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## **SPECIAL THEME**

**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND SKILLS IN  
EASTERN AFRICA AT BASIC AND POST-BASIC LEVELS**

**Editor**

**Kenneth King**

### **Editorial Address:**

**Kenneth King, Centre of African Studies, 21 George Square,  
University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 9LD, Scotland UK  
Telephone (44) 0131 650 3878; Fax: (44) 0131 650 6535  
Emails: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk or P.King@ed.ac.uk**

### **Co-ordination Address:**

**Michel Carton, Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement (IUED), Post  
Box 136, Rue Rothschild 24, 1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland.  
Telephone: (41) 22 906 5901/43; Fax: (41) 22 906 5947  
Email: Michel.Carton@iued.unige.ch**

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**EDITORIALS****NORRAG IN EAST AFRICA**

Kenneth King, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh  
Email: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk

This is the first time that we have tried to create an issue of NORRAG NEWS outside Europe! In conjunction with the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), NORRAG organised a meeting of researchers, policy-makers and donor agencies in July 2003, in order to explore whether the typical NORRAG meeting, analysing key international agency documentation, had any salience in a specific regional context in Africa.

Specifically, the two institutions organised this East Africa-wide meeting of researchers, national policymakers and development agency staff to examine the implications, from a national and regional perspective, of two very recent international policy reviews on education and training. These are:

***The EFA Global Monitoring Report: Is the world on track? (UNESCO 2002)***  
and  
***Skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank Feb. 2003).***

The meeting had two purposes. First, to examine the specific relevance for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – as well as for other SSA states - of these two more general analyses, and second to use them as a basis for reviewing national policies on technical and vocational skills development as well as for progress towards EFA goals. The lead author of the Skills Development report (Dr. Arvil Van Adams of the World Bank), was present throughout the meeting. One of the authors of the EFA Monitoring Report had also expected to be present, but the exigencies of preparing the next (2003) Report made it impossible for him to attend. However, Chris Colclough and Steve Packer will comment on the issues raised, particularly by Roy Carr-Hill's paper, in the coming issue of NN (No33) in December 2003.

The workshop was launched by Assistant Minister, Kilemi Mwiria, who has personally combined all the roles of researcher, consultant, agency person and now (since January 2003) policy-maker. In a speech which resonated closely with the NORRAG approach – he declared that there was still too much dependency on external initiatives in East Africa. Instead, national researchers and the policy community should be innovators and come up with home-grown solutions to East Africa's own priorities in these critically important areas of EFA and Skills Development.

**EFA Quantity isn't enough**

One of the strongest threads running through the Workshop papers – as can be seen in the contributions that follow – is that the pursuit of quantity - whether in enrolments, numbers of teachers, texts donated by donors etc etc – is not on its own sufficient. The fact that all the three East African countries have successfully brought hundreds of thousands – even millions – of children into school in the last several years is of course marvellous. But what if they can't read at the end of 7-8 years, what if there are insufficient committed teachers, or texts put to thoughtful use? Hopefully, the situation in East Africa is not as bad as in Ghana where the workshop heard that only 4% of the children in the state primary schools reached the mastery level for Maths of 55% in criterion referenced tests in 2000 – as compared with 57% of the children in private schools. But the workshop gave no grounds for complacency;

paper after paper reported on the newly enrolled children dropping out, on the inefficiencies of the schooling process, and finally on widespread feeling that a primary education had very little or even zero 'return' – in terms of labour market entry.

Given the increasing anxiety, in the minds of researchers, parents and policy-makers, about poor and deteriorating quality in the free primary regimes of East Africa, there is little comfort to be found in the EFA Monitoring Report: 'This Report cannot ..present world-wide progress on educational quality, nor is the information sufficient at this stage adequately to monitor changes in quality, whether positive or negative' (UNESCO 2002: 80). We have therefore a situation where at the local level, it is very clear that the greatest challenge to UPE is quality, but where, so far, the international EFA monitoring process cannot pick this element up. A very high priority for East African policy-makers and researchers must be to consolidate the research insights into the reality of free primary schooling, and link this to the series of initiatives that proclaim to secure quality and school improvement. The School Improvement initiatives of the AKF are clearly relevant here.

Nor should we be too critical of the EFA Monitoring Report for being honest enough to admit that quality remains in question. The critical factors relating to quality are mostly very difficult to measure with any degree of confidence. Thus, teacher qualifications are a quantitative measure, but teacher commitment is hugely challenging to assess, but absolutely central to quality. Numbers of texts per 2-3 pupils can be measured – just. But what use is made of textbooks is the key element that makes the difference to quality. Homework's presence or absence should be measurable, but whether or not it is 'sold' by teachers looking for an additional source of income is not so easy to measure – or even to allude to.

Teachers' official salaries can be computed relatively easily, but much more difficult to assess is what number of teachers concentrate on gaining a second income by working in the informal economy – in trade, in tuition, in cash crop agriculture.

Many donor agencies, dedicated to progress on the Millennium Development Goals, are very ready to support Free Primary Education, but what can they do to support quality, without dramatically raising the cost of an already massively expensive undertaking? And is there anything that can be suggested that is low cost and sustainable? These are the questions to be raised as the donors (including the WB, DFID, Sida, the EU) return to countries like Kenya.

What are the documents and aid packages they agree with governments? Perhaps it is these national documents that could become the basis for a further workshop interrogating the nature of the external response to these free primary initiatives.

### **The Challenge to Quality in Skills Development**

The situation does not seem to be very different in the sphere of technical vocational education and training – or in what has come to be called skills development. One of the most powerful passages in the Skills Development Review on Sub-Saharan Africa is on the quality of the public provision (World Bank 2003: 35-37). It is a tale of dramatically reduced capital investment, both from external sources and from national budgets. But, by contrast with EFA, in the sphere of skills development, we don't even seem to have the quantitative dimensions secure. What proportions of the hundreds of thousands of young people leaving the basic cycle and preparing to enter the labour market are accessing relevant training in either the public or private sector? The record is quite uncertain. And even less is known about whether training does actually lead anywhere.

Hence one of the six key questions which Van Adams discussed at the meeting was very relevant: **How can a country best address quality issues??**

It is even unclear now **where** training should lead – to the formal or informal sectors or both. In an economic environment where only a handful of trainees enter the dwindling formal sector of the economy from public training centres, what is going to be the relationship of public training provision to the expanding informal economy? Traditionally, public training has been reluctant to embrace training for the informal economy, for all kinds of reasons, to do with status, orientation, and lack of relevant knowledge. But if the Skills Development sector is to embrace a larger vision of training – for a sizeable element of the huge cohort that annually exits basic education – then it will have to reach out to the world of work that young people are actually entering the informal sector. This is easier said than done. For a training institute explicitly to face the informal sector is very different from its traditional orientation or from the aim of the formal certification that young people hope will help to insert them in the ‘modern’ sector of the economy.

The majority of the huge number of private training institutes, and training colleges that are found, particularly in the major cities of East Africa, are almost certainly not aimed at the informal economy. Or, rather, they may be aimed at the formal sector **and** at small enterprise or small business development. This latter formulation is much more acceptable than the informal economy. It points to a possible continuity between the formal businesses and the small scale sector.

But this is just speculation. Like so much else in the skills development arena, we just don’t know enough in East Africa about the organisation and provision of courses in the private training sector.

### **Quality, Quantity and Outcomes**

Hence we come to a position where we can agree that these two major documents – on EFA and Skills Development – are valuable precisely because they underline so emphatically the need for much better data, not just on quantity but on the quality of provision, both in the public and private sectors. At the moment, the only measure of quality tends to be examination outcomes, in the form of transfer to the next level of education or training, or into a formal sector job. Whereas good quality provision should also be a comment on the experience itself, the commitment of the staff, the learning environment.

### **ERNESA AND ERNWACA**

This is a good year to be examining these documents in East Africa. And it is plain that some of the very same issues are highly relevant in other Sub-Saharan African countries. Because there have been sister network organisations operating in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ERNESA) for 18 years, and in Western and Central Africa (ERNWACA) for 14 years, we asked members of these networks to reflect on these same two documents. We also asked them to consider in what sense the two networks themselves were ‘on track’ in terms of their original goals.

The same issues will be at the centre of the discussions in Oxford at the UKFIET conference on *The State of Education: Quality, Quantity and Outcomes*, on the 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> September (see programme later in this issue). And they will re-emerge at the 15<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers (15CCEM). Its theme in Edinburgh from 27-29 October is

*Access, Inclusion and Achievement: closing the gaps.* The main Issues Paper for the 15CCEM is another source of commentary on the relationships between quantity and quality.

July 21, 2003.Nairobi



**REFLECTIONS ON POLICY DIALOGUE AND ADVOCACY**

Jeremy Greenland, AKF, Geneva  
Email: jeremy.greenland@akdn.ch

In reviewing the UNESCO Global Report on EFA and the World Bank's Report on TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa, the AKF-NORRAG seminar in Nairobi noted the limitations of the two reports (for example, the EFA report has data on only three of the six Dakar goals and has very scanty and probably inaccurate data on private education provision). Seminar participants concluded that policy decisions on EFA and TVET in East Africa need to be informed by better and more detailed data, for example on the size and location of nomadic and pastoralist populations, and the current status of public sector TVET institutions. Nevertheless, the reports had the useful function of stimulating the thirty participants to produce papers specific to East Africa, some of which went on to discuss policy options such as whether an increased emphasis on Life Skills justified an extension of the primary school cycle or the expansion of junior secondary provision.

Who were these participants? Who came, and who did not? There were three main constituencies: ministries of education, university researchers and regional research networks, and independent consultants. The numbers were uneven: only three ministry officials; university faculty were the biggest group. The principal editor of the Bank's TVET report came, but UNESCO sent no one to discuss the EFA report. None of the donor agencies who are funding EFA in East Africa were present, there was no other foundation apart from AKF. This balance sheet would seem to confirm that ministries and donor agencies still prefer to commission studies from individuals to whom they issue prescriptive terms of reference. The studies' authors do not consult with their peers and, once they have de-briefed the official or donor who commissioned the study, their work is done and they are unlikely to have any further input on the policy in question.

The seminar was an informal exchange of views and did not attempt to conclude with formal resolutions. However, NORRAG intends to publish a selection of the papers as the next edition of NORRAG News. An additional 100 copies will be printed, so that participants can distribute copies to officials, donors and academics who were not able to attend. But will they read them? Beyond that, what will happen? The processes of data collection and policy formulation become clouded in mystery at this point. Will the ministry representatives now commission detailed inventories of different categories of private schools and of disadvantaged/marginalized populations? The balance of opinion at the seminar was that Kenya's and Tanzania's experience of Village Polytechnics ought to cause the ministry in Uganda to think twice before deciding to establish a new Village Polytechnic in every district. Will the Ugandan official at the seminar be able to convey that recommendation to his senior colleagues – or has the decision in fact already been taken? Will the seminar's agreement on the need to give more attention to Life Skills have an exaggerated influence on decisions about expanding the provision of junior secondary education? Will ministries take into account the seminar's warning that Life Skills require a large investment in curriculum and teacher development if the expectations of ministries and parents are to be met. It would be illuminating to have a case study of these processes, to understand how ministries of education interact with ministries of finance and planning, how all three ministries interact with donor agencies, and whether there are advisers in the President's office who in effect can override recommendations made lower down the line. It would also be interesting to study whether the popularity of SWAps – already in place in Uganda and mainland Tanzania – and under preparation in Kenya and Zanzibar increases or diminishes the quality of data and range of policy options available to ministries and donor agencies. Certainly most NGOs feel

that SWAps have made it more difficult than under the former 'project mode' for them to have an influence on national policy.

Whereas NORRAG's raison d'être is to review education policy, AKF is relatively new to this field and has tended to regard it as an optional extra, to be undertaken once its programmes in the field have yielded enough lessons that can be confidently shared with others. To date, AKF has largely relied on publication and dissemination of evaluation reports and project briefs (cfr. *Improving Schools through Teacher Development, Case Studies of AKF Projects in East Africa*, edited by Stephen Anderson, Swets & Zeitlinger, 2002) but the experience of the seminar strengthens the case for AKF to take a more aggressive approach to policy dialogue and advocacy, albeit after calculating the cost in terms of time, resources and developing staff capacity which this implies.

July 21, 2003

**OVERVIEWS****CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND SKILLS IN EASTERN AFRICA AT THE BASIC AND POST-BASIC LEVELS**

Kilemi Mwiria, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education, Nairobi.

**The Nature of the Challenge**

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, as I welcome you officially to the country and this conference convened to discuss skills development and application alongside Education For All (EFA) I should mention to you my special gratitude and delight that you all could make it to this conference. The conference marks a turning point in the way policy formulation deliberation and promulgation are handled. I need note particularly, that the presence of World Bank officials in such a forum lends weight and credibility to an authentic even apt, document such as this one they have authored. That the Agha Khan Foundation (AKF) and NORRAG have gathered people from countries across Africa and researchers to deliberate on this document echoes our government's commitment to consultation and involvement of all key players in the private and public sector in its development initiatives.

As I address yourselves this morning, I am informed by a number of realities I will need to note hereafter. Both as a researcher and government official the nature of the challenge, as I perceive it, in provision of EFA and skills development is woven around some key points.

I should begin by pointing out that Kenya and East Africa's commitment to EFA and skills development is not only a fact but is spelt out in official policy pronouncements. In spite of this, there are a myriad reasons why one would be permitted to observe that enough is not being done on a number of areas.

Firstly, EFA and to a marked degree, skills development have largely been spearheaded by external partners. Little involvement of major stakeholders (from private and public sectors) has characterised the three East African countries. Often, to my dismay, it's these foreign experts and partners who initiate debate on many of the priority themes of the day – including of course this one. There is always the danger that the initiative is stolen away from the national stakeholders or that there's complete apathy and /or ignorance on their part or a lack of means.

Second, there has been insufficient involvement by East Africans in spear-heading policy guidelines as well as the implementation of resultant recommendations. Clearly, it cannot be argued that this has stemmed from an ignorance of means or a particular disability but rather an expectancy of external help that is the curse of the people of this region. But, it is not worthy that often the governments of these countries have gone it alone generally with regard to policy formulation and implementation – only expecting a minimal involvement from their people. This has cultivated a sense of alienation – even apathy on the part of the people. Hence the calls for less government and more governance; a governance that is all-involving.

Thirdly, and closely related to this phenomenon, the small group of those East Africans who are luckily involved in relevant decision-making are not always motivated by genuine commitment to the ideals of these meetings. It may just be 'their turn' to be at such meetings, especially those that are donor-supported. Which often means their turn to gather the sitting-allowances that are now commonplace as incentives to attend such gatherings. –

I know this is not true of this Workshop as the organisers have insisted on inviting those they particularly wanted on an ad hominem basis.

A fundamental feature of this system, therefore, is a lack of continuity that results not only from frequent turnovers of staff but also in the replacement of those familiar with the issues by new faces who must also have their turn to «eat». Politicisation of this small but important dimension of development has meant that often the better and more qualified personnel have been put out of key positions to create room for ethnic competitors and for powerful politicians' kinsmen to benefit. But as you may know this feeling is now making way, at least here in Kenya and perhaps elsewhere, for a truly democratised operationalization of development plans.

In this regard one needs add that often those who are charged with the responsibility of implementing agreed upon policies lack the relevant qualifications and vision. Besides skills misplacement and displacement I should emphasise to you all the primacy of vision in the achievement of any national aspirations. Often, men and women with able or even remarkable credentials are burdened with a job to do - about which they harbour little optimism or vision.

Where governments have laid down their plans there can be, and is further a lack of clear policy and regulatory frameworks to see the recommended reforms through; there are no clear spelt-out targets; there are no monitoring arrangements in place to test and ensure replication and/or where they exist they are rarely enforced.

Our governments and societies have displayed a poor capacity to contemplate on or commit to experiments with new ways of doing things. There is little or no ground-breaking with regard to our unique demands and conditions. Moreover, innovation is rarely supported. By contrast the enforced liberalization of our economy has proven too expensive to easily implement.

Various factors have militated against our endeavours in the past – and threaten to do so now-unless they are nipped in the bud. Momentous steps have been taken by our government in this dimension to address the questions of human rights (not the all-too – common theoretical constructs that passed for this), and to promote depoliticised decision-making, equity and equality in opportunities and responsibilities. But we shall need to continue to be vigilant and check such things as were commonplace in earlier years - especially the grabbing by individuals of school land and property. Indeed, the misappropriation of resources and skills has underlain the poor condition of things and a radical departure from the trend is the only sure test of our commitment.

We must acknowledge, even then, that ours are societies characterized by poor resource bases. Human and physical infrastructure are tremendously under developed. To crown this we have exhibited a laxity in tapping and coordinating non-state providers and educators. There is, in some of our countries, little incentive for good quality private education providers.

Instead a proliferation of inferior provision has undermined the quality and relevance of the curriculum. Every market centre now has «a computer college» or a polytechnic. The end product is too much bending of the rules where merit should be the deciding factor; weak assessment systems; little involvement of the private sector or of other providers in setting standards; thus, there are too many unvalued courses; and too much sway for the profit motive rather than guided encouragement of quality private provision..

These largely urban developments have meant a limited focus on rural and agricultural education and training. The potential of traditional systems of knowledge and of indigenous expertise has, wastefully, not been tapped. Equally, there has also been a discontinuity between government and donor support to basic education and the needs of institutions of higher learning and other training institutions.

Also lacking has been a genuine concern for adults. There has been marked de-emphasis on adult literacy and informal education programmes over the last many years. Thus we have been building a system of education that lacks a holistic vision

**What can/should be done.**

I have summarised in point form what I perceive as the key areas that are needful of attention:

- ❑ Free primary education. A variety of strategies including private sector involvement; better use of facilities etc; teacher motivation; more resources for inspection etc.
- ❑ Reform initiatives to lead to blue prints; the encouragement of feasible home-grown alternatives.
- ❑ Improved overall governance and more serious commitment to related issues; lessened politicisation of education decision-making; and more incentives to the private sector.
- ❑ Commitment to generating more work and employment for school leavers through a variety of strategies.
- ❑ Insisting on better coordination of available (including external) resources; governments have to take the driving seat.
- ❑ Experimentation with cheaper modes of delivery ( see UNICEF'S example)
- ❑ Rationalizing of training institutions; as of now too many poorly resourced institutions are offering a wide range of courses including many useless ones
- ❑ Support for local innovations and innovators including in the informal sector.

Bringing the private sector on board in a coordinated way; and developing professional aspirations.

- ❑ Giving more prominence to literacy and informal education programmes
- ❑ The empowerment of more stakeholders in education and training decision-making.
- ❑ Making our main programmes and priorities into national/political crusades; involving all in implementation.
- ❑ Linking education and training to economic growth and planned industrialization.

We hope that as you interrogate the documents for this Workshop, you reflect on how all of us in East Africa can learn, not just from external international sources, but from our neighbours in East Africa. Thank you.

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## **EDUCATION FOR ALL GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT 2002: IS EAST AFRICA ON TRACK? IS THE GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT ON TRACK FOR EAST AFRICA?**

Roy Carr-Hill, Institute of Education, London  
Email: roycarrhill@yahoo.com

The purpose of the *global* report is to assess whether or not the World is on Track for meeting the goals set out in Dakar for Education for All by 2015. It contains 6 chapters with about 170 pages including many diagrams, figures and tables and, in addition, there is an Appendix with over 100 pages of tables. The purpose of this *note* is to provide an overall review, display the data presented for the three East African countries, and comment on the relevance of the report to East Africa.

### **What is in the Report?**

The report opens with a claim that EFA **is** development. A triumvirate of arguments based on human rights, human capabilities and other development benefits are laid out. The report argues (probably correctly) that a rights-based approach has been gathering pace in recent years and that mobilising governments to modernise national legislation is a crucial step. The authors paraphrase Sen's arguments emphasising the central importance of education in enhancing people's capabilities and widening their choices, referring to the value of reading and writing in its own right, the role of free and compulsory primary schooling in displacing, for example, child labour, and the empowering role of education. They then rehearse the arguments about the higher rates of return from first level schooling, and the impact of education on fertility rates, better diets and the more effective diagnosis of illness.

The second and longest chapter reviews the quantitative evidence as to whether the countries are on track to meet the six Dakar goals (Early Childhood Care Education, Primary School Enrolment, Learning Needs of Young People, Adult Literacy, Gender Parity and Quality of Education). After reviewing the evidence in respect of each of the goals separately, their overall assessment is based on a combination of the three quantitative indices of primary net enrolment, levels of adult literacy and gender parity in gross primary school enrolment (the second, fourth and fifth of the Dakar goals). They locate each country in a two-by-two table where the two dimensions are whether or not the country is close to or far from the goal and whether it has moved away from or towards the goal over the 1990s. Adding up the 'points' each country gains in respect of each goal (3 if the country has achieved the goal; 2 if the country is close to the goal *and* moving closer; 1 if the country is *either* close to the goal *or* moving towards it, and 0 if the country is far from the goal *and* moving away from it), they re-confirm the earlier diagnosis of the World Education Forum that almost one-third of the world's population lives in countries where the EFA goals remain a dream rather than a realistic proposition unless a strong and concerted effort is made.

The next three chapters are concerned with what should be done about it. In chapter three they focus on planning for EFA, lamenting both the absence of comprehensive national EFA

action plans, and the lack of involvement of civil society; drawing attention to the importance of taking account of HIV/AIDS and of conflict, disaster and instability; concluding with advocating credible planning processes for generating credible plans. In chapter 4, they examine the resource requirements for EFA, suggesting that the amount required is actually US\$5.6 billion a year, more than double the World Bank estimate, partly because of the additional amounts required for HIV/AIDS and for conflict, disaster and instability. [The total until 2015 (about US\$65 billion) is still less than the estimated bill for the recent Iraq War.]

The issue therefore is not the resources but the political will. In Chapter 5, they review the international response to Dakar showing that, after the real value of aid to basic education had declined during the 1990s, external funding for basic education in 2000 was US\$1.45 billion, approximately one quarter of what they estimate is needed, and that it is difficult to estimate the real size of various optimistic statements about projected aid flows but that they still fall far short of the resources required. In the same chapter, they query the effectiveness of the Fast Track initiative and the difficulties faced by UNESCO in playing the role of international coordinator.

In the final chapter, they conclude that progress towards the goals is insufficient, but that there are – at least when they were writing in 2002 – signs of a renewed policy commitment. They also emphasise that the coverage and reliability of the data is a problem and a challenge for future monitoring.

### **Relevant Data they have presented for East Africa**

#### Goal 1: Early Childhood Care

ECCE is seen as a potentially effective strategy for the social inclusion of children and their mothers in disadvantaged areas or situations; but fewer than half of all children in the world are benefiting from ECCE.

In Kenya, one of the 43 MICS<sup>1</sup> surveys was carried out in 2000, with a sample of 2,004 and it showed that 12.8% of children aged 36-59 months were attending some form of early childhood education for a median number of 12 hours (Hansen and Loaiza, 2002).

Whilst the three countries may well be able to 'expand and improve comprehensive ECCE' by 2015, the starting point is – from the world average point of view - very low. On the other hand, some may want to query the relevance of this goal for societies with extended families where there still is comprehensive childcare within the household. However, the focus on 'the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children' reminds us of the importance of supporting children damaged by AIDS or poverty or both, and probably at the pre-primary level.

#### Goal 2: Universal Primary Education

Their comparison by regions shows how Sub-Saharan Africa Gross Enrolment Ratios (GERs) in 1999 were the lowest of all regions. In East Africa, the picture is rather better: Tanzania at 63%, Uganda at 141% although not reported for Kenya. Only Tanzania had a reported Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) of 47%. They give a MICS estimate of net attendance rate (defined similarly to the NER but based only on those actually attending school) as for Kenya 74% and DHS estimates of 87% for Uganda and 49% for Tanzania (quite close to the NER).

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<sup>1</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, sponsored by UNICEF.

The gross intake rates are 113 for Kenya, and 70 for Tanzania, whilst the net intake rates are 34 for Kenya, 13 for Tanzania and 78 for Uganda. They also calculate school life expectancy, but only report this for Tanzania as 5 years. The implications of these wide disparities between gross and net enrolment and intake rates, of course, are wide age spreads in the school. Worldwide about 1.6% of primary school enrolment was underage and 12.5% overage. For Uganda, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) estimate 8% are underage and 30% overage whilst reported figures for Tanzania show very few under age and 25% overage. Whilst these are large proportions, the variations *within each class* will be even larger with important implications for pedagogy and (perceived) child safety in the context of HIV/AIDS.

The Monitoring Report draws on Benavot (2002) to show how increasing numbers of governments have passed legislation for compulsory schooling with an impressive increase in sub-Saharan Africa from 56% in 1969 (based on 24 responses) to 90% in 2000 (based on 48 countries). However, contrary to the rest of the world, the mean duration of compulsory schooling appears to have dropped from 7.9 years (based on 13 countries) to 7.2 years in 2000 (based on 43 countries). This may be an artefact of the different sizes of sample at the two time points.

#### Goal 3: Learning Needs of all young people and adults

This section is mostly a discussion on the diversity of learning programmes for youth and adults and of the difficulties of monitoring. No data is provided for any country. Part of the reason is presumably differences in what are seen as being appropriate life skills whether that heavily promoted by UNICEF and often adopted rhetorically by developing countries, or the more hard-nosed OECD definition seen as a basis for generating an entrepreneurial society that can compete on the global stage. The report sees there are problems when it contrasts the visions of life skills in South and North: the former emphasising societal aspects and the latter individual goals (see their Box 2.3, p.56).

#### Goal 4: Adult Literacy

They demonstrate a generally increasing adult (15+ years old) literacy rate in the world from 75% in 1990 to 80% in 2000, although the estimated numbers of adult illiterates has only declined very slightly from 879 million in 1990 to 862 million in 2000. The decreases for the three East African countries are more substantial (see Table in their Statistical Appendix) but there are still 11.8 million illiterates of whom nearly 8 million are women. Among young people (15-24 year olds), worldwide they report a slightly larger decline in the number of illiterates from 157 million to 141 million. In the three countries, the decrease is roughly parallel from 2.4 million to 2.0 million.

Based on current government policies – presumably referring to the existence of established literacy programmes and the knock on effect of enrolment in primary schools - they project that by 2015, both Kenya and Uganda will improve their literacy rates but not Tanzania.

They recognise that there are problems of assessing and monitoring literacy. In this respect these three countries have been pioneers and the often-cited World Bank report (Oxenham, 2001) about literacy draws heavily on assessments that were made in these three countries (Carron et al, 1989; Carr-Hill et al, 1992; Oketch et al 2001).

#### Goal 5: Gender Equality



For the world, they show how gender parity (the ratio of girls GER to boys GER), has improved from 88% in 1990 to 93% in 1999. In East Africa, the gender parity index was 97% in Kenya in 1990, and increased from 80% in 1990 to 93% in 2000 in Uganda and from 98% to 100% in Tanzania. In terms of the gross intake rates, the gender parity indexes have moved from 96% to 94% in Kenya (i.e. worsened) but improved from 97% to 99% in Tanzania. The gender parity indexes in net intake rates in 1999 were 102% in Uganda and 117% in Tanzania (i.e. the net intake rates of girls were higher than for boys). At this macro quantitative level, the differences are small, although the report does not consider the - perhaps more important - issues of content or process in the classroom.

The proportion of female teachers in primary education was 38% in Kenya in 1990, 30% in Uganda in 1990, and 41% and 45% in Tanzania in 1990/91 and 1999/00. There is still some way to go!

#### Goal 6: Education Quality

They review indicators of input, process and outcome. In terms of resources, public current expenditure worldwide on primary education as a percentage of GNP was 1.4% in 1990/91 and 1.7% in 1999/00, and per pupil expenditures were 12.0% and 12.9% of GNP per capita. In Kenya, the figures in 1990 were 3.2% and 13.6% respectively (no data for either Tanzania or Uganda).

In terms of efficiency, the report focuses on grade repetition and instructional hours. Data is given for Tanzania and Uganda<sup>2</sup>. The patterns are quite similar with low rates in Grades 1, 2 and 3, but then an increase to around 10% in Grade 4. There is very little difference between girls and boys. They review the number of instructional hours but no data for individual countries is presented.

They look at outcome indicators in terms of achievement based on surveys. There have been such surveys in Kenya as part of the SACMEQ, but the results (see Nzomo 2001) are not reported.

#### **Is East Africa on Track?**

In respect of the three quantitative goals (primary net enrolment, levels of adult literacy and gender parity in gross primary school enrolment), they say that Kenya has a high chance of achieving all three goals by 2015, whilst Tanzania and Uganda are likely to miss at least one goal. Compared to the 35 other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, this is a relatively good performance.

#### **Relevance of their Arguments about Planning, Resources and Aid Flows**

##### Planning and Resources

The report says that for the forty-six countries in sub-Sahara, 'detailed analysis is limited' (UNESCO-BREDA, 2002), but that plans were not expected to have been completed by the end of 2002 from East Africa. However, each of the countries does have the equivalent of a sector planning framework<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, both Tanzania and Uganda have met the requirement

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<sup>2</sup> Repetition rates in Uganda are 1.8%, 1.3%, 1.3%, 7.8%, 8.4% and 9.2% in Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; and in Tanzania 3.2%, 2.1%, 1.4%, 12.4%, 0.1% and 0.0%.

<sup>3</sup> Tanzania: Education Sector Development Plan R.O.K march 2001; Medium Term Expenditure Framework For The Human Resource Development Sector Working Group Paper, Draft 3). Nairobi Ministry Of Finance

of having both a PRSP and a sector plan in order to be included in the Fast Track Initiative (see below).

There is a sub-section emphasising the importance of time-bound EFA targets. Whilst they admit the criticism of Action Aid (2002) about the problems of emphasising the quantitative aspects of UPE, their discussion here of government set targets ignores all the well-known problems of managing systems with performance indicators (Carr-Hill et al 2000) and the tendency – illustrated heavily in this report - for these to be used as the basis of destructive league tables (Goldstein 2002).

Their comment on the (lack of) incorporation of civil society in planning for EFA should have resonance in East Africa, despite the advocacy of participatory planning by many international NGOs.

### Achieving Gender Targets

They raise the issue of the demand for 'girls' schooling and the direct and indirect costs to the household associated with schooling. Citing a rather opaque chart (Figure 4.1) based on six countries including Tanzania and Uganda, they say that private household expenditure is slightly less than half the level of public recurrent expenditure per pupil. Given that the direct and opportunity costs of sending girls to school are higher in many African non-pastoral households (see below), they argue that it may be necessary to consider targeted income supplementation for the poorest households. They wax almost lyrical about scholarship programmes whilst citing very little evidence and ignoring the well-known downsides (frictional costs ...).

### HIV/AIDS

In terms of more detailed planning and resources, the report highlights two issues that are important for East Africa: HIV/AIDS and conflict, disaster and instability.

HIV/AIDS is, of course, a very important issue for these three countries where, according to UNAIDS, the estimated infection rates are between 15% and 25%. In Kenya and Tanzania, the infection rate in urban areas is around 20% and is still increasing whilst in Uganda, the current estimate is 15% and the infection rate appears to have stabilised. The sections on Planning for HIV/AIDS and on costing the impact of HIV/AIDS on education are therefore, in principle, very important for East Africa. Unfortunately, both these sections are notable in their lack of any real evidence.

There have been many predictions of the dire consequences for educational systems because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, focusing mainly on the death and illness of teachers. But, analysis shows that, for whatever reason, pupil-teacher ratios are *lower* in countries with higher infection rates (Carr-Hill, et al 2003), and that where there are earlier deaths these tend to be when teachers are in their late thirties/early forties (i.e. when they have already taught for 15+ years) rather than when they are younger. Whilst the epidemic is a tragedy and there will undoubtedly be costs associated with replacing key personnel, it is not clear that the additional direct costs will be as high as suggested in the report, and the high cost estimates they have included may have an unintended negative impact in terms of attitudes towards those who are HIV+. Where there should be additional effort and resources is in

making schools and classrooms safe environments (including reducing the wide age range in many classes where it is not uncommon to find an 18 year old boy with a 12 year old girl), and in providing the opportunity for effective preventive education about HIV/AIDS.

### Conflict

In the report, this is presumed to refer to countries in or just emerging from conflict or where the government is unstable. Whilst this is not the case in East Africa, in parts of all three countries (e.g. North Eastern Province in Kenya, Karamoja in Uganda), there are serious concerns about safety and security both in children going to day schools and in any boarding provision. Whilst not an educational issue, governmental policies towards security need to be considered. It also means considering whether there is a possible role for education in reducing conflict.

Conflicts that are socio-culturally based cannot be solved by use of guns and force but can be solved through the dialogue and attitude change by the initiative of local community elders of the warring factions. But the PRSPs in these countries scarcely mention insecurity; and there is no provision in budgets for community dialogue.

The presence of conflict has to be taken as part of the framework for the local education system. Conflict can have several impacts either directly upon the children in terms of their security at school and on the way to school, or indirectly via their parents in terms of decisions as to where to live or whether or not to be mobile. This needs to be taken into account in deciding upon the locations of schools. It will also be important to include conflict resolution within any curriculum whether in formal schooling or in non-formal provision. This could draw on the experiences of other countries where there are ongoing conflict situations and may spring to mind.

### **International Commitments: the Fast Track Initiative and HIPC**

Two of the countries: Tanzania and Uganda – are in the first tranche of the Fast Track Initiative and Uganda is also a HIPC country.

Net aid per capita is US\$11 in Kenya or 3% of their GNP per capita whilst total debt is 6.8%. Note that if debt were calculated in terms of PPP (which is the basis for the optimistic assessments still being made about world economic development), debt would be cut by a factor of 4!

Net aid per capita is US\$27 in Tanzania or 9% of their GNP per capita whilst total debt is 2.7%.

### **Some Final Comments**

#### **The (Western) educational project is not problematised.**

The objective of free and compulsory primary education is itself curious (Bray, 1981). Even Sen talks about the *opportunity* to receive education as one of the values that individuals, households and families might hold. This implies that some families and households might choose *not to use* their resources on Western schooling. Similarly, there is no recognition that the motivation for education may be ideological or religious rather than being seen as part of the development of human capabilities.

In particular, there is no mention of those who disagree. Obviously, this is written with some hindsight, but Koranic schools and madrassas have existed for a very long time and their growth commented on by several authors.

A particular concern in East Africa is the children of nomadic groups, totalling nearly 15 million in the three countries. Children of nomadic parents are some of the least likely to go to school. There are several practical reasons: childhood labour, distance, (lack of) educational materials and mobility. Parents adopt a strategic approach: among sedentary rural populations, this usually leads to the boys being sent to school; but the reverse can be true amongst nomadic groups, as the boys' herding functions is seen as more valuable for the family economy. Moreover, some argue that one of the reasons why children of nomadic groups do not go to school is because of an ideological distrust of Western schooling (see Kratli, 2001).

#### **Estimates For Nomadic Groups**

	% of population	N of Nomads	SGA	N of SGA children	N in school	(E) GER	Country GER
Kenya	25	7,500	6-14	1,675	660	39	88
Tanzania	19	6,000	7-13	1,000	(E) 400	40	76
Uganda	5	1,030		(E) 393	(E) 150	38	85

Leaving the ideological problem to one side, if one is searching for a system that could potentially enrol *all* the children, the main issue for 'pure' pastoralists is that there are really only two choices:

- the school year for these groups is drastically shortened so as to accommodate the absences and to concentrate schooling on the periods they are in the base camp;
- some form of mobile schooling involving the teacher(s) moving with the group and that will almost certainly be much more expensive and runs the risk of ghettoisation.

But even for semi-pastoralists or recently settled communities who, together with the 'pure' pastoralists, probably form the majority of the populations in these countries, consideration of the interaction between nomadic groups and educational systems raises many of the important issues for educational development in East Africa that are not considered – presumably for space reasons - in this report. Some of these are considered below.

#### **Exclusions from the Report Important for East Africa**

The following are a sample of some of the issues that one might have raised if this report had been written for sub-Saharan Africa rather than for the world as a whole.

##### Improving access

##### *Non Formal Provision*

It has been said many times that schooling is not the same as education. But, in this report, non-formal education is only considered in the context of the learning needs of youth and adults and not as an alternative to primary school. For some, schooling has failed rural populations because schools have retained the colonial authority structure. They are

hierarchical, authoritarian and bureaucratic rather than participant and democratic (Harber, 1990) (Uganda). There have, of course, been many attempts to introduce non-formal programmes for both children and adults, some of them running for several years. But whilst non-formal approaches for out-of-school children, some of which seem to have been more accommodating to their lifestyle and wishes about what is taught, when and where, do appear to have been more successful, they are not necessarily cheaper to implement. Moreover, all appear to have encountered the problem of equivalence with formal schooling (Carron and Carr-Hill, 1992); and, until this relationship with the formal system is resolved, it is difficult to see how they could be extended substantially.

There are large-scale government programmes in both Tanzania<sup>4</sup> and Uganda<sup>5</sup> aimed at out-of-school children aged 10-16 years who are not in any formal school system, including those who have dropped out of the formal system before attaining basic literacy and numeracy.

#### *Boarding and feeder schools*

Providing boarding schools has been one of the favourite options. It can only ever be a partial solution because of the cost and reluctance of parents. However, there are promising variants in terms of hostels and para-boarding; and one could envisage ways of providing support to informal boarding of children from rural areas with relatives in town.

Another complementary option is to use the school map as the basis for constructing 'feeder' schools with only the first two or three grades of primary, or indeed for pre-primary, from which pupils can 'graduate' to the chosen form of 'boarding'.

#### *School Feeding*

School feeding programmes have been introduced nearly universally but have encountered the usual problems of distribution and supply. In a recent study of nomadic groups in these countries Carr-Hill et al (2002), in nearly every district studied, examples were cited of children withdrawing from school when the food did not arrive. Whilst there therefore there appears to be positive short-term effects on enrolment and also possibly on performance, these are not sustainable and long-running programmes may induce a dependency syndrome.

#### *Private Schools*

There is hardly any consideration of other sources of funding such as community schools, faith schools, and private for profit schools (Tooley, 2002; also see Carron and Carr-Hill, 1990). They do include a table on government reported private enrolments. There is no data for Kenya and the levels reported for Tanzania (0.2%) and Uganda (4.7%) bear little relation to what is actually be the case on the ground.

#### Improving the learning process to stimulate and retain demand

##### *Curriculum relevance and scheduling*

The evidence about the impact on retention of making curricula relevant is ambiguous, but it seems eminently sensible.

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<sup>4</sup> (COBET or Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania)

<sup>5</sup> (COPE or Complementary Primary Education (COPE))

On scheduling, perhaps formal education provision should look to ways of adapting to their target populations, rather than the other way round? Some relatively minor revisions to the calendar and timetable have been introduced successfully in several countries. These changes may not be sufficiently flexible to correspond to the actual movement of 'pure' pastoralist groups, but they can only be helpful.

#### *Teacher training, allocation and incentives*

Ideally, teachers should be from the same background as the pupils. But the process of allocating teachers to schools is often bureaucratic and does not take account of the provenance of the individual teacher or sometimes of the mother tongue of the children they are to teach. In addition, the relative isolation of many rural schools means that teachers are reluctant to go or stay there and makes the provision of female teachers particularly difficult.

#### *Language policy*

It seems obvious that a policy of using the various ethnic languages in basic education at the elementary levels for both children and adults will have a positive impact on equity among ethnic groups. On the other hand, it may have a hidden negative consequence on hampering the expansion of coverage due to increased costs. This is usually made more complex by the administrative form of decentralisation that cuts across and overlaps ethnic groups' territories, so that there can be no simple one-to-one allocation of materials and teachers. As ethnic mixing is likely to increase, this will become increasingly complicated. But these are practical rather than insurmountable obstacles. Any school 'mapping' should include assessment of the languages spoken and used.

#### **Is the Report Useful for East Africa?**

The analysis above suggests that the report is a mixed bag as far as East Africa is concerned. Whilst it is useful that the data are brought together in one place, and the two special issues considered (HIV/AIDS and conflict) are important for East Africa, the report doesn't cover many of the issues that are crucial for these countries.

The main complaint must be that, in many of the crucial respects, there is a lack of any real monitoring data. Thus, we have already mentioned that there is a 10-page section on costing the impact of HIV/AIDS on achieving EFA. Like much of the literature the estimates are based on forecasts and projections themselves based on very little solid evidence. But this is a *monitoring* report: where there are unpleasant phenomena that for a variety of reasons, one cannot monitor then, whilst the lack of data should be lamented, it is not appropriate to speculate. The same could be said for about the section on meeting the Learning Needs of Young People in the report and for many of the issues raised in the previous section.

Despite these caveats, it is an important document and one can only hope that its balance and coverage will be improved in future editions.

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# **ARE THERE SOME ECONOMISTS AND POLITICAL SCIENTISTS ABOARD THE EFA-UPE-PPE-TVET-SD PLANE? ?**

Michel Carton, Graduate Institute of Development Studies, Geneva  
Email: Michel.Carton@iued.unige.ch

After having carefully read many of the papers produced for the AKF-NORRAG Seminar on Critical Perspectives on Education and Skills in Eastern Africa, one can wonder whether some lessons have been drawn over the last decade based on the increasing problems stemming from the conceptual and strategical dichotomy between Education and Training. It is for example impressive to note that only one participant has produced two papers covering these two worlds in Uganda: the quantity-quality trade-off in Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the consequences of the low transition rates to post primary education (PPE) for TVET.

This could be explained by the fact that the organisers of the meeting had chosen to split the UPE and Skills Development (SD) issues over the two days of the meeting. We might also hypothesise that the papers for the meeting would have been quite different if the first session had been devoted to the issue which has been dealt with during the last meeting of the Working Group for International Co-operation in Skills Development (Bonn, April 2003, <http://www.vetnet.ch/wg>), Life Skills a Bridge Between Education and Training? and during the SDC Conference in Interlaken (2001) on Linking Work, Skills and Knowledge ([www.workandskills.ch](http://www.workandskills.ch))

Unfortunately, this hypothesis is not very credible, as the papers reflect the globalised common belief of the participants (and ours?) that education can largely be covered by schooling and that SD is mostly dealt with by TVET institutions. As Roy Carr Hill says very clearly in his contribution, such a "Western" educational project is not problematised, which is a problem for the people directly concerned as well as for the international co-operation agencies which are both complaining of the drawbacks of this project but are short of conceptual and strategical alternatives. Where does this come from?

As plainly expressed by Kilemi Mwiria in *Norrag News* No 28 (July 2001), "it is now common knowledge that many of the "blueprints" emanating from organisations such as the World Bank are not subjected to any serious scrutiny by the governments for whom they are written or targeted.....Even where there are research-coordinating committees in ministries of education, these are rarely consulted by donors and often dismissed as incompetent, even in cases where the locals manning these committees may have been recipients of advanced degrees from the donor countries" (p.53,54). Furthermore, we could add that the "ready to think" curricula which are, often expensively, delivered by many faculties of education in the world do not encourage to think in some alternative ways as far as education and training are concerned- especially in Africa. This could be why the papers produced for the AKF-NORRAG meeting as well as the UNESCO and World Bank reports under review are quite homogeneous. As Jeremy Greenland writes in this same issue "in both reports - UNESCO and the World Bank - life skills are conceived of in terms which are utilitarian and economic on the one hand, and individualistic rather than collective on the other. The key assumption is that a child should want to lead a "successful life"". Only a very few papers for the seminar have tried to question what can be today a successful life in Eastern Africa. Most of them have dealt with numbers, structures and the last motto, quality.

If it is understood that a successful life means living in a modernised (according to the 60s theories on modernisation), industrialised, urbanised, well governed, democratic society, one can wonder why the data and considerations which can be found in the papers are so conspicuously lacking in terms of economic and socio-political analysis. The first explanation lies in the above mentioned considerations about the influence of the globalised "blueprints" which circulate in most aid and co-operation agencies as well as faculties of education, on the thinking of the "educationists". These models all tend to look at Education (or rather Schooling) and Training as sectors in the same way as in the 60s when, as still mentioned in the Executive Summary of the WB study to day, there was a faith that "investing in the productivity and skills of people is essential to raise the incomes of economically vulnerable groups and reduce poverty". Sectors are much easier to "aid" (thanks to the SWAPs!), but one can wonder whether it is still realistic to keep such a perspective today when the EFA Monitoring Report indicates that one-third of the world's population lives in countries (mostly in Africa) where the EFA goals (understood as UPE plus some significant developments of post-basic education/schooling) remain a dream rather than a realistic proposition unless a strong and concerted effort is made.



Looking at the economic and socio-political data for the region, which, as we have said, are lacking in most of the papers under review, allows us to say that unfortunately, neither the national nor the international means will ever make this dream become reality and that, perhaps, UPE + Post Basic Education is not the right objective to aim at. Why?

- Developing further school-based education is a real social demand which will allow the "donors" to support it in the traditional way (buildings, teacher training, text books etc.). But this must be put into context, since a more realistic assessment of the pros and cons of schooling in terms of income generation is growing in the population. Indeed, there is an "implicit knowledge" in the population that the modern socio-economic development referred to above is out of reach for many people - for a long time or ever.
- Expecting that the governments become the regulating, facilitating, standard setting institutions in the field of skills development (which they have some difficulty to do even in the so-called developed countries), reflects a poor knowledge of the socio-political context of many countries. As C.De Moura Castro says in his comments about the first draft of the WB Report: "It may be an overgeneralization, but it seems that bad World Bank loans are elegant projects that do not understand what could and could not be done in that particular moment, country and ministry. Donors need intimate knowledge of local power and politics and need to know how to deal with them". (Paper No 7, WGICSD) (The difficulties encountered on the national side to transform the functioning of the State are well analysed by Bangura in his study for UNRISD Public Sector Restructuring (Geneva, 2000)).

In other words, even without referring to some alternative ways of thinking, the sectoral vision of Education/Schooling and Training has impeded UNESCO, the World Bank and most of the Eastern African authors from tapping on the knowledge of the economists and social scientists in order to ground their reflections in the local contexts: what are, for instance, the realistic economic and social development perspectives for East Africa, if a NEPAD type competitiveness is the main objective?

In a way, the World Bank Study is exploring some more interesting perspectives than the other documents, even though some important incoherence remains. Putting an emphasis on the informal sector needs and potentials could implicitly mean that the international competitiveness approach is considered unrealistic (The incoherence of the Report appears when the emphasis on the informal sector is paralleled with the over-optimistic chapter Recognising formal-sector enterprises training). In a sense the WB Study reflects what UNESCO has not (yet, ever?) succeeded to achieve, i.e. to look at education in both a sectorial AND a vectorial way, which the WB does by balancing in a different manner the demand and supply approaches to training and learning. This progress could have been even greater if the content of one of the background papers to the World Bank Study, «Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods» (by Oxenham et al.), had been more exploited (This document is much more original than the recently published WB report, *Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy: Challenges for the Developing Countries*, October 2002).

In conclusion, we can wonder whether we have made progress since the 60s when Philip .Coombs wrote in *The World Educational Crisis* : "The poorer countries now face a priority task of non formal education which years ago confronted today's industrialised countries. It is to bring to the vast numbers of farmers, workers, small entrepreneurs who have never seen the inside of a formal classroom - and perhaps never will - a spate of useful skills and knowledge which they can promptly apply to their own and the nation's development.... Industrialised and developing countries need to bring about a more effective relationship between formal and non formal education, to break down the walls between them and to

achieve a more efficient division of labour between the two" (1968, p142, 144). Will the rediscovery of indigenous knowledge and non formal education by the donors, because it is less expensive than schooling, be powerful enough to convince the Kenyan parents and government to reintroduce school fees to limit the public expenditures but also, above all, to show them that a "successful life" can be achieved without spending 10 years at school? As C.de Moura Castro says: "Do the countries want to do what is proposed?" And one can wonder what is going to be the position of the universities and NGOs which Kilemi Mwiria is referring to in his above mentioned piece where he says: "Regrettably, universities and smaller NGOs do not themselves do enough to get their research efforts and capacities known to potential users including governments". The Kenyan situation is absolutely fascinating as it is going to change the power game between the donors and the whole of the society in this country. The next AKF-NORRAG seminar could review this evolution in two years' time!

**Reference.**

WGICSD: Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development publishes a series of working papers. See [www.vetnet.ch/wg](http://www.vetnet.ch/wg)

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**EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) COMMITMENT**

Juliana Nzomo, Aga Khan Foundation, Nairobi  
Email: [Juliana.nzomo@akfea.automail.com](mailto:Juliana.nzomo@akfea.automail.com)

**Preamble**

The objective of assessing the extent to which the benefits associated with basic education are being extended to all (children, youth and adults) was first articulated at the first World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien (1990), which set out to achieve the EFA goals by 2000. The World Education Forum in Dakar reaffirmed the same commitment, declaring that by 2015 all children of primary-school age would participate in free schooling of acceptable quality and that gender disparities in schooling would be eliminated, adult illiteracy halved, early-childhood education programmes increased, and all aspects of education quality improved.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report observes that the limitation of the coverage and reliability of data was a significant problem. This is an indication that monitoring processes were not well thought out from the onset in 1990. Hence, the report has sought to initiate a sense of accountability towards commitments made at the World Education Forum, and recognizes that more weight will need to be given to the achievements and the progress of individual countries and the evidence of national monitoring processes as well as international analyses.

The data provided in the annex presents the situation as it was in 1990 and 2000, which should give an indication as to whether or not the world is on track. This paper will look into some of the indicators for which data is available for Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. In doing so, it is important to point out that as the Technical Introduction to the Statistical Annex makes clear, there were revisions to classification systems in education statistics, and data collection methods changed between the mid- and late-1990s, making time trends for a large number of variables very difficult. As a consequence, the coverage of the data

presented in the report is less useful for analytic purpose than it needs to be. There are notable differences between the data published in the report and those published by individual countries, and this has been explained by the fact that the indicators on access and participation were calculated using the population estimates produced by the United Nations Population Division.

## **Assessing Progress**

### *1. Early Child Care and Education*

Data on the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is available for Kenya for both 1990/91 and 1999/2000, for Uganda for 1999/2000, and not available for Tanzania. According to the data, the GER in Kenya improved from 33.9% in 1990/91 to 38.4% in 1999/2000, with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 1.07 indicating that girls are slightly more than boys at this level. This does not, however, tally with the figures provided by the Ministry of Education on GER in ECCE, which indicate that enrolments have been gradually declining over time from 35% to 33% as shown in figure 1 below. In Uganda, the GER was 2.8% in 1999/2000, with enrolments of boys and girls being equal (GPI = 1.00).

The low enrolment ratios, which is accompanied by the low percentages of education budgets to ECCE (around one percent), implies that pre-school education is not among the governments' top priorities within the education sector. The education policies in the three East African countries do not embrace early childhood education as part of the Universal Primary Education (UPE), and parents have been left to take sole responsibilities of educating their children at this level.

### *2. Access and Participation in Primary and Secondary Education*

The declaration of free primary education by the new Kenya government with effect from January 2003 brought the three East African countries to about the same level of political commitment, with Uganda having declared the same in 1997 and Tanzania in 2002.

Access and participation in primary education can be assessed through the performance on gross intake to primary education, and gross enrolment ratios. In Kenya, the gross intake to primary education declined from 119.9% in 1990/91 to 112.9% in 1999/2000. The gender parity index also declined slightly from 0.96 to 0.94 in favour of boys. In Uganda, the gross intake to primary rate was 112.5% in 1990/91 with a gender disparity in favour of boys. In Tanzania, the gross intake rate declined from 79.2% in 1990/91 to 69.8% in 1999/2000, with a gender disparity in favour of boys. There is obviously an issue in as far as gender disparities at intake to primary level is concerned. This may call for research into factors that influence parents' decisions to take their children to school.

Major differences are noted between the gross enrolment rates at pre-school and the gross intake rates in primary education, an indication that majority of children join primary education without having gone through pre-school education. This has been seen to have a negative impact in retention at primary school level, for example, in Kenya, about 17.5% of children enrolled in class are lost before getting to class two.

At Secondary level, the report indicates that gross enrolment ratios increased from 24.1% in 1990/91 to 29.9% in 1999/2000 for Kenya, from 4.9% to 5.3% in Tanzania, and stood at 13.2% in Uganda with no data available for 1999/2000. In all cases, there are gender disparities in favour of male students. Available time-series data has revealed that gender gaps keep widening the higher one climbs the academic ladder, with female students getting

fewer. This situation should be remedied right from pre-school level for any impact to be felt at higher levels.

### *3. Internal efficiency*

The Report uses repetition rates and survival rates to assess internal efficiency. Data on repetition by grade is available for Uganda and Tanzania rates.

A similar trend is observed in Tanzania, where repetition rates were 3.2% in grade one, falling to 2% and 1% in grades 2 and 3 respectively, and shooting up to 12% in grade 4. There are no significant gender disparities in grade repetition rates, although there is a trend of declining rates for boys at grade 4.

In Tanzania, survival rates at grade 4 improved from 84.2% in 1990/91 to 86.5% in 1998/99, while at grade 5 there was an improvement from 78.9% in 1990/91 to 80.9% in 1998/99. However, there is a gradual decline in survival rates from grade 4 to grade 5. In Uganda, data on survival rates is available for 1998/99, and stood at 56.2% for grade 4 and 44.7% for grade 5. In all cases, it is interesting to observe that the gender parity index for survival rates is in favour of girls.

In Kenya, a cohort analysis on progression from one grade to another would give an indication of survival rates.

It would indicate how many children survive from one grade to another, and how many are lost in the process. Significant wastage would be observed between grade 1 and 2 (17.5%), between grade 4 and 5 (11%) and between grade 7 and 8 (45.7%). This scenario gives a completion rate of 47.7%.

The high wastage rate between class one and two could largely be attributed to the situation at pre-school level as indicated, but also by other factors including the teaching methodologies and school environments that are not child friendly. The 11% drop between class 4 and 5 may have to do with the transition from lower to upper primary levels, while the most significant drop between class 7 and 8 has to do with high repetition rates at that level. This explains the 3.6% increase in enrolments at class 7. The situation portrayed here calls for research to establish the real issues and their remedies.

### *4. Adult Literacy*

Adult literacy rates increased from 70.8% in 1990 to 82.4% in 2000 for Kenya, 56.1% to 67.0% in Uganda and 62.9% to 75.0% in Tanzania. Literacy rates are in favour of the male population.

The links between adult literacy rates and enrolment of children to school should be recognized, and the fact that having a literate population could lead to parents being empowered to make the right decisions with regard to sending their children to school. Improving the adult literacy rates would therefore be a remedial measure towards improving enrolments and internal efficiency in the education systems.

## **Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, the question is: is East Africa on track? A simple data analysis is obviously not sufficient to lead to conclusions, especially where the data limitations are as has been indicated here. Greater attention has to be focused on maintaining comprehensive, accurate and reliable databases at national level. For those objectives that cannot be

measured quantitatively, there ought to be ways of gauging the extent to which some progress is being made such as surveys to monitor learning outcomes. The move to declare free primary education in the three countries is a step in the right direction, but requires action oriented commitment to ensure quality and sustainability.

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## **NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALISATION AND EFA: DEBUNKING GLOBAL CONSTRAINTS TO 'QUALITY' EDUCATION FOR ALL IN AFRICA**

Samson J Opolot, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala  
Email: [sopolot@cbr-ug.org](mailto:sopolot@cbr-ug.org)/[sopolot2002@yahoo.com](mailto:sopolot2002@yahoo.com)

### **Introduction**

The EFA Global Monitoring report (2002) did well to examine the progress towards EFA basing on the six EFA goals agreed upon at the World Education Forum (2000) held in Dakar. The biggest limitation is the report draws on a narrow and less publicized UNESCO statistical database, which raises questions of validity and the reliability of the conclusions thereof. In this short paper I commence with a broad description of the positive and negative changes in primary education since universal primary education (UPE) commenced in Uganda. Then I provide a critique of the negative impact of neo-liberal globalisation as a barrier to 'quality' EFA in developing contexts.

### **UPE: Uganda's quantitative leap**

Uganda has implemented UPE since 1997 resulting in rapid enrolment in basic education. An additional 1.1 million girls and 1.2 million boys enrolled and in 2001, the number of children enrolled was more than double the 1996 level (from 3.4 – 6.9 millions). According to the World Bank *Education Notes*, April (2002), enrollment ratios improved dramatically: the gross enrollment ratio first rose to 123% in 1997 and then decreased to 117 percent in 2000. The same report noted that Uganda was also largely successful in narrowing primary enrollment gaps between rich and poor and between boys and girls. The report asserted that the wealth bias that characterized access to primary education prior to UPE was all but eliminated by 1999. According to the above report, the success of Uganda's 'big bang' approach rested on the following:

- Strong political commitment and placing primary education at the centre of the Government's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP).
- The establishment of inclusive, effective partnerships both domestic and international.
- Sound macroeconomic policies, which fostered the expansion of the education system and supported dramatic increase in funding.
- Measures to improve transparency and accountability of spending at the school level in combination with predictable flows of aid.
- Strengthened collaboration with and support from external financing agencies.
- The move to General and Direct Budget Support financing modalities.

On the other hand, some unanticipated consequences have emerged, for example:

- *Inadequate Quantitative inputs*: input ratios for textbooks, teachers, and classrooms suffered with the introduction of UPE. Pupil–teacher ratios rising from

40, pre-UPE, to 60 in 1999, while pupil-classroom ratios jumped from 85 to 145 over the same period.

- *Limited Qualitative inputs:* the quality of teachers, teaching and scholastic materials have remained far below targets for quality education. The most burdened being children with disabilities. The quality gap between education of the rich and poor and in urban and rural primary education is on the rise.
- *Repetition and Drop-out rates:* In spite of an automatic promotion policy (a major source of poor quality in primary education) the rate of drop-out remains high - and more so for the girl child. The two prominent reasons for this are the poor quality of education on the one hand, and the emergence of other -considerably high-costs of educating children even in the ostensibly 'free' UPE schools (e.g. fees for uniform, feeding, etc.)
- *Poor achievement levels:* It is astonishing to find that some pupils in Primary Seven cannot even spell their own names. The above World Bank report noted that in tests administered to national random samples of 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade pupils, the number of pupils who achieved a satisfactory score declined from 48 percent in 1996 to 31 percent in 1999 on a mathematics test, and from 92 percent to 56 percent on the English oral test.

### Debunking Global Constraints

What more would it take to improve the quality of UPE? Why has it remained difficult even after savings from the Highly Indebted Poor Country's (HIPC) debt relief funds have largely been channeled to the UPE? Why even with more and timely donor funding should UPE remain such a disaster?

Educational development gurus have pointed to the discrepancy between the cultures and educational needs of the south (developing) and north (developed) contexts and how these divergences have, often times, led to corresponding threats to educational funding for the developing world. Reasons ranging from purely imperial to the current 'vent for profit' upon which the neo-liberal economic agenda is founded entail that equity and efficiency in education mean different things for the south and the north. To me, this is the axis of discord between the rhetoric of universal access, achievement, acceleration and adjustment in primary education on one hand, and the limited resources deployed for their fruition. I, therefore, reiterate Kenneth King's question: *Can education for all be attained within a donor perspective that suggests business as usual, with a few minor changes in favour of primary education? Or does the challenge of education for all point directly, not simply to adjustment policies in the South, but to the need for structural adjustment within the whole aid relationship itself?*

### Neo-liberalism and the under funding of education

Under neo-liberalism, equity measures such as education, health and other welfare policies of the state-led social development agenda of post-independence Africa led to inefficiency. Since the structural adjustments (SAPs) took root in the early 1980s therefore, the global economic agenda has been one of deconstructing the state, cutting on social expenditure and withdrawing subsidies. This being the context under which UPE is struggling to survive, it is not hard to see why resources remain a mere trickle. Governments can no longer afford to pay for public education. Overall, for both developing and developed countries, the ability of public schools to meet minimum standards of instruction seems to be declining. Even when it is known that UPE of necessity requires prior investment in mass secondary and tertiary level education, the nature of educational planning and investment has remained disjointed.

**Monoculturalism, Relevance and Quantity of education**

As Fagerlind and Saha (1989) have noted, we are not all agreed that such education should follow the urban, Western industrial model in all parts of the world. According to their research neither the age of starting primary school nor the number of instructional hours per year made an appreciable difference in science and reading achievement. They suggest that for poor societies, which remain relatively poor, it will be a case of spending limited resources in those areas of education most suitable to their needs with non-formal and vocational education strongly in mind. However even within individual countries, flexible curricula tailored to multicultural contexts such as Uganda would have to be taken into consideration. The heritage of colonial curricula that focused on cash crop farming and ignored pastoralists is lamentable. It is for this heritage, we continue to teach incongruent life skills to our communities; pastoralists on how best to fish and fishermen on how to best to herd cattle.

Above all, one may question the UPE agenda altogether; is it not another form of de-skilling to keep coming generations of the developing world educated at just a minimum level of basic education?

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**QUANTITY-QUALITY TRADE-OFFS AFTER ACCESS TO UPE****QUANTITY-QUALITY TRADE-OFFS AFTER UPE: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS IN UGANDA.**

Akim Okuni, School Improvement Regional Research Coordinator, East Africa  
Aga Khan Foundation.  
Email: a\_okuni@hotmail.com

**1. The Context**

Uganda, like Tanzania and Kenya, is party to many international conventions and agreements regarding improving the access, equity and quality of (basic) education. The UN Millennium Development Goals declared by world leaders, including the East African Presidents, in September 2000 highlight the firm belief of the international community in the key role of achieving universal primary education (UPE) in the developing countries' efforts to alleviate/eradicate poverty. Poverty can constitute an important impediment to acquiring education and governments have long aimed to increase access to education. Considering the enormous potential of a well-educated nation in achieving economic and social well-being, the attainment of UPE is a priority development target of the *Poverty Eradication Action Plan* (PEAP) in Uganda, the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (PRSP) in Tanzania and the *Report of the Task Force on Implementation of Free Primary Education* in Kenya. Thus it is the UPE campaign which remains at the core of Uganda's, Tanzania's and Kenya's determination to achieve «education for all» (EFA) and sustainable development. The EFA principles of access, equity and quality for all children underpin many of the policies incorporated into the respective countries' plans for developing primary education.

This paper examines the prospects and challenges of universal access in Uganda after UPE such as: increased access/enrolment (especially of the vulnerable groups), physical facilities and teacher recruitment; extra-large classes, provision/scarcity of teaching materials, sufficient trained teachers, and high teacher attrition; maintaining quality; retaining children throughout the primary cycle/high dropout rates; the attraction of private provision of primary education if UPE schools are overcrowded; etc. The overall purpose of this paper is to assess the extent to which the benefits of EFA are being extended to all Ugandan children and whether the Dakar commitments have a realistic chance of being met by 2015, considering the trade-off between quantity and quality after UPE. In this paper we use UPE, a programme that aimed to improve access, equity and quality, and to eliminate the cost of primary education in Uganda, to explore these questions. UPE in Uganda offers an interesting case study both because it was implemented abruptly and very rapidly, and because, before this initiative, private contributions had made a major contribution to school financing which, therefore, had severely restricted access to, equity and quality of primary education.

**2. UPE policy framework in Uganda**

A 2025 vision for Uganda's development formulated in 1997 incorporated a commitment to education as a development priority. The *Education Strategic Investment Plan 1998-2003 Framework* (ESIP) is the foundation on which this commitment was formulated over the medium term. Universalising primary education (UPE) is the government's chief education priority. UPE is therefore central to the ESIP and the ESIP framework period (1998-2003) covers the first cycle of UPE.



UPE provides «free» education to *all* primary school-going age (6-13 year old) children in Uganda on a cost-sharing arrangement whereby parents are expected to provide exercise books, pens, uniforms plus lunch at school. Originally UPE provided for «free» primary schooling for only *four* children per family. The introduction of UPE led enrolment in government-aided primary schools to almost double within a year from 2.3 million in 1996, and total enrolment has continued rising up to approximately 7.3 million in 2002, up from 6.9 million in 2001. Such a huge increase in UPE enrolment has resulted in very high pupil to teacher /classroom / textbook ratios. The *ESIP* aimed to improve the respective ratios via: good quality and cost-effective teacher training achieved through, among other measures, the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS) programme and rationalisation of Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs) by 2001; classroom building achieved through both completion of partially built classrooms and construction of new ones including improved access design for the disabled by 2003, via parallel investments of government and community utilizing local materials and resources; and ensuring access to required textbooks on a 1-book to 1-pupil basis by 2003 (*ESIP* 1998:6-12).

### 3. Prospects of universal access in Uganda

Education statistics in Uganda show that the GER, NER and NIR have risen significantly since 1996 from 80%, 57% and about 33.2% to 140.5%, 125.7% and 71.8%, respectively (see *Uganda EFA 2000 Assessment Report; Education Statistical Abstract 2001; Education Sector Fact-file 2002*: 1, 4; *New Vision*, May 12, 2003). Such extent of achievements in total enrolment, GER, NER and NIR show substantial steady progress towards ensuring the attainment of enrolment in and access to primary schooling in Uganda for all eligible children. This is all primarily due to the UPE policy launched in 1997.

Across all 12 districts and 60 sites where a second national participatory poverty assessment study was conducted between 2001-2002 (UPPAP2), UPE was highly appreciated by community members and most especially by the 'poor', the vulnerable groups (including women, children, disabled, orphans, elderly, widows, youth, etc.), local leaders and key service providers because of improvements in access, equity and quality. Altogether, community members gave ten reasons for their strong appreciation of UPE. These are: increased access/enrolment especially of girls, disabled and the very poor; improvements in school physical facilities; improved teacher motivation; higher savings for secondary education due to reduced household expenditure on primary education; improved 'quality'; improved household hygiene; improved community discipline; reduced child labour; reduced incidence of early marriages; and establishment of more private schools (see *Deepening the Understanding of Poverty 2002*: 139-40). However, UPE was most deeply appreciated because of two major reasons. As one PTA committee member in **Kihagani, Masindi district** said, '*UPE has helped us to acquire textbooks and furniture, including desks*'. Most significantly, as one poor woman explains, UPE has led to increased access and enrollment especially for the very poor:

*'Formerly some of our children used to rear goats while others used to remain at a hill where they would wait to push bicycles of fishmongers and get money, but now they all go to school'* (a poor woman in a community meeting in **Kakabagyo, Rakai district**).

### 4. Challenges of universal access in Uganda

Despite the success of UPE, UPPAP2 findings (like UPPAP1) raise serious concern about the implementation of the policy in Uganda. Although it is a key policy priority objective to

improve considerably the quality of primary education (see *ESIP* 1998: 5), deterioration in quality of primary education was cited in the majority of sites across all 12 districts as *the* major negative effect of UPE. Deteriorating UPE quality was most frequently related to the following five negative effects of UPE: overcrowding due to extra-large classes; inadequate training, motivation, commitment and monitoring of teachers; less active and voluntary contribution by parents to primary education; less disciplinary controls and regulation (due also to the June 1997 ban on corporal punishment); and lack of housing for teachers especially in rural areas. As one local leader explained:

*'How can a P7 graduate teach P7 pupils and they pass? We cannot have first grades in our schools....'* (a Local Councilor in **Kitemba, Mubende district**).

UPPAP2 established three major indicators of deterioration in UPE quality in Uganda, namely: the poor/low UPE output and in-puts, and the low system efficiency. The crosscutting indicator of low UPE output most frequently mentioned was the very few or declining number of PLE candidates passing in the first grade/division. However, inability to read and write or speak good English was another indicator of poor UPE output frequently cited. UPE quality was also perceived to be declining because of the many indicators of poor or low inputs, including the inadequate numbers of trained teachers and many untrained teachers, poorly motivated teachers, inadequate textbooks and other teaching aids, lack of UNEB exam centers, inadequate classrooms and desks, etc. There was also widespread concern about the policy of «automatic promotion» of pupils to higher grades up to PLE coupled to the inability of some pupils to read and write or speak good English. 'Automatic promotion' was said to encourage emphasis on simply doing/sitting exams, and not on passing the exams. Hence, absenteeism was rife during most of the year except during end-of-year promotional exams. And, pupils thus reach PLE when still academically weak as one 'brick-maker' explained below:

*'UPE emphasizes promotion rather than efficiency. It is so bad that children in UPE schools can neither read nor write their names, yet they keep on being promoted to higher classes. UPE promotes failures, for example, a child who scores 80 marks out of 400 can take the 12<sup>th</sup> position out of 600 pupils. These are all failures and yet they are promoted to the next class'* (a brick makers' view of UPE quality in **Busanzi B, Bugiri district**).

The 2002 indicators for GER and GIR in Uganda are 140.5% and 193%, respectively. These figures suggest that there are still many pupils that begin primary schooling when they are older (or younger) than the official starting age of six years, and who repeat grades. The latter is also indicated by the increasing figures for repetition rate between 2001 and 2002 from 9.5% to 11%, and the declining figures for survival rate to the end of primary schooling from 66% to 58% over the same period. These indicate low levels of system efficiency and quality of learning in Uganda (see *2002 EFA Global Monitoring Report*: 19). There is also a general sense that, in spite of a programme like UPE that is aimed to eliminate the cost of primary education, government's effort to increase access have been heavily biased in favour of the rich and failed to make a contribution to enhancing broad and equitable access to education at the primary level (see Deininger 2000:2-3). UPPAP2 findings show that high financial costs were the most frequently cited reason for absenteeism and dropping out. Parents from different backgrounds and livelihoods (e.g. rural, urban, pastoral, fishing, etc.) said they are unhappy with the extra-UPE charges because they stop some children from attending UPE. The categories of children most affected were especially the destitute, those from relatively large but poor households, orphans, and those belonging to the marginal urban poor. For example, one local leader had this to say:

*«If some parents cannot provide books and pens to their children, how can they pay such PTA fees? For parents who have 4, 5 or more children at school, how can they afford the building fees per child, all the maize per child and all the milling fees per child? And yet they send our children back home for non-payment of those fees. We have no choice but to keep our children in the village and cut sugarcane»* (a male Local Councilor (village) official in a Focus Group Discussion, **Lwitamakoli, Jinja district**).

And, UPPAP2 findings indicate that community perceptions of the impact of private schools on government-aided UPE schools were mixed. Although the general perception was that private schools have reduced distances to school in some cases, reduced overcrowding in some schools and are offering better quality of schooling/education given the relatively smaller class sizes, better teacher salaries/incentives, and lesser teacher absenteeism, etc., some communities said that the attraction of private provision of primary education has a negative impact on UPE schools (see MoFPED (October 2002), *Internal Synthesis Document 3: PPA2 Cycles 1, 2 & 3 Findings* (Draft), Kampala, UPPAP, pp. 274-5). Private schools were accused of encouraging theft and illegal sale of textbooks supplied by government in support of UPE to private providers therefore causing perpetual scarcity of textbooks and high pupil per textbook ratio. They were also blamed for the high teacher attrition and/or absenteeism from UPE schools, therefore causing the deterioration of the quality of UPE. Primary teachers, especially in the rural areas, have been abandoning the profession at a rate of 35% over the last three years (2000-2002) (see *New Vision* May 19, 2003:32).

## **5. UPE policy analysis and its implications for EFA targets in Uganda**

Analysis of the UPE policy in Uganda reveals there is welcome evidence of some success in achieving a key policy priority objective and strategy of improving access, equity and physical facilities expansion at the primary level. The policy shift during 2002 from FOUR children per family, as earlier stipulated when the UPE policy was first launched, to ALL children has made a significant contribution, and partly this strategy may in the long run turn out to be critical to sustaining progress towards and to achieving the UPE goal by 2015. However, the major challenge facing UPE in Uganda is the deteriorating quality mainly due to poor or low inputs especially teachers and teaching materials including textbooks, overcrowding due to extra-large classes and lack of inspection/monitoring of teachers, and due to low system efficiency especially the high rate of absenteeism/dropping out and the widespread practice of 'automatic promotion'.

UPPAP2 found out that inadequate training, motivation, commitment and monitoring of teachers, lack of housing for teachers especially in rural areas, extra-large classes due to few teachers and the negative influence of private schools, among others, were most frequently related to the deteriorating quality of UPE in Uganda. Therefore, motivating teachers to work in public schools, especially in rural and difficult-to-live-in areas, and improving supervision and monitoring by district school inspectors are among the strategies that may prove vital to sustaining progress towards and to achieving the 'quality' EFA goal by 2015. This was also the most frequently mentioned community recommendation to improve UPE quality in Uganda (see *Deepening the Understanding of Poverty* 2002: 156).

Overcrowding due to extra-large classes has implications for the state of school physical facilities as well. So far, much has already been achieved in the expansion of school physical facilities in Uganda, especially the construction of classrooms. Nevertheless, although some sort of building is necessary for a school to operate effectively, some studies (see, e.g.,

Fuller 1987; McGinn & Borden 1995:18, 78) show little or no relationship between the quality of buildings and student learning. If pupils learn as much in inexpensive schools, government should build less expensive schools so that saved resources can be used on other relevant aspects of quality including motivating and training/recruiting more teachers. After all, the Classroom Completion Grant (CCG) and School Facility Grant (SFG) funds provided by central government have been the centre of widespread corrupt practices in Uganda including: diversion of funds by local governments and hence delays in remitting UPE grants to schools; irregularities and delays in the tendering process by local governments and urban authorities tender boards; district technocrats and officials conniving with contractors to do shoddy construction work, etc. (see *New Vision* May 14, 15, 19, 2003: 3, 4, 30-31, respectively). Besides, *ESIP* stipulates that construction of new classrooms is to be achieved mainly via parallel investments of government and community utilizing local materials and resources. However, UPPAP2 found out that deteriorating UPE quality was also frequently related to the less active and voluntary contribution by parents to primary education following the introduction of UPE. Therefore, government ought to consider seriously re-sensitizing parents/guardians both about their responsibilities under UPE, including the policy requirement that they retain responsibility for the expansion of primary classrooms, and about the overall value of their contribution towards improving UPE quality.

High financial costs were the most frequently cited reason for absenteeism and dropping out. UPE regulations in Uganda prohibit turning away from school children that default on the UPE-related charges and especially uniforms, scholastic materials and lunch at school fees. The Ministry of Education and Sports needs to devise a feasible mechanism for enforcing this regulation because UPPAP2 found that children without scholastic materials and/or uniform were turned away from school in very many cases. Government finds the policy of «automatic promotion» expedient perhaps because Uganda has both high levels of enrolment and of grade repetition and dropout. However, there is widespread concern about this policy. It is noteworthy that internal efficiency can be symbolically improved by automatic promotion, but a real improvement in quality of learning requires attention to the causes of low learning in school. Remedial work designed to help failing pupils to succeed can be carried out by teachers, or by pupil peers. But remediation requires an adequate understanding of the failing students' learning problems. Therefore, unless a specific policy framework and strategy for implementing automatic promotion is designed and effected, the widespread haphazard practice of automatic promotion in Uganda threatens to undermine the progress made so far or likely to be made in the future towards achieving the quality education goal by 2015.

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**THE TURNING POINT: FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KENYA**

Salome Gichura, National EFA Co-ordinator, Nairobi  
Email: Sfpmoest@todays.co.ke

On January 6<sup>th</sup> 2003, the Kenyan children started the day with new vigour and hope. At last a new era in education had dawned. Primary education was free and all that was required, was for every child regardless of age to walk to a school next to where they live. From then on, the child was to fully participate in school until completing the cycle. To ensure full and quality participation the Kenya Government provided funds for purchase of all teaching learning materials, teachers' salaries, funds for capacity building programmes for education managers to oversee programme implementation. All levies and fees hitherto charged in primary schools were abolished.

To meet the commitment the Government earmarked Kshs.5.4 billion from its budget which was reallocated for implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE). A further Kshs.4 billion was raised from the external partners who support education. As in many African nations that have implemented FPE, the question of sustaining FPE when there has been a heavy initial dose of donor funds injected into the programme is still a big debate in Kenya.

The outcome of these joint efforts was the increase in enrolments from 5.8 million children in December 2002 to 7.2 million in May 2003, a GER of 104%. This was the best thing that had happened to Kenyan children. In the past two decades, primary education was characterised by declining enrolments at all levels of education and especially at the primary school level. About 53% of children who had enrolled in Std. I in 1994 did not complete the primary school cycle.

Both the print media and electronic media were awash with excited children of all ages rushing through the school gates to find space to interact with the intellectual world. It is significant to note that there is a high demand for education in Kenya. Parents place a high premium to quality education as this is seen as the only opportunity to break away from poverty. This has roots in the historical and economic transformation of Kenya where a diploma is perceived as a gateway to a white collar job that places the beneficiaries in the high echelons of our society.

This is all the more so because vocational and technical skills acquisition has not been at the centre of our education programmes and millions of children exit from our schools without acquiring skills for self survival and advancement. The question we need to ask ourselves is whether it is the curriculum or the teaching process adopted in our schools which is to blame. Academic education is nevertheless perceived as a channel to self advancement and is therefore the high demand.

It is important to note that six months down the road after the joyful entry to schools by the 1.4 million children there are challenges that have been experienced and that threaten the gains so far realised. FPE was a turning point to the 1.4 million children who in the past could not access schools due to the many charges levied. However, in the urban, peri-urban and rural schools situated in densely populated areas, overcrowding of children has been reported. The average school size in 2002 was about 340 students with the largest primary school having no less than 1,600 pupils.

With the new FPE, these figures have increased to about 400 and substantially over 2000 respectively. Adequate and timely data is not available in most cases and it is therefore difficult to determine the number of children still not reached and even the number of those who will enter the system in any one given year so as to plan for them.

Goal No. 2 in the Dakar Framework of Action calls for the attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE). Kenya has set the year 2005 as the target date for attainment of UPE. Free Primary Education is therefore a key strategy the country has adopted with a view to moving towards the UPE goal of 2005. This is further enhanced by the Children's Act 2001, which Kenya has enacted as it provides for free and compulsory education at primary level.

Although the country has taken the bold step to launch FPE, there are serious but hopefully surmountable challenges especially in maintaining quality. FPE calls for additional instructional materials especially textbooks, supplementary reading materials, reference books, exercise books and other stationery; need for additional teaching staff especially in areas mentioned above where there is high pupil/teacher ratios, retraining of staff to cope with the new situation in classrooms and the need to build capacity of education managers and inspectorate staff to continuously manage and supervise the programme for timely intervention.

The Government's concern is that quality is at the core of FPE if the programme is to meet its stated objectives of providing sustainable development for the country. Provision of quality education is further entrenched in the Dakar Framework of Action; Goal No. 6 recognises education as that education that enriches the lives of all learners regardless of their backgrounds. Quality education for all requires healthy, well nourished and motivated children; well trained teachers and active learning techniques; adequate facilities and learning materials; a relevant curriculum that builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender sensitive, healthy and safe; a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and value; participatory governance, management and respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures.

Abolition of all fees and charges levied to parents before the introduction of FPE means that responsibility of ensuring quality rests with the Government. Such charges were used to procure the teaching learning materials for use in schools. Conventionally, quality has been equalled to the number of pupils who pass and join the few quality secondary schools at the end of the eight year primary cycle. But this conceptualisation has now changed as Kenya has embraced the New Partnership for Development (NEPAD) Goals and Millennium Development Goals which calls for the holistic development of children- so that they can compete equally and fully within the national, regional and international arena.

To ensure that the quantitative growth in education, brought about by the FPE initiative does not compromise its quality, the Government has adopted a participatory planning approach involving all stakeholders to not only enhance governance but to also secure better impact by creating a sense of ownership of the programmes and policies being implemented. To tap on this resource, a wide spectrum of stakeholders including renowned educationalists, religious leaders, parents, communities, the private sector and development partners have been involved in implementation of FPE.

One of the challenges alluded to earlier, and currently being experienced in schools, is overcrowding of classrooms especially in the densely populated areas which have led to very

high pupil teacher ratios in some cases going up to a PTR of 1:100. To ensure that quality is enhanced in such schools the Government has introduced double shift with a view to maximising utilisation of space. There are also plans to construct temporary classrooms to accommodate the extra numbers and to also build new schools especially in the slum areas. However, Kenya is proceeding very cautiously in construction of new schools before the existing ones have been utilised to full capacity. A school mapping exercise is under way and it is only after its completion that a full-scale plan for construction of new schools will be developed. This is one of the lessons that Kenya has learnt from those countries that have been implementing FPE, that after a few years, enrolments start to stabilise and schools have been left with under utilised facilities that have cost the Government a lot of funds that would otherwise have been channelled to provide quality inputs.

The number of teachers nationally is not a major constraint because our PTR with FPE stands at 1:41 up from 1:32. However, deployment of teachers remains inefficient and new measures will be needed to improve their utilisation. Currently, teacher balancing is ongoing to ensure that children in all schools are taught. However, the challenge is to identify the teachers who can really teach as statistics show that some are affected by HIV/AIDS and other related ailments. The need to also reorient the teachers to cope with the new challenges at the classroom level is critical.

Kenya has had a long standing policy of providing textbooks to pupils. However, in some areas, the pupil/book ratios still remain high at 1:10. For effective learning and teaching and to maintain quality of the FPE programme, the Government will provide textbooks at the ratio of 1:2 for upper primary and 1:3 for lower primary which faces severe book shortages as teachers concentrate on purchasing books for the upper classes which are preparing for examinations. In addition, school-based choice of learning and teaching materials from an approved list of competitively priced textbooks is being implemented to ensure value for the shilling to the child. The provision of decentralised demand-side purchasing of teaching learning materials under the control of staff and the parents of individual schools will ensure that children receive books on time.

The management of the total education system is being strengthened through capacity building programmes and provision of facilitation tools to ensure that implementation of FPE programme is monitored and supervised for timely intervention. In addition, the sector will be decentralised with devolution of powers in agreed areas to facilitate speedy delivery of services to the child and to also enhance transparency and accountability.

It is important to note that Kenya has a well entrenched private sector that provides about 20% (MOE Statistical Unit) of education in the country. However, the institutions are beyond reach for the majority of Kenyans because of cost. Therefore the need to offer quality education in our public institutions cannot be over-emphasised. If the public education system does not compete equally with the private sector, it therefore means that quality education will elude the majority of Kenyan households and will be a preserve for the elite who can afford to meet the high fees charged in private institutions.

On the lower end of private provision of education are the majority of community schools which have been started by communities especially in the urban slums where about 60% (City Education Department, 2000) of the urban dwellers live. The schools/centres offer non formal education which is attractive to the majority of children from poor households due to its flexibility and the opportunity cost of being in school. The schools do not receive any support from the Government and purely survive on community and well wishers' goodwill. The schools are dilapidated and the majority are wanting in some respects. The

survival rates of those who join is low and those who participate to the end leave without having acquired any meaningful levels of mastery in numeracy and literacy or any other survival skills. It had been expected that with FPE such children will join the formal schools. However, the challenge is that even if education is free, not all children will join as most of them come from difficult socio-economic backgrounds; others are still bound by cultural and religious practices that create gaps between them and the schools. Therefore, even as we address quality in the formal institutions, this should be extended to reach all children wherever they are gathered receiving education. This should be the spirit of UPE.

The dilemma for Kenya especially is how to reach out to these children outside the formal system to provide them with quality services that enhance their holistic development. The challenge is how the country will move towards the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All goals of having all children participate and complete a full course of quality primary schooling by 2015.

*The financing needs for FPE are considerable and without adequate funding there is a danger that the newly enrolled school children will fail to learn much in the schools and that the gains under the FPE programme will start to witness a decline.*

The Government will adopt policies and strategies to ensure that public financing to education does not rise any further as a proportion of total Government spending. To achieve this the Government will: address the household cost of financing education; the high percentage of public expenditure allocated to personal emoluments at the expense of other education services, reduce the unit cost of education by revising the curriculum and raise the internal efficiency of the schooling system.

In conclusion drastic education reforms designed and owned by Kenyans are the only way Kenya can assure its citizens of quality education that will attract and retain children within the education system. Such deliberate effort will open the gates for the majority of children who have not been reached in the past and will break down the barriers to quality education. African Governments need to rethink their policies and framework for FPE to ensure that quality is not a trade off for quantity if our school products are going to have a competitive edge in the international arena. To end, I wish to quote the words of J. F. Kennedy the American President who said that, and I quote, «It is one thing to open the gate and it is another thing to make people walk through the gate».

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### THE EFA BANDWAGON: HAS QUALITY BEEN LEFT BEHIND IN TANZANIA?

John Durkin, Support to Education in Primary Schools' (STEPS) Project,  
Aga Khan Foundation, Dar Es Salaam  
Email: durkin@raha.com

*This article highlights some issues surrounding the quality dimension of EFA that have emerged from AKF's active engagement in the process of reform in basic education in Tanzania from 1998 to date. The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily shared by the Aga Khan Foundation.*

#### Background

Tanzania has, over the past five years, committed itself, unreservedly, to an overall poverty elimination strategy (Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and PRSP-2001) and to the goals of EFA as a key pre-requisite and strategy for combating poverty. Since 1995, a series of education reforms to address serious problems of access, resources, quality and management have been introduced through the vehicle of an education sector development programme (ESDP). A major outcome of this process has been the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) covering primary education provision, as well as education for out-of-school children and youth, for the period 2002-2006. PEDP has been designed to specifically address the Dakar EFA and Millennium Development Goals and is articulated in terms of its four strategic priorities :

- **Enrolment expansion** for the achievement of Universal Primary Education by 2006; also a focus on teacher recruitment and deployment and classroom construction
- **Quality improvement:** for improved overall achievement of male and female pupils in the context of child-friendly primary schools; it encompasses INSET/PRESET training, and teaching and learning materials provision
- **Management improvements** through strengthened institutional and human resource capacity and improved governance at central, Local Government Authority (LGA) and school levels
- **Optimised resource utilisation** through reform of the sector's institutions, devolved roles & responsibilities, increased funding commitments and partnerships with donors, NGOs and civil society.

The design, development and implementation of PEDP has been through a classic application of the sector wide approach (SWAp), with consultative and policy making structures being put in place and pooled donor funding support mechanisms made available to Government. PEDP was finalised in mid-2001 and became operational from January, 2002.

#### The PEDP Balance Sheet

Eighteen months into implementation of PEDP, what are the indications as to progress? There are some strong positives:

- The process has been genuinely consultative and has positively engaged a wide range of education stakeholders from the government, donors and civil society
- The reform agenda has taken root in the education system and is firmly situated in the context of national and local government development programmes
- Abolition of fees and «compulsory» contributions at primary level has provided some relief to parents in rural and urban areas
- Access-related targets – enrolment rates, new classrooms built, extra teachers recruited and deployed – have been substantially met or exceeded to date
- Devolved funding and financing mechanisms – development and capitation grants – to schools have had a generally positive impact and are beginning to engender greater local ownership and empowerment

On the downside, however, there are a number of concerns relating to the achievement of the quality goals and strategies:

- Though policies and planned targets for the access and quality improvement components were developed concurrently and given equal weighting in the PEDP plan, programmes and actions relating to quality improvement have been accorded lesser priority compared to elements of the access component; implementation of quality improvement strategies in the area of teaching and learning at teacher college and school levels, as well as the capacity development of key cadres at district, ward, school and community levels, has seriously lagged behind infrastructural developments
- Quality improvement programmes and strategies thus far developed under PEDP have been mainly in the traditional «input» areas of the quality education input-process-outcome framework espoused by EFA (Unesco 2003:81) – curriculum, PRESET and INSET, textbook resources and assessment. Very little attention has been paid to the development of strategies to enhance competencies and management/leadership skills of the change agents at various levels in the system who deal directly with the «process» part of the quality framework. Numerous research and evaluation studies have pointed to the critical role of these change agents if quality initiatives are to succeed.
- Achievement of enrolment targets through sensitisation and political campaigns and the effective application of the admission mechanisms has had an immediate and negative impact on the quality of education provided in schools – increased class sizes, pressure on facilities and learning resources, wider age ranges in lower grades, double-shift teaching, etc., have all contributed to increased stress on both individuals and the system. Unless quickly addressed, the danger is that these «successes» will further severely compromise existing standards of provision and, more ominously, future aspirations and interventions to promote quality improvement (URT:2003).
- Though PEDP (MOEC 2001: 9) identified the teacher as being pivotal to the success of quality improvement interventions in schools and classrooms, in reality, as the plan has begun to be implemented, the teacher appears to be, once more, a silent, unregarded, undervalued and much put-upon onlooker in the unfolding reform process

Though PEDP still has over three years to run, there are clear signs that history is about to repeat itself and that the programme might very well go the way of the first UPE campaign in the mid-seventies. That campaign achieved, through strong political will, centralized planning, and donor support, excellent access targets in the short term which were unsustainable in the long run due to financial constraints, lack of social ownership and the absence of quality.

So, why is the EFA «wagon» going off the tracks? Two areas need to be examined: the nature of the «wagon» itself and the «locomotive» process which drives its implementation.

## 1. EFA

King (2003) has questioned the underlying validity of the EFA goals and MDG targets, their simplification of complex issues, their lack of congruence and their often simplistic application in development processes. The Dakar goal relating to quality commits to:

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

This is characterised in the EFA Global Monitoring Report Summary (page 11) as a composite goal. It bears all the hallmarks of a compromise in caucus and few of the attributes needed for it to be translated into development planning realities. It begs more questions than it answers- what exactly are the recognized and measurable learning outcomes? Is it realistic to think of improving all aspects of the quality of education? What is meant by «excellence of all»?

This lack of clarity in relation to the vision for quality education impacts in two areas. Firstly, it reinforces, in the planning process, the perception that access/expansion goals are «hard» and achievable while quality goals are «messy» and distant. This translates, in practice, into precisely the sort of trade-off cautioned against in the EFA Monitoring report (page 80) – expansion is achieved at the expense of quality. Secondly, it enhances the tendency to see monitoring of quality interventions and outcomes as an «after-the-fact» event rather than being built into the process from the beginning. Indeed, the chapter on quality in the EFA Report appears to consist of a string of apologies for not being able to say anything significant on the monitoring of quality!

The quality dimension of EFA has three challenges to meet:

- Quality needs greater prominence – it should be seen as an equal and concurrent partner of access-related issues and concerns and not a secondary or subsequent goal/component. It also needs to be more widely recognised that access/expansion issues such as infrastructure and teacher recruitment have crucial quality dimensions.
- The Quality Agenda needs to be more clearly articulated – not so much in ideal terms as in what is appropriate and realisable in a given range of contexts. What exactly is meant by «adequate quality education»? Articulation of such an agenda is best served by a bottom-up process rooted in participation and ownership. Equally important is how this agenda and knowledge are presented and packaged for opinion and decision makers in the policy and development domains
- It is not sufficient to assess quality education in terms of indicators, or proxy indicators, relating to qualifications of teachers, teacher-pupil ratios, book ratios, levels of investment and the like; quality indicators of teaching and learning outcomes need to be more systematically developed and disseminated

## 2. The SWAp Locomotive

The SWAp approach is the «mechanism of choice» for donors funding education sector reform programmes in the developing world. Experience to date of the SWAp process in Tanzania has revealed a number of shortcomings:

The process appears to have far greater utility for donors in terms of improved co-ordination, target and conditionality-setting, accountability and progress/results monitoring than it is of benefit to Ministries of Education in terms of the development of human and

institutional capacity, improved planning and quality assurance and the ownership and development of new models and modalities. Indeed, SWAp implementation mechanisms often take on the characteristics and thrust of the «project» they were supposed to supplant.

SWAps tend to re-inforce the emphasis given to access-related goals over quality-related interventions. Is this because the former tend to generate outputs that are more immediately verifiable and «validateable» vis-à-vis political and development agendas, whereas quality outcomes are more complex, indirect, a bit messy and rather long term? Can SWAps and sector reform programmes which are, by design, highly time-bound, deal adequately with the quality dimension of education?

Donor and government monitoring, through joint review processes and public expenditure reviews, mainly focuses on assessments of plan objectives and budgetary deadlines and targets; far less attention is paid to the quality of such interventions or the medium to long-term implications for quality of fast-tracked targets. A good example from PEDP is the adoption of a new, and untested, PRESET training mode for teachers – one year in college, one in the ‘field’ - in order to meet the personnel gap created by increased enrolment. Will these teachers be any better or more effective than those trained in the crash programmes of the first UPE campaign in the seventies which led to short-term access achievements but long term quality deterioration?

Despite being recognised as an essential element of the SWAp mode, CIDA ( 2000), programmes to enhance the professional and technical capacity of those personnel in Ministries and other associated institutions charged with the design, implementation and monitoring of sector plans and interventions have been given insufficient attention. This can have major implications in the programming stage when these professionals are required to develop detailed strategies and interventions to address particular visions, objectives and concepts. PEDP, for example, talks of «child-friendly schools» and «child-centred learning», yet it is becoming clear, as the plan moves into implementation, that there is a lack of a common, shared understanding of these concepts, as well as the information and knowledge base necessary to develop appropriate and realistic programmes and strategies. Moreover, due to its tight deadlines and hectic pace of implementation, the SWAp process seems to offer few «spaces» for individual and institutional learning to take place.

The SWAp approach «does business» with existing planning and administrative structures and implementation of reform policies and structures is the responsibility of the relevant sector ministry. The mindset, culture and capacities of the system and its personnel are critical to the success of the reform process but if the various levels of the system remain largely unreformed then what might be the expectations regarding successful quality improvements?

There would seem to be a case for an overhaul of the locomotive or even a complete change of engine.

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### **BASIC EDUCATION FOR WHAT? LITERACY SKILLS DEFICIENCIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Robinah Kyeyune , School of Education, Makerere University, Kampala  
Email: namande2001@yahoo.com

Goal 4 of Education for All (EFA) enshrines the acknowledgement of literacy and numeracy as a human right. Expressing commitment to adult literacy, the goal states the target for «... achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults .» Global trends are reported to indicate «undeniable but slow» progress, although it is feared that illiteracy rates may actually rise in the least developed countries. (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002). This fear may indeed be justified, considering the quality of learning in primary school and the actual abilities of primary school leavers. If «to build and sustain a livelihood and to participate in society» as well as aspire for further learning are the envisaged benefits of literacy attainment, a review is necessary to assess the extent to which the large numbers of children accessing basic education are equipped with these abilities. This article argues that while the world may be realising a push in the drive towards adult literacy, attention needs to be given to the attainment of literacy by the large numbers of children who are being helped to access basic education. Otherwise they will leave school only to add to the numbers of adults who cannot communicate effectively or engage in development discourse because they lack the essential basic literacy skills. It uses the case of ongoing research in Uganda to illustrate that a significant majority of children in lower and upper primary school cannot read, write, listen, speak or compute effectively and may be condemned to exclusion from participation.

Developing literacy among her citizens is a key national goal of primary education in Uganda, clearly articulated in the Government White Paper on Education (1992) following a recommendation of an earlier education review commission, which states:

*... to eradicate illiteracy and equip the individual with basic skills and knowledge to exploit the environment for self development, better health, nutrition and family life and capability for continued learning (Report of Education Policy Review Commission, 1989).*

Certainly, careful monitoring of teaching practices for the development of learners' language proficiency is necessary if this quality must be achieved. However, there is, so far, no framework in the formal education system for literacy development and assessment. An assumption is apparent that access to formal primary education in itself guarantees the quality we are aspiring for.

#### **Literacy targets**

Ongoing QUEST (Quality Education for Social Transformation) research and development activities indicate unsatisfactory levels of literacy skills development in Uganda's formal schools. QUEST development activities are based on the general assumption that quality primary education should result in an improved quality of life. In particular the literacy skills development project is premised on the assumption that the attainment of optimal literacy levels is a prerequisite of effective learning for individual and social gains. Viewing literacy in terms of all the four language-based skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, QUEST research has probed stakeholders' expectations for the levels of reading, listening, writing and speaking ability of children at lower and upper primary school. Stakeholders included parents, teachers, potential employers, language teaching specialists and researchers, faith groups and the pupils.

English is significant not only as the medium of instruction at upper primary but also the medium of terminal assessment in the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). Perhaps more significantly, English is the language of educational success. Proficiency in the language is, especially for parents, who are a major education stakeholder, a priority indicator of an educated, or at least schooled, individual. Pupils, too, have indicated that English is important as the official language of Uganda and schools, and as an international language. They wish to learn it because they «want to get good jobs» and «to succeed in life».

Stakeholders' expectations have been expressed as hypothesised English literacy skills norms for the two levels and have guided the design of literacy tests for assessing the actual abilities of the specified groups of learners. Assessed using instruments suited to their age and class level, learners are expected, for instance, to be able to write personal letters, study notes and notices; to complete forms; write simple stories, and construct correct sentences. They are expected to describe events, objects and people effectively in speech and writing and to report events. Stakeholders expect them to be able to explain simple and common scientific processes and mathematical functions both orally and in writing. They are also expected to be able to follow lessons, news broadcasts, oral instructions and sermons. Stakeholders expect learners at both levels to interpret information in verbal, numeric or graphic form and articulate it in a different form; follow and enjoy simple stories and poems; follow newspaper articles and understand written instructions as well as notices and advertisements. They also expect them to understand sacred books.

The literacy tests were taken by children selected randomly at the two levels in ten schools from each of fifteen districts selected out of the fifty six in the country.

### **Literacy assessment**

Results of the test results indicate that teaching in primary schools has not equipped learners with the expected abilities. Pupils' performance in the different tests strongly suggests that at both lower and upper primary, literacy attainment is very low. A vast majority of the children in the sample lacked proficiency in English and, sadly, in their mother tongue, which many of them pleaded that we allow them to use during the tests, explaining that they «do not understand English».

### **Reading**

Although interview responses and lesson observation suggest that teachers spend a lot of time and effort teaching reading, especially focusing on the sub skill of comprehension, test results suggest that even as late as the sixth year of primary school many learners have not stepped onto the road to effective reading. An extreme indication of the neglect of basic

reading skills is the strange behaviour of a few pupils at this level who held the print upside down but seemingly believed that they were reading. These pupils could not access any of the information in the test instruments. The vast majority of children in both groups were unable to read at the various levels of assessment. They could not interpret the instructions in the tests, and therefore did not attempt the tasks. They could not make sense of the verbal symbols that made up stories or even single words or sentences, and could not read graphic information such as was presented in graphs or pictures or picture stories.

Consequently they did not as much as demonstrate misinterpretation of the requirements or misunderstanding of the information in the test items. Errors in their responses would at least have suggested reading difficulty. But many test papers were returned with the space for their responses either unused, filled with some signs that cannot be called letters or pictures, or filled with print whose meaning had nothing to do with the tasks. Curiously, some children copied the print in some of the test items, including the instructions, into the space provided for readers' responses. Apparently, some of our *readers* have the ability to discern letter shapes and to transfer this perception onto paper as a copy of what they see. For their writing was quite accurate in letter formation and spelling. However, they did not meet the specified requirements. At upper primary, inability to read was exemplified by the pupils' lack of referencing skills since they could not use dictionaries effectively.

In focus group discussion teachers made jokes about the pupils' reading ineffectiveness, which nevertheless turn out to be serious statements of truth. One deputy headmaster said, for instance, «You see, your paper is much whiter than what they are used to.» It is true that the paper we saw in many schools was of a very poor quality. In contrast, the tests had been printed on very good quality paper,

We discovered though, from lesson observation in many schools, that the children rarely handled printed matter and had no practice in reading from books. Lessons were characterised by content laden teacher talk accompanied by some writing on the chalk board. Children often had to copy heavy content notes hurriedly from the chalk board into their exercise books, as teachers cleaned the boards to create space for more notes. An occasional chart or map on the wall might interrupt the talk and chalk practice, but these were not effectively used either. Books had no place in the lessons, although stacks of multiple copies of different subject textbooks were usually available in stores or in head teachers' offices. The more articulate children explained that once in a while, they may get a chance to read old newspapers or lone pages torn out of books and used to wrap something at a market or shop. In this culture it is likely that only children with particularly interested and supportive parents, or the foresighted and specially gifted children will learn to read and practise the skill in meaningful ways. Some children were misled by their teachers who, anxious to *help*, distorted the requirements spelt out in the instructions.

### **Speaking**

Inquiry revealed that teachers do not teach speaking and listening because, they argue, the skills are not examined. The results of this neglect are apparent in the learners' inability to compose in conversation or to speak freely and at length on a selected subject. Although the speaking tasks were based on the scope of the syllabuses besides the stakeholders' expectations, the children in the sample needed a lot of prompting from the test administrators, and even then, did not say much. They had very limited vocabulary and structures and very few had any confidence to speak to adults. Many pupils at both levels often resorted to stating the facts learnt in Science and Social Studies when, for instance, asked to report an imaginary incident or describe a past event. They were evidently unable to talk about subjects or topics outside the classroom.

### Listening

Listening tests showed that both lower and upper primary pupils did not concentrate on detail or take in specific information in oral communication. This was despite the signals they sent to the speaker, both of listening intently and understanding. The signals included leaning forward and slightly inclining the head with ear towards speaker, looking steadily at the speaker, sometimes smiling and nodding at some detail, and seeming to reflect on the detail as it was articulated by the speaker. However, they could not answer questions based on specific detail in the listening texts. Very often they could not follow spoken instructions either and many did not accomplish the tasks based on these. Both groups of pupils had outstanding difficulty identifying the individual sounds in words or single words making up sentences.

### Writing

The majority of learners at both levels could not write simple stories or personal letters although their syllabuses for the levels specify this area among the teaching content. Learners at upper primary could not write simple paragraphs to explain common scientific processes or functions although they have learnt about them in class. Instead, most of them defined the processes in identical sentences. It would seem that the teaching content has not been translated into functional language practice. At both class levels pupils failed some writing tasks because they did not understand the instructions, since they could not read for meaning. Seeing one familiar content word, most pupils took it for granted that they were required to reproduce the factual content learnt in class.

### Conclusion

Our inquiry so far indicates that teaching practice in Uganda's primary schools has not catered for literacy development. Education for all might have been taken for granted to mean access but has not tackled issues of quality in learning. And pupils are far from the mastery of the skills that are fundamental to their attainment of both specific and broad personal and social goals of education, including using the language effectively and succeeding in school and in life. Treated in the EFA perspective of quality basic education, the issue is what benefit the children are gaining from primary education. It is clear that stakeholders should be concerned about how the system can be confident that those completing the seven year primary cycle will truly demonstrate the country's attainment of quality in the provision of basic education.

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**EDUCATION FOR ALL: IS TANZANIA ON TRACK?**

Eustella Bhalalusesa, Adult Education & Extension, University of Dar Es Salaam  
Email: bhalalusesa@edu.udsm.ac.tz

**Introduction**

In this brief paper an attempt is made to respond to the Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report: *Education For All: Is the world on track?*. While the report covers the six goals spelled out in the Dakar Framework for action on Education For All world-wide, this present report is focused on Tanzania only. In particular, the paper pays attention to goal number four of the Dakar Framework for action which demands that countries achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 especially for women and involving equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. In other words the gap that existed in 2000 should be halved. This means Tanzania has to improve by 50% the current literacy rate - from 68% to 84% in the 12 years to come. This is a big challenge given the socio-economic realities of the country. The analytical framework provided within the EFA Global Monitoring Report indicates that Tanzania is one of the countries that are at risk of not achieving the goal (p.93). Therefore, in the effort to assess the situation as reported in the monitoring report, this paper also tries to illuminate the possible challenges that contribute to the slow progress towards achieving this goal and gives recommendations for a way forward.

**Legislative and policy frameworks that guide the provision of adult basic education in Tanzania**

Tanzania believes in equality and also in the human right to education. This belief has been expounded in the constitution of the Ruling Party and that of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 as amended in 1984 although it is importantly not legally enforceable in court. Tanzania also has signed and ratified the international conventions concerning the right to education for all and also these are reflected in the national constitution and other policy documents like the Education and Training Policy (ETP) (1995) which is further translated into detailed strategies, plans and programmes in Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP) and Education Sector Development Programme (Ed-SDP). One would, therefore, expect Tanzania to be in a very strong position for promoting education for all. However, experience shows that a government may ratify human rights treaties without any cost implications and subsequently ignore them. It is often emphasised that mere ratification of international treaties does not necessarily reflect a government's commitment to implementing them.

In Tanzania, the recognition of international statements and declarations on domestic policies alone has not guaranteed realisation and enjoyment of the right to education for all. A national report assessing challenges and achievements of Education For All (EFA) for the past ten years (1990-2000), for example, pointed out clearly that although Tanzania has a strong commitment to ensuring the realisation of education for all, and has set in motion some analysis of the challenges facing basic education, the progress towards EFA has been much slower than anticipated. The report also noted with concern that the literacy rate, which allegedly reached almost 90% in 1986, had dropped to 84% in 1992 and has been dropping at the rate of 2% annually

### **The current context of adult basic and literacy education**

Literacy activities in Tanzania started ever since independence and gained momentum in the late 1960s. At independence, for example, 85% of the total population (80% men and 98% women) did not know how to read and write (Nationalist Newspaper, 24 August 1967). The government felt that it was unwise to leave adults in the state of illiteracy, for this would imply delaying the country's development for generations.

A series of adult basic and literacy education programmes were introduced so as to provide the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable youths as well as adults to overcome the life constraints. With these initiatives, Tanzania made impressive gains in the field of adult education especially adult literacy in the 1960s and 1970s. The campaign led to high rates of adult literacy from 15 percent in 1961 to 90.4 percent in 1986 (Elimu, 1993).

However, despite these achievements, the literacy gains could not be sustained. Since the mid and late 1980s, very few classes have been active. Studies conducted in the 1990s (Carr-Hill et al., 1991; Kadege et al., 1992) indicate that literacy and post literacy classes have almost ceased functioning. The situation has not changed much to-date (Mushi and Bhalalusesa, 2002). Currently, the illiteracy rate is estimated to be more than 32 percent of the adult population.

The reasons for this situation in which many adult literacy classes have ceased to function are attributed to lack of strong political will for community mobilization, combined with significant problems facing the adult literacy programme in terms of relevance, management, funding and low morale among adult literacy instructors most of whom were also untrained and are incompetent to teach adults.

This situation is inflated by late enrolment of children in school. Although the Education Act No. 25 of 1978 (amended in 1995) stipulates that all children should be enrolled in school when they are 7 years of age, in practice only a small proportion of the seven year olds are enrolled in school. Access to primary education for this legal age has been fluctuating in recent years, indicating that those who are enrolled are over age. Until 2001, only 4,842, 875 children of school age were in school. This represents a gross enrolment ratio (GER) of only 75% and a net enrolment ratio (NER) of only 57% (BEST, 2000).

The decline in enrolment is a result of many factors including abject poverty among parents who fail to meet the education costs, long walking distances to school, inadequate curricula, lack of value attached to education on the part of parents, and lack of space especially in urban schools like in Dar es Salaam.

It is also important to note that although recent statistics show that almost 5 million children of school age are in school, many of them drop out before completing grade IV which is considered to be the minimum necessary stage for literacy skills acquisition. Thus, adding weight to the problem of illiteracy already existing in the country. For example, it is estimated that, about 30% of children enrolling in Standard I, do not reach standard VII (UNESCO, 1998). Experience shows that it is children of the poor and marginalized groups who have a higher propensity to drop out than those of well to do people. As long as retention rate and survival rate at primary school is not 100%, there will be huge numbers of new illiterates each year.

In Tanzania, a special Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) has been conceived. The PEDP is targeting primary education strategic priorities in the areas of enrolment expansion;

quality improvement; capacity building; and optimum utilization of human and material resources. Through its affirmative operationalisation, which began in 2002, PEDP has started to show positive results. According to the Non-Formal Education (NFE) Status Report of 2002, the government (by September, 2002) managed to enrol 365,963 out-of-school children (240,280 boys and 125,683 girls) in various Complementary Basic Education Programme centres. The NFE Strategy has been initiated to address the backlog of unschooled children and youth. However, unless concerted efforts are also addressed to the adult population, EFA in Tanzania will remain more of a vision than reality.

#### **Possible threats to the achievement of EFA in Tanzania**

***Marginalisation of adult basic education.*** In Tanzania adult basic and literacy education is marginalized within the education system. For example, it has been noted that at the ministerial level, adult education that used to form an independent department with its own budget has been reduced into a mere unit within the office of the Commissioner for Education. This is evident in the Assessment Country Report on Education For All (URT, 2000) in which Tanzania provides a critical review of the major decisions and actions undertaken since the World Conference on Education For All. In the report heavy emphasis is placed on primary education while adult education as part of basic education is only mentioned in passing. For example, the section on investment in EFA since 1990 does not show how much was allocated and spent on adult basic education. Rather it shows budget allocation for primary education and other sectors as teacher, secondary, technical and higher education. It is not clear whether the budget allocated to primary education covers adult education also.

***Lack of strong political will.*** One of the major contributing factors to the achievement of 1970s within the education sector was the strong political will inherent within both government and political leaders at that time. The late President Nyerere (1961-1985), in particular, endeavoured to instil an understanding among his citizens of the importance of education and their role in implementation of Universal Primary Education through his numerous speeches. Resources were made available to facilitate community mobilisation and advocacy. These have remained to be memories of a proud past.

#### **Lack of quality facilitators**

Another key issue concerns the teaching force. In Tanzania, adult education programmes continue to rely heavily on untrained volunteer facilitators as well as primary school teachers. The primary school teachers take this as a part-time job and have proved to be unsuitable to handle adults. But it is also important to observe that for most people education alone is not a panacea for everything. Poor communities have multiple interrelated problems necessitating a multi-sectoral approach. This is still a challenge given that such approach demands skilled and specialized personnel.

#### **Lack of accurate and reliable data on adult education and literacy education.**

Available research findings show that there are still a large number of children, youth and adults with special learning needs, who cannot easily access formal system, such as pastoralists and nomadic communities, hunters, gatherers, working children, girls, the disabled, orphans, as well as street children and those displaced by armed conflicts in neighbouring countries. The exact number of these groups is not correctly known given the limited availability of reliable information and data in the sub-sector. The government has

established a system of gathering, storing and reporting information on adult basic and literacy education from communities through the district to the ministry level. However, the task of collecting, processing and keeping statistical data and information is not an easy undertaking as the Education Management Information System (EMIS) is lacking. Accurate, reliable and timely information on adult basic and literacy education at all levels is simply missing. This, then, creates a doubtful state of inaccurate and unrealistic data on aspects of literacy rate, number of out-of-school children, enrolment figures, learning centres, numbers of disabled children and so on.

### **Reaching the hard to reach and mobile communities**

Finally, there is the challenge of reaching the mobile pastoral communities given that the levels of participation in education and other development activities are seriously constrained by their high mobility.

### **Concluding remarks and recommendations**

Overall, the observation made in the monitoring report in so far as Tanzania is concerned is to a large extent valid. Given the nature of the report it was not possible to provide detailed status for each country that would lead to specific recommendations. In the following section, I provide some of the recommendations for a way forward.

#### **1. The need to revive a strong political will**

In the advent of harsh economic realities and insufficient resources, realisation of the Education For All depends for the most part on the voluntary consent of the government in power. The government needs to revive its commitment, create an enabling environment and demonstrate this in concrete activities to make EFA a reality particularly in allocation and distribution of resources. Despite its declining popularity among policy makers, adult basic education remains a sound investment. It provides a positive reinforcement in the next generation and enhances the productivity and well-being of the current adult population.

#### **2. The need for partnership and multi-sectoral collaboration**

There has been an encouraging record of cooperation between government and a variety of NGOs addressing issues of out-of-school children, youth and adult literacy. However, linkages among NFE institutions and between the government are weak and in most cases, district authorities do not know the NGOs or private agencies organising NFE programmes. Therefore, there is a need to establish key linkages and institutional collaboration between the government ministries, private agencies and institutions so as to address the problems of out-of-school children and youths and adults.

#### **3. The need for a holistic approach to education provision**

We have noted that for adults, education alone though important might not be a solution to the pressing immediate socio-economic problems. There is a need for the government and other interested parties including NGOs to look for alternative funding possibilities which will allow more investments in diversified programmes that address other aspects of peoples' lives such as HIV/AIDS, agriculture and health.

#### 4. The need for accurate data on adult basic education

Finally, there is a need for Ministry of Education and Culture to make adult basic education data part and parcel of the Ministry's Education Management Information System as well as to take stock of the many NGOs and private agencies involved in provision and to play a leading role in uniting, co-ordinating and supporting them.

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## QUALITY OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LEVEL: IS KENYA ON TRACK?

Wangari Mwai, Maseno University, Maseno, Kenya  
Email: wangaridoc@yahoo.com

### 1. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is very important in our endeavour to meet the targets for Education For All (EFA) which are: Quality early childhood education and care, Free and compulsory primary Education, Life skill and training for youth, Adult literacy, Girls education and relevant basic education. As reflected here, Early Childhood Development is a foundation on which our education for all and especially basic education should be founded.

### 2. Early childhood education: a definition

According to a supervisor (1) of Early Childhood Education within Kisumu municipality, this level comprises education that cares for the child from the foetal stage to age five. This expert came up with the following sub divisions of the level.

- (i) 0-1 years-Womb and Home training.
- (ii) 1-3 years – Baby/ Kindergarten class.
- (iii) 4 years- Middle class.
- (iv) 5 years-Pre unit.

Thus, at the age of six years, the child should be joining grade/ standard one. Learning at this level should be holistic. The expert told me that, ideally, the child should grow in stature, wisdom and socially. The learning environment should be conducive and should include play, acquisition of new knowledge and self and other discovery.

Our paper deals with **quality**. The quality of something is a judgement on the degree of overall excellence. Since it is a judgement; a person often uses his/ her own criteria to make the judgement. This is not much use if we wish to discuss «**quality of learning environment**» sensibly. Everyone needs to agree on the criteria. After such an agreement, then all are able to use the accepted criteria to evaluate learning situations. They are also able to identify weaknesses in terms of the criteria. This should help decide on steps to remedy any weaknesses. What the expert gave me, I believe is the agreed yardstick for the early childhood education in Kenya. An in-depth look at what the inspector told me to identifies three major areas namely: pupil characteristics, content characteristics and to some extent, the teacher characteristics. These are the ideals. However, numerous questions arise. For instance, how many Early Childhood centres meet this criterion? Secondly, are people who run such institutions even aware of such requirements?

Because of the obvious answers to these questions among others the state of these institutions is worrying. For one, owners and promoters of Early Childhood Education create the institutions as pathways for mothers to enter the job market. Indeed, not in one gender workshop have I heard advocates of gender equality fighting for the promotion of the same through investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres so that mothers can be free to grow in the development arena. Increasingly also, early childhood schooling is perceived as an easy profit making business for entrepreneurs who are short of skills, space

and capital. After all, all that you need is a room and parents who are desperate for a child minder or whose children have reached kindergarten age and the parents cannot afford to take them into the prestigious pre-schools. Due to this, the situation on the ground is often times worrying as demonstrated here-below.

### 3. The real situation

It is difficult to describe in brief the most common situations, or scenarios of Early childhood Learning environment. However, the case study below demonstrates main characteristic of the same:

The classroom is one half of a timber building with corrugated iron roof and no ceiling. The design betrays the fact that it was originally meant to be a shop. It is July. Kenya's most wet month. When the heavy rains fall, it is extremely difficult to hear a person speaking.

There are spaces between the timber and the chill flows in unabated. There is a small table which the teacher uses for her cane and books. It is thus a storage.

There are no shelves or flat working surfaces. There is one round table and unmatching small chairs crowded around it.

There are about thirty scantily dressed children, ranging from three years to five. One of them is loudly reading the alphabetical charts as the rest follow. It sounds like a Call-Response pattern of a folk song. There are a few other illustration charts with poorly done drawings. Some illustrates the numerals, others, names of animals and a few, names of people.

There is no children's work on display.

The teacher is a young woman who recently completed her four-year secondary school course. She hopes to join the private sponsored Early Childhood Teacher training through her church that runs this centre. Her pay is roughly Kshs. 800 per month. But all this depends on how fast the parents pay fees for the children. The fee is Kshs. 100 per child per month but it is rarely paid.

She lives in one room behind her classroom. As she sits at her table, she knits a sweater for her forthcoming baby. She wears a stern face and seems oblivious of what her pupils are doing.

### 4. Discussion on the case

From this case study, we derive the variables that have a relationship with the quality of a learning environment. These variables include; the **physical learning environment**, the **learner characteristics** and the **teacher characteristics**.

#### *4.1 Physical learning environment*

In this area, the most important aspects are the infrastructure and the availability and accessibility to learning materials. Apart from those sponsored by Non-governmental Organisations, most Early childhood Education centres lack adequate furniture. While some centres have no furniture at all, many more do not have enough for the number of enrolled pupils. Often times, the furniture does not match the physical size and stature of children.

This furniture that is ill- adapted to the physical size of children is uncomfortable and can cause postural discomfort and pain. Some centres have benches that are fixed too far from the table the children use. This strains the child's arm when writing. Typically, children bend over the writing table and this undesirable practice is due to a combination of poor seeing conditions and furniture misfits.

Another important and often overlooked aspect is relevance of the materials used and subsequently, the content learnt. The work of researchers indicates that the availability of good quality instructional material is an important factor on pupil achievement. Thus, well-produced and easily available reference material is an important asset. But, the contents that are irrelevant to the experiences of students, denigrate their culture or ignore their language, and are unlikely to stimulate interest or assist achievement.

#### *4.2. Learner characteristics*

Learner characteristics are the attributes that the pupils bring with them to school from their home and social environments. These are wide ranging. They affect how well the child responds to the learning environment. Important influences on the child's readiness for learning include: Nutrition; Level of physical and mental stimulation; Attitude of parents to school; Degree of parent caring in the home; The individual's personality.

In general, the health and nutritional status of Kenya rural children is far from satisfactory.. Growth retardation (as indicated by rates of stunting) and malnutrition are common and often relate in part to the high prevalence of infections and common illnesses among children. Children with communicable diseases and infections who come to school are likely to infect their classmates especially due to overcrowding. Many common health problems can also be associated with poor environmental health in and around the learning establishment. The prevalence of under nutrition and grade retardation are widespread especially in the rural areas and poor slum areas in the neighbourhood of urban centres. Poor health causes chronic absenteeism, which impedes performance. Hunger is also not rare. This is a stressful state that can interfere with the learning process. Due to poverty in their homes, many young children attend centres and go for long periods of time without eating. Some go without breakfast and many miss lunch. Others miss both lunch and breakfast. Hungry children are often less alert and lethargic.

At the family level, delayed entry, stagnation and also absenteeism coincides with the occupation of the parent. Among poor families high rates of absenteeism are often recorded due to lack of the small fee or health related problems. Most of the households depend on subsistence farming for survival. Household incomes, are therefore, likely to fluctuate around the poverty line frequently enough for the resultant nutritional shortfalls to lead to chronic malnutrition. At the same time, low household incomes lead to neglect of childhood illness, especially where households have to cost share in the provision of medical services. All these factors negatively affect the physical, emotional and cognitive development of the child.

#### *4.3 Teacher characteristics*

Borrowing from the ECD supervisor's analysis, the parent is a child's first teacher. Child psychologists and educators argue that the beginning of learning and good health is congenital. Parents therefore need to be sensitised on the fact that the foetus needs to be handled with care since its gestation period is a foundation to the future personality.

When the children join the centres, we observe that there is significant association between pupil quality of learning and the length and the nature of the teachers' post secondary schooling and the length of professional training the teacher have land.



A teacher's own educational level, professional training experience and motivation, acquisition of personnel needs, have an impact on how well her pupils perform.

The nutritional and motivational needs of teachers cannot be overlooked. In hardship areas, teachers may also be hungry and in need of a meal or a snack during the school day. Community spirit needs to be encouraged so as to promote sharing of food resources among all who are hungry.

The foregoing suggests that the professional training of the Early childhood teacher is of paramount importance. However, most countries, Kenya included, demand much lower entrance requirements for this level than others. Indeed, in Kenya, many early childhood education teaching posts are filled with the untrained people. Yet this is a crucial stage of cognitive and other significant modes of personality development. Sustaining ECD teachers is quite another matter. Firstly, there is a glaring discrepancy in that teachers at all other levels (primary school, secondary school, middle level colleges and university) are in salaried government employment. On the other hand, the ECD teacher, by Kenya government policy is not on the government payroll. Most urban councils pay regular salaries to ECD teachers similar to other teachers. This leaves out the ECD teachers in the rural areas. In theory, the community should pay these. In practice, their payment or non-payment vary from school to school and from season to season.

## **5. Conclusion and way forward**

The foregoing discussion, albeit brief, gives a number of tips on the quality of the learning environment at the ECD level with particular reference to the sector as a small enterprise concern in Kenya. We define learning environment to include the degree to which the school meets physical need of the learner, the learners' own characteristics and the characteristics of the instructor. One area that has not been catered for here is the instructional process. We observe that learning is incomplete unless there is a conscious effort to make it holistic. However, we note with concern that even at this very sensitive stage there is a lot of rote learning with a central focus to the cognitive development of the child. For instance, though the child might have acquired other skills at the ECD level, entry to grade one is determined by their achievements in the 3 Rs. Thus, achievement on such areas as health, social and cultural aspects or even spiritual dimensions is completely ignored. The pressure to acquaint the children with academic skills deprives them of playtime. This guides our judgement of quality of Kenya's ECD towards the negative scale.

Secondly, our analysis of the hypothetical case study unveils a lot that needs to be done to address a cross-section of challenges that deviate Kenya's ECD from the right track. To intervene in this, the following suggestions are made. Our government should:

- Endorse and disseminate learning comfort norms and learning environmental health standards for **all** ECD centres.
- Ensure a focus on the holistic development of the child. The interventions by NGOs are often entitled ECD Health and Nutrition. Due to this, it is quite possible to focus on health related interventions and forget the cognitive aspects of child development.. On the other hand, government driven interventions are geared towards cognitive achievements and may easily overlook the health and nutrition aspects.

- Identify, promote and disseminate the best package of health, nutrition and education interventions from among practises known to improve the lives of children, and which can be delivered at the ECD centres.
- Examine the possibility of instituting an ECD equipment scheme.
- Search for durable approaches for providing relevant instructional materials.
- Facilitate the raising of awareness of local communities about teachers' needs.
- Determine and review ECD teachers' salaries and conditions of services.
- Ensure provision of basic needs and services to ECD teachers in disadvantaged areas and communities.

In summary, early childhood education has, for a long time, been at the periphery of the education programming in Kenya. It was formerly considered as social rather than an education activity. There are no specific budget allocations for ECE, except for school inspection and minimal amounts for teacher training. Parents and the community, therefore, have to provide learning facilities and materials, somehow take care of the teacher, and generally run the programme. All these factors have serious implications for the cognitive development of the child at this foundational level. The importance of building this foundation should be reflected in adequate government allocation for ECD teacher payment and training. If this happens, then Kenya would be taking a giant step towards the right track in quality of learning environment at its ECD level.

Further, as indicated in the EFA Global Report of 2002, the extent of early childhood care and education (ECCE) is still relatively an uncharted territory. Comparative data in this area from diverse social, geographical and other significant areas of the country and regions need to be collected. Thus, there is need for serious research in this area.

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## **PROVISION OF QUALITY UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (UPE) IN UGANDA: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS?**

James Kakooza, Enhancement of Universal Primary Education in Kampala (EUPEK)  
Project, Kampala

Email: [jkakooza@akesu.org](mailto:jkakooza@akesu.org)

### **1. Introduction**

The quality of education in Uganda was greatly affected by the introduction of the education for all (Universal Primary education, UPE) due to the unexpected increase in pupil enrolment. For example since the introduction of UPE, enrolment has gone up by 139.7% i.e. from 3,068,625 in 1996 to 7,354,153 in 2002. This led to the overstraining of the available resources, leading to reduction in the quality of education. The resources that were affected most are: financial, infrastructure, scholastic material and human resources among others.

This paper discusses: human resources, infrastructure and financing as indicators of quality education in the context of the EFA global monitoring report, while drawing evidence from a practitioners point of view.

### **1.1 Pupil-Teacher and Pupil-Class Ratios and the quality of education**

In Uganda, national and Kampala pupil-teacher ratios figures for government aided primary schools are 57 and 42 respectively (Draft Education Statistics Abstract 2002). The above stated ratios are reasonably low. However this kind of data has been found not to be accurate.

First, there are schools both in rural and urban areas that are under-resourced, with ratios of over 100 pupils per teacher. This means that the schools with low pupil-teacher-ratios do compromise the schools with high pupil-teacher-ratios. This therefore averages the ratios to the current observed figures and hence the problem of large classes still persists.

Second, the pupil-classroom ratios for both national and Kampala district are far higher than the corresponding pupil-teacher ratios. This therefore suggests that there are many classes that take place in non-classroom environments. For example countrywide cases of classrooms operating under the shade of trees have been reported. This inconveniences both the pupils and their teacher, due to class-transfers especially when the weather conditions change. This is clearly observed when it is windy, raining or when there is dust blowing during the hot season. This undoubtedly compromises the teaching-learning process and hence the quality of education.

Third, monitoring data for Kampala City Council (KCC) gathered during the course of the EUPEK interventions show figures that are higher than the figures obtained by the MoES. «It should be noted that EUPEK works in schools on a day-to-day basis while the ministry depends on the monthly returns from the school administrators» possibly the reason for this could be that incorrect monitoring data is delivered to the ministry either by mistake or intentionally by the heads of institutions for unknown reasons.

To assist both the schools and the city education in improving the teaching and learning under circumstances of large-number pupil classes, EUPEK through its day-to-day capacity building program in the schools, provides the teachers with techniques of handling large classes. All the teachers benefit in this kind of intervention regardless of their qualification.

### **1.2 Teacher Qualification**

In Uganda, National statistics indicate that of the teaching force, 83% are trained while 17% are untrained. The 17% untrained teachers are however mostly located in the rural areas. Despite majority of the teachers being qualified, the period of two years spent in the teacher training colleges are not sufficient to enable them to acquire all the skills required of them to properly execute their duties. Statistics have also shown that 62% of the qualified teachers possess the lowest teaching qualification in the Ugandan education system (grade III) and that there is low upgrading rate either due to: low teacher motivation, lack of financial capability, job security or the government ban on the recruitment of teachers. This means that there is a lack of institutional capacity to handle the upgrading system. For example, who handles the up-grader's load while away in college given the insufficient number of teachers in schools?

To assist the teachers be updated, the EUPEK project through its field technical staff (Project Officers-POs) provides professional capacity building for the teachers in government-aided schools in Kampala on a day-to-day basis. In this, EUPEK's POs who are highly technical with a long history in the teaching profession, assist the teachers in planning for teaching (scheming, lesson planning etc.). They (POs) observe lessons and later

conference with the teachers and together agree on more involving methods for both their pupils and themselves. The POs also provide the teachers with professional development workshops on a weekly basis. The improvements achieved by this are obvious to the teachers, school administrators, the city education officials and the parents.

### **1.3 Funding of UPE activities**

The Uganda government has put a lot of effort into the funding of UPE activities. This is evidenced by matching of the steadily increasing enrolment with the increase in the UPE capitation grant. Despite this, there are a number of problems that UPE is still facing as regards funding.

First, the UPE capitation grant does not include lunch for the pupils. Therefore there is risk of low class-participation especially during afternoon lessons by the children from poor families who cannot afford lunch. This affects the learning abilities of pupils and hence the quality of education.

Secondly, the capitation grant is disbursed according to the number of pupils in a given school. This disadvantages the smaller schools resulting in inability of these schools to afford the basics like non-textbook materials especially those that could be used to make learning resources. Besides this the capitation grants reach schools very late. For example the grant for the first quarter is received by the schools in quarter 2 or even 3. This affects the planning abilities of the school administration and hence the quality of education.

Third, the monthly pay for the teachers, which is still very small (a primary school teacher earns Uganda shillings 103,000/- which is an equivalent of UDS \$50 per month). This contributes therefore to low morale among the classroom teachers, and therefore contributes to the teachers' inefficiency; which in turn affects the quality of education.

Though little monetary intervention can be done by EUPEK regarding the problem of low funding, the project has done a lot as regards not only provision of raw materials for making learning resources but has trained the teachers in actual material making from low cost and locally available raw materials.

In the material field, schools have been assisted with raw materials, and also how to make learning resources. The schools have also been assisted with the establishment of school based learning resource centres after realising that the zonal Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) that government set up to serve cluster schools are too distant and costly to access by the teachers.

### **1.4 Community Involvement**

One of the reasons why the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program is not attaining the targeted success is lack of effective community participation. The major community issues that have confronted and affected the success of the UPE program in Uganda are mentioned below.

It has been discovered that School Management Committees (SMCs) do not exist in many schools. Where they do exist, they are non-functional and they are there in name only. Second, the SMCs are supposed to be voluntary organisations without any remuneration. This has created low morale amongst the SMC members and therefore led to the non-functioning of the committees. Third, there are low literacy rates among the SMC members in many of

the areas in Uganda including SMCs under Kampala City Council. This leads not only to difficulty in conducting the school business but also to manipulation by the school head teacher. And fourth, School Management Committee guidelines are out of date. They were drawn up in 1969, 26 years before the emergence of the Universal Primary Education.

In this regard, EUPEK does some community mobilisation. As of now, SMCs in the 65 schools EUPEK has worked with have been mobilised. However as a case study, emphasis has been laid on capacity building for 15 of the 65 SMCs. Community mobilisation efforts are evident and the indicators for this include: SMCs holding regular meetings, realisation of the quorum during SMC meetings and possibly better planning of school based activities.

### 1.5 Conclusion and recommendations

As the global monitoring report asserts, EFA in Uganda would be on track but to realise total success as regards quality of education, there is need to: increase the number of classrooms, number of teachers and provide them with continuous in-service teaching skills. The need to motivate the teachers by remunerating them better is critical and urgent. There is also need to provide teachers with multi-grade teaching skills in order to equip them better to combat the multi-grade classes automatically created due to the automatic promotion policy.

There is also need to strengthen the supervision, inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the education programs at school level. Critical also is the need to assist schools develop learning resource centres at school level and have them well managed and finally having a supportive community towards the UPE intervention is vital and immediate not only in Kampala but throughout the country.

From the above observations, conclusion can be drawn that «while government has the will and zeal to ensure that UPE succeeds, support by civil society organisations like EUPEK is critical and urgent. These interventions however should not be restricted to the urban areas but also should spread to all parts of the country. If the collaboration between the government and the civil society is ensured, success of UPE is likely to be achieved more effectively.

*Foot Note; EUPEK –Project; Is an Aga Khan Development Network School Improvement Project (SIP) in Uganda. It is implemented by the Aga Khan Education Service, Uganda (AKESU) and funded by the AKF, EC and DFID. The project started as a Kampala School Improvement project in a few schools (1994-1998). The project expanded into EUPEK in 1999 with a vision of covering all government aided schools in Kampala District. The project since its inception has served 65 government aided schools in Kampala*

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## THE STATUS, INTERPRETATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER EQUITY IN THE KENYAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Enos H.N. Njeru, Institute of Policy Analysis and Research, Nairobi  
Email: enjeru@ipar.or.ke

### 1. Introduction

Education is fundamental to development of human resource capacities for sustainable economic growth and development. By imparting new skills and knowledge in people, education expands human capabilities, increases labour productivity and enhances essential participation and partnerships in nation building. Education is a vital tool in achieving greater autonomy, empowerment of women and men and addressing gender gaps in the distribution of opportunities and resources (Muganda, 2002; Muthaka & Mwangi, 2002). More equitable distribution of opportunities and resources between men and women leads more directly to higher economic growth and productivity (World Development Report, 2000/2001).

Debate on gender equity in education presently revolves around two universally accepted declarations or goals, one of them being the Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015, later refocused as Education for All (EFA), as articulated in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and reaffirmed at the Dakar (Senegal) World Education Forum in April 2000. Secondly, in September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration to achieve universal completion of primary schooling and achieve equity in access to primary and secondary schooling by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.

In a number of countries, efforts have been intensified to bridge the gender education gap. But achievement of this goal in many parts of the world, and Africa in particular, has been rather slow. For instance, in 1996 in Amman, Jordan, girls' education was reported to have made an 'excruciatingly slow» progress, especially in Africa. A follow up EFA assessment in 2000 revealed that in many cases little or no success had been achieved in narrowing the gender gap in education.

Kenya, since independence, has recognized education as a key sector in the country's socio-economic and cultural development. As such, quality education provision and training at all levels has remained a central policy issue, hence various commissions set up to address the country's education and training needs. The commissions include the Ominde Commission (1964); Gachathi Commission (1976); the Presidential Working Party on the Establishment of the Second Public University (1981), Koech Commission (1999) (FAWE, 2002) and the recent implementation of free and compulsory primary education policy for all school-going age children. The Kenya government (GoK) is also signatory to various international and regional conventions advocating for equity in education.

In Kenya, poor access to education and gender imbalances are largely blamed on prevailing poverty, poor national economic performance, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation, especially in ASALs. Other issues defining the macro context of education in Kenya include negative attitudes towards schooling, amidst dwindling opportunities, thus de-motivating parents against sending their children to school; numerous other challenges as indicated by reduced gross enrolment ratios, high dropout, low completion and transition rates, as well as regional and gender disparities; in addition to the questions regarding both quality and relevance.

In addressing the foregoing problems, Kenya has developed several policies including poverty reduction papers, National Education Master Plan (1997 – 2010). Recently, the country has embarked on developing provincial EFA plans, for incorporation in Kenya's national EFA plan. Beyond the policies, there have been efforts related to service provision, including bursaries, text books, school feeding program, provision of desks and learning aids, teacher training, campaigns for girls' education, among others.

This paper discusses the status, interpretation and opportunities for gender equity in the Kenyan educational system, starting with background information at international and

national levels; then conceptual considerations; gender representation at various levels; opportunities and roles of various stakeholders; some of the constraints and challenges facing the attainment of gender parity; conclusions and way forward.

## **2. Conceptual considerations on gender and equity in the education sector**

Gender is socially constructed, denoting differing social roles for men and women in society (Muganda, 2002). Gender thus connotes differentials in social relations with respect to cultural practices, roles, positions, responsibilities, occupations, rights and obligations. Equity denotes fairness and justice for all. Inequalities do arise from the process of assigning to men and women, boys and girls, specific social roles, privileges, rights, responsibilities and duties on the basis of the sexes of the persons concerned. In this process, many African societies do manifest cultural diversity as exemplified in complex gender driven power relationships that disadvantage women and girl-children in accessing and benefiting from educational resources and services. It is largely for this reason that many see focus on gender analysis as essentially translating into focus on women and girls, in spite of cases in which boys are themselves disadvantaged in specific aspects of education and opportunities for specific skills acquisition.

Gender based inequalities largely contribute to lower enrollment of girls, less retention of those who enroll, poor performance in many subjects, particularly mathematics and sciences and technical disciplines, and less participation of women in tertiary and higher levels of learning. These imbalances serve to limit the extent to which women's potentials can be fully developed as they also cumulatively affect levels and nature of their participation in the labor market, politics and managerial positions.

## **3. Gender representation in Kenya's educational institutions**

The education system in Kenya comprises the pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary and/or university education. At independence, the country inherited 7-4-2-3 (that is 7 years of primary schooling; 4 years secondary; 2 years of advanced secondary – forms 5 & 6; and 3 years of university) system of education until the shift to 8-4-4 (that is 8 years primary; 4 years secondary and 4 years university) system of education in 1983. To-date, enrollment at various levels is generally characterized by gender, regional and income disparities.

### **3.1 Pre-primary education**

The pre-primary education which incorporates and is also referred to as Early Childhood Development (ECD) offers integrated services that meet the cognitive, social, emotional, nutritional and overall care of children aged below 6 years. Without a clear government policy on pre-school education and management functions, this education sub-sector has received minimal public attention in Kenya, being left mainly the concerns of local governments and municipalities, communities and individual parents, the private sector interests and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), hence not much analytical and recent data is available.

### **3.2 Primary education**

In 2000, the National Gross Enrollment Rates (GER) in primary education was 87.6%, increasing marginally to 91.% in 2001, before declining to 90.8% in 2002. As indicated in Table 1, enrollment in standard one increased by 2.4%, from 970,900 in 2001 to 994,500 in 2002. In 2002, the enrolment across the classes shows some gender imbalance, the highest discrepancy being in standard 8. For the boys, the transition rate from standard 4 in 1998 to standard 8 in 2002 was 79.4%, while that for girls was 75.0%. Conversely, the survival rates for the girls who joined standard 1 in 1998 to class 5 was 81.1%, compared to

77.2% for boys. A total of 514,350 candidates sat for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in 2002 with 47.5% being girls, compared to the 480,996 registered in 2001. Although the GER indicates a positive rise, it obscures the full extent of the challenges facing education. For example, of the children who enroll in primary schools in Kenya, girls in particular do not stay long enough to complete the cycle. The completion rates in the last five years at this level have remained at 47% mark.

Figure 1 shows the trend in GER for boys and girls between 1998 and 2002, indicating clearly that the GER for girls is considerably lower than that of boys. This inequality is explained in terms of preference for educating boys rather than girls in some cultures and use of girls in domestic child labor, and negative attitudes associated with girls' education.

### **3.3 Secondary school education**

There has been a marked increase in secondary school enrolment in quantitative terms since independence for both boys and girls (see Table 2). At independence, for example, there were 20,553 boys and 9,567 girls as compared to 447,203 and 400,064 boys and girls, respectively during the year 2002. The proportion of girls increased more rapidly than that of boys. Girls, at independence, comprised 31.8% of total student population, increasing to 47.2% in 2002.

### **3.4 Tertiary and University education**

Generally, there is a near-gender parity in enrollment, retention, completion and progression rates for both boys and girls at primary and secondary school education levels. However, the gender paradox begins when girls complete secondary education and enter university and other tertiary institutions. On student enrolment in primary teacher training colleges by sex (see Figure 3), the trends indicate minimal disparities in student enrolments. During 2002, for instance, the colleges admitted 15,730 trainees, with females constituting 47.4%.

Public university education is, however, characterized by a big gap in enrolments in favour of male students (see figure 4 above). This is in contrast to private universities, which have relatively higher female student enrolments. In 2002, for example, female students constituted 52.5% of the total enrolment in private universities. Arguments have however also been advanced to the effect that the females are still less able to effectively compete with males for entry into the public universities which are financially more affordable but also more difficult to enter due to the high cut-off entry points as a strategy to deal with the large applicant numbers. Consequently many good females but below the public university cut-off points end up joining the less competitive private universities where qualification for admission and ability to pay are equally important. Another reason advanced as to why more girls than boys join private universities is that these private institutions, due to the prohibitive cost of equipment that would otherwise be required to install the facilities needed for natural and biological sciences, including medicine (and thus charge prohibitive fees to offset some of the costs to ensure operational viability), choose to offer more of humanities and social sciences which are less equipment intensive, and also allow the institutions to charge moderately affordable fees to attract more students, for their financial viability.

As such, the students who want to do science-based courses, such as engineering and medicine, must pass well enough to secure places at the public universities and leave the arts based courses at the private universities to the women.



#### 4. Opportunities and roles of key stakeholders

Achievement of gender equity in education in Kenya will require collaborative participation of learners (boys and girls), parents, communities, development partners, the civil society, private sector and the government:

**Learners:** For this actor category, there is need to demystify mathematics and science subjects hitherto viewed as masculine subjects. Career development and counseling tutors at institutional levels also need to tailor their attitudes more positively towards gender sensitive study orientations to complement the guidance and aspirations imparted by other stakeholders.

**Parents and community:** The key issue here pertains to addressing socio-cultural and societal orientations that are responsible for gender differences in performance, e.g. with regard to the gendered division of labour, child up-bringing, adult reactions to children's needs, based on gender differences. Improving the quality of learners is essential for both boys and girls to be healthy, well nourished, ready to learn and supported by their families and communities.

**Development partners, civil society and private sector:** Their support is essential in formulation of gender sensitive education policies and provision of basic education in hardship areas.

**The Government:** A key role for the government would be to facilitate formulation of gender-sensitive policies and mediation for more inclusive science and technology. Other responsibilities would have to do with provision of adequate funds to support basic and quality education through good governance and management, supervision, and production of well trained gender sensitive teachers. The school environment should be healthy, safe, protective, effective and conducive to gender mainstreaming.

#### 5. Major challenges and constraints

Achievement of gender parity in education in Kenya faces, among others, the following major challenges and constraints:

- **Socio-cultural orientations in societies that inculcate gender differences in performance.** Boys and girls undergo different cultural orientations regarding birth ceremonies and later on division of labor in productive and domestic chores, based on gender stereotyped artifacts such as clothes and toys, games and play within the context of the overall preparation and skills training for adult roles.
- **Cognitive styles that characterize gender performance in learning mathematics and science subjects.** This has to do with the mismatch characterizing success or failure in mathematics and science subjects, i.e. between reflective and impulsive, holist and serialist styles as well as between field-dependence and field-independence with regard to styles of thinking and learning (Costelo, 1991).
- **The HIV/AIDS scourge.** This pandemic has led to increased school dropouts, especially for girls who are faced with increased domestic responsibilities when family members are ailing or succumb to the pandemic. The overall effect has been reduction of opportunities for further learning and skills development, in many cases skewed against girls.
- **Poverty issues:** These should be addressed as they generally impede access to education. Girls are more affected than boys in situations where choices have to be made on whether to take boys or girls to school.

- **Gender-insensitive policies:** The policies in question are seen to be either ambivalent or permissive to discontinuation of girls from school as seen, for example, in the cases of teenage pregnancies, which cause girls to drop out of school and perhaps not given a chance to resume studies after baby delivery. In some cases the public attitudes are themselves punitive and not conducive to creation of opportunities to allow the post-teenage mothers to go back to school.

## 6. Conclusions and way forward

The Kenya government is signatory to various international and regional declarations and conventions advocating for equality and equity in education. To-date, the GoK is working on various key issues and concerns to ensure gender equity and possibly equality in skills training, education and other affirmative action towards to empowerment of girls and women. It is however generally important to consider gender performance at primary and secondary education levels, independently as a goal. This should be accomplished with a view to critically allowing room to focus, among other concerns, on access to the job market, parliamentary and other substantive livelihood granting opportunities after secondary education. For girls, education does not automatically translate into jobs and income generating opportunities, empowerment or other forms of social capital. The status quo is largely blamed on under-representation of girls and women in scientific and technological fields, in itself a product of socio-cultural ethos, orientations and gender-insensitive policies. In order to address the imbalances in question or to mitigate their consequences and implications for socio-economic development, there is need to:

- Review and incorporate lessons learnt on the causes and consequences of under-representation of girls and women in science and technology during the pre-service and/or in-service training and professional development of educators and counselors;
- Promote awareness and understanding of the full range of career choices among female and male students;
- Review the contents of mathematics, science and technology course textbooks, activities and other learning materials, with a view to undertaking revisions, where necessary, to ensure incorporation of strategies that facilitate ease of uptake on the part of the females;
- Enhance sensitization of parents and communities, through public awareness campaigns and other communication strategies on the value of girls' education, with a view to minimizing the impact of the practices that militate against it;
- Elimination of conflict between the institutional practices, structural values and attitude positions between school and home, which act against optimal access to and utilization of skills development opportunities by the females, with the overall effect of alienating the girl-child from education and essential life skills development..

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### **EDUCATION FOR ALL GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT 2002: WHY UGANDA WILL NOT ATTAIN THE INTERNATIONAL TARGET FOR ADULT LITERACY**

Anne Katahoire, Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, Makerere University  
Email: Anne [Katahoire@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Katahoire@yahoo.co.uk)

The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 stipulates that Uganda is one of the countries, which is at a serious risk of not achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015. This is in spite of the renewed efforts by government to strengthen adult literacy programmes in the country. Adult literacy is now one of the six priority areas of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). The government in 2003 committed resources to the implementation of adult literacy programmes, amounting to approximately US\$2.5m (Ush4.9bn) and for the first time, districts now receive funds for adult literacy work. A National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan (2002/03 –2006/07) has been launched whose aim is to achieve a 50% improvement in literacy levels by 2007. Given this commitment and investment why is Uganda not on track?

Uganda currently has the lowest adult literacy rate in East Africa, Kenya's literacy rate is 83.3% Tanzania's is 76% and Uganda's is 68% (UNDP, Human Development Report 2003). The Uganda Poverty Status Report (2001) noted that literacy was higher in urban areas (87%) than in rural areas (60%) and that there was also significant gender disparity with literacy rates among women being 51% as compared to 77% for men. The literacy rate is lowest among the pastoral communities and is estimated at only 6% in Karamoja and people with disability currently are estimated at 37% (National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan 2002/3- 2006/7). The current provision of adult literacy education is also limited in its geographical coverage resulting in unequal access to opportunities for learning literacy with some districts having more literacy programmes than others.

The National Adult Literacy Programme is also limited in terms of numbers of adult illiterates that it is able to attract. The National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan (NALSIP) (2002/03 –2006/07) acknowledges this fact when it highlights the fact that the

government and non-governmental literacy programmes combined are currently accessible to only about 4% of the estimated 7 million non-literate adults. These disparities between regions, sexes and people suggest that literacy programme designers need to check whether special approaches might be needed to attract special groups to overcome the factors that cause their diffidence about enrolling.

At the same time the programmes seem to be in danger of missing their primary clients, who are the people who have no schooling. An evaluation of the Functional Adult Literacy Programme in 1999 noted that almost three quarters of the graduates sampled in the study had been to school, many for more than five years. The fact that they still felt themselves inadequately literate and numerate reflects poorly on the quality of primary education they had received. This prompts the question about the strength of demand for literacy programmes by the totally unschooled and non-literate population. It also raises the question as to whether the enrollment of people already with some schooling intimidates and deters many of the totally unschooled from enrolling, so that the main purpose of the programme is largely frustrated. These again are issues that need to be taken up more seriously by programme designers.

While The National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan (NALSIP) is an agreed strategy, there is no clear implementation plan at present. Non Governmental Organisations are agitating for more involvement in decision-making, designing and implementation of literacy programmes and for an allocation of some of the resources that have been made available for literacy work. Government acknowledges the need for cooperation with NGOs involved in literacy work but the mechanisms for implementing such cooperation are not yet in place. A National Adult Literacy Steering Committee was suggested; this has been under consideration since 2001 but has still not been established. In theory, it would bring representatives of the government and NGOs together, provide a forum for harmonising adult literacy strategies and provide technical guidance. In the meanwhile the NALSIP cannot be implemented until a structured forum for dialogue is set up. This is a major roadblock leaving NGOs and government with no recognised collective channels to discuss literacy strategies and implementation.

Government has meanwhile moved ahead strongly with its decentralisation policy, pushing literacy programme design, resources and planning processes down to district level, and ultimately to sub-county and parish (lowest administrative entity) levels. While this maybe commendable, several challenges are beginning to emerge. There is very limited professional capacity at the district level let alone at the lower levels to design and implement literacy programmes. Community Development Officers and Community Development Assistants who are responsible for literacy programmes in the districts are also responsible for all other community development programmes in the district, which include community mobilization and sensitization for health, sanitation, women's groups, youth activities, etc. Worse still there seems to be disagreement between district officials responsible for running the literacy programmes and officials based at the headquarters regarding how the resources available for literacy should be utilized. Since January 2003, several articles have appeared in the national newspapers that have argued that money meant for adult literacy is wasted on seminars, whose outcomes are questionable. For example in a letter to the editor published on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003, entitled «why waste money on seminars?» the author observed that:

Government invested Shillings 5bn in literacy work. This money should go to districts but we have not received it. Instead the Ministry of Gender keeps inviting us for useless seminars and 'bribes us with allowances'. Here is an example of wasted Poverty Action Fund money. We arrived for a seminar in Kampala on Dec.16<sup>th</sup> 2002,

received allowances and meals, started work at 10 am the following day and finished at 4.30 p.m. On Dec 18<sup>th</sup>, we received more allowances and meals but no work was done. This was the last day. What a waste! We have already been informed of the next seminar in February. What does this mean? What is the Ministry and the IGG doing. Do they know all these things?

In another letter dated January 30<sup>th</sup> 2003 the writer observed that:

In November 2002, the Ministry of Gender invited us for a Functional Adult Literacy workshop in Masaka for ten days...on the last day one ministry official commented that although we have developed a draft trainers manual, there was no prior training needs assessment and no guiding curriculum. We agreed that another workshop be held. In December 2002, we went back to Masaka but discussed different issues. Meanwhile, we in the districts are told to go and train instructors. We have not received money to do this and have no training manuals. Why can't the Ministry give us money to pay literacy instructors who are working for free instead of wasting money on useless activities

Another letter appeared in the edition of the Monitor of January 24<sup>th</sup> 2003 was entitled «Literacy Programmes a failure». In it the author challenged the Ministry of Gender:

I challenge the Ministry of Gender to inform us in the districts about the achievements. There is no curriculum, no trainers' manuals and no teaching materials in 31 districts. Worse still government is planning to borrow more money from the World Bank for the same purpose. Does the Gender Ministry have the capacity to properly use such a loan? Some of us are tired of centre inspired workshops used as pretext for misusing Poverty Action Funds

These letters were all written by district officials and all were questioning the way resources that have been allocated to literacy were being utilized and to some extent they were also questioning the priorities of the Ministry of Gender in relation to literacy work and to some extent their questions are genuine. For example while Literacy Instructors are an obvious key to effective literacy education, the government policy is that they should be volunteers. As a result the majority of the instructors have relatively little schooling and receive only minimal training. Coupled with poor supervision and monitoring and complaints by instructors about lack of incentives, literacy programmes are poorly run and are likely to collapse in some areas unless these issues are taken seriously. Several reviews have recommended that a system of basic allowances and incentives for instructors should be worked out; to date this has not been done.

Given this kind of scenario the estimation by the EFA Monitoring Report 2002, that Uganda will most likely not attain the International adult literacy target of achieving a 50% improvement in the level of adult literacy by 2015 comes as no surprise. However the reasons for Uganda not attaining the target cannot, as is usually the case, be blamed entirely on lack of resources; on the contrary the reasons may have to do with efficiency, capacity and strategic utilisation of available resources. These are issues or indicators that are not captured by the global Monitoring system. The question is how should a report such as this be read given the fact that behind the figures presented so much is left unsaid.

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**PERSPECTIVES FROM OUTSIDE EAST AFRICA****PARTICIPATION OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN BASIC EDUCATION PROVISION IN GHANA**

Joshua J.K. Baku, ERNWACA, Accra, Ghana  
Email: ernwaca@ncs.com

**Introduction**

Education reforms were introduced in Ghana in 1987 to expand access, improve quality and enhance managerial practices. By 1994, it had become clear that the reforms had not achieved all their objectives, especially those of universal access and quality. The achievement of these objectives appeared to be beyond the reach of government alone hence the importance of the role of private schools. But even with their participation, Ghana seems still far from the target.

Private school system was indeed the cradle of formal education in Ghana. In the Ghanaian context, private school refers to any educational institution established and operated by persons or groups of persons other than the central or local governments. Sometimes, particularly in recent times, proprietors of private schools have been attracted into the sector by the intention to make some profit on their investments.

The first major Post-Independence Education Law of Ghana, the Education Act of 1961, recognized and institutionalized the contribution of private schools in educational provision. The Act provided for private institutions thus: «subject to the provisions of this Act, any person may, in the prescribed manner, establish and conduct a private institution.» This provision has remained in force till today with occasional revision of the guidelines and regulation of operation.

The aim of these revisions is to ensure that the schools provide their services within the framework of the Ghana Education Service regulations. These guidelines are necessary to ensure quality and adequacy of scope or coverage in educational provision in the private schools. In particular, it is considered important to ensure that:

- the basic education curriculum and the aims of basic education are not narrowed down in private schools to merely preparing pupils to pass examinations.
- private schools comply with the language policy of the Ministry.
- private schools respect the national school-age and its attendant requirements.

**Popularity of Private Schools**

Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme was introduced in 1994 as a requirement of the 1992 Ghana Constitution. This provision in the Constitution became necessary because the education reforms, initiated in 1987, failed to achieve one of its major objectives of providing universal access for all children at the basic education level. Universal access remained only on the drawing board and education quality was persistently falling. The structures and facilities that could permit universal access were grossly inadequate while teacher quality, morale and commitment which could ensure quality of basic education persistently dwindled.

That state of affairs offered a great opportunity to the private schools. They cashed in and have since made serious inroads into basic education provision. Indeed, if Ghana hopes to achieve or even make any substantial progress towards the targets it joined the International Community to set at the World Education Forum (2000) and confirmed at the Dakar Framework of Action, then she can only base such a hope on the active participation of private schools. This is particularly so in the context of the persistent pressure from other sectors on the country's fragile economy.

The private schools charge high fees which in a way has detracted from the positive contribution they could make towards universal access. Nevertheless, they continue to be popular with those who can afford the fees. The opening of new basic education private schools is a very common feature in recent years. Whereas public primary schools increased by 24.8% (9424 -11765) between 1987 and 1997, the private schools shot up by 761.4% (145 – 1249) over the same period. The trend was about the same for junior secondary schools (JSS), though private JSS were very late in entering the scene because of initial government policy. The private school situation had further expanded by the 2000/2001 academic year.

#### **Distribution of Private Basic Schools**

The spread of private schools in the country is not equitable as they tend to be concentrated in the cities and regional and district capitals. While private schools account for about 20% of basic education enrolment in the urban areas, they account for only 4% of total enrolment in rural areas. This may be explained by the fact that the urban areas do not only have high population density but also higher income levels as well as higher proportions of educated people who have understood and recognized the value of good quality education for their children.

#### **Quality of Education in Private Schools**

The continuing popularity of private schools may be explained in terms of the quality of education (at least academic) they provide. Parents believe they get their money's worth in the private schools. The generality of people in Ghana, especially parents, perceive quality of education only in terms of the numbers of pupils/students who are able to pass the final examinations with very good grades to make admission at the higher level easy. There is nothing more frustrating to a Ghanaian parent than the failure or weak passes of the child in either the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) or the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE). The struggle to gain admission into higher institutions with such weak grades can be a very unpleasant experience. Most private schools are able to guarantee good grades to their students. The key, obviously, lies in close supervision and effective time use.

Academic performance of pupils of private schools has been found to be persistently higher than that of pupils in public schools. The Table below illustrates this assertion



Table 1: Performance in Criterion Reference Tests (Public and Private Schools)

Type of School	1996 English: Maths	1997 Eng : Maths	1999 Eng : Maths	2000 Eng : Maths
Public ( Mean}	33.0 28.8	33.9      29.9	36.9      32.2	36.9      32.3
Public (%mastery)*	5.5 1.8	6.2 2.7	8.7 4.0	9.6      4.4
Private (mean)	61.0 47.0	67.4 51.7	59.2 46.9	70.4      56.9
Private (% mastery)*	56.5 31.0	68.7 40.4	53.2 28.4	77.9      53.7

Quansah, Kofi (2002): 2000 Report on Administration of Primary 6 Criterion Reference Tests

\* Percentage of candidates who attained mastery level score ie. 60% and 55% for English and Maths respectively

Ironically, the majority of the teachers of private schools are untrained and indeed poorly remunerated. The secret of their superiority appears to be greater commitment, motivation and supervision of their teachers. The sustenance, and for that matter continued employment of the teachers, of the private schools depend on the quality of the pupils they turn out. On the contrary, the public school teacher feels secure, regardless of his/her output.

### Impact of Private Schools on the Education System

- Private basic education schools have had tremendous impact on basic education in Ghana. They have been contributing to the solution of the shortfall between demand and supply of access to basic education: For example, private schools rose from 8.1% of the national total of basic education schools in 1997 to 11.1% by 2000/2001. Their existence has helped to ease pressure on the public basic schools. Perhaps what the private schools can be blamed for is their perceived role in perpetuating inequity in educational provision. It is only parents who can afford the high fees that are able to send their children to the relatively high quality private basic schools. It is estimated that about 18% of children from the top income quintile attend private schools while less than 10% of children from the lowest income quintile do so. The majority of students in the top senior secondary schools tend to be products of the private basic schools and a good number of students who gain admission to the universities in Ghana were once pupils of the so-called private preparatory schools. The concern is whether or not the existence of the private schools is not gradually building a class system in the country, especially for the future.

**EFA: QUANTITY– QUALITY TRADE-OFFS AFTER ACCESS TO UPE  
THE CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS IN THE SADC REGION**

Charmaine B. Villet, University of Namibia with Pulane Lefoka, ERNESA, Maseru  
Emails: [cvillet@unam.na](mailto:cvillet@unam.na) and [jp.lefoka@nul.ls](mailto:jp.lefoka@nul.ls)

All SADC member states have programmes aimed at achieving the EFA goals. In the case of Namibia for example the EFA National Plan of Action (2001-2015) states that her commitment to education for all is affirmed in Article 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. This EFA policy was adopted in 1990 and makes full provision and access to quality education a right for all children in Namibia.

The EFA National Plan of Action further states that the right to quality education for all Namibian children remains a major challenge, as Namibia is one of the countries with the highest disparities between rich and poor. Such disparities can be found throughout the region. To ensure equitable distribution of wealth and educational opportunities, and to ameliorate the devastating impact of such disparities on SADC societies, governments have embarked upon a number of policy initiatives aimed at opening up opportunities for basic education and lifelong learning.

Many SADC countries have made progress in reaching the targets associated with EFA and the Millennium Development Goals. Within 11 years, Namibia obtained a primary Net Enrollment Rate of 89% in 2001, and a 94% survival rate to grade 5 in 2000. However, governments' goals for the provision of education for all have become severely challenged by a number of issues, which often can be traced to the grave disparities between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Jonathan (2001) states that it has become a truism of contemporary debate that appropriate educational policies and practices are a necessary condition both for a more equitable social future and for a collectively prosperous economic future. However, the question that remains is to what extent the process of social change can be delegated to a reformed schooling and tertiary education sector? This question is exacerbated when the agendas for schooling are driven by global forces, which lose sight of the unique peculiarities that impact upon social transformation within regions and individual countries. This calls into question a number of assumptions made by the EFA drive; this in turn forces us to take a critical look at these assumptions.

**Are the EFA Goals Relevant?**

Many proponents of EFA will answer in the affirmative, arguing that the goals are broad enough for governments to find their own agendas in these goals. However, the very specific ways in which governments are required to submit annual evaluation reports to UNESCO forces them to adopt this evaluation agenda in their pursuit of EFA. So it, once again, becomes a matter of «whoever pays the fiddler calls the tune». This may be forcing policy-makers and educators on the African continent to implement globalized education agendas at the peril of local agendas that could focus on the realities of our unique and peculiar situations. Many African policy-makers and educators have been calling for more homegrown solutions to our development challenges. However, not complying with global agendas often will make them out to be the pariahs of the world. Current events and conditions on the continent suggest that we should take heed of Jonathan's warning that «current fashions are exported from one place to another with scant regard for context, due to the globalising of political and policy trends». She argues further that the immediate problems in improving schooling are problems of means, not of ends. They are a matter of ensuring that what we endorse in principle can be delivered in practice. As education is often seen as the «royal

road to equity and redress», the primary engine that can lead to wealth production and equitable distribution of that wealth, can the current EFA agenda steer us on that road?

### **Are the EFA Goals Realistic and Attainable?**

Implementing these educational priorities as identified in Jomtien (1990) and reaffirmed in Dakar (2000) remains a challenge; and efforts to overcome them often confront severe constraints, making progress very difficult. One of the notable challenges is the sustainability of current levels of educational expenditure given the low economic growth and increasing government budget deficits. This is multiplied by escalating personnel costs in light of the increase in personnel due to increasing numbers of learners entering schools as well as the improvement in the qualifications of teachers. Already personnel take huge chunks of the current budgets leaving precious little money to effectively implement educational activities.

The inequities in educational provision also place a major constraint on the efforts of the education ministries. Channeling already scarce resources to the most needy schools is often just a first step in addressing the backlog. The ravages that generations of poverty inflicted on these communities are often not so easily rectified by merely placing needed resources in the schools.

One of the major concerns currently is the issue around the allegedly zero economic return rates on primary education. In most of our countries, school leavers with only a primary education are not really better off in securing a job than those who never went to school at all. The EFA focus on primary schooling has even had a negative impact on the growth and sustainable development of secondary and tertiary education in most of our SADC countries. Reports indicate that economic returns on education are more evident at the secondary and tertiary levels. How then do we justify the continued focus on primary education at the expense of expanding secondary and tertiary education?

### **Can Quantified Targets support Quality Goals?**

Educators on the continent have been lamenting that the quality of learning appears to have gone down in recent years. It is said that fewer and fewer learners are able to read and write, and their numeracy skills have been in decline as well. Tertiary institutions are at their wits' end in trying to make up for the foundation skills that schools have failed to teach. High schools in turn blame the lack of quality instruction on the primary school and so the blame game continues. With the EFA focus on access, classrooms have ballooned beyond control with teachers struggling to apply learner-centred education in these situations. The lack of resources such as textbooks, science equipment, projectors, computers etc. has compounded the situation. However, the question that begs attention is whether the focus on meeting quantified targets has derailed a focus on the quality of teaching and learning? Moving beyond the basic preconditions for access to schooling forces us to examine the quality of the content and the processes involved in delivering quality education. Although the problems concerned with equitable access to schooling are enormous, they are practical and can be readily agreed upon. However, it becomes immensely more challenging to agree on what would constitute a quality education as the answer to this often depends on who you are and where you stand within the socio-political and economic sphere. Agreement on what should constitute a quality education is a big challenge in any country, let alone coming to an agreement on global turf. EFA proponents are thus confronted with the dilemma of an elusive definition of what should constitute quality education that is both globally meaningful and able to address development challenges in individual countries.

**Conclusion**

The provision of basic education to all in the region is challenging educators and policy makers in their efforts to attain the goals set out in the Jomtien declaration. Opening the doors to education for all did set in motion a tide of challenges that now threatens to drown the strides made since the early nineties. Increasing numbers of learners graduating from primary school can often not find places in high schools. The demand for more and better-qualified teachers is severely constrained by the impact of HIV/AIDS and low education budgets. Furthermore, providing quality education is faced with a huge lack of resources, both human and financial.

The cry for education that is relevant and focused on «social, cultural, economic and technological development» presents us with the formidable challenge to examine the health of our schools and to find ways to improve them. Currently our education systems in the region are not providing the opportunity for our children to exceed our levels of achievement. It is equally not seeding the conditions for a society in which our children will participate fully economically, politically and intellectually. It continues to perpetuate the social inequities of our societies. Strenuous efforts are required to create an educational culture and environment that will be simultaneously better for us and for our children. Hopefully moral purpose will drive these efforts.

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**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN EAST AFRICA****LIFE SKILLS – A BRIDGE BETWEEN EFA AND TVET?**

Jeremy Greenland, AKF, Geneva  
Email: jeremy.greenland@akdn.ch

**Summary**

This paper starts from the proposition that Life Skills form a bridge between Education For All (EFA) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Drawing on the two reports under review at the July 2003 Nairobi Workshop, it examines some of the implications of a policy decision to build that bridge by extending the cycle of primary education and/or expanding access to junior secondary education. The paper concludes that increased attention to life skills is not in itself a sufficient justification for such a decision.

**Life Skills – What?**

Over the last few years, the term life skills has become an increasingly popular buzzword in development literature and in the policy statements of most donor agencies, but the frequency of its use has not been matched by greater clarity or agreement about its definition. The third goal of the Dakar Declaration (2000) is 'to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills'. The sixth goal is 'to improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills'. One of the three justifications for EFA cited in the introductory section of the Global Report is that it gives access to 'resources that allow people to avoid illness, have self-respect, be well nourished, sustain livelihoods and enjoy peaceful relationships'. In repeating this language, the subsequent narrative notes that 'the meaning of life skills is open to a variety of interpretations', merely adding the objective of 'enhancing the choices and freedoms that lead to a better life'.

Although the TVET Report has 'skills development' in its title, the term 'training' dominates the subsequent text. What the Report does do, however, is to stress repeatedly the importance of basic education: 'what employers want most are the basic academic skills taught in general education at the primary and secondary levels – the ability to communicate, calculate, follow directions, solve problems, learn on the job, and work in teams'. It may be inferred, therefore, that this is what the Report understands by life skills.

Thus in both Reports under review at the Nairobi Workshop, life skills are conceived in terms which are utilitarian and economic on the one hand, and individualistic rather than collective on the other. The key but unexamined assumption is that a child should want to lead 'a successful life' and that this involves a series of economic and personal, not ideological or family and community choices which a variety of educational provision can influence.

The pedigree of the term life skills is uncertain and various typologies have been suggested which are beyond the scope of this short paper. For example, an OECD study argues for a distinction between skills and competencies and defines key competencies as 'acting autonomously, using tools (language, ICT) interactively, and functioning in socially heterogeneous groups'. The International Academy of Education (IAE) advocates paying more attention to the 'socio-emotional skills needed for success in school and in life...i.e. the set

of abilities that allows students to work with others, learn effectively, and serve essential roles in their families, communities and places of work'. At a rather more mundane level, the UK Minister of Education recently launched a competition to define life skills, and his own list ranged from sewing on a button, to wiring a plug, to knowing how to rent a flat and writing a job application!

### **Life Skills – Why?**

Back, then, to the increasing popularity of the term in the context of schools. This may in large part be a knee-jerk reaction on the part of politicians, parents, children themselves, and the international development community to the perception that schools, if they ever did, now no longer prepare children adequately for economic success. Why bother to go to school, if all you get is the Basic Education cycle? Life skills, so the story-line goes, will help keep school-leavers off the streets and reduce the threat of social unrest, they will generate more employment opportunities than would otherwise be the case, and disguise the fact that the supply of such opportunities by government or the formal commercial and business is small and more or less static, and that the vast percentage of primary school-leavers (500,000 this year in Kenya, 700,000 in Tanzania) will simply be left to their own devices. If, in addition, schools can stem what is widely perceived to be a process of moral decline, so much the better. The Ugandan paper *New Vision* recently quoted the Director of Ethics and Integrity in the Office of the President as saying that a new syllabus incorporating ethics and integrity would be introduced in primary and secondary schools to fight corruption. On the same page, the Anglican Bishop of Lango decries 'the degenerated morals among the youth' and announces the launching a new code of conduct and regulations to be followed by schools'. It is significant that most of the people who call for schools to 'teach virtuous habits' are not themselves teachers!

There is probably a greater need to clarify the conceptual underpinnings of life skills than of any other subject taught in school because of their strong cultural, ideological and religious connotations. This is so because in most economically poor countries, faith-based education provision, in the form of Christianity or Islam or other religious faiths, accounts for a much greater proportion of overall provision than in the rich countries. It is the norm, not the exception, and most governments, curriculum development and teacher training institutes, parents and communities want it that way.

It is also particularly true if a given country or government has committed itself to a policy of empowering parents, communities, and children themselves to have a greater voice in determining what should be learned in school. There is an obvious tension between making individual choices and the frequently invoked principle of respecting parental and community values. On which side of the fence do the life skills of 'taking personal initiative' and 'critical thinking' lie? This does not mean choosing between making a chair and a table – it means being able (and free) to critique government policies and personalities. Although Nyerere bravely said that 'the educational system of Tanzania would not be serving the interests of a democratic socialist society if it tried to stop people thinking about the teaching, policies, or beliefs of leaders, either past or present', the Party newspaper at the same time was saying that 'pupils at all levels must be made to understand fully the principles of TANU and the Afro-Shirazi party'. Should schools in Africa challenge the disinclination of most political and religious leaders to have issues of homosexuality handled in schools? Should a HIV/AIDS curriculum recommend abstinence? Is it as important a life skill as knowing about reproductive health? Staff of national curriculum development centres in the past have not been known for their radical opinions and preparedness to take risks – especially when it means facing down the powers that be.

Respecting community values, however, raises the problem of defining which community is going to count. Most governments continue to imply that community equals nation and are wary of encouraging local variations in curriculum content. For example, it took several years for the ministries of education in East Africa to approve the 'integrated' curriculum of the AKF-supported Madrasas programme among mainly Muslim communities in Mombasa, Kampala and Zanzibar. If the subject of social and sickness insurance is being explained to children as an important part of any HIV/AIDS curriculum, is it assumed that this will benefit them as individuals or their extended families? Should life skills in the nomadic communities of East Africa be helping children live 'more successful' nomadic lives, or are there not-so-subtle pressures to conform to the norms of the majority?

Though couched mainly in personal terms, leading a successful life is frequently meant to include being 'a good citizen'. This is redolent of the 'nation-building' curriculum reforms in the mid-1960s in most African countries, where 'national values' were thought to be an effective counter-weight to the divisive and centrifugal tendencies of colonialism and regional or ethnic factionalism (cfr. the deliberate mixing up of children from different ethnic backgrounds in Kenya's first wave of 'national' schools). The ability to get on with others is a life skill.

From an economic perspective, acquiring fluency in both English and Kiswahili is undeniably a key life skill throughout East Africa today. This probably means promoting both languages as early as possible but is offset by the technical evidence that a child should be established in one language, preferably the mother tongue, before adding a second or a third. On which count will language policy be decided?

The general point is that taking life skills seriously will involve a radical questioning and overhaul of the current curriculum and of the theories underpinning it. It is not clear that governments in East Africa have yet faced up to the implications in terms of time, cost and professional capacity-building for doing this.

### **Life Skills – When?**

Assuming a policy decision to introduce life skills into the school curriculum, when should this be done? The prevailing wisdom seems to be that they should be brought in at upper primary or lower secondary level and – by far the most important consideration for policy-makers in the Ministries of Planning and of Finance – that this requires an extension to the existing primary school cycle and/or expanding access to junior secondary school. But why delay the start of life skills until adolescence? Advocates of TVET will argue that the skill of using a lathe or a bunsen burner should not be taught until children are of secondary school age in case they injure themselves, and that children should be able to move straight from the classroom to the world of work before they have forgotten these work-related skills. This is similar to the notion of the 'sandwich' course where teenagers move between the classroom and the work-site and then back again in a single sequence.

Do these arguments apply in respect of life skills? Jerome Bruner's oft-quoted dictum says that any subject can be taught to a child of any age, if the conceptual basis is sound and the pedagogy appropriate. If we believe this, life skills can/should be taught at home from birth, as part of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme, and then throughout the primary cycle. A four-year old who masters the High/Scope ECD motto of 'plan, do, review' has already acquired a life skill which, as the TVET Report keeps reminding us, employers are increasingly looking for. The challenge is to define what this set of skills comprises, and how

it should be taught, to the same child aged seven, eleven and fifteen. Many life skills involve a strong component of moral reasoning, and yet many curricula and teacher training institutions still accept (tacitly if not consciously) Piaget's theory that, for example, children cannot distinguish between notions of equity and equality until they have reached a certain age – and which thus flies in the face of Bruner's dictum. Curriculum developers need to decide whether they prefer Bruner or Piaget.

### **Life Skills – How?**

Most of the discussion about life skills assumes what may be called a 'transmission' philosophy of education which is at odds with current thinking: life skills can be crammed into the rucksack which contains x other subjects without discarding anything that is there already. The transmission philosophy characterises most approaches to TVET, including the current World Bank Report («there are x steps/skills in how to change a carburettor, and a correct sequence in which they should be taught/learned», etc). The Report limits itself to distinguishing between modes of acquisition which are 'out-of-date' (said to be the dominant situation in the informal sector) and 'state-of-the-art', but both are equally prescriptive and reinforce the notion of the teacher as the authority figure, 'the one who knows'.

The lesson here is that a very different type of pedagogy is required to teach life skills, and that, as a result, large amounts of in-service training and large amounts of thought in the design of curriculum materials are required. In this regard, there are large variations between different HIV/AIDS resource materials currently on offer, some of which tell children what to think, whereas others encourage them to make up their own minds. If the transmission theory is not challenged, children will simply copy pre-cooked lists of life skills from the blackboard, memorise them, and regurgitate them on demand.

A major dilemma is whether life skills should be an explicit, timetabled part of the curriculum («on Tuesday afternoons we do life skills after we've done woodwork») or a 'cross-cutting theme' («we do it all the time») – or a mixture of both? The way in which the principle of teaching language or mathematics 'across the curriculum' as well as teaching them as subjects in their own right has been implemented does not augur well for taking a similar approach to life skills. Headteachers, teachers and children alike will be much less motivated to give life skills serious attention if there is no timetable allocation, no materials, and – above all -- no publicly recognised examination. Yet the opportunity for teaching life skills via other existing approved subjects is enormous. For example, the English Language reader developed by the IPAR project in Cameroon in the 1970s was able to tackle sensitive social issues (for example, mothers having to bring up children on their own because the fathers were migrant labourers) in a non-threatening manner. The quartet of novels under the general title of The First Ladies Detective Agency (Sandy McCall-Smith) is arguably the best source of material on life skills in present-day Botswana, but one doubts whether it features on the Ministry of Education's approved syllabus. The increasing use of theatre (usually of a humorous kind) to transmit 'serious' messages about HIV/AIDS is another example.

Why assume that life skills should be delivered/acquired via formal, government-financed institutions called 'schools' without parallel reinforcement in the family and the community? An evaluation of the AKF-supported Child-to-child health education in Zanzibar some years ago showed that children scored highly in terms of increased knowledge about subjects such as the spread of disease from contaminated water, but that their attitudes and practices (for example in terms of washing their hands after using the toilet) had hardly changed at all. Can teachers change attitudes and practices without the collaboration of community



development officers? This is an important topic for further investigation in East Africa, but it has huge budgetary implications which policy-makers are reluctant to entertain.

Why assume that an extension of the primary cycle or the expansion of junior secondary schooling is necessary for the purpose of introducing life skills? It has taken a long time in Kenya to reach consensus on whether the decision to extend the primary cycle to eight years (making it the longest in Africa?) has met its original objective of increasing school-leavers' readiness to enter the world of work. There is growing evidence that the primary school leavers' certificate is of little use to the 500,000 in Kenya and the 700,000 in Tanzania who enter the labour market every year. In Northern Pakistan, it is increasingly the case that parents are reluctant to enrol their children in primary school unless the prospects of their graduating to a nearby secondary school are good. Does this phenomenon hold true in any parts of East Africa?

Another factor to be considered before extending the primary cycle or expanding junior secondary provision is the gap between the assumed and actual age of children in school. Most primary curricula are still built on the assumption that children enter at age six and finish at age twelve or thirteen. This is very rarely the case in most of Africa, as a consequence of over-age entrance and grade repetition – and is conspicuously not the case in East Africa since the declaration of UPE/FPE. Most children in the upper grades of primary school are young adults – a fact which should influence the content and methodology of the whole curriculum. Story books in Africa may no longer feature British stereotypes of Janet and John and their dog Spot, but they still tend to focus on fables about animals in the jungle. Does the average Grade 6 class include the same number of girls who are mothers and boys who are fathers? If not, does this affect the way the life skills of child-rearing and parenting should be taught? Do currently available HIV/AIDS curricula and materials over-emphasise reproductive health issues and neglect such sociological issues of how to discourage older men (e.g. schoolteachers) from offering schoolgirls academic help in return for sexual favours – and how to encourage schoolgirls to resist such unwanted advances? Is the latter a life skill? This line of enquiry opens up the separate policy issue – not addressed in this paper -- of whether more generalised access to junior secondary education should be single-sex or co-educational. It seems that there are large numbers of middle-class parents in East Africa who are prepared to devote a large proportion of their disposable incomes to sending their children, especially girls, to single-sex boarding schools in preference to much cheaper local co-educational schools. Adding one or two years to the primary curriculum (or universalising junior secondary education) may therefore have the effect of widening the gender gap – a greater proportion of girls will be wives/mothers than boys will be husbands/fathers -- a challenge which can be addressed, but only if the new extended curriculum recognises it as such.

Should a decision to add one or two years to the primary curriculum be imposed nationally or available as an option in particular parts of a country? If early marriage for girls is a large problem in certain parts of Kenya but irrelevant elsewhere, should its repercussions be discussed everywhere? The pace and rhythm of the additional segment should be considered. In Bangladesh, BRAC's programme for adolescent girls who have dropped out of primary school or who have never been enrolled enables them to cover the equivalent of five years of primary-level work in a whole year less.

Before recommending the additional segment, the curriculum planners should ask themselves why it is not possible to cover the range of life skills within the existing primary cycle. One gap in the EFA literature that it does not tackle the issue of what the duration and content of 'primary' or 'basic' education should be? Currently, there are huge variations in what

duration and content mean (cfr. the reported recent moves in EA to 'harmonise' the three national curricula). Several international studies purport to show that children in country x achieve much more by the end of the primary cycle than children in country y, and it ought to be possible to iron out some of these inefficiencies first (the unpopularity of such studies and the resulting 'league tables' may explain why the EFA report skirts the issue!).

### Conclusion

This brief paper has concentrated on some of the curricular implications of taking life skills seriously in schools and, in passing, has stressed the cost in time and enhanced human resources in implementing such a policy. It cautions policy-makers against assuming that extending the primary cycle or expanding access to junior secondary education are a necessary pre-condition for doing this successfully.

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### BASIC EDUCATION FOR LIFE SKILLS – THE KENSIP EXPERIENCE

Ombech Abidha, Kenya School Improvement Project, Mombasa.  
Email: kensip@akesk.org

#### Basic Education and Life Skills

Currently, as many as 500,000 youths enter the labour market in Kenya (World Bank, 2000, P.18) a great number of them graduates of the 8-year primary education, and most of them without survival skills. Good quality education is important for at least three reasons (UNESCO 2002). First, there are the core skills provided by basic education; second, education can help alleviate negative features of life; and third, education has a powerful role in empowering those like children and women who suffer from multiple disadvantages. A Life Skill is a capacity acquired over a period that contributes to productive co-existence with other members of a community. PAHO (2001) describes life skills as falling in the following three categories:

- Social or interpersonal skills, including communication, negotiation/refusal skills, assertiveness, cooperation, empathy.
- Cognitive skills, including problem solving, understanding consequences, decision making, critical thinking, self-evaluation.
- Emotional coping skills, including managing stress, managing feelings, self-management, and self-monitoring.

It is usually recognized that whereas skills are *doable or observable* characteristics of a person, attitudes developed early in life are critical in determining the extent to which young people are able to acquire basic education that is a superset of life skills. With the proliferation of livelihood and health issues in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), skill development has become even more important (WB, 2000).

#### Policy Environment and Life Skills

Findings from the WB (WB 2000) yield a clear and strategic role for governments to play in skills development as part of actions towards the achievement of Millennium Development

Goals for poverty reduction and Education for All (EFA). Kenya does not have adequate policy to support development of life skills early in the life of its youth. I believe that *life skills* on which Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) entirely depend must be formed very early in life. To ensure effective acquisition of TVET, *behaviour formation* must be focused early to forestall the need to work on *behaviour change*. This paper discusses the need for a supporting policies in the early years of schooling that facilitate skill development. It draws examples from a project based in Kenya's Coast Province that strives to facilitate such skill development through the formal school. Whereas findings from EFA global monitoring (UNESCO, 2000) argue that Kenya may be on EFA track, we argue that it cannot be on track without a policy that supports skill development in its basic cycle of education.

In the primary cycle, we attempt to develop life skills through teaching of curriculum subjects like languages, mathematics, and science, among others. Development of these skills is closely linked to pedagogy of active learning. Through participative teaching methods, such as role play, debates, situation analysis, and one-on-one problem solving, education programs are expected actively engage school children in their own acquisition of life skills. All trained teachers you find in our project schools are aware that they should use 'child-centred' teaching approaches or pedagogy. This pedagogy is often associated with teaching/learning resources. It is rare, if at all, to find any two teachers that hold the same views about the teaching process and its facilitation of learning. When is a teaching 'child-centred' somewhere in Kwale? Would it be similar in Nairobi or Turkana? We know that it will be different. Since life skills needed in Turkana may be different from those needed in Kisii, can a common process of 'child-centeredness' be disseminated that facilitates the teaching and maintains the uniqueness that enable acquisition of skills useful locally? With low transition rates, the majority of the children in the primary circle need a policy dispensation that can make this possible. This currently does not exist.

### **Initiating the Policy Dialogue**

The broad goal of the Kenya School Improvement Project is to make quality primary education accessible to all children in Kenya. Quality education implies the existence of a minimum package of life skills that has to be imparted through work that temporarily goes on in school, tried/tested at home, and perfected in real life after school. We found no adequate uniform framework to facilitate this and ensure acquisition of life skills.

### **Teacher's Professional Documents**

These documents include the Schemes of Work (SW) and Lesson Plans (LP). Other accessories include textbooks and guides. Teachers often acquire the curriculum and some textbooks (usually centrally recommended) to prepare SW and later from SW prepare Lesson Plans. Our observations have been that there are no recommended formats that are enforced, and both documents mainly teacher centred. Our position was then that 'child-centred' SW and LPs must be in place before any meaningful skills could be learnt. The project piloted a child-centred SW and LP that has been accepted by teachers. The documents identify at the planning level 'skills' that children will 'take away' from each topic. The policy challenge remains on how to move such a process beyond the few schools we work with through the systems, including the Teacher Training Colleges. Such a policy would make a significant contribution to basic education that facilitates life skills.

**Linking 'skills' with the 'living place'.**

In the final situation, it is the skills we are able to use long after schooling that determines whether we got anything from school. The Kenyan curriculum identifies other *emerging issues* like HIV/AIDS, Adolescent Reproductive Health, Malaria, etc that are to be infused in the other subjects or taught separately. Skills must be practised as they are learnt, and practised in a real life environment. For there to be any 'life skills' acquired from the primary school circle, we have to treat learning in school the way we consider 'development'. Participatory methodologies like Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) aim to ensure ownership of the problem and the subsequent solution strategies. Adoption of a policy that explicitly entrenches children's participation in and out of school is an urgent requirement if life skills are to be developed. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methodologies need to be tried and recommended on the basis of their efficacy in facilitating acquisition of life skills.

In KENSIP we were faced with this dilemma. We decided that such participation has be linked to the teacher's professional documents, the SW and the LPs. We modelled these documents, through 'take-aways' as a platform for skill development at schools and at home. We have used the Child-to-Child Approach and fertilised it with PRA skills like 'pair-wise ranking' to come up with a child-driven participatory method and process for acquiring life skills (Abidha 2000). But these will be limited to only the few schools we will be able to impact.

There is need to formulate a process within the primary school circle that can facilitate skill development and infuse it into the school system, including the teachers training colleges. The challenge is how to pick up such experiences and make them influence the primary education programs at the national level

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**LIFE SKILLS AND THE VET CONTEXT IN TANZANIA**

Bernadetta Ndunguru, Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), Tanzania  
Email: [bndunguru@hotmail.com](mailto:bndunguru@hotmail.com)

**1. Introduction**

The development of skilled human resources is perhaps the most important factor contributing to social and economic development of a given country. Without skilled human resources, other resources such as capital, land and nature have little use. This statement

further underscores a common understanding that when relevant and of required quality, Vocational Education and Training (VET) can play a key role in the transformation of a country's economy.

In the case of Tanzania, her development and transformation objectives include, poverty reduction, creation of more gainful employment opportunities (only about 15% of the labour force can at the moment be absorbed in formal employment), and provision of competitive goods and services commensurate with the global market requirements. A recent development challenge is for Tanzania to work towards achieving behavioural change for minimizing the spread of HIV/AIDS among the active working age group. For VET to be relevant and of quality, its delivery system must therefore put into context the above mentioned social and economic development issues.

## **2. The VET context in Tanzania**

To achieve the required relevance and quality, the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) of Tanzania has adopted a Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) delivery approach. The approach is outcome based, giving room for integrating all necessary skills to enable a graduate perform at a prescribed learning objective.

At macro level, the approach is flexible enough to package learning content to address different learning objectives such as skills and competences specific for rural subsistence producers, or for the urban informal sector operators to enable them to enter gainful economic activity. Ideally this should reduce poverty, and give specific skills, for example, for hotel services or textile workers to enable Tanzania to compete effectively in the global market. At the individual level, the approach should enable us to maintain formal employment, or otherwise enhance income for a subsistence producer or open opportunities for the unemployed and informal sector operator. VETA ensures the integration of the following skills components:

➤ ***Practical Vocational Skills through training:***

This part is pertinent for any skilled worker, and has existed since VET started being implemented in Tanzania in the 1960s. Its focus is on the psychomotor domain, the doing part.

➤ ***Theoretical vocational knowledge through education:***

This part is now taken as an essential component as it underpins the practice with theoretical reasoning so as to ensure innovation and creativity when applying the practical skills. Its focus is on the cognitive domain, the thinking part.

➤ ***Business and entrepreneurial skills***

This part has been introduced with the change from a planned to a market economy. This component strives at developing entrepreneurial and market oriented attitudes among workers. It aims at stimulating translation of skills and knowledge into business ideas for purposes of producing job creators. It focuses on the affective domain, that is, how one applies the practice and the thinking to make gainful social and economic living.

➤ ***Other cross cutting skills in the VET context***

Due to our observation that the current social and economic demands are exerting a lot of pressure on the youth's psychological and physiological needs, a VET system which lacks curricula for dealing with these additional demands will

therefore fall short of producing a sustainable work force. This is particularly so in view of the current HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the wide spread of drug and alcohol abuse.

### **3. Rationale for a life skills programme within VET institutions**

The life skills concept is currently a household matter not so much due to the EFA goals, but rather due to the escalation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in that the trainers in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) introduced life skills components into the originally knowledge based (cognitive) education so as to enable trainees apply the knowledge to address HIV/AIDS life threatening situation. In this case, life skills meant skills that ensured application of SRH related knowledge and actions to enable positive SRH outcomes.

With the EFA goals, there has been a need for an expanded discussion on how to operationalize life skills in the VET context. This is basically in view of the fact that while discussing the question of HIV/AIDS and the marginalized segments of the society including the poor, women, unemployed, informal sector and the youths, who are at the highest risk of being infected due to a number of reasons including inadequate income.

If life skills are meant to enable one to apply practice and knowledge to enable make a meaningful living, the context of a life skills programme in VET should therefore focus on VET outcomes which should ensure both employment outcomes and also that workers are able to apply SRH knowledge and practices to ensure sustaining of the human resources capacity of Tanzania.

### **4. Life skills and the CBET concept**

The CBET approach has an advantage of allowing flexibility in the packaging of learning to prescribed outcomes. In view of the lack of an agreed definition on what life skills are, the evolution of the CBET concept in Tanzania is paving a way through which life skills in the EFA context can effectively be applied. The introduction and application of business/entrepreneurial in CBET, is enabling the move of VET graduates from a situation where they are only job seekers to one where they may become job creators; this is a step where graduates are enabled to apply their practical skills and knowledge to address their income and/or employment problems. While the integration of other cross cutting skills such as how to handle safety, environment, relationships with other workers, and SRH, ensures that an employee or a self employed person is adequately equipped to sustain a healthy working life in terms sustainable work environment and also SRH.

### **5. Examples of life skills application**

In a rural subsistence economy setting, where villagers have plenty of mangoes or avocados, which rot because there is no market, life skills could be applied in a way that the villagers are given for example a learning package whose outcomes are such that they develop awareness of the business and economic opportunities or potentials from the fruits surrounding them which they would have otherwise thought as being of no market value. The CBET learning package would therefore include as VET skills either processing or packaging skills, as well as business skills, how to determine hygienic and freshness condition of the fruit as a knowledge component, and also how to identify market opportunities so as to translate the other skills into an enterprising income generating activity, as a life skill.

In a formal institutional based learning situation, where intakes consists of pre employment trainees, a learning package will consist of practical and theoretical components, life skills in terms of entrepreneurial components, to enable trainees to build business opportunities, work relationships, customer satisfaction, safety, and environmental promotion skills – all of which will improve the employability of both job seekers who would prove an asset to an employer in ensuring competitiveness, as well as for learners who wish to take self employment as an option.

The need for adding SRH related skills can't be overemphasizes in view of the situation where HIV/AIDS is a threat to the human resource factor. Hence the life skills components as propagated by SRH specialists must be integral to any meaningful VET programmes in the Tanzania context to ensure sustainable human resources, and likewise to be able to contribute towards the macro level objectives of VET programmes.

## **6. Challenges**

The main challenge facing the integration of life skills components in VET programmes is in the inherent traditional approaches which are subject oriented and not outcome based. Such programmes have a supply-oriented, single line approach whereby different learning components are not integrated but taught separately. It may thus take a while to adopt CBET, since it will involve transforming the VET providers, facilitators and instructors so that they do not look at life skills as a separate component and take it as an added work load, to a level where they have adopted CBET, and therefore come to see life skills as producing outcomes which meet both individual and national expectations in terms of quality and relevance.

Additional resources (currently scarce) will be required to facilitate reforms in delivery approaches so that life skills become an integral part of VET programmes.

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN EAST AFRICA****SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AN EAST AFRICAN CONTEXT**

Kenneth King, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh

Email: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk

This short paper seeks to situate the World Bank's *Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*<sup>6</sup> within a specifically East African context, and, even more narrowly, within the experience of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and within these, principally Kenya. It will attempt to review to what extent the Bank paper has researched these three settings for material, and to what extent such material and illustrations have been drawn upon in the analysis. Finally, it will speculate on whether the findings from the review will capture the attention of governments in the region, in respect of the recommendations. It would seem likely that a text that draws explicitly on East African material would be able to commend itself to the local policy community.

**East African research base**

The research base in East Africa for the World Bank's findings looks, on the face of it, rather substantial. Materials which were directly commissioned on one or more of the three East African countries would include:

Kilemi Mwiria 2002 'Vocationalisation of secondary education: a Kenya case study';

Halfdan Farstad 2002 'Integrated entrepreneurship education in Botswana, Uganda and Kenya';

Kenneth King 2002 'Enterprise-based training in Kenya';

Hans, Haan, 2001 'Training for work in the informal sector: new evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa'.

There were several other studies commissioned which looked more generally at different aspects of public sector skills development, financing, distance learning, employment, and enterprise development across Africa, and from time to time these draw on examples from the three East African territories.

The result is that East Africa is given a good deal of attention in the final review document. The specifically case study material in fact draws on Kenya more than Uganda and Tanzania. But that is because two of the curricular case studies (on vocationalisation and on entrepreneurship) are located in Kenya as well as other countries.

The coverage for East Africa across the whole volume is therefore rather complete. East Africa, however, does not have one of the case studies of private technical and vocational education and training, but for most of the other sections of the World Bank review, there is a good deal of illustration from East Africa.

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<sup>6</sup> In this paper most references will be to the World Bank's Skills Development document (hereafter SD).



Apart from work commissioned specifically for the Review, there is some other work referred to in the bibliography which focused on East Africa, and this would include studies funded by the Bank, UNEVOC/UNESCO, USAID, DFID, ILO and SIDA. It is noticeable that there is very little material in the 10 page bibliography that is derived from Ministries of Labour or Education & Training – indeed there are only 2 Ministry sources in the whole bibliography. The nearest to an official source in the three East African countries is that of the Vocational Education and Training Authority in Tanzania (VETA), and a policy paper by a Kenyan think-tank on micro and small enterprises. What this may mean is that there simply have not been recent or current government reports or commissions relating to skills development in the 3 East African countries that seemed relevant to the wider context of the World Bank review.

This is not just a bibliographical point, but it also relates to the question of dissemination and impact of the WB findings. In a situation where, for example, there have already been influential commissions on education and training at the national level, it may be crucial to be able to relate the World Bank findings to those. The nearest any of the East African countries comes to that may be the Republic of Kenya 2000 *Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training* (The Koech Commission Report). Government Printer, Nairobi.

But despite its title, the Koech Commission remains much more concerned with education than with training. By contrast, the World Bank Review (hereafter WB Review) covers a whole range of different training environments, both public and private, in the formal and informal sectors, and both institution-based and enterprise-based, and it also has some coverage of education. It is rather unlikely that any of the three countries has a document that has the range and coverage of the WB Review, not least because of the ministerial boundaries that sometimes artificially separate these several core elements of skills development.

Substantive sourcing of East African material in the WB Review

### 1. The Numbers Game

Much has been made in all three East African countries of the sheer numbers entering primary school as a result of the new policies on free access; and the press is full of discussions about the huge budgetary and teacher requirements for satisfying the enormous numbers of new entrants (over a million in each country). The Skills Development paper is naturally much more concerned about a second set of numbers at the other end of the basic cycle, and it uses figures from Kenya (500,000) and from Tanzania (700,000) to underline the equally huge challenge facing this annual number of young people entering the labour market (SD 18). In a situation where the formal sector has been stagnating, this has meant that the great bulk of the young labour force entrants are said to be entering the informal economies of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

This gives the informal sector a very special place in the WB Review. When the public training sector can cover the training of only 7% of new labour market entrants in Kenya (SD 81), and the non-government training sector at least as much again, most of the training outside the rural agricultural sector will necessarily be done on the job in the *jua kali* economy. It must be remembered that there is an important distinction between the size of the training sector per se and the number of young people absorbed in the labour market. Thus, in Tanzania, the numbers of young people getting employment (presumably in the formal sector) after being in the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) centres is reportedly as low as 14% of those attending (SD34). The rest have to find work elsewhere. Equally, even where there is a very high proportion of training being offered, for example, in the private and non-government institutions of Tanzania – which are responsible

for 90% of all TVET training in Tanzania – this large figure says very little about the subsequent absorption of those receiving such training (SD 55)<sup>7</sup>.

What is difficult to work out – even with the useful categorisation in the WB Review – is the actual scale of who is getting training in the three East African territories. First, we know that the public sector training capacity in formal TVET centres is very small – as low as 7% of the cohort, as we noted in Kenya. Second, the WB Review shows for several of its case study countries that private and non-government training opportunities are much larger than government provision, in some cases eclipsing public provision. But none of our three countries was included in the World Bank case studies; so the data for East Africa are not firm. Third, there is apprenticeship training in the informal economy which the Bank judges to be ‘responsible for more skills development than the offerings of all other training providers combined’ (SD 82). But, again, there is a very real question mark around the size of this training system in East Africa, where the West African traditional apprenticeship has no exact counterpart.

Thus, ideally, we should have available the following four figures, relevant to the skills development challenge:

1. an annual school-leaver/ labour market entry figure (in the Kenya case, 500,000);
2. an institution-based training sector number (both public and private);
3. figures for formal training in enterprises, whether large, medium, small or micro;
4. a figure for those entering work, formal and informal, with no training, as casual or day labourers.

In the Kenya case, there is a very relevant fifth figure that has been very widely quoted since the new government took office at the beginning of 2003, and that is the number of jobs that the government intends to create annually.

Intriguingly, this annual jobs’ pledge in Kenya is exactly the same, 500,000, as the number of young people coming into the labour market every year. What the government has not made very clear is whether these jobs include both formal and informal sectors. Which they obviously must do.

Unlike the EFA agenda which we discussed yesterday, there has not developed the same sense of there being a right to training (Training for All? [TFA]), but we would suggest that figures 2,3 and 4 above are all pretty uncertain in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Not only are they uncertain, but there is no distinct sense of whether they should include the whole cohort (i.e. Training for All), or whether the training that is available should be both for the formal and informal sector.

The World Bank Review makes it rather clear that formal sector training should be oriented much more to the informal sector, but it admits that many of its own reform programmes, including its recent programme for Kenya, have failed because of the fierce opposition of the training institutions to their conversion to support the informal sector (SD 37).

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<sup>7</sup> The very high figure of 90-92% of all TVET in Tanzania being in the non-government and private sector is not derived from a WB case study but is derived from Haan 2001.

We reach a somewhat contradictory position after this brief analysis of some of the key figures that are available in the WB Review.

The annual cohort of school leavers entering the labour market is already very large – at over half a million. If the national EFA programmes underway in all three countries are successful, the total age cohort will not change its size, but the portion of it that consists of school leavers will rise very substantially.

At the moment, we do not have a good sense, for East Africa, of the size of the group of school leavers who do get some post-basic training, whether in public or private sector training institutions. But the WB Review implies that this is a rather small segment of the entire cohort, perhaps as small as 5 -10%, and it is argued that the bulk of this small percentage is private or non-government provision.

At the moment, also, we do not have a good sense of what proportion of the annual cohort of young people get a formal sector job and what proportion get an informal job. But the WB Review points, for instance, to only 10% of the entire cohort being absorbed into formal employment in Uganda.

Nor do we have good data on what proportion of young people who enter work – whether in the formal or informal sectors – actually get training. But it would seem that the bulk of training in enterprises is informal, and that, as might be expected, the more educated the employee, the more likely they are to get access to formal training.

One conclusion from this brief examination of the figures available in the World Bank Review is that at the country level, we have a very broad outline of the movement of young people from schooling to work, but for none of the East African countries is there firm data on the major components of this provision.

## **2. School-based TVET in East Africa**

Given the massive figures of pupils entering the basic cycle in East Africa, it is perhaps not surprising that policy-makers have paid attention at different times in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to whether the school's own programmes could become more relevant to what we have sketched as the architecture of work and employment.

Broadly there have been three dimensions of the approach to using schools for technical and vocational skills development. First, there has been the use of explicitly technical and vocational secondary schools, including in East Africa. Historically, this distinct type of technical or vocational secondary school was present in East Africa. It is now more prevalent in Francophone Africa than in East Africa but even there the WB Review views it as having a small if not marginal position vis a vis the regular secondary schools. This type of provision remains very much more substantial in the OECD countries than it does in the SSA.

The second type of public provision of some kind of vocational or practical education has taken place via the attempt to orient the entire school system towards the world of work. Driven by very different rationales, both Tanzania and Kenya attempted this in both their primary and secondary cycles, and have retreated from it at different times. The World Bank Review carried out an evaluation of what has often been termed the vocationalisation of secondary education, including in Kenya, and it reached a generally rather critical position on the cost and effectiveness of doing this on a large scale, but nevertheless felt the case for computer studies and 'low cost' programmes such as agriculture and business studies could

be justified, along with the teaching of entrepreneurship education. The Kenya case study of vocationalisation was carried out just a year after the Government had precipitously terminated most of the practical provision. Interestingly, the study concluded that 'the wholesale withdrawal of industrial education courses, typewriting with office practice and computer studies from even those schools that are well equipped to teach them is a somewhat unfortunate development' (Mwiria 2002: 47).

The third type of public provision is post-basic or post-secondary vocational training centres or colleges. These have the advantage of no longer competing directly with academic secondary school curricula. This sector does not emerge very positively from the WB Review. In Kenya in particular the quality has been allowed to run down, and there is an air of decay in the training centres. They are also said to have a poor relationship with industry because of the overly centralised control of the curriculum. Nor is this an external criticism; the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training's own evaluation reach a very negative conclusion about the dismal state of provision. Significantly, this negative commentary by Kenya on its own TVET system is said by the WB Review to be 'a summary of the overall analysis of the state of TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa' (SD 37). Somewhat surprisingly in the light of this, Kenya is also mentioned in the WB Review as being one of the countries developing 'dual training' which should imply a close relationship with industry.

#### **4. The potential policy impact of the World Bank Review.**

We said at the outset that one of the acid tests of this WB Review would be how its many different recommendations would be received in the client countries, and we surmised that the extent to which the document had understood the local context and challenges would partly determine its uptake at the country level. This is of course at tall order when it is recalled how many different Sub-Saharan contexts there are. We have illustrated a little the way that the Review has referred to the East African and particularly to the Kenyan experience. And we should add that there several more references to East Africa than those we have alluded to.

But the prior question must be: how does a document of 127 pages of tightly argued text get absorbed by the hard-pressed policy constituency? One answer, of course, is that the policy maker – or the politician – has no time to read more than the Chapter on Conclusions and Recommendations (17 pages) or the Executive Summary (10 pages). The shorter of these is more likely to be read. So what actions follow from a close reading by policy of the Executive Summary (hereafter ES). The ES set out 6 very pertinent questions for skills development in SSA, and judges that its findings 'yield a clear, strategic role for governments to play' (SD: xvi). The most appealing to East African policy-makers of the 6 questions would be:

'Given the widespread decay in public training systems, what should be the role of the public sector in training?'

'In view of the shortages of public financing, how can needed skills development be financed?'

These 2 questions reduce the reading requirements still further. The first of these questions is elaborated in a section of the ES called 'Making reforms work in public training'. What are the recommendations here that might resonate with East Africa, or more specifically with Kenya?

The first issue is the need for further reform given the current failings of the public system. Some promising reforms are mentioned, and the first of these is the introduction of national co-ordinating bodies and national training authorities that have got some substantial measure of autonomy. Tanzania already has this in VETA, though Kenya only has a national advisory council.

The second issue reinforces the recommendation about autonomy and accountability and argues that the public training system can become more responsive where individual institutes are given the freedom to set fees, adapt training to local needs, hire staff etc. Financing performance and outputs rather than inputs is recommended. Responsiveness will also be increased, it is argued, by the introduction of new shorter competency-based programmes that meet the needs of new clients. Overall, this suggestion could be attractive in East Africa, but would require a sustained investment in new staff, new curricula and approaches to be feasible.

Other innovations such as National Qualifications Frameworks are mentioned, but there is a health warning attached to them because of their implementation complexity.

Governments are then encouraged to be more proactive in developing policies, setting standards, investing in curriculum development and instructor training. As well as in initiating evaluations. They are also encouraged to meet equity objectives and fill strategic skill gaps, providing skills training in priority areas where the non-government provision has been reluctant to invest. Government is cautioned against crowding out the private, non-government provision.

In terms of policy impact, these recommendations to free up the public training system may well be welcome, but they will require substantial initial investment, given the decay in the public system. But this advice about an aggressive responsive public system runs a little counter to the emphasis on the public sector filling just the strategic and equity gaps, and avoiding too much competition with the private, non-government sector.

As far as the question about shortages in public funding for skills development is concerned, one of the main mechanisms discussed is the use of training funds and training levies. These are already present in both Kenya and Tanzania.

At the end of the Executive Summary, there are five principal findings and conclusions that emerge from the Review. Of the five, one is about the need for reform in skills development for the informal sector; one is about how the non-government training institutions account for most of the available training, and that they should be brought into the reform dialogue; one is about the importance of management and finance. And the last two are somewhat contradictory: one states that 'the record of TVET reforms over the past decade has been promising' while the other states that 'public training continues to face challenges in reform and will require sustained commitment' (SD: xxii).

One of the reasons for the relative blandness of these final recommendations and findings is probably that they have to synthesise an enormously rich fabric of different initiatives and reforms over the continent, many of which are captured in the detailed text.

But perhaps the largest policy challenge for a government in East Africa is that the recommendations throughout this single, comprehensive report turn out to be the responsibility of several different ministries. So action on such matters as informal sector

reform, training levies, vocationalisation of secondary, and greater responsiveness for vocational training centres require a policy dialogue with several different policy audiences.

Returning to our earlier concern about the numbers game, one ministry is responsible for the number of school-leavers; several ministries for post-basic training; another for policy on the informal sector; and yet another for the pledge on the creation of new jobs. Hence the dissemination challenge for a cross-cutting document such as the World Bank Review is really quite considerable.

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### THE QUALITY CHALLENGES OF JUA KALI TRAINING

Harun Baiya, SITE Enterprise Development, Nairobi  
Email: Harun\_baiya@sitenet.org

### Introduction

The informal sector has undergone a rapid expansion in many developing countries and particularly in Africa over the last 2 decades. The sector now plays a central role in the social economic sphere for most of these countries. In the East Africa region, the sector is the source of 85% to 90% of all non-farming employment opportunities. The sector is growing at very high rates as well. For example, it is estimated that the sector in Kenya grew by about 18% in 2002 and in Uganda by over 20% in the same year while the formal or modern sector grew at about 2% in Kenya over the same period.

The sector, however, faces a number of challenges, the central ones being the productivity of its labour and competitiveness of the products and services it seeks to provide. These two are factors of skills. There is a growing consensus that for the sector to contribute to real economic growth especially by creating reasonable returns on the labour invested and improving productivity and competitiveness, the level and quality of skills-ready training

provided are critical. The issues of how workers in the sector acquire skills and the quality of those skills are therefore important to many development workers and researchers, and hopefully the governments as well.

### **The Informal Training Apprenticeships**

There are numerous studies on how workers in the informal sector acquire skills. The level of understanding of apprenticeships in West Africa has until recently been better than in the case of Eastern Africa. However studies of the informal sector in the region and particularly in Kenya show that in informal sector firms with less than 20 employees, between 60% and 73% of them acquired their skills through apprenticeships, largely in enterprises of similar size. In other studies, especially where manufacturing and service enterprises with up to 50 employees are considered, the proportion of workers who acquired their skills through apprenticeship ranges from 38 to 50%.

It is apparent that the smaller in size the informal sector firm is, the higher the proportion of workers who rely on apprenticeships for training; by contrast, workers in enterprises on the higher end of the scale tend to have come from a formal technical and vocational training and education background.

In the case of West Africa, studies indicate that some 55-85% of the small producers in the informal sector have acquired skills through the apprenticeship system.

A critical analysis of literature does not show a significant difference in importance of apprenticeship training between the East and West Africa regions, especially in proportion of workers in the informal sector who have acquired their skills through the system. However, there are important and significant differences in how the training is organised and managed, which have a bearing on quality. Some of these are highlighted below.

### **The changing face of the 'Jua Kali' Sector In East Africa**

There are a number of important changes on the face of what the Kenyans call their Jua Kali (informal) sector that have a bearing on provision of apprenticeship training and are a potentially major source of quality management challenges. Three of these changes are particularly notable.

- a) Apprenticeship and its remodelled version - enterprise based training have increasingly become fee-based activities with a growing number of enterprises offering such training as a major source of income. Dressmakers now also sell tailoring classes; former secretarial bureaux offer secretarial courses as well; while cyber cafes host IT classes. Challenges arise in areas of the competency of the trainers, the type of curriculum used, and relevance of such training and in monitoring, as well as the 'dual' sides of providing both service/production and training in these businesses.
- b) The informal sector has seen the emergence of a new dimension. It is no longer confined, either in practice or as an image, to the road-side mechanic, or a small metal-bashing operator or dress maker, but what the sector now includes other areas such as information and communication technologies (ICT) and related service enterprises. In fact the informal sector is now present in a whole range of business operations where skills are demanded and where opportunities for productive employment generation are found.

- c) Technology and market changes have had significant bearing on the informal sector that is challenging the relevance of skills provided/available to the sector. The process of technology diffusion among the majority of enterprises in the informal sector in EA is often based on imitation as opposed to deliberate search and strategic dissemination of skills that allow the sector to respond to changing market opportunities. Most trainers do not, on their own, have the capacity to upgrade their technological and skills capacities and will require facilitation and support. For example, the level of apprentices in auto mechanics has dropped sharply in the last few years because many of the 'older master mechanics' do not have skills to handle the 'newer versions of injection engines—they only know carburettor engines.

There are various reasons for these changes but two important ones are the ever increasing social demand side for training by the large number of unskilled and jobless young people, and the changes in the economic opportunities (new areas of business where skills that may not be traditionally available suddenly open up). For example, in the last 2 years, the demand for specialised garment workers has suddenly increased due to the growth in the sector as a result of the AGOA export initiative. However the level of skills of many potential employees has been lower than expected. This has suddenly opened up a 'business' opportunity for some enterprises to attach semi-skilled workers for a period ranging from one week to two months before they can qualify to join other firms. This is similar in the IT sector, where in Kenya for example, there are over 200 training providers with a capacity of 20000 young people, many of them offering training that has strong apprenticeship elements.

### **Quality management Systems**

The instruments for managing quality of training for the informal sector in EA are limited to the traditional Trade Testing, which has undergone little or no change since the immediate post-independence period. Uganda and Tanzania have, however, been working on some TVET reforms that have elements that change how skill levels are tested and recognised. However, the apprenticeship providers are generally not at all involved in 'quality' assurance.

Training management is fairly different in many West African countries e.g. Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon and Benin. Here the informal sector, through clusters and associations, plays a key role not only in 'quality assurance' but also in establishing the level and type of skills needed in their respective sectors, and in the development of curricula as well as facilitating delivery of such training. Some associations, e.g. Metal workers in Ghana, have their own certification and quality 'assurance' standards which are recognised by the sector and other employers.

Appreciation of the importance of a self-organised sector as a strategy for upgrading and maintaining quality of training cannot be overemphasised. An example that is well documented is the textile workers association-- *Federation Nationale de Professionnels de l'habillement* (FEDNAPH) in Senegal, which has a membership of over 10,000 artisans, plays an active role in skills development for the sector. This association has demonstrated the role of self-organisation and self-regulation in improvement of quality and indeed, management of training in the informal sector.

A critical review of the apprenticeship and enterprise-based training in West Africa and East Africa shows two main areas of difference. The main one relates to the self-organisation of the sector just discussed and is often referred to as Informal Sector Associations (ISAs) and the role they play in training. If these are active, it is easier to articulate and track emerging training needs; they allow for self-regulation, make it easier for an intervention such as introduction of new skills/technology, and also facilitate easier and more accurate monitoring



and analysis of the sector. The other area is that governments in West Africa seem to demonstrate a greater engagement with the ISAs and embrace informal training and support it accordingly.

### **Key Policy Questions and Issues**

There are several bundles of questions and issues that arise if quality of informal training in EA is to be improved. These include:

- The level to which governments appreciate the role/importance of informal training systems and the needs/opportunities for their social and economic improvement
- How can governments influence and stimulate improvements in the quality of training offered in the informal sector and by private providers in general? Is there a need for increasing the monitoring and analysis of such training?
- There is need for strategies to facilitate informal training e.g. provision of guidance, supportive materials, upgrading of skills of master trainers, fiscal incentives for the providers (e.g. tax breaks) etc. and especially promoting apprenticeships for women and rural enterprises, including on-farm 'commercial' production at small scale level.
- While there are major reforms taking place in Eastern and Central African countries in the area of TVET, rapid review of the thinking does not demonstrate serious attention to strategies of improving apprenticeship training provision. There is increasing appreciation of «training for the informal sector or re-orientation of training» but tangible strategic interventions that will build on the apprenticeship process are missing. So, are we about to repeat the same mistakes—where analysis of the informal training system is ignored?
- Experiences in Uganda have focused on building 'Associations of Private Training Providers' with a hope that this will, among other things, improve the quality of informal training. However, this is the supply side of training only. In order to improve the training, engagement of the demand side as well is critical, and such efforts must be complemented by self-organised enterprises—whether they provide apprenticeship training or not.

There are several specific recommendations given in the World Bank document on 'Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa' (pages 93 to 95), which in my mind provide an excellent starting point for a rationalised approach to the sector—provided stakeholders and governments in particular appreciate the reality of the ever-expanding and complex process of informal and private skills development efforts and enterprises.

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### **BASIC EDUCATION FOR WHAT: LOW TRANSITION RATE TO SECONDARY EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA.**

Akim Okuni, School Improvement Regional Research Coordinator, East Africa  
Aga Khan Foundation.  
Email: a\_okuni@hotmail.com

#### **1. The Context**

Hundreds of thousands of youth enter the labour market every year, mostly from school systems. In East Africa, these include about 500,000 in Kenya and 700,000 in Tanzania (see Johanson & Adams 2003:18). In Uganda currently, the available post-primary education and training (PPET) institutions can absorb only 50% of the estimated 642,488 UPE leavers for 2003. This situation will be compounded in 2004 when (for the first time) an estimated 900,000 Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) candidates will be completing and seeking admission opportunities in PPET (see *New Vision* May 12, 2003:49). Thus the magnitude of Uganda's (indeed East Africa's) employment and PPET challenge is stark. Uganda and the world at large (especially the World Bank) seem now to have belatedly awoken to the harsh reality that the much-hyped UPE alone is not enough to spearhead meaningful development in poor countries as earlier thought (see *New Vision* June 11 & 16, 2003:6 & 23, respectively). Yet, the transition rate to secondary education in Uganda is very low mainly due to its high financial cost. Thus the 'poor' in Uganda generally prefer business, technical and vocational education and training (BTVET) to mainstream secondary education partly because they perceive it to be relatively affordable (see *Deepening the Understanding of Poverty* 2002:153).

Both BTVET skills development and providing UPE are important to economic growth and poverty reduction. However, in no region other than sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is the balance drawn more sharply between the achievement of skills development and providing UPE. The capacity of most SSA states including Uganda to meet both the skills development and UPE goals is limited. But for the past decade or so, donor interest in BTVET has waned with increasing attention given to UPE. This is the case despite the fact that the rampant presence and 'de-skilling' impact of HIV/AIDS has compounded the problem of skills development in SSA and indeed in Uganda (see Johanson & Adams 2003:xiii, 76-77). Besides, appropriate provision and adequate financing of both secondary education and BTVET (i.e. PPET as a whole) is essential to achieving Education For All (EFA) and the poverty reduction goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus in anticipation of the initial impact of the «UPE bulge» in 2004, the Uganda government aimed at providing a first class day secondary school per sub-county by 2003 and it intended to provide Universal Secondary Education (USE) in the medium term. Furthermore, the government's emphasis in BTVET was to set up in every sub-county low-cost accessible community polytechnics to impart a variety of skills especially to UPE leavers, the poor and the disabled focusing on the needs and potential of the individual in society (see *2001 Election Manifesto*: 52-3; *New Vision* May 12, 2003:49). However, despite the recent shift in international attention from UPE to PPET, the World Bank has still ruled out supporting the introduction of BTVET in Ugandan PPET saying that the program would not be sustainable (see *New Vision* June 12, 2003:4).

This paper interrogates (within the context of the PPET sub-sector and policy in Uganda) both the longstanding notion of basic education as the engine for socio-economic development, and the implications of the current reluctance of international donors to support the introduction of BTVET skills development in schools. It examines and highlights the evidence in Uganda that explains why such shift of attention from primary to PPET was overdue and necessary, and why therefore PPET ought to be taken more seriously now. Furthermore, it explores the challenge of BTVET skills development in Uganda, in view of this recent shift in attention towards secondary education.

## **2. Uganda PPET sub-sector overview and policy context**

Relatively little is known about the PPET sub-sector in Uganda, and comprehensive data on the BTVET component of PPET is not readily available (see Liang 2001; Levine & Byaruhanga

2002:3, 12). Nevertheless, PPET sub-sector in Uganda consists of two main divisions: BTVET and secondary education. The two are separate and independent departments within the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES).

The government-run BTVET component of PPET in Uganda was recently brought under the purview of the MoES. However, currently in Uganda facilities in government BTVET institutions are paradoxically already being under-utilized. Besides, most of these institutions have a supply-side approach to the provision of skills, assuming that their products would find employment anyway. Furthermore, BTVET is exceedingly diverse. It consists of a diverse set of institutions offering programs in a range of technical and commercial areas. Yet, restructuring of the management of the BTVET still remains incomplete since the transfer of institutions previously under the separate Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Labour. Despite the under-utilization of government BTVET institutions, there are about 450 private sector BTVET institutions in Uganda. And, unlike the government institutions, private sector BTVET enterprises tend to provide vocational skills with a view that trainees need to fit the «world of work», thus ensuring a match between skills and work (see Liang 2001; Levine & Byaruhanga 2002:13).

Secondary is the largest component of PPET in Uganda in terms of enrolment, staffing and budget allocation. It has grown substantially during the past two decades (following the defeat of Idi Amin) with the emergence of the so-called 'Third World' (secondary) schools, because of their being characteristically under-resourced. A similar pattern is reflected in enrolment trends during the same period, reflecting the growth in numbers of secondary schools. This growth is expected to increase significantly from 2004 due to the anticipated impact of the «UPE bulge». Overall, the proportion of girls in secondary school in Uganda has risen steadily since the 1970s, although the proportion of female enrolment declines at upper secondary school.

### **3. Why PPET in Uganda should now be taken more seriously**

Communities in Uganda generally perceive (lack of or low) education and poverty to be closely linked. In a second national participatory poverty assessment study undertaken between 2001-2002 (UPPAP2), low education (e.g. attaining only basic education) and illiteracy were cited as overall effects, causes and characteristics of poverty, and by contrast high level of education was mentioned as a characteristic of the better-off. In the majority of sites where data were collected community members, as illustrated below, highly valued (higher) education as a means of rising out of poverty mainly because it enables one to compete more suitably for (high-income) jobs and employment.

'With education one can get employment. Educated children can in the long run help one in old age' (a poor young mother during a semi-structured interview in Alekilek, Moroto district).

However, primary education was perceived to be of limited worth when after completion of UPE there is no substantial difference between someone who has been to school and one who has never gone to school at all. Difference was mainly perceived in terms of, for example, certificate gained, nature of employment and income acquired, practical value added or skills acquired, and ability to employ oneself. Primary education was also considered worthless when there is limited or no immediate and direct usefulness and relevance of the education acquired to the traditional livelihoods of people especially who are just eking a living and live hand to mouth. In addition, community members felt UPE to be valueless when children cannot go in school beyond the primary level due to high cost of (and/or lack of

nearby) secondary school. Thus, many community members advocated the teaching of agriculture on the primary curriculum citing that it would make the curriculum more practical and relevant for the UPE dropouts. Also most community members preferred BTNET arguing that it imparts skills that can enable one, especially with low/average education, to be self-employed. They also argued that BTNET is more affordable than secondary education and it provides a vital alternative when one cannot access secondary education due to high financial costs (see *Deepening the Understanding of Poverty* 2002:136-7, 151-4).

Such sentiments about the perceived limited value of UPE alone in delivering EFA and steering poor countries such as Uganda out of poverty appear to have captured the attention of international policy makers and may explain why secondary education is the new donor darling in Africa. The World Bank, which co-organised the SEIA conference together with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the Academy for Education Development (AED), now argues that secondary education is not only vital to achieving EFA, but also to ensure supply of teachers to support UPE quality. And, the Uganda Education Minister explains why PPET should now be taken more seriously thus:

'No country can hope to make much economic progress with a work force that has only attained primary education. It is high time we stopped praising ourselves.... Primary education completion is a priority but is not enough. Evidence has shown that secondary education contributes significantly to economic, social and cultural development and progress. This leads to reduction of poverty. Parents will only send their children to school if they see a clear advantage in terms of future economic benefits and if their communities can see the social and cultural gains of schooling' (see *New Vision* June 16, 2003:23).

#### 4. Uganda secondary education policy analysis

Nevertheless, the secondary sub-sector in Uganda is currently still heavily reliant on finance from non-government sources, with about 70% of the direct costs borne by families. Moreover, the limited public resources do not appear to be used in an equitable manner. In 2000, schools reported national average public expenditure of Ush. 72,000/= per pupil. However, district averages of the national distribution of public expenditure per pupil in the same year varied significantly. For example, whereas relatively better-off districts in and around the capital city such as Kampala, Jinja and Mukono received well above the national average public expenditure per pupil, relatively poorer hard-to-reach and/or insecure up-country districts such as Adjumani, Bundibugyo and Kitgum received far below the national average (see *Educational Statistical Abstract 2000* MoES, Kampala). This indicates that there are significant problems in the current system of allocating public funds (Levine & Byaruhanga 2002:10-11). Thus high financial cost impacts negatively on access and equity of secondary education, and is a potential barrier to achieving EFA and the poverty reduction goal of the MDGs. Access and gender equity is heavily skewed in favour of the higher income groups and boy-child. UPPAP2 findings (like UPPAP1) indicate that altogether secondary education costs were considered prohibitive in 35 of the 60 sites in 11 of the 12 districts where data were collected. Some parents said that paying the high financial cost of secondary education was one reason for moving from relative better-off status into poverty, because it erodes one's asset base. As one woman explained:

'I paid one child in school up to Senior Three and got stuck, then I sold a cow that belonged to me and paid the Senior Four fees. The father of the child refused to assist and said there will be no more animals left to pay bride price for the wife of the boy. I am finished. I have no animals anymore' (a woman in Ruwe, Arua district).

Other parents felt that '*when there is not enough money, boys' fees are paid before the girls*'. This implies that the impossibility of accessing secondary education because of the high financial cost severely limits the educational opportunities of the girl-child especially. Therefore, providing free or subsidized USE ranked third out of ten most frequently stated community recommendations to government in order to improve education service delivery in Uganda (see *Deepening the Understanding of Poverty* 2002:156). However, it is estimated that a 18-fold increase in resource requirements from current levels would be required to provide «universal, compulsory and free» secondary education in Uganda (see Levine & Byaruhanga 2002:11).

The full government estimate for USE is probably an over-estimation. Even in the primary sub-sector whereby UPE is ostensibly «free», a significant proportion of the direct costs (e.g. exercise books, pens, uniforms & lunch) are by policy borne by families. Besides, a substantial portion of family finances in secondary education is spent on non-essential inputs, e.g. uniforms, boarding costs, etc. Therefore, as stated by the Ugandan President in his *2001 Election Manifesto* (p. 51), in order to make secondary education permanently cheap (and accessible) we must de-link accommodation from essential inputs (i.e. teachers, books, laboratories, libraries and sports). With the target of providing a first class day secondary school per sub-county by 2003 achieved, it would indeed be cheap for government to provide USE in 2004, notwithstanding that introduction of USE is also conditional upon a significant rise in revenue collection to «for instance, Ush.2000 billion per annum» (see *2001 Election Manifesto*: 51-52). However, government has so far achieved neither target. Besides, the national budget estimates for FY 2003/2004 indicate that although more revenue will be collected, it will only rise up to Ush.1655 billion (see *New Vision* June 13, 2003:46). This figure is still far below the required Ush.2000 billion necessary for government to be able to fund USE.

## **5. BTVET policy analysis and the challenge of skills development in Uganda**

The wholesale transfer of BTVET institutions previously under different government ministries to the MoES did not take full cognizance of how the institutions would relate in a coherent and practical manner. For example, this is evident from the unclear demarcation of operational responsibility between the BTVET and Higher Education departments of the MoES. The Labour Ministry's Directorate of Industrial Training too was appended to the BTVET department of the MoES without clarity on how it would relate to the vocational education and training that has been within the purview of the BTVET department. The great diversity of the BTVET component of PPET, therefore, presents challenges in management of the component and the development of a coherent strategic policy framework (Levine & Byaruhanga 2002:13-14).

For example, at the policy level pronouncements have been made emphasizing the prominence of this component in taking care of both the supply and demand side pressures that have been on the increase since the introduction of UPE. The Uganda government's emphasis in BTVET is to set up in every sub-county low-cost accessible community polytechnics to provide local community-specific and relevant multi-skills training opportunities. Focus on the immediate and direct usefulness and relevance of BTVET skills to the traditional livelihood of the individual in society would indeed make such education more worthwhile (see discussion in Section 3 above). However, by policy the planned community polytechnics will lack such responsiveness. Instead, they will universally provide only pre-determined multi-skills training in 18 traditional areas such as motor-mechanics, carpentry, building, tailoring, cookery, handicrafts, hairdressing, etc. (see *2001 Election Manifesto*: 53). Besides, under-utilization of government BTVET institutions and the existence of about 450

private sector BTVET institutions in Uganda brings into question the feasibility of building a further approximately 850 community polytechnics, considering the stringent resource base for the PPET sub-sector as a whole. The *Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) 1998-2003* (p. 8) stipulates using currently under-utilised educational facilities in the late afternoons, weekends and vacations. However, this is a narrow and limited view of the resource-inputs that traditional TVET ordinarily demands, and it ignores other relevant inputs especially highly skilled manpower and modern equipment.

Operation of public-private partnerships with clear mandates for either party involved is a viable option worth considering, and government has appointed and inaugurated the relevant steering committee (see Johanson & Adams 2003:53-64; *New Vision* May 12, 2003:49). Nevertheless, there are outstanding questions that remain to be addressed in order to ensure effective regulation and supervision. These regard: curriculum development, testing and certification, and standardization of qualification. Furthermore, there are likely to be reservations raised especially by the 'poor' about the potential for increased burden of BTVET-related charges as a result of requiring parents to provide relevant equipment and inputs.

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## OVERVIEW OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA: CONSTRAINTS AND PROSPECTS

Charles K. Ngome Bureau of Educational Research  
Kenyatta University, Nairobi.  
Email: [Ckibanani@yahoo.com](mailto:Ckibanani@yahoo.com)

### Introduction

#### An Overview of Skills Development in Kenya: Constraints and Prospects

##### 1.1 Introduction

The World Bank review of Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (Johanson and Adams 2003) reveals that the existing public technical and vocational education training (TVET)

system in Kenya suffers from critical problems including the decline of quality; lack of relevance to occupational and social realities: under-enrolment; and under-funding. This shows that Kenya faces a difficult future because the importance of skills and adequate training cannot be over-emphasized as it is expertise and technology that differentiates between the developed and developing countries such as Kenya. In the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1996, Kenya articulates its intention to industrialize by the year 2020. Unfortunately, the TVET system that is expected to play a critical role in this endeavour by providing necessary skills that will catalyze the industrialization processes is in a sorry state. This brief paper falls into three sections. We begin by discussing the status of TVET institutions, which essentially substantiates the situation described by the World Bank document. We follow this with a review of the provision of skills within the formal school system. Third, we conclude by pointing out what needs to be done to enhance skills development in the country.

## **1.2 Status of TVET Institutions**

Currently, Kenya has more than 650 public and private TVET institutions which include: 4 national polytechnics; 1 technical teacher training college; 35 technical training institutes and 600 Youth Polytechnics popularly known as village polytechnics. These institutions offer a wide range of training programmes from craft to diploma certificate levels. A variety of courses are offered including building construction; carpentry and joinery, commercial-based fields; engineering, textile-based programmes, catering, accommodation and information and communication technology. This TVET system is characterized by several problems. First is the problem of provision in the public budget for TVET institutions. The effects of this under-funding are devastating. Over the past two decades, TVET institutions have continued to receive less financial allocations from the government than the estimated annual expenditure, a trend which is expected to continue. Consequently, physical facilities are dilapidated and lack maintenance. Equipment used for training in most institutions is outdated while vital aspects of the training support system are wanting with such areas as library acquisitions being relegated to the periphery with negative impact on the quality of TVET programmes.

Second, the declining quality of staff is affecting the ability of TVET institutions to accomplish their role in society. These institutions are generally unable to attract and retain high calibre academic staff. This is mainly due to the low level of remuneration, which they offer. Third, certain skills that are needed in the domestic market are not provided in the training programmes of TVET institutions. An example is the lack of training in bicycles assembling and repair, despite the growth of demand for bicycles in the country, especially in the rural areas where a bicycle is a very important mode of transport. Surprisingly no institution in the country offers training in bicycle assembling and repair.

Fourth, industries play a peripheral role in development and implementation of TVET curricula which exacerbates the mismatch between formal training and requirements of employers. Fifth, declining enrollment levels, particularly in the traditional engineering and building based courses, poses a serious challenge to the country's policy of industrialization. Sixth, since formal sector employment has been stagnant for decades and the informal sector that has been generating about 75 percent of the total employment in the country is now saturated; large numbers of TVET graduates have become victims of unemployment. This is disheartening to most of them. Seventh, TVET exhibits gender and regional inequalities. Women are not only underrepresented but also cluster around home science, typing, tailoring and office practice courses. These skills tend to prepare them for their traditional role as mothers and homemakers. At the regional level, members of those communities that hail

from high potential districts of the country are over-represented in TVET institutions while those drawn from arid and semi-arid (ASAL) zones are seriously under-represented. These problems are now being compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. While sub-Saharan Africa accounts for only 10.4 per cent of the world's population it records 71.3 per cent of AIDS related deaths. The epicentre of the disease in Africa is located in Eastern and Southern Africa. In Kenya, it is estimated that 900 AIDS-related deaths occur daily. Although an assessment of the epidemic on the economy is yet to be done, this has negative implications on the quest to develop TVET skills in the country. It is against this background that HIV/AIDS has been declared a national disaster.

### **1.3 Diversification of the School Curriculum**

Besides the TVET programme, the government has over the last decade made attempts to enhance skill acquisition through the formal school system. In 1984, the academic curriculum was replaced with a diversified one. The arguments advanced to rationalize adoption of a diversified curriculum included the need to alter the negative attitude of young people towards manual work and rural livelihood; generate vocational interest; create a better match between the skills learned in school and those needed in the labour market; reduce rural-urban migration and help integrate schools with communities. The Kenya Education System (often referred to as the 8-4-4) was therefore initiated with a multi-track diversified curriculum, which combined academic with the pre-vocational and vocational subjects.

It is nineteen years since the diversified curriculum was adopted. Like the mainstream TVET system that has already been discussed, the diversified school curriculum has not met its objectives. First, reports from the Kenya National Examinations Council indicate that students perform poorly in vocational or Technical subjects because of lack of exposure to practical work. This is a direct consequence of lack of finance to adequately equip school with necessary facilities and resources for imparting practical skills to students.

Second, the 8-4-4 system has failed to impart practical skills due to the backwash effects of examinations. The approach in the teaching of vocational subjects is examination oriented. The strong teaching emphasis on the preparation of students for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) is necessitated by the fact that national examinations in Kenya influence significantly one's life chances by deciding who moves to an attractive professional course in the public university sector. The teaching of any vocational subject is put into the context of the national examinations that call for drill methods much more than methods that enhance the acquisition of skills. Any teaching that sets out to impart vocational skills (without use of the examination drill methods) is bound to eventually fail because in the eyes of the Kenyan society, a successful teacher is one who enables many of his/her students to pass national examinations. Third is the issue of student bias against vocational subjects (except commercial and information technology related subjects). The negative attitude by students towards Vocational education stems from the perception that academic education is a more promising path to high salaried formal sector jobs and with that, a high social status.

Although the primary and secondary cycles of the 8-4-4 system of education were intended to be an end in themselves and not a preparation for the next stage of schooling, the negative attitude to vocational education has made this impossible to achieve. Thus primary and secondary cycles of education tend to be a preparation for university education. Even though only a small percentage of students in the country eventually access university education, their whole character (primary and secondary schooling) is that of university



preparation. Those who have failed to enrol in higher education are in many respects seen as failures rather than as successful primary and secondary school graduates.

#### 1.4 What Should Be Done?

Several steps should be taken to resuscitate TVET programme in the country. Examples from some Third World countries (including Kenya) show that a TVET system may produce people whose skills are not in demand thus leading to wastage. TVET institutions should be assisted to identify skills that are really needed and useful before they mount their training. This will assist them to avoid the problem of overproduction of skilled labour in some trades like secretarial while demand in others is unmet. Second, there is need to offer high quality training at all level through expansion and modernization of equipment and facilities. Third, training opportunities in information technology-based courses should be increased to cope with increasing demand. Fourth, it is imperative to enhance the training of middle-level engineers and technologists, if Kenya is to meet its objective of industrializing by 2020. Fifth, the terms and conditions of work for TVET staff should be improved to boost their morale. Sixth, to promote a sustainable link between training and the world of work, industrial attachment should be strengthened.

The formal school system also requires adjustment to promote its relevancy to the country. The process of its modification started a few years ago when the school workload was reduced at both the primary and secondary levels following the scaling down of separate academic education from vocational. This separation had been encouraging the tradition of looking down on the manual worker. But it still does not sufficiently underscore the importance of working with the hands and brain to increase productivity. The separation reduces the value of general education by providing knowledge that is not applied and technology that is not put to use. We propose the teaching of practical subjects in secondary schools, particularly in areas that do not require high capital or recurrent costs or which could produce items for sale and thereby generate some revenue. Schools should not attempt to teach all practical subjects but specialize so that they can offer at least one practical subject effectively. We do not therefore advocate for the total removal of vocational subjects from the secondary school curriculum but go along with a limited subject choice as in the World Bank Review.

It is imperative to stress that the objective of practical studies in school should not be vocational training as articulated earlier but rather the acquisition of manual dexterity and practical skills as an integral part of general education. Although the majority of students may never use these skills in future occupations, some may certainly do so. Some of the skills that should be particularly stressed and developed through practical studies include problem solving; independent thinking; practical resourcefulness and activity; cooperative teamwork and good work habits. It should not be thought that practical subjects are the only or even the most effective ways of teaching these skills. We, as educationists, would greatly appreciate, if we saw a practical orientation in the teaching of all subjects by the use of project work and an experimental or applied approach.

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**TECHNICAL EDUCATION: BUILDING ON LOCAL SUPPORT FOR SKILLS AND JOBS.**

Mary Kinyanjui, Institute for Development Studies, Nairobi  
Email: markykinyanjui@yahoo.com

The informal economy popularly referred to, as the Jua kali sector in Kenya is an enigma. It is puzzling in the sense that whereas other sectors of the Kenyan economy especially some medium and large firms in textile and garments collapsed in the recent crisis, micro and small enterprises (MSEs) remained intact.

MSEs were able to survive the economic turbulence of the late 1980s and 1990s. The turbulence was a product of the structural adjustment programmes including market liberalisation. Although the informal economy survived the turbulence, it is marred by several problems, which include a lack of skills. The lack of skills problem is reflected and manifested in the quality of informal economy products. Lack of precision and poor finishing are the most conspicuous problems of the informal economy products. Skill training in Kenya runs parallel to the formal mainstream education programmes and more often than not students pursue industrial and practical education from the following sources:

- Apprenticeship,
- Youth polytechnics
- National polytechnics
- Non profit technical institutes
- Informal private sector

Technical training institutes are midway between youth polytechnics and national polytechnics. The technical institutes and national polytechnics are government institutions while youth polytechnics are community-based institutions. Besides, these three institutions there are non-profit organisations such as churches that have sponsored institutions, which are involved in the provision of industrial and practical education to the youth. Institutes of science and technologies are also involved in the provision of industrial education to high school graduates. Many of these institutions providing practical and industrial education are funded mainly from school fees and community donations in the form of «*Harambees*»(self help activities and collections). Communities in particular provide land and fund buildings and equipment needs in the training institutes.

Chapter seven of the World Bank's report on skill development in Sub-Saharan Africa assumes that the government will try in vain to be the major source of funding for skill development in Sub-Saharan Africa and hence it proposes cost sharing and income generating projects as alternative sources of funding for skill development. Whatever funding arrangements are made to ensure sustainability, this will not be realised unless the existing technical school funding policies that are already at work are taken into account. It is proposed here that skill development projects should be undertaken together with revival of grassroot economies and self-help schemes. If this is done the poor will be able to finance skill development needs. And if the much-needed revival of agriculture and livestock farming takes place, skilled graduates will be able to seek employment or start their own businesses in the informal economy.

**EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF THE UNHAPPY EMPLOYER**

Mwangi Ngumo, Kenya Institute of Management, Nairobi  
Email: mngumo@kim.ac.ke

The Kenyan employer is unhappy. He is unhappy because he is expected to produce goods and services for a rapidly globalizing and highly competitive market. To do so, he needs to identify ways he can increase his revenue while keeping his costs low, a near impossible and often contradictory proposition. And he knows it can be done but the only way is by having smart employees working both hard and smart, - employees who can innovate and create continuously and delight a customer.

So, he turns to the labour market and, through various channels, finally settles for what he regards as a capable employee. 6 to 12 months later, to his utter disappointment, not only is the employee unable to perform the tasks he was employed to, but also lacks positive attitudes to his work and his colleagues. He realizes now, in retrospect, that the employee's educational and training background did not prepare him adequately for this job. The curriculum was prepared by a government agency, delivered by a public school where teachers were paid lowly, and the examination was conducted by another government agency manned by the colleagues of the agency that set up the curriculum in the first instance. None of those agencies conducted a skills gaps survey and no one prepared a man-power development plan. So, in some cases, you have too many similarly-trained people hunting for few jobs; in other cases, there are no people to perform a job. So, while the demand for better and better educated people has continued to rise, perhaps to reduce the number of applicants for a particular job, the functional co-relationship of those «qualifications» to the job has continued to decline. Kenyans have become job takers, not job-seekers – they will do any job, but none too well, not well enough to guarantee the competitiveness of the employer's goods and services.

So, the employer turns to a training agency and, although here he has a better choice of both private and public sector training providers, he encounters a fresh set of problems. First, he discovers, the training institutions have not revised their curriculum for decades, and are completely out-of-touch with current industry requirements. The training programme is geared towards the residential student, unlike the working student who needs to report to work, at least some of the times. And the costs are astronomical! True, the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), a resource pool that all employers are expected to contribute to, could refund a substantial portion of those costs, but the process of getting reimbursed is ridiculously slow, and DIT is always looking for reasons not to refund. So, the ability of the employer to access good industry-related training is further handicapped. Some rely entirely on «poaching» other companies' workers.

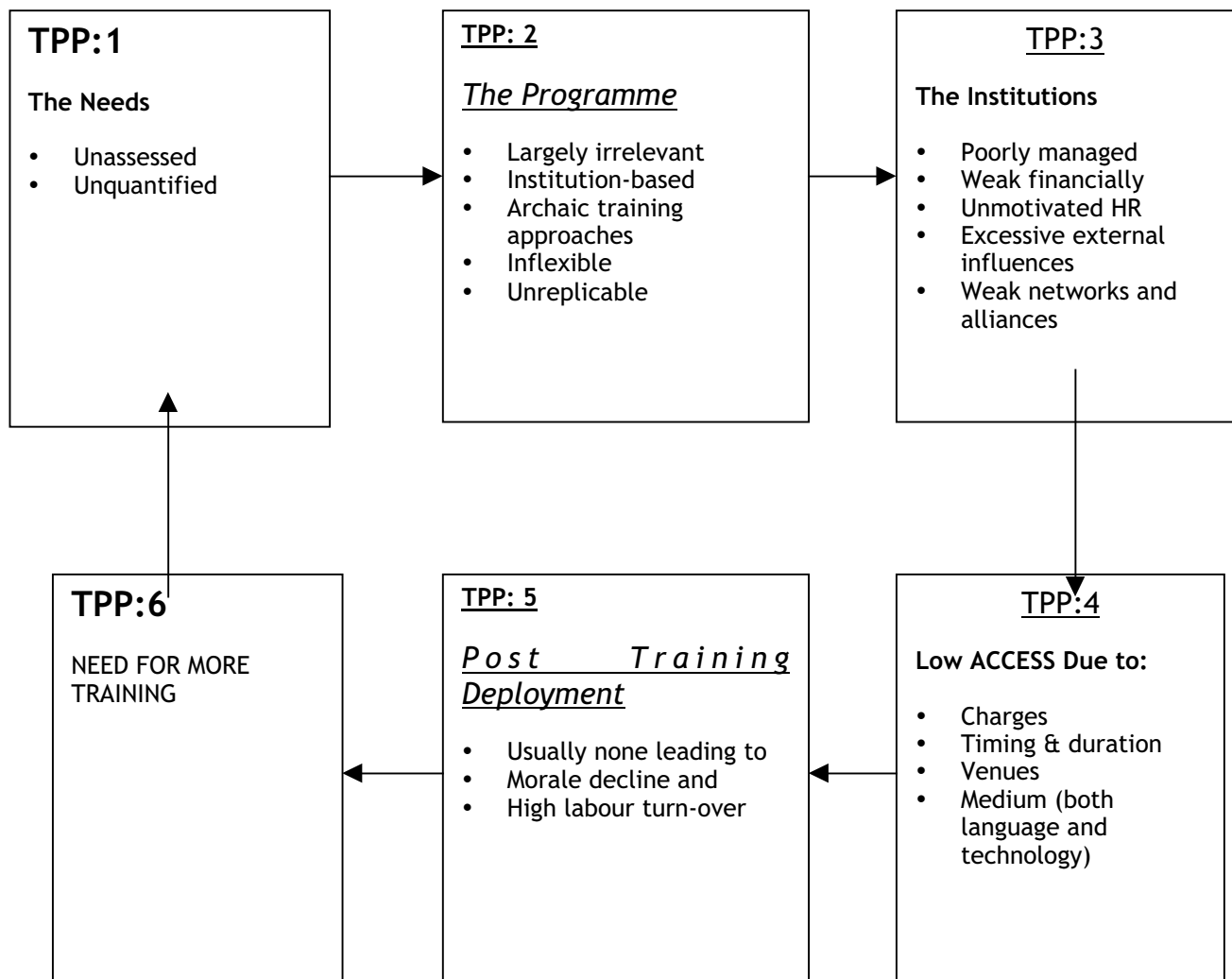
There are also problems associated with the capacity of the provider-institutions. Several are poorly managed, their financial status is hand-to-mouth, and their viability is a touch-and-go affair.

But even if the employer finally manages to get a good course for his employee, and even if he can afford both the fees and time-away that the employee needs to go through the course, he still finds himself with yet another hurdle: the employee needs enhanced responsibility, one that will enable him apply his new knowledge and demonstrate his newly-acquired skill. The employer realises, all of a sudden, that he had not carefully thought about this matter and that he has not developed any tools that can assist him in this. He turns to

his human resources development manager who, it turns out, has no formal training in this area and should perhaps be sent for training himself. The employer now seeks the services of a consultancy firm to conduct a job evaluation. Apart from the consultant's exorbitant fees, the employer now finds that he is expected to raise everyone's salary, sometimes three-fold. This he certainly cannot afford. His unhappiness persists. The only choice left to him is to let the employee go to another employer, or to fresh training. Training, which was expected to be a motivator, has become a de-motivator.

This is what I call the Employer's Dilemma. I have summarised this in a chart I now refer to as «*Training pitfalls and Traps (TPP): The Employer's Dilemma*».

#### TRAINING PITFALLS & TRAPS: THE EMPLOYER'S DILEMMA



For the employer to realize the benefits of good skills development programmes, there is need to have formal and informal linkages with the provider-institutions. The government should legislate for such linkages at all levels of education and ensure that the providers are aware of the skills gaps in the market, both current and prospective. Good skills-development practices require:

- 1) That the training needs are assessed and continuously re-assessed;

- 2) That the training programme is flexible and capable of being improved all the time and that it has an inbuilt mechanism for replication, particularly at company-premises level;
- 3) The training/instructional approaches shift sufficiently to trainee-centred, rather than trainer-centred styles;
- 4) The costs in time, money and distance are minimized;
- 5) Technology is taken advantage of so that as many people as possible gain access to industry-relevant skills; and that
- 6) The employee is given tasks that require the utilisation of his new found skills.

Only then can we break the training access barriers and create a working population that can challenge the best in the world.

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**ARE ERNESA & ERNWACA ON TRACK? - NETWORKING IN SSA****EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA  
(ERNESA)**

J.Pulane Lefoka

(Acting ERNESA Co-ordinator), National University of Lesotho, Maseru

Email: jp.lefoka@nul.ls

The ERNESA history dates as far back as 1985, the time during which it was a project of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It was registered as an independent Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in 1992 as a regional Network of national educational research associations of twelve countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. The most active organisations are those found in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and Tanzania. However, plans are underway to revitalise and therefore ensure that active members in member countries other than the ones mentioned here benefit from the organisation. Further plans are to sensitise potential honorary members who can professionally contribute to the development of the network.

ERNESA has, for more than seventeen years, been cognisant of retaining its mission and therefore playing a pivotal role within and outside the regions (southern and eastern) in which it is located. Specifically, ERNESA is about capacity building, undertaking educational research and ensuring that research findings are disseminated for consumption. Since its plan is informed by the regions' diverse national and historical experiences and by the regions' varying levels of social, cultural, economic and political development it therefore follows that through joint deliberations with ministries of education and researchers themselves, ERNESA has taken the advantage of local presence and investigated the research and training priorities needed to support the region. The Africa Policy Dialogue Research and the Basic Education Training Projects twinned the ERNESA training and research activities in a rewarding manner. For example, the Africa Policy Dialogue required training on policy research as a step that was to precede engaging in the research activity. The Project ensured that researchers from both the ministries of education and the research organisations underwent the same training. In this way, attempts were made to achieve one of ERNESA's major objectives «to develop capacity through training». Training facilitated by experienced researchers to in-experienced ones has allowed ERNESA to help professionals at these levels forge academic links for the benefit of their own countries. Moreover, the training and research activity was an opportunity to participate in EFA activities in a small but meaningful manner.

The establishment of a SADC Education Policy Support Initiative (EPSI) Unit to implement the Region's capacity development activities and research programme provided ERNESA with an opportunity to offer professional support and to collaborate with other regional research networks such as SACHES and SACMEQ. Moreover, undertaking research for international organisations such as UNESCO and ADEA and playing a facilitating role for some of the ADEA' Working Groups: Working Group on Education Sector Analysis and the one on the Teaching Profession has enhanced ERNESA's aim to collaborate with international organisations with similar mission. Being a member of some of these organisations steering committees is very important because it brings ERNESA nearer to various policy-oriented organisations.

Dissemination of research findings through publications of books and most importantly though research abstracts comes as a result of good collaborative efforts between ERNESA and a Chilean organisation: REDUC under the generous funding of the German organisation formerly known as DSE. Dissemination of the series of research abstracts has meant achieving the objective: «disseminate educational research information within and outside the region». The research abstracts are regarded as most valuable by both policy makers and students in teacher education. The third and therefore latest volume captures the most recently completed research project.

Participating in research and training activities on topical issues means that the Network is cognisant of issues that are on the cutting edge. For example, ERNESA completed a UNESCO study on renewal of secondary education and is engaged in one on contributions of ministries of education on poverty alleviation. Undertaking these research project has come at the time when the world is concerned about the success of EFA as well as at the time that the world's concern is on issues such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and gender related matters. In a nutshell, relevance to the world's needs and emerging issues is facilitated by playing significant roles in initiatives of the type mentioned here.

ERNESA has the potential to do more and to be more relevant. However, funding affects its intentions to be more aggressive in providing its services. There is no doubt that the Network needs to intensively evaluate itself, find the niche areas where it can operate, and bring on board as honorary members professionals with a potential to help it grow and be self-sustainable.

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#### **THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK FOR WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (ERNWACA): IS IT ON TRACK?**

Joshua Baku, West African Exams Council, Accra  
Email: ernwaca@ghana.com

The inspirational force behind the formation of ERNWACA in 1989 was its 'senior' sister Network, ERNESA. ERNWACA was formed with the best of intentions, very high hopes and a laudable mission and vision - to develop a time tested research culture and local research capacity that ensures that decision making and policy formulation in the education sector is always based on scientific information. The trick was to get policy makers and implementers on board the research process for a collective ownership of and responsibility for all research products for greater and easier acceptability and the usage of research findings.

ERNWACA was meant to be a platform for bringing together researchers on the one hand and policy makers and implementers on the other, to generate scientific information via the participatory study approach and use such information to improve education quality in the sub-region. The misfortune of the sub-region's dependence on foreign experts for analyses of educational situations and scientific data would have become a thing of the past.

Having traveled this far, the question is: How close has ERNWACA moved towards its ultimate goal? Is the Network on track to reaching those targets.

Looking back, analyzing the present and projecting into the future, one may want to answer 'Yes and No'. Or better still, the response to both questions could be: 'Yes, BUT .....!'

It is true, the Network has undertaken a series of research projects, including two major transnational projects which have been published. In a bid to make research reports more reader friendly and usable to policy makers, the Network is developing a Research Manual to simplify research reporting. The network has expanded into twelve countries but regrettably, up till now, this includes only one Central African country - Cameroon - which was a founding chapter. The original strategy of bringing policy makers on board the network seems to have faded away in many countries while several national chapters have tended to become a self-perpetuating club that is limited to friends. Many good and seasoned researchers remain uninvited by or un-attracted into the network. Above all, though a lot more studies in the education sectors are now undertaken by local researchers, individual researchers rather than the Network as a whole is taking charge of these. Both the Ministries of Education and development partners continue to commission projects in many countries without giving any consideration to the Network whatsoever.

In my view, these setbacks were not totally unexpected. For a long time, the Regional Coordination was without a substantive Coordinator. Those who held the fort lacked sufficient drive or even commitment.

Thank God, there is now light at the end of the tunnel. For the past two years, ERNWACA has been blessed with a new full-time Regional Coordinator. She happens to be a greater inspirer, a net-worker and is full of ideas. Life and zeal have returned to the Network. We may be a little late in moving towards the goal but we will surely get there sooner than it may have once appeared.

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CONFERENCE & SUMMER SCHOOLS
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THE OXFORD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
9th – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2003  
University of Oxford Examination Schools, Oxford, UK

*'The State of Education: Quantity, Quality and Outcomes'*

Convened by the UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET)  
Managed by CfbT Education Services

The 2003 Oxford Conference promises to generate stimulating debate on the current state of education world-wide. **There are some 200 papers being presented. And you only have a couple of weeks to register! So if you have not already done so, do consult the conference website:**

**[www.cfbt.com/oxfordconference](http://www.cfbt.com/oxfordconference)**

**and plan your presence at this event.** There are a number of innovations being incorporated into the execution for this conference. These include concessionary rates for students and others, and a new structure which will allow enthusiasts of a particular section of the conference to follow that sub-theme throughout the various sessions allocated to that, over a three day period.

**Those of you who just want to inquire about registering by email, please contact the Conference Organiser, Sarah Jeffery: [SJeffery@cfbt.com](mailto:SJeffery@cfbt.com)**

Another of the innovations this year is that we are not having 12 plenary speakers, as we did in 2001. Rather we are having an initial plenary, at which Professor Jonathan Jansen will be speaking. His abstract is included below. You can immediately see that his address will be very relevant to several of the themes of the conference. There will also be a plenary, on the 10<sup>th</sup>, delivered by the President of the British Association of International and Comparative Education (BAICE); and there will a final plenary on Quality of Education on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>, organised by the Department for International Development.

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**TARGETING EDUCATION: THE POLITICS OF PERFORMANCE AND  
THE PROSPECTS OF EDUCATION FOR ALL**

Jonathan D. Jansen, University of Pretoria  
Email: [jdjansen@postino.up.ac.za](mailto:jdjansen@postino.up.ac.za)

**Abstract of Keynote Address  
Oxford Conference, Tuesday 9th September 2003  
09.00 hours, Examination Schools**

Why is it that despite the serious (and acknowledged) methodological inadequacies of target setting in education (TSE), such activities continue to enjoy credibility among major

international agencies? Why, despite the remarkable lack of progress—even regression in some cases—in moving towards set targets (Addis Ababa, Jomtien, Dakar etc), development organizations continue to press forward with such processes? Why do developing countries, with no credible plans and (promised) resources, continue to go through the motions of TSE?

Drawing largely on the African experience, this paper will describe the conceptual, methodological and political factors that undermine and yet propel TSE in developing country contexts. At least three factors that advance TSE will be discussed. First, *the symbolic significance of participation* in cross-national setting of performance standards; such symbolic standing might have little or nothing to do with the actual achievement of such standards. Second, the *political consequences of non-participation* in cross-national target-setting exercises; such consequences could be real in terms of both internal pressures as well as external sanction from powerful international agencies. And third, the *financial benefits of participation in target setting*, even if progress is limited, stalled or reversed; such material gains might under extreme pressure on national budgets contribute much needed resources. Similarly, factors that limit the achievement of targets will be explored. For example, that targets are set outside of the routine planning frames or cycles of national governments; that targets compete with multiple existing agency targets, all of which assume more or less the same urgency as the new targets; and that targets are agreed to by political leaders, with little buy-in from government bureaucrats required to meet the new technical commitments. The question will then be posed directly: does TSE merit the high levels of political energy given competing priorities, cycles and routines of especially weak states?

In conclusion, it will be demonstrated that TSE—as currently conceived—works against the achievement of education quality in developing countries. This position will be assessed in the context of the recent spread of performance-driven education systems in much of the world, and the emerging evidence of impact on education quality. What remains at the heart of educational reform across developing countries is how best to achieve «deep change» that alters not only the surface behaviours of education systems reflected in cross-national targets, but that fundamentally disrupts the well-described inertia that plagues pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in third world education. And to this end, targets—their conception and ambition—are unlikely to make durable changes to the quality of education in resource-poor contexts.

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**1<sup>st</sup> International Summer School**

**Geneva**

**29 September-3 October 2003**

## NEW PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID : THE EUROPEAN RESPONSE

[www.eadi.org](http://www.eadi.org)  
[www.iued.unige.ch](http://www.iued.unige.ch)

During the 1980s experiences in disaster relief, in particular related to famine in Africa, had led policy makers, practitioners and researchers to begin to re-think strategies for intervention both during a crisis and afterwards as well as to reflect on the need for some prevention instruments ?. This reformulation of approaches was itself brought into relief in the 1990s by the human tragedies that erupted in Africa. Both those involved in humanitarian relief and those involved in development found themselves ill equipped to respond to the catastrophes unfolding before them. The European response, both at the bi-lateral level and at the European Commission level, has been particularly influenced by its colonial past and the location of the Head Quarters of major international relief agencies in Europe.

Against this background, the Summer School will assess from a comparative European perspective current approaches to humanitarian aid and development co-operation, as well as the transition and contradiction between the two. It will bring together leading commentators from Europe and the South to reflect on where we have been, where we are now and where we are going in respect of the immediate response to human disasters and the reconstruction of secure human lives.

Issues to be addressed :

- Do development and humanitarian aid belong to a continuum ?
- From development to crisis : the end of the development myth ?
- Is Aid a collusion between the international development community and Southern elites?
- Is there commonality or incoherence in respect of development co-operation policy between individual European states and the European Commission ?
- What are the lessons in reconstruction from the Balkans and Afghanistan ?
- Are NGOs the agents of development or tools of globalisation?
- To what extent have European policy makers listened to voices from the South (recipients and programme deliverers) ?

The European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) is organising this first Summer School to bring together students and those involved in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance to debate these questions. EADI is committed to examining such issues from an interdisciplinary approach which also incorporates a comparative European perspective. The Summer School is jointly organised by IUED and Twente Development Group (TDG) of Twente University (The Netherlands). It is hosted by IUED in Geneva, close to the head quarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the High Commission for Refugees, which makes it an ideal location to examine the relationship between humanitarian aid and development co-operation.

## Registration

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Name :.....

First name :.....

Institution :.....

.....

Postal address :.....

.....

email address :.....

.....

My academic research is focusing on :

.....

.....

My main interest in the Summer School is :

.....

.....

**Deadline : 31 August 2003**

**Registration can also be made online  
on the IUED website**

**The organisers do not provide accommodation.**

A list of different types of accommodation in Geneva is available on the website :

[www.geneve-tourisme.ch](http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch)

**Public :**

This Summer School is primarily open to advanced post graduate and PhD students engaged in development and area studies, international relations, humanitarian aid and European studies .

**Participants : max. 25**

Participants will be encouraged to share their research interests with each other, the organisers and speakers.

A certificate will be delivered at the end of the week.

A detailed programme is available on the  
IUED website : [http://www.unige.ch/iued/  
new/enseignement/formation\\_continue/  
fc\\_2003\\_summer\\_school.html](http://www.unige.ch/iued/new/enseignement/formation_continue/fc_2003_summer_school.html)

**Fees : 100 euros**

**Registration :**

Registration will be confirmed upon acceptance by the organizers and receipt of payment (a bill will be sent). Early registration is advised since admission will be on a first come basis.

**Contact : Michel.Carton**

Michel.Carton@iued.unige.ch  
Joy Clancy  
J.S.Clancy@tdg.utwente.nl

Address to correspond with:

**Institut Universitaire  
d'Etudes du Développement (iuéd)  
Att. Prof Michel Carton  
24, rue Rothschild  
C.P. 136  
1211 Geneve 21  
(Suisse)**

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## **2<sup>nd</sup> EADI International Summer School – Enschede - Summer 2004**

### **Governance, national identity and political ideologies**

From the late 1980s and early 1990s, bilateral and multilateral donor organisations argued strongly in favour of downsizing the public sector in order to enhance efficiency and to enhance service delivery. The debate on public sector reforms and capacity building gradually shifted to one in which 'good' governance, the role of civil society, democratisation and popular participation gained more and more momentum.

Whereas the attention originally focused on the available mechanisms for representation and participation in decision-making structures, in policy formulation and in politics, various authors have indicated that the participation of particular groups, such as women and minorities, is also related to perceptions of identity and particular ideologies, both at individual and societal level. These ideologies are reflected in documents and political rhetoric on national unity, security and order. For example, although the participation of women in decision-making and in politics became a more prominent issue on the donor agenda following the Beijing World Conference on Women, the implementation of this proved to be very complicated, in particular in countries where women are at the centre of nationalist discourses, and are considered to safeguard the (reproduction of) ethnic identity and culture.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> EADI summer school will therefore address the question whether the fascination with 'good governance' and democratisation has enhanced the opportunities for political participation of different groups within society, against the background of cultural and national identity and political ideologies at both national and international level. Furthermore, it will address the question to what extent democratisation processes have been constrained by political ideologies or to perceptions of potential threats to the nation-state.

This summer school will be jointly organized by the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI), the Technology and Development Group (TDG) of the University of Twente and the Centre for European Studies at the University of Twente. It will take place in the summer of 2004.

For more information, contact: Joy Clancy (J.S.Clancy@tdg.utwente.nl) and Irna Van Der Molen (P.vanderMolen@tdg.utwente.nl)

**NORRAG MEMBERSHIP, NORRAG AGM, NORRAG BUSINESS****NEW MILESTONE IN NORRAG HISTORY**

Alexandre D. Freire, IUED, Geneva  
Email: alexandre.freire@iued.unige.ch

At last, NORRAG membership is free! From now on, the services provided on our website (*NORRAG NEWS*, and NORRAG database) are freely accessible in an electronic format only. After 12 years during which the necessity of maintaining a symbolic membership fee was considered as an important way to reflect a sense of ownership of the network by its members, it appears today that we have to change! *NORRAG NEWS* No 30 was focusing on the challenges implied by this move. So, let us remember why are we changing.

First of all, because the costs generated by the management of the fees, even using new electronic means, were still inevitably higher than the fees, we are now abandoning membership fees. By using a new dissemination system, we also expect to gain many new members in the «North» as well as in the «South». Thirdly, if meetings and conferences already provide some opportunities for NORRAG members to meet and exchange ideas, one of the new objectives of NORRAG is to diversify our platforms of exchanges, the virtual ones as well as the more concrete, face to face ones. We do believe that through this new management, membership and dissemination policy, we will succeed in developing an even more lively network.

Concretely, it is easier than ever to become a member of NORRAG. The registration system, now free, still exists. It allows us to continue to work as facilitators, to connect people, and simply to know who's surfing on our pages. How will you know about a new NORRAG News issue? Simply, you will receive an email alert with a link on our website. Just download it! Or search it for items of interest.

We do believe that this new policy will make it easier not only for us but also for you to continue to enjoy our activities. Since this new policy has come into force, we had the pleasure to see registration of many of our old members, and also a wide range of people from institutions like the World Bank, DFID etc. Through a virtual encouragement to those who have been in contact with NORRAG over the years, we have also acquired new members in the network. In the future, we will continue to attract «fresh» people and institutions and we hope to be able to count on your help and networks in that.

**NORRAG MEMBERSHIP, NORRAG DISSEMINATION, NORRAG AT OXFORD**

Kenneth King, Editor *NORRAG NEWS*  
Email: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk

We are at the beginning of a very interesting few weeks and months. *NORRAG NEWS* which charged a membership fee during the period 1991 to 2001 has finally decided that it should no longer charge. We have taken far too long to decide, but that is partly because there is a tradition and history which we need to abandon when we move to being virtual and accessible at no cost – apart from that owed to your internet service provider!

That tradition can be summed up in the feeling that NORRAG was in some sense a Network – a ‘Club’ or a real membership organisation. Those who joined, we felt in our most idealistic moments, were not just customers, clients and consumers. Rather they were contributors and partners. As an editor, I could turn to them, and say – could you contribute to the next issue of *NORRAG NEWS*?

We know that many members of NORRAG found the Membership Directory very valuable. People kept it beside their phones and computers, because those two hundred people who joined NORRAG were a valuable resource. Coming from almost all agencies, many NGOs, several key libraries, and most of the academic centres that dealt with international and comparative education, they were a good source of insight and experience. By contrast, now, about half of those who have decided to join NORRAG, I don’t know personally, but what is already clear - even in these first few weeks and months when people could register on line – is that we are drawing in people whom we didn’t manage to contact under the old regime. From different countries and from different constituencies.

By the December issue of 2003, we shall decide whether it might still be of interest to members to have a hard copy or virtual Directory. We can enter in that a few key words on the professional expertise of the members who have joined, as well as their essential contact information.

**Preparing for the Annual General Meeting in Oxford.**

Members of NORRAG are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Oxford, which takes place on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, after dinner. That will be an opportunity to meet the current President, Ingemar Gustafsson who is from Sida, the NORRAG Secretariat, Michel Carton, from Geneva, and other executive committee members. The executive committee will be meeting immediately after the Oxford Conference; so the AGM will be a good opportunity to get your ideas into the debate.

At the AGM, there will be a report from the Secretariat, a report from the editor of *NORRAG NEWS*, and a financial statement. There will also be some refreshments. If you are planning to be in Oxford – do come along.

As it is now so simple to join, why don’t you encourage some of those who you know are coming to Oxford to do so beforehand? It just takes about 2 minutes – as you know:

[www.norrag.org/registration/php](http://www.norrag.org/registration/php)

**Rethinking Dissemination and Membership**



When in 1991 Renfrew Christie, then of the University of Western Cape, persuaded us in NORRAG that we should stop distributing NN free, and see whether there was sufficient interest for people to enrol as members, we learned a number of things. There was an interest in enrolling as members, but we also learnt that where NORRAG combined access to the Bulletin with other activities – such as workshops, special conferences, such as have taken place in Bonn, Oxford, Edinburgh, Paris, and many other places, members enjoyed having something beyond the Bulletin. Something that involved face-to-face contact with other members. Hence membership was largest in countries such as Holland, UK, Germany and Switzerland where executive members had used particular issues of NORRAG NEWS to explore some particular theme in more depth – such as higher education, knowledge for development, sector wide approaches. Even when there were fees, it seems that the Bulletin on its own was only one aspect of what some people wanted.

Now that there is no traditional paying membership as elaborated in our original statutes as an NGO, how does that alter the organisation? How do we judge when there are sufficient members who have enrolled on the website? If there were 200 or so members when it was necessary to pay, how many would there be when it is no longer necessary.

#### **Here is the rough profile of membership in 2002:**

NORRAG had approximately 175 members in 2002 drawn from a total of 31 countries. They were from NGOs, Universities, Research Centres, and Development Agencies.

Of these 31 countries, 6 dominated the membership in terms of total numbers:

UK	31
Netherlands	22
USA	18
Switzerland	15
France	15
Germany	15

In other words, 6 countries were responsible for 116 of the 175 members.

But there were individual members scattered from Kenya, Namibia and South Africa to Chile and Argentina, from Uruguay to Mexico, and from Vietnam to Niger, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe. But the numbers were very small. Just 13 developing countries. 11 of the 16 EU member states were covered, and several other DAC countries such as Japan and Australia.

The really large gaps were East and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union – where there were no members. And the Middle-East, the Gulf and North Africa – where there was only one – in Lebanon.

#### **The unacceptable imbalance between North and South.**

Although it was a South African who had suggested we move to a paying membership organisation – and especially that Northern-based organisation pay rather than be subsidised by development agencies, we were aware that we would need to continue in some way to distribute free to the South. We were immediately faced with the dilemma of which South, and what mechanism would we use to determine who should be a 'recipient'. All kinds of approaches to free distribution have been tried by development agencies - including sending to deposit libraries. But it is widely acknowledged that there are difficulties with most such distribution. In our case, we tried for year to use the existing Educational networks that

existed in Eastern and Western Africa, and in Latin America. But there are real problems in deciding that something needs to be sent to someone who may not have asked for it. Hence we were tempted to ask the individual network contact points if they actually wanted to receive NORRAG NEWS, and if they didn't reply, we were faced with a dilemma.

The advantage of the present dispensation is that there are not two different arrangements for North and South. And we are no longer sending off free copies into the void – without really knowing if they are appreciated.

#### **Avoid sending NN as a lengthy electronic newsletter**

What we have avoided doing is actually sending electronic copies of NN to individuals as a form of dissemination. We have instead drawn people's attention to the fact that it does now exist, that all the past copies of NN also exist on the Website. They can be searched as a database etc etc. But the decision to enrol must be left to the individual. I am sure that we would not be thanked if we were to send out heavy 70-90 page files around the world.

#### **Dissemination and Awareness-raising in the South**

If we are to fulfil our plans to disseminate much more fully in the South, then we cannot just sit back and wait for the news to get out. Nor can we only use our existing contact lists as they were restricted to particular networks. Rather, we shall have to develop further occasions like the Nairobi workshop – where the regular work of NORRAG can be participated in, and as a result, individuals can decide to take out membership. Interestingly, several of the Nairobi workshop members have already signed up. There is a West African workshop planned for early next year, which will make a link to ERNWACA.

But the priority need for the next several months will be to identify a whole series of contact points in the South, and give them the option to review the kind of thing that is attempted through NORRAG NEWS, and then make up their own minds. Hence we shall be hiring a part time doctoral student to work closely with the Executive Committee to build a Southern presence.

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**New! New!      New! New!      New! New!      New! New!**  
**Conference Proceedings from the 2002 CAS Annual Conference:**  
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**Internal and External Visions**  
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# KNOWLEDGE FOR DEVELOPMENT?

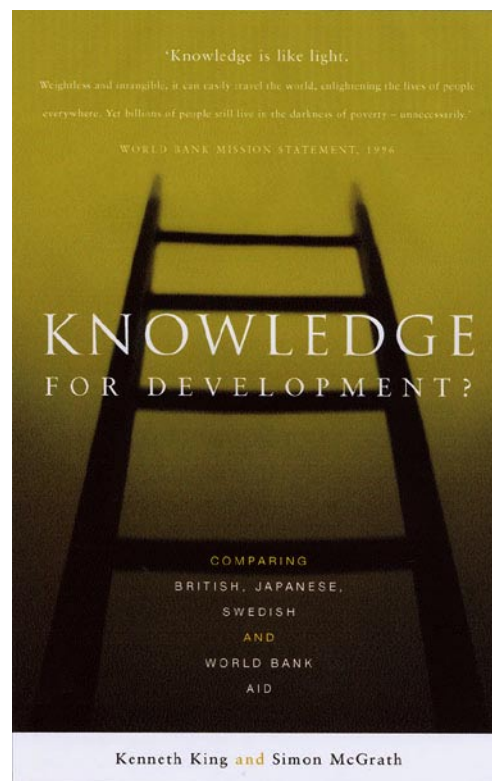
*Comparing British, Japanese, Swedish and World Bank Aid*

Kenneth King and Simon McGrath

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## KEY POINTS

- *The first detailed critique of an important new fashion in the world of development aid*

- *A detailed study of four of the most influential development agencies - including the World Bank*
- *Essential reading for development specialists and of interest to comparative educationalists*

### **MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOOK**

In 1996, the World Bank President, James Wolfensohn, declared that his organization would henceforth be 'the knowledge bank'. A new discourse of knowledge-based aid has since spread rapidly across the development field. This book is the first detailed attempt to analyse this new discourse and practice. Through an examination of four agencies -- the World Bank, the British Department for International Development, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency -- it explores what this new approach to aid means in both theory and practice. It argues that too much of the emphasis of knowledge-based aid has been on developing capacity within agencies rather than addressing the expressed needs of Southern partners. Moreover, it questions whether knowledge-based aid increases agency certainty about what constitutes good development.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

KENNETH KING is professor of international and comparative education and director of the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.

SIMON McGRATH has been a research fellow at the Centre of African Studies, and became research director at the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria, South Africa in October 2002. Both have published extensively in African studies and international comparative education.

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#### **2. The New Aid Agenda**

- A brief history of aid - World Conferences, International Development Targets and pro-poor growth - Moving beyond the donor-recipient relationship? - The discovery of knowledge for development

#### **3. Knowledge for Development**

- Introduction - The origins of knowledge-based aid - The knowledge economy - Knowledge management - Organisational learning - Knowledge-based aid - Knowledge for development - Knowledge-based aid activities - Knowledge-based aid or learning-led development? - Alternative accounts of knowledge and development - A brief concluding comment

#### 4. The World Bank or the Knowledge Bank?

- Introduction - The World Bank's older knowledge strategies - The new knowledge environment and the knowledge WDR - The key role of education in knowledge for development - The new knowledge-sharing World Bank - The current status of knowledge sharing in the World Bank - Knowledge versus operations: a continuing tension - Bank knowledge projects which privilege knowledge development and sharing in and with the South - The (Global) Development Gateway - Concluding remarks

#### 5. From Information Management to Knowledge Sharing: DFID's Unfinished Revolution

- Introduction - DFID's knowledge discourse - The White Papers - The target strategy papers - Some further comments on knowledge and development in the major DFID texts - Knowledge and development in internal texts - Reviewing knowledge and development discourses across internal and external documents - DFID's knowledge projects - DFID as an honest broker of development knowledge - DFID as a smarter knowledge user - Other related projects on data, information and learning - An overview of DFID's knowledge projects - DFID's knowledge products - The White Papers - The target strategy papers - Overall trends across DFID's knowledge products - DFID's knowledge practices - How should we judge DFID's approach to knowledge and development?

#### 6. Knowledge, Learning and Capacity in the Swedish Approach to Development Cooperation

- Introduction - Historical overview - SIDA's discourses of knowledge, learning and capacity - Sida's account of the relationship between knowledge and development - Sida, knowledge and research - Sida as a learning organisation - Sida's narratives of capacity building and institutional development - Sida and information - Sida as a generator of development knowledge - Action programmes - Sida's other knowledge products - Sida's initiatives to support knowledge, learning and capacity development - Research cooperation Capacity development - Organisational learning - Knowledge and learning in practice - Learning versus knowing: concluding comments

#### 7. Experience, Experts and Knowledge in Japanese Aid Policy and Practice

- Japan's own development experience - Shared experience as the preferred form of bilateral cooperation - Experts and generalists in development aid - Sources of policy knowledge in Japanese development assistance - Knowledge-sharing initiatives in a culture of valuing experience - Other mechanisms for sharing development knowledge - Japanese spirit; Western knowledge: concluding comments

#### 8. Conclusions and Implications for Knowledge, Aid and Development

- Origins of knowledge-based aid - Key elements of knowledge-based aid - Knowledge-based aid as better working - Internal - External - Adding in learning and capacity - Overall assessment - Knowledge-based aid as a transformation of aid - Knowledge-based aid and wider debates about knowledge, development and aid