



Donors to African Education

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Straight Talk in Angers

A former Minister of Education shares his views on the recent DAE Task Force meeting

In addition to its other merits, the recent DAE Task Force meeting had the virtue of breaking with the tradition of "officialese" which characterizes gatherings of Africans and their donor community partners – particularly when the meetings are between high-ranking dignitaries.

In Angers, it should be underlined, over thirty African ministers of education met face to face with senior officials from the major multilateral agencies involved in education (World Bank, UNESCO, African Development Bank) and from the bilateral agencies (French Cooperation, USAID, CIDA, etc.).

Among the external partners, the award for forthrightness goes undeniably to the Vice President of the World Bank for the Africa Region, Mr. Edward Jaycox and the French minister of cooperation, Mr. Michel Roussin. Mr. Jaycox, in the direct style for which he is so well known, highlighted one of the scourges afflicting contemporary Africa: namely, the poor use of human resources which discourages those committed to helping Africa, stifles skills, and exacerbates the brain drain. Vice President Jaycox advocated incentives to encourage skilled Africans to return and contribute to development back home.

Coming from a senior official of an institution which has hitherto called upon non-local expertise for the implementation of its projects in the various African countries, talk such as this was startling. It certainly highlights a decisive evolution in the way the World Bank now views development in Africa.

The message from France's minister of cooperation was equally direct. Mr. Michel Roussin has been known for his frankness since he took office last

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Quotes from the Task Force

The DAE Task Force meeting in Angers, at the end of October, discussed the implementation of externally funded education projects and programs. The following quotes catch the richness and quality of the debate both in the plenary sessions and in the smaller discussion groups

*"The capacity to manage, the capacity to diagnose problems, to formulate solutions, and to implement programs that deal with these problems cannot be imported...it has got to be a domestic capacity.....
..... There is far more capacity in Africa, and from Africa, than is being used by African governments... Let's insist that African governments bring the people back that have gone overseas... Where are all these people? Let us find them and bring them back, even if we have to pay for it..."*

Mr. Edward Jaycox, World Bank

"A plan which has been imposed by international agencies and experts may be technically an excellent document, but it is not likely to create that support and involvement which are needed for successful implementation. African ministers have an important responsibility here. We have to provide the leadership in the plan preparation. If we don't take the leadership, if we don't take interest in preparing the national plan

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March in the rue Monsieur. Some African officials have learnt to their cost the real meaning of the revised French position. Monsieur Roussin did not beat about the bush when confronting the Africans squarely with their responsibilities concerning the decline of their education and training systems. From the outset, the French minister made the following unequivocal observation: "...the situation of many African education systems is serious, very serious...". Gone, such introductory caveats as things are bad, but they could be worse. Mr. Roussin went on: "Governments will have to make difficult and sometimes painful choices...[for]...the recent development of national education systems follows almost exclusively a policy of social appeasement at the expense of quality and the matching of education with the real needs of the countries...".

This forthrightness was long overdue. In a relationship of mutual respect and esteem, what could be more normal than considering those we deal with as adults, to be spoken to as adults. All too often, our non-African partners, for fear of offending us, have tended to treat us gently and even to flatter us, thereby furthering our inclination to portray ourselves as eternal victims. Thirty-three years after the wave of independence swept Africa in the 1960s, our claim that outsiders – the former colonisers – are entirely to blame is becoming less and less credible. For us, coming of age means having the courage to face ourselves, to clearly determine what our own responsibilities are, and to meet our problems head on.

For our part, during the debate following the donors panel on the morning of Saturday, 23 October, we took the liberty of stating that the donors had to get over their guilt complex or colonial mentality just as we, the Africans, had to liberate ourselves from colonialism and get over our persecution complex. Judging by the reactions of several African ministers after the session, there is cause to believe that they are not as impervious as in the past to such straight talk, which coming from

external partners is the language of friendship. For our true friends are those who, in confronting us with our responsibilities, do not take us for eternal children. A healthy partnership is one based on mutual trust which is itself founded on frankness and a sense of responsibility.

In Angers, both Africans and donors agreed on the extremely serious state of the continent's education systems. Furthermore, they deemed it urgent to work together, taking courageous steps to halt the wreckage and adopt a new approach which would turn away from easy solutions, carelessness, lack of accountability, and a single objective for education, that of focusing exclusively on the production of civil servants.

One word kept cropping up, **consensus**: above all, consensus among Africans inside each country on the measures needed for recovery. This means that everyone must struggle to overcome partisan interests as education is an issue which involves us all and determines the countries' future.

Jean-Paul Ngoupande
Ambassador of the Central African
Republic to Côte d'Ivoire

documents, then the donors have no other alternative than to propose their documents..." H.E. A. Parsuramen, Minister of Education, Mauritius

"France will place emphasis on the emergence of national capacities... A small number of high-level specialists will continue to be made available ... The role of such specialists will be to ensure the training of nationals to take over from them..."

M. Michel Roussin, Minister of Cooperation, France

"If you formulate a comprehensive and coherent national policy —which is owned by the people, which has a consensus — already a big part of the battle is won. It is useful for two reasons. First, because YOU have a framework, donors cannot come and tell you what to do. Rather, you can tell them: 'This our framework, our priority... this is what we want you to do, please come and help'. Second, such a framework is also useful for your own government as an internal tool. ..." Mr. Aklilu Habte, UNICEF

"I see a strong link between the development of a clear and coherent national strategy and the avoidance of donor-driven development. I am told that nature opposes a vacuum. If national policy makers fail to define the agenda, you can be sure the donors will try to do it for them. On the other hand, where there is a clear and nationally owned strategy — as in Mauritius, Guinea and Ghana — you have seen that the donors are even tripping over each other to support these strategies..."
Mr. P. Moock, DAE Chairperson

"Ownership by the African countries means changes in the regulations, procedures and processes of donors. Because these processes need to be adjusted to suit the clientele, there is need for continuing and increased dialogue..." H.E. Fay Chung, Minister of State, Zimbabwe

"Donors have often focused aid to a Ministry of Education to create a planning division while overlooking most of the units that actually make the Ministry of Education run... We have not provided sufficient support to strengthen budgeting, and management in the Ministries of Education..." **Mr. Birger Fredriksen, World Bank**

"Donors are as guilty as everybody, we are very goal oriented..... so when we see a capacity problem the temptation is to work around it, bring in some experts... This is not development..." **Mr. Edward Jaycox, World Bank**

"The donor response has to be different and the traditional externally designed project has to be abandoned..." **Mr. I. Gustafsson, SIDA**

"Conditionalities linked to educational assistance should be fully discussed between the beneficiary and the donor in a spirit of real partnership. We can't accept conditions being imposed unilaterally..." **H.E. M. Parsuramen** reporting on the discussions of the African Ministers' Caucus.

"All in all, the best way to tackle the problem of conditionality, which, in fact, is frustrating, is to start from national experience..."

H.E. J-P Ngoupande, Ambassador of the CAR in Côte d'Ivoire

"A requirement for measurable, identifiable and quick results is somewhat contradictory to our attempt to widen the discourse, and to widen our approach to education reform..." **Mr. I. Gustafsson, SIDA**

"Public service servants cannot be held accountable for programs and budgets unless the activities and the costs of such programs are clearly identifiable..." **Mrs. C. McAskie, CIDA**

French minister of Co-operation makes important policy statement at the Task Force meeting

At the meeting, Mr. Michel Roussin, the French Minister of Co-operation, explained France's co-operation policy in sub-Saharan African countries

Numerous challenges

The minister referred to the very serious situation of many education systems by reason of the population growth and the economic and financial crisis. The international community has to face many challenges, in particular having to accomplish more with fewer resources, improve productivity, promote growth, and reconcile budgetary realities with social constraints. *"Clear-sightedness, rigour and determination are called for"* said Mr. Roussin. Clear-sightedness to analyse the causes of failures, rigour to exercise tighter control of inadequate resources, and determination to make difficult and sometimes painful choices. The minister stressed the urgent need to give combined thought to regional solutions, notably in the field of higher education, and the need for senior African national personnel to prepare for and cope with change themselves.

A new model

Mr. Roussin reminded donors and the governments of sub-Saharan African countries of the imperative necessity of matching education to real development needs. He emphasized the urgency of reshaping primary education in Africa, for the existing model, established on post-independence bases, is unrealistic. The primary school should place emphasis on basic learning and the entry of young people into active life, and at the same time the selectivity of other levels and types of education should be improved. He underlined the importance of creating what might be called a "new school", since the existing model cannot enable the present enrolment rate to be maintained, nor can it attain the objectives of Jomtien. This being so, the State alone cannot bear the entire burden of the education effort. It is therefore important that families and communities recognize the utility of the school and play a part in its management.

An educational priority

Taking education and training as the priority lines of action of French co-operation, the Minister announced that one quarter of its budget (2,000 million Francs) would be spent on supporting "practical and measurable" projects in the field of education. One of the priorities of French co-operation will be to promote the emergence of national capabilities. Consequently a reduction in the volume of technical assistance in terms of personnel is planned (apart from a small number of high-level specialists whose role will be to train African nationals to take over from them, through practical activities connected with programmes of reform in progress). In conclusion, the Minister stressed the importance of a closer collaboration among donors and the need to establish between donors and States, a contract which clearly defines the commitments and obligations of each party.

The Angers meeting of the DAE Task Force

The DAE Task Force meeting, held in Angers from 22-24 October, was well attended with 62 senior government officials (ministers of education, finance, permanent secretaries and ambassadors) representing 39 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and 89 participants from 43 donor or development agencies.

Central theme of the meeting

The central theme was the “implementation of educational programs and projects”. A background paper presented some of the factors which inhibit the successful implementation of activities aimed at improving and expanding education in sub-Saharan Africa. The paper started with an analysis of national conditions which facilitate such effective implementation and went on to discuss the ownership of programs, the implementation capacities of governments and donors, and the administration and management of funds. Very rich debates on these questions took place during the meeting and participants unanimously agreed with the relevance and importance of the theme.

Five Key speakers

Mr. Jaycox, vice-president of the World Bank for the African region, set the overall theme for the meeting. Emphasizing the need for greater use of the hitherto untapped pool of highly qualified African expertise for the design and implementation of education sector programs, he invited participants to examine why we are not getting better results and reiterated his call for better use of the capacity inside Africa. Mr. Jaycox challenged African governments to create incentives for supporting professionalism and invited governments to explore how they might encourage the African professionals abroad to return home. He indicated that agencies should be ready to pay for such professionals.

As an example of best practice, the Minister of Education for Mauritius, Mr. A. Parsuramen described how his country had, using local expertise, formulated an educational master plan and strategy and is now implementing this with international support. The Minister emphasized that implementation starts with planning which has been based on clearly defined objectives and wide consultation. The consultation must create ownership among the different stakeholders at all levels – especially teachers – and must benefit from strong political commitment.

In separate addresses, both Ms. C. McAskie, vice-president for the Africa and Middle East Bureau of the Canadian International Development Agency, and M. Michel Roussin, the French Minister of Co-operation, indicated that their respective agencies would be transforming their technical assistance. The emphasis would be more on the use of local expertise and country-led aid management. CIDA planned to strengthen partnerships between Canadian and African institutions with short term professional training. The French Ministry of Co-operation was focusing its attention on the increased provision of primary education, emphasizing basic foundation skills, and facilitating young people’s entry into working life, through appropriate vocational training programs. French support to other levels of education would be much more selective. Both agencies stressed the importance that they attached to the use of African experts and the development of national plans which are wholly owned and supported by the beneficiary country.

The Vice-President and Minister of Finance of Botswana, Mr. F. Mogae, reminded the participants of the resource-constrained environment – often dominated by debt repayment – in which education operated. He spoke of the tendency of many African countries, and their external partners,

to focus external assistance and domestic revenues from mining or oil (for those lucky enough to have them) on crucial infrastructural requirements, including those of the education sector. However, he underlined that building schools without the teachers – making the infrastructural investments without the manpower and recurrent revenue to maintain and operate them – was a wasteful use of development funds. The recurrent cost implications of new investments needed to be examined very carefully and donors should give serious consideration to the maintenance of existing assets until such time as sustainable national resources are available. He concluded with recommendations on an increased role for the private sector in the provision of education, with need for real cost-sharing in higher education by the direct beneficiaries, and called for increased research on methods to determine the cost-effectiveness of different inputs to the educational system.

The meeting of the African Ministers

At a closed meeting of the caucus of African ministers, the ministers selected six of their members to assist in coordinating with the DAE executive committee. The representatives are: chairperson; H.E. A. Parsuramen, Minister of Education and Science for Mauritius; vice-chairperson, S.E. Mrs. Aicha Bah Diallo, Minister of Pre-University Education & Professional Training: Guinea; and secretary, H.E. S. Mudenge, Minister of Higher Education, Zimbabwe. The three alternative representatives are: H.E. Mr. Bonfim, Minister of Education of Sao Tome; H.E. Mrs. G. Zewide, Minister of Education for Ethiopia; and H.E. Prof. A. Imogie, Minister of Education of Nigeria.

These representatives subsequently addressed the Task Force raising the following points. First, ministers

Participation in the Task Force Meetings

- 31 African countries were represented at Angers including;
 - 29 Ministers
 - 22 Permanent Secretaries and ministry representatives
 - 11 Ambassadors /Embassy spokesmen
- A total of 62 African Government officials participated in the meetings

- 43 Agencies were present at Angers of which;
 - 12 were Multilateral,
 - 19 were Bilateral and;
 - 12 were NGOs or Foundations
- In total, 89 agency representatives took part in the meetings

emphasized the need for a balanced and equal partnership which takes into account national sovereignty. They indicated that the conditionality linked to external support can be a positive instrument supporting ministries of education in their own negotiations at national and local levels. But positive results were difficult to achieve when unilaterally imposed conditions did not respect a beneficiary country's national sovereignty and thus distorted the partnership. Second, ministers agreed wholeheartedly with suggestions that each country needed to formulate its own sector policy and several examples were mentioned. Third, ministers pointed out that capacity building was a first priority and called on an increased use of African consultants. Finally, the African ministers asked the donors to take back the above messages to the management of their respective institutions.

The Small Discussion Groups

Some of the themes identified and discussed in the smaller groups included: the difficulties in retaining national capacity; the donors' underestimation of the pressures on the education sector – often over 1/3 of the total civil service; the need for a longer-than-usual time frame to allow productive co-operation on educational programs – donor projects are often scheduled over 4 years and take 7 years, but major reforms often require 10 years; the

effects of the social and political upheaval in the region on education systems; the need for African countries to formulate coherent national educational action plans; the development of national plans through widespread consultation so that genuine consensus is reached among all stakeholders, creating a true sense of ownership thereby facilitating implementation at a later stage; the use of national plans to constrain donors' support to the national plan rather than, in a situation of vacuum, adoption of donor driven projects; and finally that realization that success in education is inseparable from success in the economic sphere. Unless economic growth is restored there will be no stable national resources base to support educational systems, and there will be no job opportunities for school leavers.

Working groups

Throughout the three days, working groups met to discuss the advancement of their work. The Task Force approved the creation of a new working group on "Finance and Education", led by CIDA and the group on "School Examinations" reported its final results and formally closed (*see separate articles on these two groups - Editor*). Finally, two special interest groups one on "Early Childhood Development" and another on "Literacy" met to consider steps that may lead to the eventual creation of full working

groups on these themes.

Work style

Several factors contributed to the meeting's special style of informality and frank interchange. First, the meeting was located outside Paris. This ensured that participants were free to concentrate on the substance of the meeting. Second, the work method featured keynote presentations in plenary session alternated with small informal discussion groups and panel debates, thus, all were able to participate in a free and frank interchange. Third, there was an opportunity for the African ministers to hold a closed door discussion. Fourth, several optional meetings of working groups were held outside the Task Force meeting. Finally, the meeting was a rare opportunity for many key decision-makers and donors to exchange viewpoints in informal discussions. All of the above contributed to the productive work-method. The involvement of the African Ministers was very much in evidence; many presided over plenary sessions and participated actively in the discussion groups designed to facilitate dialogue among national representatives and agencies. In the words of one participant, the DAE undoubtedly provides a useful forum for sharing experiences and dialogue between Ministers of education from sub-Saharan African countries and the donor community. ■

Donor Support to Universities: Streamlining Reporting Requirements

African universities face major resource constraints during a period of increasing student intakes. Funding constraints have affected physical installations and facilities, and material conditions of the day-to-day life of university staff. With the decline in national funding, external donor support has gained significance but it is increasingly needed for core activities, basic institutional necessities, rehabilitation, and capacity building. Such increased external support has often come through an increase in the number of external donors, each with distinct reporting requirements. This proliferation of donor reporting systems can lower universities' ability to coordinate donor support and detract from institutional management capacity. Multiple donor administrative requirements, including report prepara-

tion and handling visits from donor personnel, are labour intensive for senior staff, and divert them from their basic management responsibilities. As donor assistance has increased in significance, these administrative burdens have grown accordingly.

A survey of policies and reporting requirements

A recent review, sponsored by the Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE) and financed by SAREC, surveyed policies and reporting requirements as perceived and practised at two universities, the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) in Mozambique and the University of Dar Es Salaam (UDSM) in Tanzania. These universities were selected as they both are engaged – although at different stages

of implementation – in a process of institutional transformation which includes efforts to better manage their development assistance. At the two universities, donor support makes up a significant portion of funding. UDSM estimates that over one-half of the university's resources in the last few years have been provided through donor support. At UEM in 1992, external contributions represented 63 percent of the university's budget. The review looked at the levels of funding their nature and duration. At UDSM, the study found varying degrees of donor dependency across departments with major funding for engineering to virtually no assistance to the computer centre. Very little donor support has been provided for the core institutional functions of the library and central administration

Universities should:

- gather key data on donor support
- initiate annual institutional reports
- develop reporting systems, initially at the faculty or institute level
- ask donors to indicate specific gaps which need to be covered in the university's annual report so that annual reports fulfil project requirements
- use an annual external audit of the institution for project financial reporting
- take greater responsibility for the management of external funds

Donors should avoid:

- parallel reporting systems
- setting up new administrative systems
- complex reporting requirements with frequent monitoring visits
- over-general reporting requirements without clear objectives
- paying for the services of individual university staff outside of the university system
- multi-university activities with multiple reports

Donors should support:

- university reporting systems
- coordination of activities at the university level
- delegate management responsibility for external funds to universities while providing institutional support

Extracted from *"Beyond the Fragments: Donor Reporting Systems at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique, and the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania"*, by David Wield of the U.K.'s Open University. The report was commissioned by SAREC as a contribution to the WGHE.

(student records, personnel, finance, and accounting). In contrast as a result of its 1991 strategic plan, UEM has been more successful in obtaining core institutional support from donors in recent years, including some recurrent financing. But donor assistance to both institutions is not long term, and does not usually extend beyond two years. This offers little stability for planning and requires senior staff to be permanently engaged in fund-raising.

Steps towards holistic reporting systems

As these two universities have worked to coordinate increasing donor contributions around a strategic institutional plan, they have found the diverse reporting requirements of donors to be increasingly onerous. For example, at UEM, as donor support has risen, the diversity and proliferation of reporting systems have gradually become a serious problem for the senior management. As part of its strategic plan, the university has argued for a more flexible, institutional approach to funding, linked to a holistic reporting system. In 1992, the university produced its first Annual Report and began to develop an external audit system and other accountability mechanisms. At least two major donors have accepted the annual financial audit as the financial report for their projects.

A second phase of the study, a review of donors' formal and informal reporting requirements, is now under way. Also commissioned by SAREC, this assessment will illuminate reporting elements common among donors, point out duplicative or non-essential practices, and suggest practical improvements for the universities involved. The results will be presented at the WG's next meeting in May 1994.

Working Group on Higher Education

More than 40 people attended the Working Group on Higher Education's sixth meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on September 21 and 22, 1993. Co-hosted by the University of Dar es Salaam and the World Bank, the WG's lead agency, the meeting was organized around the general theme of university capacity loss and staff retention, and included a discussion of the rationalization of donor reporting systems (*see article, facing page*). Sixteen representatives of African higher education institutions participated, including 6 vice-chancellors or deputy vice-chancellors of universities.

Staff Retention and Capacity Loss

Mr. Robert Blair, Managing Director of Speciss College in Zimbabwe, presented the preliminary results of a study on university staff retention and capacity loss commissioned by the WG early this year. The study, based on an extensive series of questionnaires and interviews at seven African universities, gathered data on staffing trends over the 1988-92 period. In addition, surveys explored staff perspectives on academic work, possible reasons for departure, and the extent of secondary income activities.

The preliminary results suggest that – with the exception of several “crisis departments” at each university that have only one or two staff in post – universities in the region seem to be holding their own in terms of staff numbers over the past five years. The overall number of positions has been rising on most campuses, and universities have been reasonably successful at either retaining or replacing staff. To the extent that universities have suffered significant staff departures, this appears to have occurred before 1988. Rather than a quantitative loss, the true problem universities face seems to be a significant qualitative decline as

staff resources are drained away by a combination of secondary employment, extended leaves and secondments.

The survey, generating more than 1,110 responses from seven campuses, suggests that current staff are committed academics. Over 50 percent of the respondents have known no other career than academia. They show a strong preference for university life, place a high priority on research and publication opportunities, and generally plan to seek promotion within their current institution. However, they also expressed dissatisfaction with regard to their remuneration, living conditions, and university facilities, and demonstrated growing interest in consultancy and contract research possibilities.

Emphasizing that the study is still incomplete and that conclusions and recommendations are yet to be developed, Mr. Blair noted that additional information is being received and analysed, including questionnaires from departed staff, responses from institutional leaders, analyses of secondary employment, and comparative terms of service.

Lessons from Overseas Training

Mr. David Court, Regional Representative of the Rockefeller Foundation, presented lessons learned from the Foundation's experience with graduate training abroad as a strategy for building capacity among university staff. Among other points, Mr. Court noted that staff development must be a continuous activity: participants need preparation before doctoral study and reinforcement afterwards. Candidate selection is critical, and ideally should be part of an institutional staff development plan, perhaps considering such individual characteristics as gender, ethnicity, and academic merit.

(continued overleaf)

Canada revealed that these programs are expensive and often of limited relevance to African scholars. They have proven especially deficient in research methodology training and in thesis supervision. Instead, Mr. Court suggested that post-graduate training in South Africa or Egypt might be more relevant and cost-effective. During the ensuing discussion, participants generally agreed with this assessment, but there was general consensus that more attention needs to be given to the development of post-graduate programs within Africa.

AIDS and Higher Education

Discussion then focused on AIDS and higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. Mr. Edward Mburugu, a lecturer in sociology at the University of Nairobi, presented an exploratory paper on this topic. Because of the lack of data on the prevalence of HIV infection among university populations, only inferential conclusions can be drawn for the present, but the problem could well be serious and growing. University representatives commented on what is being done to challenge this incurable disease, and the reports were quite encouraging. All of the universities represented at the meeting described very active preventative education campaigns run by staff and students.

Informatics and CD-ROM Capacity

The Group then turned to a discussion of informatics, including information technology as applied to computers, communications, and electronic access to knowledge. A 1992 survey of 31 African universities by the International Association of Universities found wide variation in informatics deployment among and within institutions. The use of information technology, particularly computers, has expanded very rapidly in recent years, but the institutional policy framework for managing this process remains weak. Subsequent discussion confirmed the diversity of informatics development in the region. For example, the Universi-

ties of Zambia and Zimbabwe have computerized some administrative functions, including student records and the university payroll. The University of Ibadan has embarked on library computerization, has some CD-ROM capacity, and plans to initiate electronic mail next year.

The next presentation built on a common theme of enhancing electronic access to knowledge by African universities. A recent American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) survey of 30 African libraries provided useful background. The challenge of maximizing scarce library resources has prompted a shift towards electronic data bases and CD-ROM use in developing countries. The CD-ROM technology, cost-effective, simple, and user-friendly, carries considerable potential for African libraries. Mr. John Newa, Director of Library Services at the University of Dar es Salaam, assessed his university's experience with CD-ROM. While subscriptions to CD-ROM annotated bibliographies can sharply expand access to current scientific knowledge, a reliable document delivery service for requested articles is necessary. He noted that the main challenge at present is the sustainability of the CD-ROM system. Although it may cost less than several hundred journal subscriptions, it requires foreign exchange for CD-ROM subscriptions and document delivery, implying dependence on donor good will for its continued existence. Another shortcoming is the limited inclusion of African sources within these data bases.

Ms. Lisbeth Levey of the AAAS then outlined current needs for further development of CD-ROM capacity in African university libraries. The AAAS has recently produced manuals (*CD-ROM for African Research Needs* and *Marketing CD-ROM Services*) intended for African librarians, researchers, and decision-makers. The AAAS also plans to begin in 1994 a two-year pilot study of CD-ROM costs and benefits at five or six African universities.

Next Meeting

The Group's next meeting, co-hosted by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), is scheduled for May 17 and 18 in Dakar, Senegal. The agenda will include a day devoted to discussion of the prevailing research environment in African universities which will be organized by SAREC. In addition, participants will review the final report of the capacity loss and staff retention study, and eight papers on the future role and mission of African universities, which were commissioned by the Working Group in 1993. Another agenda item will be the second phase report on the assessment of ways in which the burden of multiple donor reporting requirements might be reduced through some form of rationalization.



The Management and Mobilization of Teaching Personnel

A difficult task but exciting prospects for DAE/TMS

A common terminology but different realities

On the initiative of the Commonwealth Secretariat, a group was constituted to make progress in the field of the management and mobilization of educational personnel. Two regional seminars were held in October 1993; one in Dar es Salaam for English-speaking African countries, the other in Ouagadougou for French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries. A total of some twenty countries were represented at the two seminars, and most of them are to set up national working groups which will diagnose the situation in this field in each country and establish a strategy of action.

Having attended both these seminars, my comments and impressions as an outside observer may be of interest. I propose to raise four points, more or less at random:

The danger of generalizing; are teachers underpaid?

My first observation is backed by comparative analysis. Existing comparative data (despite their present imperfections) on African countries reveal very considerable differences from one country to another with regard to the way schools are organized in general and – where this group is concerned – in levels of teacher training and remuneration and in personnel management systems. Yet very much the same arguments and lines of thought are expressed by countries whose circumstances differ widely. How can it be asserted in overall terms that teachers are underpaid when the average salary, expressed in units of GNP per capita or in terms of purchasing power, can vary by a factor of between 1 and 4, depending on the country?

My second remark concerns the use of terms such as "pre-service" and "in-service" teacher training, or the word "inspection", having a general or generic meaning, as though they referred to something standard. In actual fact, as we know, they can correspond to very different practical realities, on which pedagogic efficiency depends to varying extents; the concept may be valid or not, depending on the use made of it.

Standard-setting opinions: who is qualified?

As a complement to the two foregoing observations, it is my view that one should beware of hastily-reached standard-setting opinions where teaching is concerned, when they relate to forms of school organization or resources mobilized. What we should probably be concerned with first and foremost are the results of the educational process; schools exist primarily for their pupils, and it is on them (their learning achievements, their careers, their individual differentiations) that we should base our judgement of the relevance of the forms of organization adopted and the resources mobilized. In this perspective, the term "unqualified teacher" was widely employed in these seminars. No doubt it should be used more prudently.

Two remarks may be made in this connection: First, the term unqualified teacher is often used to mean one whose level of training falls short of that which is nowadays considered desirable. But the question is: does it make any difference to what the pupils learn, whether their teacher is of level A (unqualified) or level B (recognized as qualified)? Possibly it does make a difference; equally possibly, it does not.

In the former case, it would appear justified to step up teacher training. In the latter case, it is high time to stop describing teachers of level A as unqualified, but it is a matter of even more pressing importance to reduce the level of training of B-level teachers, so as to avoid recruiting over-trained teachers (which is not serious in itself), but more importantly to avoid paying more than is necessary for the service they provide (assuming that teachers are paid according to their level of qualification). Since budgetary resources are limited, the money saved by not recruiting over-trained teachers can be used to remedy shortfalls in expenditure on items other than salaries (text-books, teaching materials, fuel for inspectors' vehicles, etc.) which everyone recognizes as justifiable for the better functioning of the system. Alternatively, the money could be used to finance an extension of the period of schooling, which is still a priority in some countries.

Second, whatever the quality and relevance of pre-service professional training (and all the more so if it leaves something to be desired) teachers acquire their professional know-how during their early years on the job. After a few years, little trace remains of their pre-service training, and the distinction between qualified and unqualified largely fades away.

What can be done about differences in teaching efficiency?

My fourth observation concerns a reality markedly in evidence in all school systems – the variable pedagogic efficiency of teachers of equivalent level of training working under similar teaching conditions. This

(continued on pg 15)

The Working Group on School Examinations completes its program

The Working Group on School Examinations (WGSE) has completed its program and was officially closed down at the Angers Task Force meeting. This group, led by the Irish agency HEDCO, was created in 1989 to help coordinate and collaborate on the development of national examination systems as a mechanism for improving primary and secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa. The WGSE has achieved its limited objectives and closed, thus making space for new initiatives.

WGSE outputs: costed action plans for 14 countries

The group's goal was to draw the attention – of both African governments and the donor community – to the role that examinations can play in improving education. The need for technical assistance, advice and training to support African examination systems was identified as an important element of donor policy. Thus, the WGSE aimed to help in improving national examination systems by structuring country-specific requests for development assistance. The WGSE built its program on studies of the school examinations systems in fourteen sub-Saharan African countries. The studies – carried out jointly with African governments – resulted in country-specific five-year costed action plans for the improvement of examination systems within each of participating countries. Individual reports of the plans were passed-on to the respective governments as their property, and a synthesis report entitled “Using Examinations to improve Education: A study in Fourteen African Countries” (*World Bank 1992, Africa Technical Department: Technical paper No. 165*) was published.

Seminars were held at regular intervals to discuss the results and to promote cross-fertilization of ideas between countries and with the donors. Those

national officials attending the seminars had the opportunity to discuss and compare the recommendations in the action plans. The fully documented plans were the central element in subsequent internal discussions on reform and support of schools examinations systems.

Were the action plans used?

After dissemination of the country-specific action plans and their discussion at both regional and country level, the WGSE set about evaluating their impact on both the donors and the participating African countries. The directors of examinations boards/councils in each of the fourteen countries were contacted. Seven countries responded – Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia. The post-evaluation of these seven countries found that most countries had incorporated elements of the studies into development plans, or indicated that they had been influenced by the studies in their planning. In four of the countries – Lesotho, Mauritius, Uganda and Zambia – important examinations reforms are in process or are planned. The study had some influence on developments in Ethiopia, where negotiations regarding examination reform are now underway. The work also had some influence in Swaziland, where collaboration between various agencies has been promoted. Kenya, while very active in the studies and in the WGSE, had just completed a major examination reform and therefore was least affected by the studies.

What determined their use?

Three factors contributed to the use of the action plans. The first factor was their timing. Where the studies were carried out in countries that had already begun, or were considering, change to their national schools examination systems, they had a

greater effect. In these cases, the studies fitted-in with the development of a national policy and were not donor driven. The second important factor was that seminars, held at regular intervals, allowed important contacts to be developed, both between the African countries themselves and between the countries and donor agencies. These seminars provided the opportunity for those attending – often individuals in positions to influence policy in their own countries – to respond to what had been done. The third important factor that contributed to a positive policy environment was that the fully-documented country reports were often written by local consultants and thus were accessible to local governments and others.

Conclusions

By carrying out studies on examination systems in various African countries, the Working Group helped draw attention to the role examinations can play in improving primary and secondary education. The group has met its objectives. Nevertheless, there still is, and will continue to be, a need for assistance to the African examinations systems through advice, technical assistance and training. However, it was felt that the topic of schools examinations was not a sufficiently broad theme for ongoing donor and government interaction in a DAE Working Group. School examinations are only one of a number of inputs that affect the quality of learning in the classroom; there is a need to look at other inputs which include curriculum, materials, and teacher training. A forum which allows donor/government discussion of the impact on learning of this broader range of inputs would be a valuable addition to the DAE.

John Lynch
HEDCO

New DAE Working Group on Finance and Education

At Angers, the Task Force approved the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) proposal to establish a DAE Working Group on Finance and Education (WGFE). The group aims to facilitate discussion on policy issues related to the financing, management and planning of education in sub-Saharan Africa. It will provide a forum where Africans and aid agencies can share information, develop mechanisms and policy instruments to reinforce existing capacity, and develop new capacity to better manage resources going to education.

Steps Taken to Create Working Group

At the Manchester meeting in October 1991, African ministers suggested that the DAE pay more attention to the underfunding of education and the deteriorating education indicators. In response, CIDA prepared a paper outlining some of the major issues facing African decision makers in financing education in sub-Saharan Africa. CIDA also proposed the creation of a DAE Working Group. The DAE Executive Committee discussed the proposal in October 1992 and recommended consultations with donors and African experts.

In January 1993, interested donors met informally in Washington, D.C. to discuss the creation of a Working Group on Finance and Education in Africa. The aim of the informal meeting was to gauge interest in funding such a group and to identify further steps. Participants agreed on the need for consultation with experts from Africa. Such consultation was to examine the priority issues surrounding finance and education, and to determine the feasibility of establishing a DAE WG on Finance and Education. CIDA, the French Ministry of Cooperation, DAE, USAID and the World Bank agreed to organize the consultation, scheduled to take place in Mauritius at the invitation of the

Minister of Education. The African ministers on the DAE Executive Committee collaborated in identifying participants. All agreed that it was important to bring together experts from outside ministries of education and government to broaden discussions and to reflect the variety of players involved in the delivery of education and training in Africa.

The consultation, held in Mauritius on September 25-26, 1993, included officials from ministries of education and finance, professionals from education institutions, local governments and NGOs, private school owners, politicians and researchers. Twenty-three Africans from thirteen countries and fourteen representatives from six development agencies attended the meeting. It was financed by the Aga Khan Foundation, the British ODA, CIDA, the International Development Research Centre, the Japanese International Cooperative Agency, the French Ministry of Cooperation and USAID. Members agreed on the feasibility of establishing a Working Group and reached consensus on its goals, priorities and the direction of its program.

Working Group Approach

Participants at the Mauritius meeting agreed that the WG should be constituted of African technical and professional experts and donor representatives. Participation would be based on competence. They stressed the importance of African collaboration and the equitable participation of Africans and donors in the WG. The group will program activities in policy research – case studies, developing guidelines, handbooks, training instruments – using national and regional networks to facilitate research and emphasize the discussion of research results with policy makers. It will be policy oriented by implicating decision makers in all stages of research – from the defining of

activities and methodologies to the dissemination and discussion of policy research results.

Objectives and Priority Issues

The objectives of the working group are to (i) develop a ministry's of education capacity and technical expertise for their effective interaction with the ministry of finance and other stakeholders in the educational financing, planning and management process, (ii) promote dialogue between the private and public education sectors and (iii) analyse best practices in Africa in education financing. The priority issues defined at the Mauritius meeting and subsequently confirmed at Angers relate to (1) budgeting techniques and expenditure management; (2) funding mechanisms and policy instruments needed to finance education and training, and (3) the governance of resources needed to meet education objectives. During the Angers meeting, representatives from Zambia, Gambia, Nigeria and the African Development Bank stressed that the WG should not focus only on primary education – that adequate financing of education needs to occur at all levels.

Next Steps

CIDA is committed to being the lead agency for this Working Group. It recognizes that financing issues are of utmost importance for sustainable improvements in the quality of education in Africa. CIDA believes that the WG will be most relevant if African researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders in the delivery of education services are fully involved in working group activities. Currently, CIDA is working to identify an African institution to coordinate the group. CIDA will work with this institution to develop a detailed and costed workplan for the next two to three year period and it will provide financing for the

(continued on pg 15)

What can we learn from debt-for-development swaps?

In the second of a three part series, the DAE examines debt-for-development swaps, looking at the mechanism and the success of previous swaps

Presently, sub-Saharan governments spend twice as much on debt repayments as on their education systems. The US \$9 billion spent by sub-Saharan Africa each year servicing foreign debt is crippling governments' social expenditures. The stagnant education budgets have also come under increasing pressure from rapid demographic growth, with the result that more and more African children are denied schooling. Therefore, if we are serious about universal primary schooling in Africa, we must explore ways of reducing debt payments and channelling some of that \$9 billion into education budgets. As the DAE argues throughout this series, debt swaps are an emerging innovative instrument that may be one of the most effective methods for channelling this money into education.

Before embracing debt swaps as the solution to the under-funding of education, we must consider the experience gained from past swaps and the feasibility of future debt swaps. A number of debt-for-development swaps – primarily in the environment sector – have previously occurred. But how can foreign debt-relief be exchanged for local development funds? How successful were past swaps? And can this technique be used to finance expanded basic education?

The mechanism of debt swaps

In answering these questions, we must begin by looking at the mechanism of debt-for-development swaps: *an external investor provides debt-relief to a developing country in exchange for the country's local financing of an agreed development project.*

In the 1970's and the 1980's many developing countries started to run into

difficulties repaying the foreign exchange they had borrowed from international commercial banks. The banks saw – and continue to see – that developing country borrowers might default on their loans. Rather than carry non-performing loans in their portfolios (which, in many cases, requires that banks increase their provisions against bad debt and can reduce a bank's access to new capital) the commercial banks prefer to write-off such debts, selling them at highly discounted prices or even donating them to a development agency. By writing-off these debts, the banks clear their books of non-performing loans – in some cases taking a tax break in the process – recovering a small proportion of the loan through a combination of the tax deduction and the proceeds of the discounted sale of the debt note. With the debt available for trade on a secondary market, an opportunity arises for a third party to use their foreign currency to buy the debt note, in other words to provide debt relief. Thus, for the debt-swap mechanism to work, a secondary market for the developing country's foreign debt must exist.

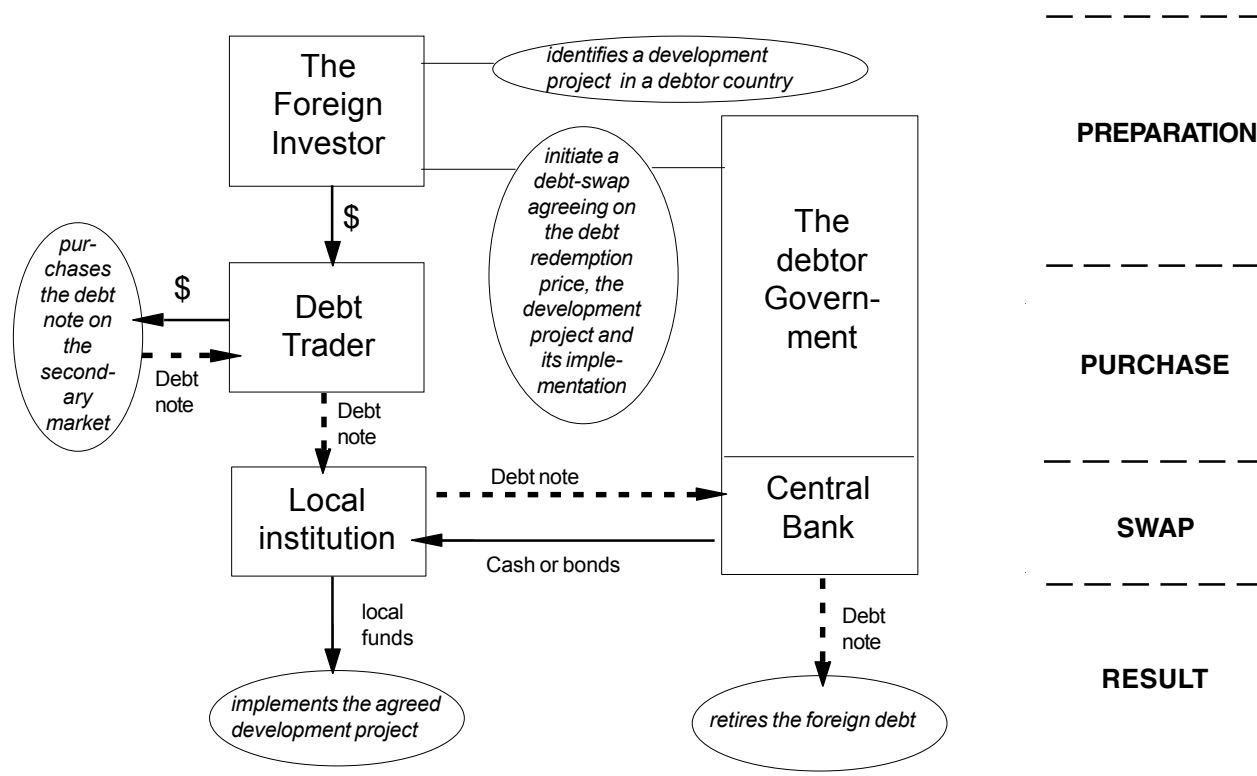
Most debt-for-development swaps follow four phases and involve three main parties, each supported with advice from technical agents. The first party is the foreign investor – a development or donor agency, until now principally international non-governmental organizations – supported by advice and services from an international professional debt trader. The second party is the debtor government of the developing country, working through its central bank and other specialized government departments. The third party is the local institution chosen to receive and administer the local funds needed to

implement the development project. The four phases are: first, preparation and discussions; second; the purchase of the debt on the secondary market; third, the actual swap; and finally, the results phase.

During the preparation phase, the foreign investor identifies a development project of joint interest to itself and a particular indebted country. Using the services of an international professional debt trader, the foreign investor verifies that the outstanding debt of the developing country is available for trade on the secondary market. With this confirmation, upon advice from the debt trader, the external agency agrees with the indebted country to provide foreign debt relief in exchange for the country's local financing of a given project. Agreements must be reached between the external agency and the debtor government on the amount of local funds that government will allocate to the project or program in relation to the amount of the foreign debt to be retired (the redemption price), and on the specification and implementation of the development project. Both parties should agree on the choice of the third party – the local institution responsible for receiving and administering the local funds and managing the implementation of the project. With these agreements completed, the remaining three phases can be undertaken.

With the help of a professional debt trader, the foreign investor buys the outstanding foreign debt on the secondary market at a discounted price (the purchase price). The investor then hands over the debt note to the local institution. The actual swap can now take place. The local institution hands over the note to the debtor country's central bank, which in exchange for

Figure 1. A SIMPLIFIED DEBT-FOR-DEVELOPMENT SWAP



the debt note, provides the local institution or project administrators with local bonds or currency (the redemption price). In the final phase, two actions take place. The debtor country's central bank retires the debt (at the full face value of the debt note) – the debt is wiped out. And the cash, or interest on the bonds, is administered by the local institution or NGO to implement the development project. The process is illustrated in Figure 1.

The mechanism of swapping debt for development funds relies upon prices differentials. The first price differential is the deep discount between the *face value* of the original debt and the *purchase price* of the debt note (typically 20 - 50 cents on the dollar – see Figure 2 for some examples). This price differential is set by the market value of secondary debt. The second differential is the difference between the *face value* of the original debt and the *redemption price* paid to convert

the foreign debt to local counterpart or project funds. This differential is fixed by negotiation between the foreign investor and the indebted government (the amount of local funds created varies from swap to swap, however, it lies between the debt's discounted price and the full face value of the debt). Through this mechanism, the foreign investor is able to leverage their initial funds.

The past experience of debt-for-development swaps

Some examples of debt-for-development swaps that have taken place in Africa are listed in Figure 2. These swaps followed the pattern outlined above, although with the exception that some of the early debt swaps were prompted by commercial banks donating foreign debt (resulting from changes in the banking laws of certain countries). One of the first occurred in 1988 when Midland Bank donated its

entire portfolio of Sudanese debt – totalling \$800,000 – to UNICEF. UNICEF gave this debt obligation back to the Sudanese central bank to retire in exchange for the local currency equivalent of \$80,000 to be used for clean water, deforestation and health education projects. Following Midland's lead, between 1989 and 1991, other commercial banks donated \$20.5 million of their Sudanese debt to UNICEF, which generated an additional \$2 million of local currency for further projects. Although the \$2.8 million of local currency created represents only 10% of the total face value of the debt, the purchase price of the debt was nil and the Sudanese central bank was limited in how much new currency it could create.

Other examples of debt-for-development swaps can be cited. For example, the River Blindness Foundation bought \$1 million of Nigerian debt at a purchase price of \$400,000 in early

1993. This was redeemed for \$500,000 of local currency to support the distribution of drugs used to combat onchocerciasis (“river blindness”). To date, swaps in sub-Saharan Africa have retired debt with a face value of \$80 million at a total cost to investors of \$8 million. This \$8 million, however, has created \$20 million worth of local counterpart funds – allowing NGOs to increase their funds by 250%. The amount of leverage varies from swap to swap. Some examples of the level of leverage are shown in Figure 2.

Are there disadvantages to swaps?

From the examples above, the advantages of debt swaps becomes clear. Foreign NGOs gain a leverage on their initial investment by exploiting the mismatch between the value associated with their scarce foreign exchange and the value of local currency. In other words, debt swaps are a mechanism for NGOs to exchange their currency at a premium. As for recipient countries, debt swaps mean that they get to retire their debts at a discount and in local currency, and that the money gets spent inside the country. Debt swaps appear to benefit everyone, so why have they

not been used more extensively? What have been some of the difficulties associated with these swaps? Four key concerns deserve mention.

The first drawback of debt swaps involves inflation. The money needed to finance the new projects must come from either reallocating resources within the country or by printing more money. Reallocating resources is often difficult and sometimes undesirable; printing more money is invariably inflationary. Therefore, governments prefer to issue bonds instead of currency, to prevent the money supply from growing too quickly, with the interest on the bonds used for project spending. Through this, the inflationary effects of debt swaps can be guarded against. However, issuing domestic bonds itself is not without problems. Essentially, bonds create a high interest domestic debt from what was originally a low interest foreign one.

The question of inflation points to a second concern. When executing the swap, the external agency or provider of debt-relief immediately “converts” all of its foreign currency to local funds. However, if the project is

scheduled to last over a number of years, then the donor must protect the value of the local currency that has been created against the possible effects of inflation or currency devaluation. These two effects can erode much of the gains created through leverage and, in cases where there is hyperinflation or where there has been a major currency devaluation, it might be wiser to convert foreign exchange conventionally and gradually over the life of the project. Inflation and devaluation can be guarded against, however, by choosing projects that are accomplished quickly or by investing the money locally in secure portfolios.

A third concern is the issue of commitment. At the outset of a swap, the foreign investor providing the debt relief reaches an agreement with the government and a key local agency to support implementation of a specific development project. Such agreements are not always honoured in their entirety. The perception of external control and diminished national sovereignty is always a thorny issue and can cause governments to rescind their agreements. Likewise, a new government may not accept the commitments of the previous administra-

Figure 2. SELECTED DEBT- FOR- DEVELOPMENT SWAPS IN AFRICA

COUNTRY	YEAR	FACE VALUE of debt	PURCHASE PRICE		REDEMPTION PRICE		LEVERAGE (ratio redemption / purchase)	SECTOR
			Secondary Market cost	(as a % of face value)	counterpart or project funds generated	(as a % of face value)		
Sudan	1988	800	0	0%	80	10%	n/a	Water & Environment
Zambia	1989	2270	454	20%	2270	100%	5	Environment
Madagascar	1990	919	446	49%	919	100%	201	Environment
Guinea	1990	1000	500	50%	1000	100%	2	Self-help
Ghana	1991	1000	250	25%	1000	100%	4	Eco-tourism
Nigeria	1993	10000	400	40%	500	50%	1.3	Health

values quoted in US \$ Thousands

tion. However, if projects are chosen carefully and there is a *clear national constituency* for the project, then problems with national commitment can be avoided.

A fourth concern that has arisen out of previous debt swaps is the issue of "additionality", or the amount of new resources that come to the country as a result of the debt swap. Where the local institution chosen to implement the development project is an NGO, it does so often because the project coincides with its existing priorities and programs. With the availability of funds from the debt swap, the NGO is free to reallocate its own previous spending – and that money may well be used in projects in other countries. Thus, the funds generated by debt relief may simply replace existing spending. In addition, this problem is aggravated by the fact that the leverage created by secondary debt markets works mainly in the NGO's favour. If the NGO can generate close to 100% of

the debt's face value in local funds then the developing country does not benefit from the debt's discounted price. Instead, developing countries end up subsidizing the value of the NGOs leverage.

Unanswered questions

Above we have outlined some of the problems associated with debt swaps. The main lesson seems to be that debt swaps can work if done with care, however, the possibilities for failure are real. As the discussion has shown, debt swaps undertaken in the past principally have involved foreign NGOs buying up commercial debt to finance specific projects. But underlying this discussion has been the question "how can debt relief be used to finance universal primary education in sub-Saharan Africa?" Governments will certainly be one of the central actors when talking about basic education but how would we ensure that an injection of foreign funds into an education

budget, brought about by debt relief, would be used to actually finance additional education spending, as opposed to simply replacing existing spending? And given that debt swaps are a one-off occurrence, what happens to education spending when the debt swap money runs out? In addition, we must ask if debt swaps can include, not just commercially-owned debt, but also publicly-owned debt. And can debt swaps become official development assistance policy? In other words, can what has started out as an innovative development strategy by non-governmental organizations be adopted at the government level? The scope for adopting debt swaps at the official level is an emerging debate and in the third and final article of this series, the DAE will consider the issues involved in whether debt swaps can be adopted as official overseas development assistance policy.

Christopher Shaw
Neil Saravanamuttoo

...new Working Group...

(..continued from pg 11)

WG activities if it is also financially supported by other donors. The detailed workplan will be ready by spring 1994. In order to refine the workplan, it will be important to identify which countries, African researchers and consultants wish to participate in WG activities, particularly in the areas of budget management (which will be the first topic in the program) and financing mechanisms. If you are interested in participating in the WG activities or are working in the area of education finance and have information to share or if you would like further information, please contact the author.

Linda English
CIDA

...mobilizing teaching personnel...

(..continued from pg 9)

variation is just as marked as the distinction made between so-called unqualified and qualified teachers. It is explained, generally speaking, by three complementary factors: (i) teaching/learning methods and techniques of communication with pupils; (ii) the teacher's motivation and the energy he puts into his task; (iii) the charisma and personality of the teacher, and his aptitude for the job. This variability of efficiency from one individual teacher to another, irrespective of his training and of the practical circumstances in which he works, is obviously an important dimension of personnel management; yet it is generally found expedient to assume that all teachers are identical when they have received similar training. For the working groups, this is obviously an unavoidable challenge, and the problem and its different components are difficult to cope with. A

question that inevitably arises is what should be the criterion on which a teacher's salary is based; in other words, what is being remunerated ... his diploma?... his function? ...the service he effectively renders? And what are the consequences where the non-impersonal management of the teaching profession is concerned?

Alain Mingat
University of Dijon

Education for All ...a Long Way to Go

The International Institute for Educational Planning, in collaboration with UNICEF, initiated a series of policy seminars to review the progress achieved in "Education For All" (EFA) since the Jomtien Declaration. The first two policy seminars were held in Africa; one in Ouagadougou in April 1993 with six African countries from the Sahel region, and another in Kampala, with seven countries from eastern and southern Africa. The main objective of the seminars was to take stock of the status of "Education for All" in the participating countries. This was done through the exchange of national experience and examination of certain successful innovations in the area of basic education.

Concern for basic education is not a new area brought to the forefront through the Jomtien conference alone. Prior to Jomtien, African countries have made considerable efforts in the field of basic education over the past three decades. Nevertheless, the Jomtien Declaration has been instrumental in renewing commitment and positive policy orientation towards "Education for All" among the politicians and administrators. These policy seminars are aimed at gauging progress in the light of the EFA declarations. They provide some powerful feedback from the African professionals to the international donor community on the current progress – or lack of it – towards EFA.

Uneven progress, but some emerging trends

From the preparatory work and from the discussions in the Ouagadougou and Kampala policy seminars on the progress towards EFA, five main conclusions can be drawn. First, the political statements and policy assertions that resulted from Jomtien have not been adequately translated into practical actions and achievements on the ground. Second, the slowing down of the growth rate in primary school

enrolment continues to be a matter of serious concern in several countries. Third, even though considerable progress has been made, gender disparity in primary school participation continues to be an issue. Fourth, qualitative problems also persist. Fifth, attempts have been made in several countries to create alternative systems to complement the formal primary schools, but no viable alternative has yet emerged.

The case studies of innovations presented at the two policy seminars illustrated that some countries have moved away from rhetoric to deal with real issues through innovative, though small scale, projects and programs. At least three trends could be identified from the case studies and from the ensuing debates during the seminars:

First, governments are actively seeking new partnerships within their countries to implement basic education programs. Clearly apparent is the increasing number of initiatives by NGOs who have traditionally stayed away from education sector activities. Persistent efforts to involve the community in mobilizing resources for basic education are more prevalent than in the past. However many participants signalled some apprehension with this tendency believing that it may overburden poorer communities, thereby retarding progress towards education for all and even reinforcing disparities in educational development.

Second, traditional institutions of learning which function through religious institutions, such as Koranic schools, are making a comeback. In several countries, with various religious communities and multi-ethnic populations, these structures are seen as a potential means of promoting basic education, particularly among girls.

Third, another common trend observed in many countries is an increasing concern for the quality of learning. This concern for quality has brought to

light serious problems with the training and deployment of teachers in primary schools. It is now recognized that the improvement of teachers' motivation and attitudes is the key to achieving quality improvement. Concrete actions are being taken in several countries to make for such change.

Reaching EFA Goals by the year 2000 impossible ?

There appears to be a gradual decline in confidence on the part of many countries that they will be able to meet international expectations. Many governments feel that the programs of structural adjustment have severely crippled their capacity to raise resources for basic education. They consider that the expectations of the international community, as voiced through the Jomtien Declaration, are unrealistic, and are calling for a serious re-examination of the targets.

Donor support uncoordinated and inconsistent

Participants in the seminars were unhappy that international initiatives in African countries lack coordination and consistency. They called for strengthening of inter-agency coordination and networking, to ensure more effective utilization of international support.

The sustainability of externally-supported programs and projects in education was an issue repeatedly raised in discussions. It was generally agreed that the paucity of indigenous initiatives leads to the adoption of external initiatives which fail to take root in local cultural settings and thus form a part of the education system. Participants criticized international aid agencies for frequently changing their stance on different issues and often withdrawing financial support to programs before these are sufficiently integrated within a system. They called for continuity on the policy front.

Fig. 1. PARTICIPATION IN BASIC EDUCATION

Primary school - Gross Enrollment Ratio

COUNTRY\ YEAR	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993
Burkina Faso	18	29	37	..	..	..
Central African Republic	71	76	72	..	..	..
Mali	27	23	24	..	..	..
Mauritania	37	49	50	..	..	..
Niger	25	26	29	..	..	..
Chad	..	43	64	..	..	..
Ethiopia	35	36	31	27	22	19
Kenya	115	99	95	95	95	94
Malawi	60	60	69	..	..	..
Zambia	90	100	92	86	87	..
Zimbabwe	85	136	116	..	..	..

1980, 1985, 1990 = UNESCO Data, 1991, 1992 = Country-reported data

countries. Further, even when programs are suggested by external agencies, they must be reviewed for their long-term suitability to the country.

Second, to meet the funding agencies' requirements as well as a country's needs, capacity building in project design, implementation and monitoring is needed immediately.

Third, governments must examine the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of proposals related to the EFA initiative, not only to assess the feasibility of their initial implementation, but also to assess the likelihood of their eventual integration into the national system at the later stage when the external funding has dried up.

All participants felt that the sharing of professional experience related to EFA between their countries was very poor. Regular interchange would increase the dissemination of the many lessons to be learnt from other African countries. In order to facilitate mutual sharing of experiences, countries should develop effective networking. Thus was felt that such senior level meetings among countries with similar problems should take place more often, and that the international community could help in organizing such meetings.

G. Carron, R. Govinda
IIEP

Strengthening national ownership

One point made throughout the seminars is the need to ensure robust and enduring *national ownership* of activities supporting the EFA initiative (*incidentally, the issue of ownership has been to the forefront in other meetings between African professionals and the donor community - Editor*). The point was made repeatedly that, while external resources would be needed for

renewed progress towards EFA for some time to come, such external support should be integrated into the national program. Unfortunately, this was rarely the case. Three guidelines aimed at strengthening national ownership emerged from the debates and discussions during the two seminars:

First, instead of waiting for external agencies to suggest possibilities, it is essential to generate programs and projects on basic education *from within*

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Calendar of events

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🌍 DAE Activities

📌 WGBL

The Working Group on Textbooks and Libraries will meet in London on January 18 to discuss the issues and outcomes of the working group's activities. Contact: Dr. Digby Swift, ODA.

📌 WGSA

The Steering Committee of the WG on Education Sector Analysis will meet on 31 January. For further information, contact Lucilla Jallade, BER/PSA UNESCO.

📌 WGTP

The WG on the Teaching Profession will hold a Country Action Plan Programme to review Teacher Management and Support in the second quarter of 1994. The meeting will be open to WG members, facilitators, and consultants. For further information, contact Dr. Henry Kaluba or Mrs. Carol Coombe of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

📌 DAE WG coordinators

The DAE Working Group coordinators will meet at the IIEP in Paris on March 16 and 17.

Other Meetings

- ① The Bellagio Publishing network will meet on January 19 and 20. Items include reports on the DAE Task Force and EFA forum, and the colloquium on relations between international organisations and African publishers. Attendance by invitation. Contact Katherine Salahi, Bellagio Publishing Network.
- ② A forum entitled "Literacy Training and Development Program for Africa" will be held from February 14 to 19 in Tunis, Tunisia. Topics will include policy, research, and practice pertaining to literacy and language. Attendance by invitation only. For further information contact Dr M. Maamouri of the University of Tunis, or L. Puchner, NCAL.
- ③ An Education for All enlarged steering committee meeting will be held at UNESCO, Paris February 28 to March 2. This meeting is intended to be a team-sharing opportunity for those concerned with EFA, and is open to all donor agencies. For more information, contact Michael Lakin, UNESCO.
- ④ An IIEP Planning Meeting for the establishment of a SADC Consortium to monitor the attainment of the goals of the Jomtien Conference, will be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, during the second half of 1994. A seminar on "Data Entry and Data Cleaning" will be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, the second half of 1994. For more information on these two activities contact K. Ross, IIEP.



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