the World Bank, and the degree of ownership of the national policies should be further analysed and debated.

5   Conclusions and perspectives

Based on the analysis of partnership and ownership in education policy processes in Uganda, from 1997 to 2009, several conclusions and perspectives have emerged. These will be related in the following to the three research questions guiding the study. Furthermore, the issues of partnership and the UPE priority will be seen in relation to the three key concepts selected from world systems theory: isomorphism, decoupling and rational actorhood. Finally, perspectives on the partnership model in the development discourse and its relationship to ownership will be presented.

5.1 Conclusions on donor harmonisation and partnership interactions

The donor harmonisation of education funding agencies in Uganda, which began in 1997, changed their interaction with the Government. Because of the harmonised position of EDP before negotiating with the Government, the interactions became more effective, in terms of both time and resources spent by the partners. The partner support of government education sector plans replaced the previous funding agency initiated projects. Combined with the move from project to budget support, the Government gained more control over the education agenda, as well as the management of funds. Donor harmonisation can therefore been seen as increasing government ownership in the sense that it strengthened its leadership role. This interpretation is in accordance with the PAC partner commitments to achieve ownership (OECD, 2005a).

The findings can, however, also be interpreted to mean that the harmonisation of funding agencies in EDP during the ten-year period did not end the vulnerability of the Government's position. EDP has continued to provide the majority of funding for the education sector budget and as a result of donor harmonisation, the Government must negotiate with the funding agencies as one actor. According to the MoU from 2009, the Government cannot seek support from individual funding agencies for specific areas, but must negotiate with EDP (MoU, 2009). This can be seen as a weakness for the Government's position in negotiating with partners.

5.2 Conclusions on partnership interactions in the formulation of education priorities

The formulation of education priorities in Uganda in the ESCC and the ESR meant that funding agencies became part of government led processes. This initially contributed to an enhancement of government leadership in establishing education priorities, and strengthened government ownership. However, the findings of this study show that government capacity is critical for it to function in leadership responsibilities. When the MoES has lacked technical capacity or capacity to lead in policy dialogue, the use of external consultants and technical assistance from funding agencies have tended to dominate the policy processes. The degree of government ownership can therefore be questioned. This was particularly evident in the development of the ESIP 1998-2003 and, according to some of the partners and stakeholders, also an issue in the later ESSP.

Over time, the ESCC and the ESR have also contributed to enhancing the influence of the funding agencies in education policy processes. EDP has a strong negotiation position with the Government, partly because of high technical capacity. The findings of this study show that stakeholders outside the partnership, and to some degree the MoES itself, do not perceive the current partnership as equal in terms of power. Because of the Government's dependency on external funding, negotiations on critical undertakings and budget priorities can be seen as taking place in an asymmetrical partnership which can undermine the legitimacy of government ownership. From this perspective the positive development of strengthened government ownership in policy dialogue is potentially influenced by a more subtle impact of the EDP in internal processes of formulating and implementing education priorities. However, the findings support that during the examined ten-year period, the Government has increased its influence over the education policy and priorities in terms of goals and control over budgets, but that the influence in the implementation processes continues to be negatively affected by a lack of sufficient capacity in the education sector.

5.3 Conclusions on partnership and Government ownership of UPE in Uganda from a world systems theoretical perspective

According to world systems theory, the partnership in Uganda and the role of the Government in policy processes should be seen in relation to the world cultural order. The concepts of isomorphism, decoupling and rational actorhood can contribute to an understanding of government ownership in the setting of UPE as a priority in Uganda.

UPE has been a national education priority in Uganda since the GWP in 1992, but was not implemented until 1997. UPE was a specific recommendation of the government appointed Commission that prepared the education framework for the GWP. The policy of free primary education can therefore be seen as a homegrown policy and government owned. The Government's use of international frameworks, such as the EFA goals and the MDGs, can be understood as a rational decision to attract external funding for their national education priorities (GoU, 1992; GoU 1998; MoES, 2004; MoES, 2007). According to Mukunya (2007) the possibility to attract funding was one of several key factors behind the presidential promise of UPE in 1996.

According to world systems theory, this is an expression of the kind of rational actorhood performed by a nation-state. Generally, nation-states will choose the role of "rational and responsible actor" (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 153), expressed in policy statements, policies and goals that have both a collective and an individual gain. President Museveni's launch of UPE in 1997 can be seen as an example of rational actorhood. After decades of unrest, Museveni wanted to create a momentum for a new political era. The UPE policy formulation was borrowed from the EFA 1990 goals from Jomtien, and the IDTs of 1996 (GoU, 1998). According to Steiner-Khamsi (2004) and Meyer et al. (1997), policy borrowing is most common when an extensive reform is launched, and governments want to project an image of a responsible actor:

> In times of political change, intro- and retrospection are not viable policy solutions, but externalization is (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, p. 203).

Borrowing external policies is a common act in political transition times, such as during the emerging democracy in Uganda in the 1990s. During such periods, the historical past is not

referred to in positive terms and policies are borrowed from outside instead of being built on internal experiences and resources (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Meyer et al., 1997).

The UPE launch in Uganda in 1997 cannot completely be interpreted as an example of such policy borrowing, because of the previous national priority established by the Commission in 1992. However, the continued priority in the three education sector plans can be understood as rational actorhood, because the UPE priority seems to be a response to an international education agenda rather than to internal demands and needs. This aspect also appears from the findings of this study, where stakeholders outside the partnership, such as the teacher's union, articulated that education policies tended to be launched as political statements, rather than being based on demands from the education sector.

According to Meyer et al., (1997), the isomorphic development globally and nationally of the "consensus" on, for instance the UPE priority, makes sense only when seen in relation to an impact of world culture. The ideas of poverty reduction, development partnerships as well as the education priority of UPE have all become part of the development discourse based on the world cultural values of development and progress. This discourse has been articulated by international professionals and has set the agenda for international conferences on development, as presented in Chapter 2. The ensuing priorities, such as the EFA and MDG goal of UPE, are reflected, and often quoted, in national plans and policies as well as in the policy documents of the funding agencies.

The international education agenda is reflected in all education sector plans developed in Uganda during 1997-2009, where to a large degree, the priority of primary education duplicates the EFA and the MDG education goals (GoU, 1998; MoES, 2004; MoES, 2007; MoFPED, 2004). A world cultural influence from the international community can therefore, be seen as having an overall influence on the policy processes related to the development of UPE in Uganda and provides a broader perspective on government ownership than the specific interactions with partners.

When UPE was launched in Uganda, the policy was not based on the actual resources available in the education sector. At the time, there was, for example, an insufficient number of qualified teachers and inadequate school facilities to make primary education universal. The policy of free primary education was also contradictory. For instance, the launch of UPE did not result in cost-free education, since parents had to continue to pay for schoolbooks, uniforms and meals, thus making primary education difficult to access for poor households

(NMFA, 2008; Ward et al., 2006). UPE was in several aspects impossible to achieve and a decoupling between policy and practice occurred. Part of the recent situation is the complexity related to decentralisation of the education sector, and the tension between central and local Government. According to the findings of this study this is partly because of lack in local capacity and partly because of local resistance to central governance.

5.4 Perspectives on the concepts of partnership and ownership

This study has brought forward perspectives that could be valuable for further discussion and research related to the concepts of partnership and ownership. One is whether funding agencies should have an equal partner role in government matters, such as setting national education priorities? Although the high proportion of external funding could be argued to legitimise the funding agencies' degree of influence and control, this leads to a dilemma with respect to ownership. The concept of partnership implies equal partner roles, but the concept of ownership implies that the Government should have more influence and control than the funding agencies. This interpretation of the two concepts highlights a contradiction in the partners' expectation of the nature of the partnership. It reflects the challenge to interpret and implement commitments and purposes related to these relative new concepts of partnership and ownership.

Secondly, there is a weakness in the use of the concept of ownership, because it fails to include the issue of capacity, as reflected for example in the PAC definition. The current use of the concept of ownership can result in conclusions of strong government ownership, for instance based on a government document, without taking into consideration the development of that document. The capacity to initiate, to plan, to formulate priorities, to monitor a process and to evaluate on progress both at central and local level are essential to support ownership of national education priorities. Therefore, one could say that ownership is the least developed principle of PAC (Rakner & Wang, 2007). It has been signed up to with the purpose of providing effective aid and is linked to the economic perspective of development (OECD, 2005; OECD, 2008a). It has therefore been based more on the funding agencies' demand for effective use of their support, than on the concern for the benefit or sustainability of the development process of the partner country (Henkel 1997; Crewe & Harrison as cited in Crossley & Watson, 2003, p. 100).

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The third one concerns the cross-commitments of the partners. A government is expected to primarily be committed to its national plans and to the demands and needs of the people. The funding agencies, on the other hand, have a primary commitment to their own mandates and agendas. If the partners have different primary commitments, the partnership concept does not fully reflect the complexity of the interactions taking place. The constant negotiation and compromise taking place during policy dialogue are not necessarily best defined within the concept of partnership.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Information about the Interviewee
Name:
Organisation/Institution:
Position:
Came in position this year:

The process of developing education plans and priorities

1. Can you describe the process of making the ESIP and ESSP? Who were involved? At what time? Who has influenced them?

2. How would you describe the degree of country ownership in ESIP and ESSP? Is there a difference?

3 a. In your opinion, to what degree did EDP have an influence on the plans and policies expressed in ESIP and ESSP? How?

 b. Who were the most influential among the funding agencies in EDP in this process?

The education priority of UPE

4. In your opinion, what is most needed at present stage to achieve UPE in 2015?

5. In your opinion, which part of the education sector in Uganda needs priority focus at present stage to achieve UPE?

Partnership and ownership

6. The Paris Declaration refers to the donors' responsibility to help building capacity in the partner country. Is EDP in your opinion doing that?

7. How would you describe the funding agencies in EDP's attitude and willingness today in using national systems in Uganda?

8. How would you describe EDP's respect for government leadership in the process related to UPE?

9. What has been the major discussion within the working group for primary education in EDP within the last years?

10. How would you describe the partnership between EDP and MoES?

11. In your opinion, does donor harmonisation influence the degree of ownership towards UPE in 2015? Please describe in what way?

12. Are there any changes that have been made to strengthen the degree of ownership in the partnership between EDP and MoES? If yes, please explain?

13. Are there changes you think ought to be made in the partnership between EDP and MoES in order to strengthen ownership? If yes, which ones? If no, please explain.

Appendix 2: List of Interviews

Title	Organisation	Date
Education Specialist	UNICEF	19.08.2009
Education Specialist	Irish Aid	20.08.2009
General Secretary	Uganda National Teachers Union	24.08.2009
National Executive member. Representing Pre-Primary	Uganda National Teachers Union	24.08.2009
National Chairperson	Uganda National Teachers Union	24.08.2009
Principal Education Planner/Head Research	Ministry of Education and Sports, Department of Planning and Policy	28.08.2009
Chairman/Education Specialist	Education cluster of 31 NGO`s contributing to education	01.09.2009
Director General/ Former head of the Institute	Uganda Management Institute / Faculty of Higher Education Studies at Makerere University	02.09.2009
Commissioner	Ministry of Education and Sports, Department for Pre-Primary and Primary Education	03.09.2009
Education Specialist	World Bank	07.09.2009
National Coordinator	Forum for Education NGO`s in Uganda	07.09.2009
Chairman/ Advisor Education	Education Development Partners/ Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	08.09.2009

Appendix 3: Informed Consent for Participant in Interview

1. This interview is part of a data collection for a fieldwork research for a Masters thesis. The research intends to analyse how a development partnership influences ownership in education policy processes. The student is conducting the research independently as a student at the University of Oslo, Norway. The information shared in this interview will be used in writing a Masters thesis. The student's fieldwork is financed through a research grant from Save the Children, Norway and the content of the Masters thesis will be referred to in an interview with the student in their national publication in Norway and could be published on their webpage.

2. The student wishes to record the interview for the sake of transcribing it correctly. The student will keep the sound files confidential, but the participant is not made anonymous in the Masters thesis, unless required by the participant.

3. Participating in the interview is voluntary, and the participant has the right to withdraw from the process at any time.

4. The Masters thesis can be made available to the participant if she/he desires. The student can email the finished material as well as an abstract in the late spring of 2010.

Do you agree to participate in this interview, understanding the information given above?

Would you like a copy of the finished material: __yes __no

Appendix 4: National and international milestones affecting partnership in Uganda, 1990-2009

	1990	1992	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2002	2003	2004	2008	2009
National		Government White Paper	Presidential promise of UPE	Launch of UPE	ESIP 1998-2003	EFAG established	HIPC application	MoU	ESSP 2004-2015		Revised ESSP 2007-2015	EFAG renamed EDP
				SWAp				Preparation of FTI proposal			New FTI proposal	Restructuring of education sector
				PEAP 1			PEAP 2			PEAP 3		
International	EFA, Jomtien		International Development Targets			Introduction of PRSPs	EFA, Dakar	Launch of FTI				
							MDGs					