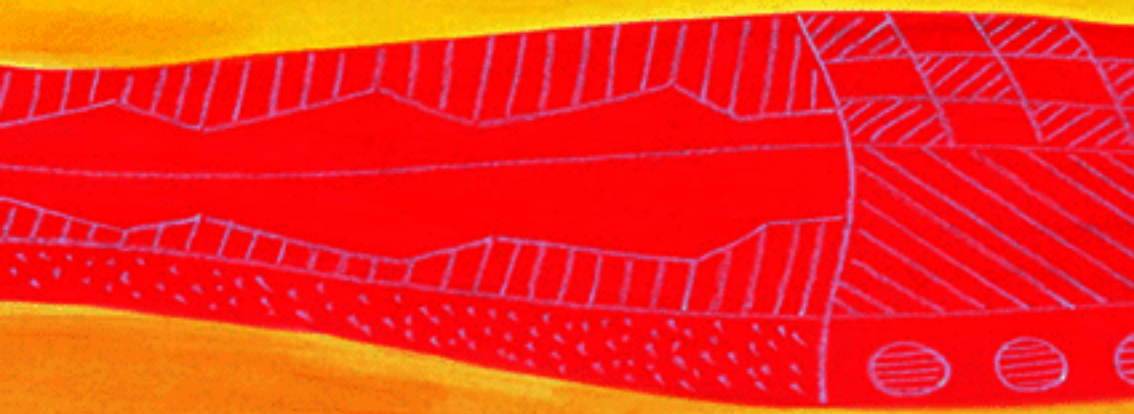
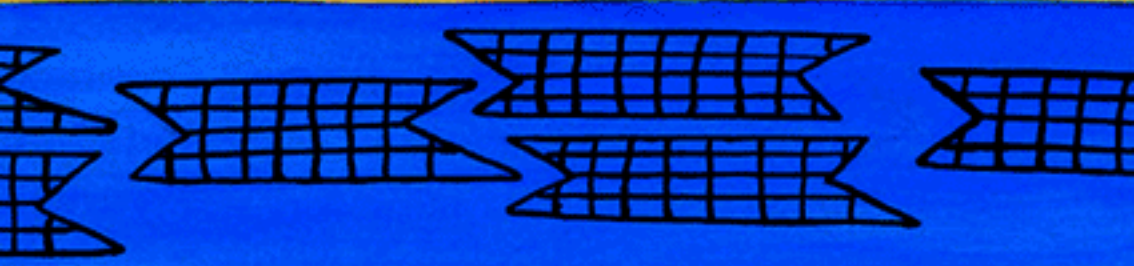
Association for the Development of African Education

Formulating Education Policy: Lessons and Experiences from sub-Saharan Africa



Six Case Studies and Reflections from the DAE Biennial Meetings (October 1995 – Tours, France)



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The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the DAE, to its members or affiliated organizations or to any individual acting on behalf of the DAE.

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Association for the Development of African Education (DAE)
c/o UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning
7-9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, Paris 75116, France

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PREFACE

In the past decade, considerable attention has been directed at the substance of education policy—"getting education policy right". Policy objectives were designed to support education reform efforts aiming at providing better quality education to greater percentages of the school-aged children. From emphasis on primary education to decentralized management systems to multi-grade classrooms to community schools ..., education ministries and their funding agency partners have sought solutions for the various problems constraining educational development in Africa.

More recently, there has been a growing appreciation that—in addition to the substance of educational policies—the *process* of policy formation itself can have a profound impact on the direction, viability and success of national education reform. Since 1990, the Association for the Development of African Education (DAE) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have collaborated on exploring the process of policy development in different African countries. The first phase of this partnership resulted in a comparative study of five countries, presenting a historical perspective on policy formation. Following the DAE's 1993 Biennial Task Force Meeting (held in Angers, France), both USAID and DAE recognized that additional, more targeted research was needed on the policy formation process in order to provide ministries and agencies with practical guidance and insight on how to better manage and support education policy formulation and implementation. The vision that both partners brought to this task was the need for an analytical framework which would address such operational questions as: Who was involved in the policy selection process, how, why and when? How was of consensus reached, and to what degree? Which contextual factors affect policy development, and to what extent? How have policy reform packages been managed, by whom and with what outcomes?

DAE and USAID collaboration on this second phase of inquiry into policy formation was initiated in October 1994, with a Washington meeting of a USAID-convened consultative group (including USAID personnel, other agencies and education specialists) and DAE representatives to review previous work on policy formation, identify key questions, discuss methodology and suggest country case studies. This approach centered on the preparation of a second series of case studies in six countries that had recently undertaken an educational reform but were at different stages in the policy development process. Along with the insights gained from the 1993 case studies, the intention was to extract and synthesize lessons and/or best practices from the various country experiences.

By December 1994, the undertaking of six more case studies had received the approval of DAE's Steering Committee and authorization from USAID. A study coordinator was recruited, along with researchers in each country. The latter were charged with writing the case studies. Concurrence was received from for their respective education ministries. An international technical review committee, consisting of representatives from the African Capacity Building Foundation, UNESCO, the French Ministry of Cooperation, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the World Bank, USAID and the DAE reviewed the scope and approach of the study. Moreover, the DAE Steering Committee indicated that the work would contribute to the theme, and form the analytical base for, the October 1995 Biennial Meeting (held in Tours, France). Two authors' workshops, hosted by the DAE in Paris, brought together case study authors, DAE and USAID personnel and consultants. The first workshop, held in January 1995, resulted in the definition of key research questions, identification of the "policy event" to be studied in each country and preparation of an outline and research plan for individual case studies. A second authors' workshop six months later (July 1995) was devoted to the finalization of the studies, discussion of emerging lessons and the development of a conceptual framework for the

organization and analysis of factors affecting the policy formation process— all of which formed the basis of the presentation of the case studies at the Tours Biennial Meeting. Between these two workshops, the authors received visits by USAID study managers and the study coordinator to assist them in the methodology, focus and analytical approach of their respective studies.

Many people and organisms have contributed to this document. Funding has been provided by USAID and the DAE. The project was designed and directed by Karen Tietjen and Ash Hartwell (USAID education specialists) and Christopher Shaw (DAE Secretariat). Critical input at the design phase was contributed by many too numerous to mention from the African, agency and academic communities. Case study coordination was provided by Richard Sack, and technical advice from David Evans. The authors received field assistance from Tietjen, Hartwell, and Sack. Editorial assistance was provided by Sack, Evans, Hartwell, Tietjen and Jeanne Moulton. Document production and translation was managed by Thanh-Hoa Desruelles (DAE Secretariat). The synthesis paper captures the content of discussions held at the two authors' workshops; most importantly, it incorporates the discussions and observations of the participants of the 1995 Tours Meeting; and it owes its genesis to discussions at the 1993 DAE Biennial meeting held in Angers.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

DAE	Association for the Development of African Education
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EFA	Education for All
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoE	Ministry of Education
MP	Master Plan
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WP	White Paper

The Case of Benin

EGE	Forum on Education *(Etats Généraux de l'éducation)*

The Case of Ghana

APTI	Association of Principals of Technical Institutes
CDR	Committee for the Defense of the Revolution
CEE	Common Entrance Examination
CHASS	Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools
CRT	Criterion Referenced Tests
GES	Ghana Education Service
GESC	Ghana Education Service Council
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
JSS	Junior Secondary School
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NUGS	National Union of Ghana Students
PMU	Project Management Unit
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
PREP	Primary Education Project
PRINCOF	Principals Conference
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
TUC	The Trade Union Congress

The Case of Guinea

COPASE	PASE Interministerial Preparatory Committee
PASE	Sector Adjustment Program for Education (*Programme d'ajustement du secteur de l'éducation)*
FAC	Cooperation and Assistance Fund (France) *(Fonds d'aide et coopération)*

The Case of Mauritius

CPE	Certificate of Primary Education
HDRP	Human Resources Development Program
MES	Mauritius Examinations Syndicate
MPICU	Master Plan Implementation and Coordination Unit

The Case of Mozambique

GDR	German Democratic Republic
GEPE	Office for Educational Projects Management
LES	Higher Education Law *(Lei do Ensino Superior)*
NEP	National Education Policy
RECODE	Consultative Organ of the Donors and the Ministry of Education *(Reuniao de Coordenaçao das Actividade de Doadores à Educaçao)*
SNE	National Education System (*Sistema Nacional de Educacao)*

The Case of Uganda

EPRC	Education Policy Review Commission
EPU	Education Planning Unit
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Center
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
RC	Resistance Councils/Committees
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SHEP	School Health Education Project
SUPER	Support Uganda's Primary Education Reform
TDMS	Teacher Development and Management System
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UPE	Universal Primary Education
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority

Overview and Analysis of the Case studies—Lessons for Education Policy Formation

by David R. Evans, Richard Sack and Christopher P. Shaw

Introduction

Successful education reform in Africa is dependent on the quality of the underlying education policy. DAE's work has been guided by this awareness since its inception, and it emerged as a powerful lesson from consultations on implementation at the previous Biennial meeting, held in Angers, France in October 1993. Beginning in 1990, DAE sponsored a series of case studies on education policy formation in five countries in Africa.[2] These studies formed the basis for a series of technical review meetings and ultimately a decision to undertake a second set of case studies, this time written solely by authors from the concerned countries. Together, these efforts have produced ten cases from sub-Saharan Africa which constitute a substantial knowledge base. The cumulative African experience in education policy formation, reflected in these cases and in this summary analysis, provide the background for the discussions at DAE's Biennial Plenary.

Box 1. Case studies on Education Policy Formation

In the past five years, DAE, with the support and collaboration of USAID, has sponsored case studies on Education Policy Formation in ten African countries. The cases are:

BENIN*	BOTSWANA
GHANA*	GUINEA*
MALI	MAURITIUS*
MOZAMBIQUE*	SENEGAL
TANZANIA	UGANDA*

*Cases reported in full in this publication and commissioned for the Tours Biennial Meeting

The DAE Biennial meeting in Angers in 1993 recognized the importance of having in place "long-term education sector development strategies" which presume a clearly articulated and fully supported education policy framework for the country. During that meeting and subsequently, Ministers of Education and funding agencies alike increasingly became concerned with the "how to" questions of education policy formation. In addressing these questions two facts emerged: (i) recognition that a number of African countries had a history of education policy formulation from which lessons could be learned. That realization led to the case studies which formed the basis of the discussions at the 1995 DAE Biennial; (ii) education policy formation was of sufficient importance and immediacy to be a suitable theme for the 1995 Tours Biennial meeting. As a result, it appeared that lessons and methodological guidelines can be extracted from the case studies which would assist all African countries in creating or improving their national education policy structure.

The importance of countries having a sound sector policy which articulates a plan and priorities for the education sector was reinforced by the comments of the keynote speaker at Tours, Mr. Per Grimstad, Director-General of NORAD. He reported on his agency's new approach to development which emphasizes partnership rather than dependency. This requires both NORAD and African governments to enter into responsible business relationships for the financing of development activities. Each partner has contractually defined responsibilities and is accountable for them to the other partner. Projects are defined

and implemented by the government, not NORAD which, however, wants to see that the project is based on sector policy which has approval from the Ministry of Finance and widespread support within the sector. According to Mr. Grimstad, this approach is an alternative designed to overcome the weaknesses of past development relationships.

One of the central lessons to emerge from the case studies is the diversity of experience in African countries. Past discussions about policy formation have focussed almost exclusively on the *content* of policy, such as EFA, efficiency, or girls' access—while the *processes* of policy formation have been little analyzed or discussed. With the worldwide movement towards more active involvement of civil society in governance and policy, along with decentralization, governments are seeking to learn lessons from each another about policy processes as well as content. Approaches to education policy formation vary widely between countries depending on their colonial history and hence their inherited patterns of interaction between civil society and the state. Equally clear is the existence of windows of opportunity which depend on both internal political and economic conditions and on external patterns of relationships with the funding agencies and international economic forces. Running through all the cases are two central themes: the need for publicly stated education policies which are understood and supported by both government and civil society, and the importance of participation by the diverse parts of society that will be affected by the policies.

This paper will first take a brief excursion into how social scientists have viewed the processes of policy making, then—in order to facilitate discussion of the case studies and the diversity of experience expressed at meeting in Tours—present a set of elements which are part of many policy formation experiences. Subsequent sections of this paper will examine a series of issues which emerged from the analysis of African national experiences. The final section will summarize the dialogue and findings of the Biennial meeting in Tours.

SYSTEMATIC, ANALYTICAL VIEWS OF POLICY MAKING

The social science literature on policy formation shows **two distinct views**: the earlier, more traditional literature tends to characterize the process as **a set of stages or steps** which follow a logical order, while the more recent literature suggests that policy making is **a messy, fluid process** which cannot be reduced to a simple linear model. The more traditional models are helpful in portraying a confusing reality in an ordered way. This facilitates thinking about the components of a policy process. However, recent field-based research, as well as the case studies sponsored by DAE, illustrate that reality is more complex, less clearly ordered, and seldom reflects a simple application of technical rationality in decision making.

Policy making as discrete steps and stages

The more traditional descriptions of policy formation contain some version of a "policycycle"—a set of stages beginning with problem identification and ending with an evaluation of implemented programs that can lead to a revised set of issues that feeds into a new cycle. A typical example of a policy cycle—graphically shown in **Box 2**— would contain the following stages:

(a) **Identification of policy problems; setting the policy agenda.**
Policy problems originate from a variety of sources: some are *technical*/*professional*—such as planners seeking to rationalize school locations or educators concerned about content of the curriculum; others are more *political*—such as parents worried about the ability of their children

to gain access to higher levels of education or teacher unions frustrated by their terms of service; and some come from *external sources*—such as when funding agencies advocate policies like improved access of girls to basic education. When pressures are strong enough, the issue becomes a policy problem to which the government must respond and the problem becomes part of the policy agenda. However, there is a difference between identifying issues, which can come from many different sources, and getting them onto the policy agenda. This requires visibility for the issue *and* significant levels of interest from powerful forces in the government, in civil society, or from the funding agencies.

(b) **Formulation and assessment of policy options**.
Once issues are identified and have become part of the policy agenda, the rational planning approach indicates that alternative solutions should be drawn up and evaluated. All too often, this step is incomplete and only one policy response is investigated and prepared in detail, thus reducing the options. However, when this stage is undertaken rigorously, several technically sound, economically feasible, and politically practical options are set forth and compared. Making judgements about the desirability of the various trade-offs involved in different options is the responsibility of the political and educational leadership of the country.

(c) **Adoption of particular policy options.**
This stage requires a decision-making process for the selection of policy options to be implemented. Various approaches are used to formalize these decisions. In Anglophone Africa, where there is a history of education commissions, governments often take the most recent policy commission report and respond with a White Paper indicating which recommendations will be accepted either in part or in full. In Francophone countries, there is a practice of *Etats Généraux* that provide recommendations to be selectively implemented by Ministries of Education or sent to parliament for action.

(d) **Implementation of policies.**
This includes the translation of policy options into specific strategies for carrying out the policy. Strategies in turn are converted into plans with actions, time lines, and resources. The choice of strategies is subject to local conditions and a variety of constraints, including resource availability and managerial capacity. Since policies interact with local realities and are adjusted accordingly, this is actually an ongoing part of the policy formation process. Indeed, policy as implemented and experienced is the final definition of what a policy actually is. How education programs are actually implemented was the subject of the 1993 meeting in Angers, France.[3]

(e) **Evaluation of policy impact.**
Evaluation of policies has two components: first, collecting information to measure the effect, if any, the policy has had on education; and, second, when the desired impact did not occur, assessing the causes of the "deviant" results. Assessing the impact of a change requires baseline data, established prior to policy implementation; it also requires a capacity to collect information which will provide an appropriate indicators of policy impact.

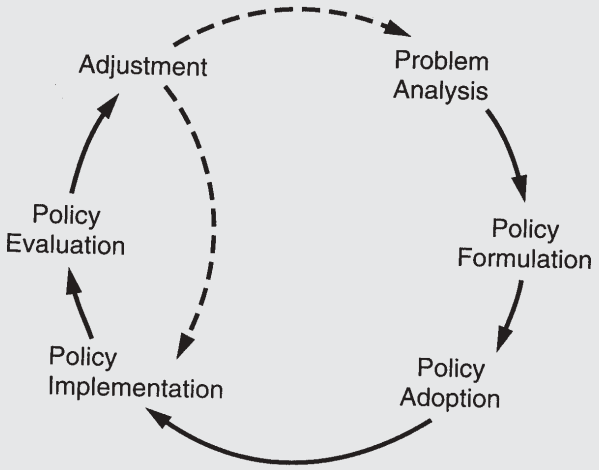
(f) **Adjustment and beginning of new policy cycle.**
This step is essentially identical to the first stage discussed in this section—identification of policy issues. If policies are found to be less effective than expected, then a judgement has to be made whether this is enough of a problem to be kept on the policy agenda. If it is, then assessment of the causes of the problem is needed. Lack of effectiveness can come from two general sources:

- inadequate capacity to implement the policy effectively, or
- problems with the policy itself.

Funding agencies have traditionally assumed that lack of implementation capacity is the problem and sought to provide assistance in the form of projects to increase that capacity. While lack of capacity is often a contributing factor, assessment of the policy itself may also be needed.

The "steps and stages" approach can be reconciled with the "fluid process" view by emphasizing the unpredictability of the process. Instead of seeing these stages as rigidly sequential, each one can be viewed as a challenge to be faced at some point in the process of policy formation and implementation.[4] Nonetheless, thinking of the policy process as a logical sequence of steps can help to make sense of the challenge, even though it does not provide fully applicable guidelines for policymakers working in real

Box 2: Schematic Diagram of a General Policy Cycle



Source: Haddad & Demsky, 1994. Page 10.

world settings. Since—as the case studies demonstrate—environmental characteristics strongly influence every stage of the process, at any given point a country can be addressing a particular stage or even several stages at once, without necessarily having dealt with "previous stages."

In his presentation at Tours, Mr. Wadi Haddad, Deputy Secretary of the World Bank, argued that the "policy cycle" (see **Box 2**) was an oversimplification for analytic purposes. In reality no country goes through such a circle, rather it goes through many loops. His research showed that the most successful policy processes started with policy actors functioning in an organization and proceeding step by step—planning being an incremental process—adding small changes to existing policies. Policy reforms which tried to be holistic or were too dependent onindividual actors were much more likely to fail, according to his research.[5]

Policy making as a fluid process: evidence from field studies

In practice, the elements of the policy cycle do not take place as a series of discrete steps, but are experienced as a continuously interactive process. At all stages, affected stakeholders seek to make changes which address their concerns. In this sense, the formulation of policy options is not something

which happens only at the beginning of the cycle, but is continuous, with important inputs being made even after the adoption of a particular policy option. Thus even well into the implementation stage, powerful actors can and will seek to influence the translation of policies into regulations and actions. Policy leaders often underestimate the importance of the large numbers of mid-level bureaucrats and school-level educators who will influence the form which policies take in practice. Failure to involve these cadres in the policy process at an early stage may increase their resistance during implementation. Under some circumstances, these actors can block or reverse policies when they reach local levels. A good example is found in countries where new textbooks which have been delivered to schools are not being used by the teachers, who feel more comfortable teaching as they have always done without texts. The old adage about education is still valid—when the door to the classroom is closed, the teacher controls what takes place.

Most studies of policy making and the processes by which it occurs are confined to the North American context and have been done by mainly political scientists, sociologists and economists. Even those studies that concentrate on developing countries make abundant reference to, and tend to draw their conceptual frameworks from, the North American work.[6]

One analytical point in common to most treatments of policy making is the distinction and interplay between information and technical analysis, on the one hand, and politics and power, on the other hand. As Lindblom and Woodhouse put it

> Thus, a deep conflict runs through common attitudes toward policy making. People want policy to be informed and well analyzed, perhaps even correct or scientific; yet they also want policy making to be democratic and hence necessarily an exercise of power.[7]

When it comes to education policy making in Africa, an analysis of the previous set of case studies points out that

> Policy recommendations for education reform therefore have two components, technical and political. Even modest changes in education, desirable from a technical perspective, can lead to substantial unrest and even violence if they are perceived to threaten the access to benefits of various groups in society. Change in education requires public consensus and political acceptability to a degree not needed in other sectors.[8]

According to this perspective, there is no "*One Way*" to view the policy process. A couple of the most prominent students of policy-making and related processes (concentrating mainly on North America) conclude that

> Deliberate, orderly steps therefore are not an accurate portrayal of how the policy process actually works. Policy making is, instead, a complexly interactive process without beginning or end. To make sense of it certainly requires attention to conventional governmental-political topics such as elections, elected functionaries, bureaucrats, and interest groups. But equally or more important are the deeper forces structuring and often distorting governmental behavior: business influence, inequality and impaired capacities for probing social problems. These intertwine in fascinating and disturbing ways in contemporary policy making.[9]

In other words, given the large number and variety of factors and forces involved in policy making, "pure rationality" should not to be expected. This is more art than science. As Porterand Hicks put it, "the policy process is fluid, even messy, but still largely understandable."[10]

Indeed, the Nobel prize recipient Herbert Simon argues that

> The capacity of the human mind for formulating and solving complex problems is very small compared with the size of the problems whose solution is required for objectively rational behavior in the real world—or even for a reasonable approximation to such objective rationality.[11]

The message here is that a certain modesty is in order when one embarks on the complex and perilous task of policy formation.

This modesty also covers the applicability of concepts and lessons derived from the North American context—characterized by a long tradition of decentralization and democratic openness—to developing countries where governments tend to be more centralized and where the policy elites tend to play a more predominant role in policy formation. Nonetheless, the concepts and analytical orientations gained from the former are a useful starting point for looking at the processes of policy formation in other political, social, economic and cultural contexts.

OVERVIEW OF THE SIX AFRICAN CASE STUDIES

The case studies on which this paper is based take a systematic, analytical and critical look at the **processes** of educational policy formation in six African countries. These studies are written by actors involved in, or close to, the events and processes that are the subject of their papers. Each case is different, with the differences covering several dimensions:

(a) Although each case study focuses on at least one policy "event", the nature and form of that event vary. All, however, include some form of, more or less, formal document.

(b) The authors' academic backgrounds and perspectives vary. Some have social science training others are educationists; some have extensive policy experience, others are more academic; and, of course, their relationships to the politics of their respective educational systems vary.

(c) Coverage of implementation varies. Most of the case studies deal with the longer-term process of policy *formation*, which includes the *formulation* (i.e., articulation and drafting) of a policy document. The focus on policy *formation* means that feedback from implementation into the on-going articulation of policy becomes part of the overall process.

Each case study is anchored to an policy *formulation* "event" (generally, a policy paper or declaration, with the exception of Mozambique). In the policy formation process, documents are formulated and become a matter of record and reference. Such documents—be they laws, government statements, declarations, Commission reports, or White Papers—serve a function: they focus attention and become a touchstone against which implementors can be held accountable. In varying forms, this occurs in both open, industrial democracies—where appointed implementors are accountable to elected officials[12]—and in more closed and/or less developed countries—where national education systems are dependent on, and accountable to, external financing for their development and, even, survival.

Characterizing the cases: a descriptive overview

The table in **Annex 1** provides an overview of the case studies by country and "topic". The "topics", which are the major conceptual themes that emerge from the case studies, include both descriptive and more analytical categories. Identification of these categories is derived from both the scholarly literature on policy formation and from the case studies themselves. What follows is a synopsis of the country case studies that follow in the subsequent chapters.

BENIN

In 1990 Benin was the first of the new wave of African democracies, emerging from seventeen years of a "militaro-marxist" regime that brought on its own demise through financial insolvency. The regime became progressively incapable of paying civil service salaries and student scholarships. For a combination of reasons, the *école nouvelle* that was decreed in 1975 did not succeed in its objectives of adapting schooling to socio-economic realities of the country.[13] One of the first demands made of the new democratic regime was to hold a broad forum on education (the *Etats Généraux de l'Education*) which advocated priority for quality education in order to reconstruct the country's intellectual elites. Beyond the *Etats Généraux*, however, education remained the business of the Ministry of Education (MoE): the elected legislature paid little attention to the sector, the press and other media devoted only periodic attention, and local communities did not become particularly activist.

Shortly before the birth of the new regime, an extensive policy analysis project was started by UNESCO with UNDP support that produced an integrated set of studies designed to provide the knowledge base required for sustainable policies. These studies were begun before the end of the old regime and with no more justification than that something would have to be done and, therefore, extensive policy analysis would be useful. Their practical impact was unpredictable: (i) the studies were used by those attending the *Etats Généraux de l'Education* andprovided factual reference points to passionate debates often dominated by interest-group politics; (ii) they provided input into the production of an official policy statement; (iii) they were used as justification by one funding agency for a major financial involvement in the education sector (that funding agency's initial motivation being to support democracy, without prior commitment to any particular sector); and (iv) they became a common and unavoidable point of reference to all concerned with the sector. However, most of the information generated by these studies was not widely diffused beyond MoE down to the local levels of the education system. An important secondary outcome of this policy analysis project was its capacity building effect among staff of MoE and other ministries who worked on the studies along with international experts. Many of these staff have subsequently been promoted to higher level positions in their ministries.

A number of the suggested reforms are currently being implemented with financing from one agency, in particular. One intended consequence of the policy analysis project was to promote donor coordination. Since MoE never took the lead in this area, funding agencies largely pursued their own inclinations. Nonetheless, by their existence and comprehensiveness, the policy studies did have a coordinating effect.

The major message that emerges from the Benin case study is that a strong body of sector studies, in which nationals from the Ministry played a major role, can have a number of positive consequences, many of which can not be foreseen when the work was initially planned and undertaken.

GHANA

In 1983, the populist military regime that took power in 1981, veered away from its policies of self-reliance and undertook extensive adjustment programs with support from the IMF and the World Bank. Due to a combination of underfinancing, a teacher exodus, lack of statistics, and declines in enrollment, the education system was pronounced "clinically dead" in the mid 1980s. In 1987 a wide-ranging education reform was promulgated. Initial reform actions concerned the post-primary level as per proposals formulated in 1974 and piloted on a very limited scale in the late 1970s. However, given the felt need for immediate action, the reform proposals of the mid-1980s were announced abruptly, and developed in the absence of policy analysis by a very limited number of people.[14]

The reforms were very well financed by several international agencies and implemented in a climate of institutional instability within the sector. Results have been disappointing, with all indicators suggesting that little learning is happening in the schools, even after seven years of reform implementation. Enrollments increased, but barely enough to keep up with population growth, and retention rates declined. More positively, the institutional base for planning and policy formation based on good statistical information was created.

The major message that emerges from this study is that, although strong, authoritarianleadership can be quite effective in getting a reform off the ground, it is not sufficient to make it work and provide tangible results. Lack of a solid knowledge base, no consultation during the preparatory period, an authoritarian approach to reform implementation, and failure to improve learning outcomes all resulted in a thorough reevaluation of the reform six years after its inception. This evaluation provided the basis of a new cycle of policy reforms.

GUINEA

In a context of adjustment financed by several funding agencies (French, USAID, IMF, World Bank, and others), a policy declaration was approved in 1989 that provided the basis for a multi-agency financed education sector adjustment program. The document was designed as a guidepost for future directions: it is precise about sector objectives and priorities, but silent on how they will be attained. This was done in order to allow adaptation to a variety of situations, recognizing (i) the advantages of a succinct and readable policy document, (ii) the need to allow maximum flexibility for future implementors who will be working under unpredictable conditions. National and expatriate experts played a major role, as did frank and open discussions between government, the funding agencies and teacher unions over a sustained period. Although at times quite argumentative, these discussions played a constructive role.

Implementation was characterized by (i) a large degree of participation within MoE that was organized around several working groups, (ii) structured donor coordination under the auspices of MoE, (iii) stability of the MoE team of higher-level staff implicated in the policy formulation phase, and (iv) strong and highly effective leadership from the Minister who remained in office for about seven years (until 1996) that covered the formulation of the policy statement and its implementation. Staff stability has contributed to the professionalization of MoE teams and, therefore, the quality of implementation. Actual results went beyond the targets set in the policy document.

The major messages from this case study are the importance of: (i) strong, collegial and continuous leadership; (ii) a policy document that allows for flexibility and is not overly detailed; (iii) the continuity and stability of a team that is involved in both the policy formulation and implementation phases; and (iv) ministerial leadership in the process of donor coordination. All of these factors contributed to the successful implementation of Guinea's educational adjustment program.

MAURITIUS

The Master Plan (MP) was elaborated 7-8 years after the minister had (upon taking office in 1983) decided not to apply agreed adjustment measures to the education sector. Mauritius is a very small country, a democracy, and at the time of the MP, its economy was strong and growing. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education was characterized by a high degree of stability (the same minister was in office from 1983 to 1995) under strong leadership.

The need for the MP came from a diagnosis of the education system's shortcomings, perhaps foremost of which was that the economic and social changes of the 1980s were not accompanied by corresponding changes in the education system. In the late 1980s, the future of the Mauritian economy was seen to depend on skill-intensive activities and a well-educated labor force. Also, the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, plus a meeting of funding agencies on human resource development, provided impetus for developing the MP. Although work on the Plan was initiated locally, international funding agencies played an important role. Most notably, they provided technical expertise and perspectives that were lacking in-country. In some areas, national counterparts were not available, so some of this expertise was not sustained locally.

Consultation was extensive during the preparatory phases of the MP and the continual search for consensus (a basic cultural value in Mauritius) often took precedence over pedagogic and social considerations. This is related to the fact that the Plan took more than twice as much time to prepare as was originally assumed. A coordinator was appointed in order to orchestrate both the consultative and technical aspects of MP preparation. Although advisor to the minister since 1983 and well integrated into the ministry, the coordinator was not from within the MoE career stream. He was an economist who, previously, had worked in the Ministry of Finance.

This case study also demonstrates the beneficial effects of donor coordination in a context where the country takes charge. In this case, a detailed Master Plan was the necessary condition for "taking charge", as it became an unavoidable reference point for all concerned. Strong ministerial leadership and a consensus were major aspects of this process.

MOZAMBIQUE

This case is different than the others in that it traces the post-independence history of education policies to the present time when all agree that new beginnings are needed. In sharp contrast with the other countries discussed here, post-independence Mozambique opted for an education system that was not based on that of its former colonial master. However, it is presently agreed that that system is not adequate for current needs. The time is ripe, therefore, for formulation of a new education policy.

Several factors play important roles in the policy making process. For one, the poor state of Mozambique's infrastructure (roads and telecommunications) inhibits effective consultations. Another factor is the predominant role of donors in the financing of the State. The agenda for sector studies appears to be largely set by the funding agencies. However, Government is beginning to provide more input into this process and, recently, has taken the lead in donor coordination.

UGANDA

When the new regime took power in 1986 after a long guerrilla war the country was in a state of economic collapse, political turmoil and social decline. As a result, a new philosophy of fundamental change through participatory democracy, liberalization, modernization, unity and accelerated development was introduced. However, policies of self-reliance gave way to externally financed adjustment programs in 1988. In the education sector there was a long tradition—dating back to 1928—of review commissions at regular ten-year intervals. The process of policy formation went through two phases: an Education Policy Review Commission (1987-89) and a White Paper (WP) Committee which undertook the work of policy formation in 1989.

A prominent aspect of the Ugandan case is the search for ever-increasing legitimacy for education policies through deeper consultation and participation which are important values of Government's ideology. The work of both the Commission and the WP Committee was characterized by public consultations. The former held public meetings and solicited a total of 496 memoranda and resource papers and was, by far, the widest consultation on education ever in Uganda. However, the consultations concentrated on urban elites and key community stakeholders were not consulted. Because of this, the Commission was seen by many as being part of the old system. Although its report made important recommendations for change, in many cases teachers, lower officials and others who participated in the process did so under the culture of fear of the dominant bureaucrats, politicians and the economic elite. The WP process aimed at correcting this situation. Under strong and active ministerial leadership with the active support of the President himself, a bottom-up, consensus building process was undertaken, along with analysis of the Commission's report and public responses to it.

Funding agencies had their own agendas which did not fit well with the slower WP process of policy formation. This was facilitated by the absence of a government master plan. It was in this context that funding agencies produced studies and projects outside of the WP framework. This was somewhat justified by the inertia of government bureaucrats and the weaknesses of government's internal operations.

LESSONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES: ANALYSIS AND EXPERIENCE[15]

Drawing from the case studies, as well as from participant contributions at the Tours Biennial Meeting, this section concentrates on the major lessons that emerge and that may have broad applicability. Each sub-heading is in the form of a question, immediately followed by the major points that emerge from the subsequent paragraphs.

The context: what conditions trigger an education policy review?

- ➤ Crisis and/or change motivated by political and economic factors often precipitate policy reviews.
- ➤ Education reforms can reinforce the legitimacy of new governments.
- ➤ The political and institutional contexts are crucial factors.

For many countries the first key issue is simple: "When should a national process of education policy review be initiated and how does one get started?" The first step in the process involves assessing the context. The case studies point to the fact that national reviews of education are often triggered by some combination of crisis and/or change motivated by political and economic factors:

- after a new, often revolutionary and/or newly democratic, government has come to power—as in Benin, Mali and Uganda;
- at the end of a period of conflict or war—as in Mozambique and Uganda;
- when public dissatisfaction with the condition of education reaches a level where it can no longer be ignored—as in Benin, Ghana and Guinea;
- when macroeconomic adjustment, often linked with reliance on external development financing, obliges government to reorient its financing and budgetary strategies and practices—as in Benin, Mauritius, Ghana and Guinea.

Other factors can also motivate the decision for a policy review. In Mauritius, the decision was motivated by the growing awareness that the current educational system was not able to produce the kinds of graduates needed by the crucial export economy of the island. In rare cases, like Botswana, the policy process has been institutionalized in a manner which promotes systematic consultation on policy issues at all levels of society.

Governments have different motivations for undertaking a national review of education policy. For many governments, education is a critical institution for socialization into values and beliefs. Also, successful delivery of educational services is central to a regime's legitimacy and, therefore its capacity for effective governance. If, for example, access is limited, dropout rates high and educational quality poor, people will be dissatisfied with the government. New governments need to establish credibility that they can function effectively—and education provides one of the most visible ways of demonstrating their competence.

These days, there is the tendency to summarize the political context by the level of democratization. Although somewhat reductionist, this can be a useful approach, especially since the making and implementation of education policy does involve a broad spectrum of the population. With the exception of Mauritius—whose entire post-colonial history is characterized by fully democratic government—all the countries studied here have undergone varying degrees of transition towards more democratic and open forms of government and political expression, as well as economic liberalism. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Benin and Ghana case studies find that educational activism (a broad-based forum in Benin shortly after the advent of the democratic regime; a wide-ranging reform in Ghana, shortly after abandoning self-reliance for IMF-led adjustment) served the Governments' legitimation needs. Actually, this is an old story in the annals of educational reform.[16] Actual reform in Benin since its forum has been relatively minor, whereas the structure of Ghana's education system has been largely overhauled. As for results in terms of learning, however, the jury is still out on the Ghanian case.

The context in terms of predispositions to open to public dialogue on education varies. Some of the variables which may indicate receptivity to dialogue in a country would include:

- the degree of decentralization of decision-making and control over resources;
- the extent to which political leaders are accountable; the existence of accountability mechanisms, elections or other checks such as a parliamentary question process;
- the existence of a free press and non-government radio in the country;
- the ideology of the ruling party—is it explicit about encouraging participation ingovernance?
- the presence of a country-wide participatory structure—is it within a political party or across parties?
- a history of public dialogue about the education policy process—are there accepted procedures which are familiar because of their past use?
- government receptivity to input from civil society, and openness of public officials to other perspectives; and
- the existence of capable non-governmental agencies with a history of undertaking policy analysis and publicizing their findings.

Whatever the current degree of receptivity to dialogue, the policy making process will have to take place within that context. However, strong leadership in education can result in innovations which have no historical precedents in that context. Several of the Francophone cases describe fairly radical changes as the result of new governments.

An excellent example of the education policy challenge facing a new government was presented at the Tours Conference by Professor Bengu, the Minister of Education of South Africa. He stressed two major political imperatives for the process of policy making in education: the need (i) to ensure consensus around national education policy, and (ii) to locate the resulting policies within the framework set out by the interim constitution. The central position of the education struggle in the years before the end of apartheid led to a need for demonstrable signs of progress in education soon after the new government took power. For them, timing and opportunity were two vital factors in initiating policy development, particularly as they faced the challenge of balancing tensions between preservation of minority privileges and transformation of the system to meet the needs of the majority.

Countries in severe economic difficulty will likely be under strong pressure from the funding agencies to undertake structural reforms, including a rationalization and strengthening of basic social services like education. As the case studies make clear, funding agencies have often played a significant role in initiating or supporting policy formulation. Funding agencies have supported data collection for policy analysis, helped organize meetings where policy alternatives are discussed, and provided both local and international technical assistance for various steps in the policy cycle. Not infrequently funding agencies have made the existence of a coherent policy framework a pre-condition for further investment in the education sector, thereby exerting pressure on governments to undertake a full review of education policy.

A counter-example of this is Mauritius, which was in the middle of its adjustment phase, with requirements for reduced spending in education, when the then newly appointed Minister of Education disassociated his ministry from the adjustment measures. His reasons were as political as they were educational. Subsequent events suggest that his refusal to apply adjustment measures to the education system harmed neither the education system nor the macroeconomic climate. To the contrary, it could be argued that by maintaining the reliability of the education system and its capacity to deliver uninterrupted services to the population—instead of focusing on the elimination of inefficiencies with potentially disruptive consequences—the Mauritian policy contributed to the enabling environment that preceded that country's strong economicgrowth.[17]

Discussions on several panels at Tours stressed the "normality" of unstable conditions in Africa. Many presenters felt that policy making nearly always took place in a context of uncertainty, tension, and sometimes overt conflict. Minister Chombo of Zimbabwe felt that there seemed to be one crisis after another: "There has never been a stable situation when we could sit down, assess how well we were doing and reflect on how we should plan for the future. We also didn't have sufficient resources to be doing planning, implementation, and evaluation at the same time." Minister Nhavoto of Mozambique reminded listeners that his country had been in a state of guerilla war for almost thirty years with a resulting 93% illiteracy rate, and very few primary secondary schools able to function. Planning under these circumstances requires national mobilization to rebuild educational systems and begin the process of restoring the human infrastructure for development.

What structures or methods can be used for policy review?

- ➤ Expert and representative teams are often formed to establish a diagnosis and guide the process.
- ➤ Social, political and historical contexts are determinant: in general, commissions or national conferences are central.

When conditions are favorable for initiating a national review of education policy, what procedures have been used by African countries? The case studies show two clear patterns which, not surprisingly, grow out of the colonial heritage of the countries. In all cases, work has been initiated by teams composed of MoE staff and external (expatriate and/or national) experts. These teams are charged with establishing a diagnosis of the prevailing situation (including benchmarks) of carrying out a process of policy review and formulation. The process involves, in varying proportions: identifying issues in the education sector, assessing a variety of suggested solutions, and producing a coherent set of policy recommendations which, after review by the government, can become the basis of reform and development for the nation's educational system. The characteristics of the process are very much conditioned by the national context and the historical precedents for policy making.

In the Anglophone cases—Botswana, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, and Mauritius as well—the process is quite explicit and is based on an historical pattern which goes back well before independence. Periodically, government appoints a National Education Policy Review Commission which is a temporary, independent group charged by government with the task of looking at education, soliciting inputs from a range of people interested in the sector, and formulating a coherent set of policy recommendations. The Commission is typically chaired by a distinguished national educator and includes representatives of all the major stakeholders ineducation in the country. Many commissions have working groups for specific sub-sectors like primary education or teacher training, each of which draws professionals from the appropriate ministries and from society. The final commission report is presented to government and often made available to the general public as well. Government then responds with a White Paper indicating which recommendations it is accepting in part or in whole. The process is well understood in these countries and it is regarded as a legitimate method—inherited from Britain—for the government and civil society to work together in drafting education policy.

Not surprisingly, given the differences in colonial heritage, the Francophone cases—Benin, Guinea, Mali, Senegal—reflect a rather different approach to policy formulation. In these countries, the emphasis is on consulting national and international experts. The consultation of civil society takes place through a formally convened national debate on education policy matters. The cases reflect a varied pattern of irregularly convened Etats Généraux, or National Seminars on Education, often preceded by preparatory activities. These are large national meetings, often comprised of several hundred people who get together for two or three days or more (ten days in Benin) to debate issues in education. There may or may not be any formal document or pronouncement resulting from such gatherings. The outcomes are viewed by government as advisory and there is usually no formal response on the part of the government. The Ministry of Education chooses what to do with the information and advice it has received during the meetings. Occasionally, the gathering is a way to inform participants and to mobilize support for a policy which the government is on the point of implementing. Teachers and their unions tend to be over-represented in comparison to parents and employers. The process tends to become more politicized than in the Anglophone countries.

Both of these patterns offer models which, with suitable adaptation to local circumstances, may be helpful to other countries with similar historical contexts. Different approaches are found in Mauritius and Mozambique which reflect their own cultural, political and historical contexts. Mauritius exemplifies a country with a diverse cultural composition which has evolved a politics of consensus in the context of relatively high economic development. Mozambique reflects a country emerging from decades of civil war that is resource poor and lacks a tradition of participation by civil society in education policy formation. In all cases, the importance of the historically generated patterns of consultation and expectations of the role of government cannot be over-emphasized; they set the context within which any policy process must operate.

What knowledge base is needed?

- ➤ Baseline, monitoring and evaluation information are essential.
- ➤ In general, production of information is a good investment; its utility goes far beyond the context of immediate problem-solving.
- ➤ The usefulness of the information is closely linked to how well it is known and understood by all concerned.

By and large, the knowledge base can take two different forms:

(a) Baseline information (data) that is a starting point for the work of policy makers. Collection of this information is often called policy or sector analysis. Collection of such information can involve the Ministry of Finance and can, if needed, be conducted outside of the Ministry of Education.

(b) Continually collected information designed to assess the progress of policy implementation. This is generally known as monitoring and evaluation and is useful in order to ensure that organizations such as Ministries of Education behave as "learning institutions", in a position to learn from on-going and recent experience.

All of the case studies refer to a knowledge base of the first type, where the information was produced for the specific purposes of the policy formation process.

Four case studies illustrate different approaches to the relationships between policy formation and the knowledge base:

(a) In Benin, a thorough sector analysis was carried out under the direction of working committees with external support from UNDP and UNESCO. Large amounts of information and analytical knowledge were produced, some of which had little immediate impact on policy in a context of weak leadership from the minister and uneven funding agency implication.

(b) In Ghana funding agencies were heavily implicated in support of a reform that was authoritarianly decreed with little analytical support. Information concerning very poor learning results became available well into implementation that caused a reassessment of the approaches taken.

(c) In Mauritius there was a combination of locally produced policy analysis on pedagogical issues that was useful and work produced by foreign experts that was not fully integrated into the policy formation processes for lack of national capacities of appropriation (lack of counterparts).

(d) In Uganda a series of 16 pre-investment studies, mostly carried out by two-person teams of a national specialist and an international consultant, were commissioned on topics suchas: teacher supply and demand, science and technical education, textbooks and instructional materials, the financing of primary education, and an enrollment projection model. During the same period the planning unit undertook a national school census using a revised and expanded instrument.

In Benin, the knowledge base was constituted before government and funding agencies had specified their needs. The pertinence of the information became clear only when the government entered into the initial phases of the policy formation process with the *Etats Généraux*. This is consistent with the point of view that policy makers are often unable to predict future information needs.[18] Indeed, this view of the usefulness of policy analysis to policy formation suggests that the library (where information is stocked and used on demand, at the appropriate times) is the appropriate analogy, rather than the problem solving metaphor which is more commonly employed. The problem solving perspective imposes a narrow definition for the utility of information to policy analysis. At issue, rather, is informed interpretation, grounded in a mass of readily available information (such as could be found in a library).

If papers were written only when it was clear that they would be used for problem solving, then the information would not be available for use by the time the policy makers wanted it.... The uncertainty and unpredictability of the context make it nearly impossible for the production of information to conform to the expectations promoted by the problem solving perspective.[19]

None of the cases presents a model for the development of a knowledge base designed to serve policy formation, assuming such a model exists, and no consistent pattern can be found in the studies. Two very different cases are, nonetheless, illustrative:

(a) In Benin, the studies and information collection were designed and undertaken before any need for them became apparent and before educational reform became part of the national agenda. Although perhaps not used to the fullest of their potential, the studies proved useful for a subsequent consultative forum and policy statement, as well as for attracting a major funding agency to the education sector. Furthermore, in an absence of organized coordination between funding agencies, these studies had a "coordinating effect" in that they became an unavoidable point of reference for all—national and foreign—working in the education sector.

(b) In Ghana, extensive reform was undertaken in the absence of policy analysis and related studies. About 7-8 years later their need became painfully evident. It is impossible to estimate the "cost" of having proceeded with the reform in the absence of a detailed knowledge base. However, the need for clear baseline data, monitoring information, as well as more analytical studies became clear in 1991-93 when student testing showed that little-to-no learning was taking place in the schools despite massive investments.

In the countries studied, the knowledge base constituted a combination of statistics and some studies, generally including one on the costs and financing of education. In none of these cases, however, did the knowledge base appear to be a determining factor. At best, it appears to have been a necessary, but not sufficient, input into the policy making process. One is tempted to conclude, therefore, that: (i) the costs of a lack of information can be high; (ii) the costs of producing, even over-producing, information may turn out to be an excellent investment; and (iii) production of information is a necessary, but far from sufficient, input into the policy formation processes.

The usefulness of the knowledge base is also related to its assimilation, appropriation and dissemination. In this respect, it has a capacity building function. Benin and Mauritius are illustrative. In Benin, the policy analysis studies were conducted by expatriate experts working closely with nationals. Their participation in the studies had a learning-by-doing effect which was subsequently recognized in the form of promotions to key technical positions within MoE and other ministries (Finance and Planning). In Mauritius, on the other hand, national counterparts were not in a position to assimilate the technical work of foreign experts which, therefore, never became appropriated and part and parcel of a continuous process of policy formation.

How is a coherent and sustainable policy framework assembled?

- ➤ Priorities need to be established and choices made between policy options.
- ➤ One should distinguish between treating the symptoms and tackling the root causes of persistent issues.

Once issues have been identified, the analysis shifts to understanding the causes and looking for ways to address the issues. Many problems in education are symptoms produced by complex combinations of factors, and cannot be fixed with simple, single-factor solutions. For instance, the all too common problems of dropouts and repeaters are often cited as policy targets, with little thought about how to change classroom activities and the behavior of the pupils. Extensive research in many settings has demonstrated that dropouts, particularly of girls, are caused by multiple non-school factors—family economics, perceptions of the utility of schooling, cultural gender norms—most of which are not readily influenced by government policy or action. The problem of repeaters is often addressed by administrative fiat—rules prohibiting repetition or limiting the number of times a pupil can repeat. This approach ignores the real causes of the problem, which may be poor teaching, low nutrition, lack of textbooks, or even the inadequacy of the teachers' assessment skills. So, the task of seeking possible solutions to problems requires access to existing research on a regional and international level, as well as research and knowledge rooted in local cultural and historical conditions.

Another example is would be the reality test of financial feasibility and sustainability. Although securing adequate resources for the education sector was an issue in all the cases studied, the nature of the problem could vary radically. In Benin, on the one hand, the educationsector historically garnered over 30% of the government budget with decreasingly satisfactory results. Here the policy options focused on improving the efficient use of available resources. In Guinea, on the other hand, the education sector was clearly underfinanced and policy aimed at increasing resources. In both cases, however, analytical tools (financial simulation models) were used to develop policy options and assess the long-term financial impact of proposed educational measures such as teacher recruitment and other personnel policies and qualitative inputs designed to reduce repetition and drop-out rates.

Policy formation ultimately requires making choices between policy options. Selecting an option for a specific problem relies on the evaluation of the pros and cons of the options. Two sets of criteria come into play: (i) technical judgements based on available information, research knowledge, educational practice, and an assessment of financial capability; and (ii) judgements based on an understanding of the local context—political, economic, cultural and social. Once a series of choices has been made, there still remains the difficult task of assembling the choices into a coherent and feasible overall framework of policies.

In those settings where an education commission is appointed, the commission produces a detailed report summarizing its overall policy structure. However, most commission reports have serious shortcomings when viewed as coherent policy statements. Because the process is widely consultative and the combined membership of the commission and its working groups can be quite large, the report usually reflects a series of compromises when choices have to be made. The result is commonly a long list of policy objectives—often more than 200, sometimes referred to as a "wish list." The document accurately reflects the desired goals a nation has for its educational system and is valuable for that reason. Therefore, a subsequent process is needed to make hard choices to set priorities for implementation in the light of resource constraints. A first step in that direction comes in the form of a White Paper which sets forth the government's position on the recommendations of the commission. Even the White Paper usually deals primarily with the general acceptability of the policies, not specifically with their economic or administrative feasibility.

In settings where national seminars are used for policy discussion, a different means is used to produce an overall policy framework for the country. National meetings and preparatory committees produce the components for an overall policy, but the task remains with the government to produce a written statement. In some cases there may be no complete statement, but rather a series of decrees and actions implementing parts of the recommended policies. In the case of Senegal, after the Etats Généraux of 1981 a National Commission was appointed to translate the resolutions produced into implementable educational policies and practices. Yet, their final report was submitted to the president of Republic three years later. Guinea provides an interesting example which illustrates the linkage between the amount of support which generated for policies and the level of specificity which is appropriate. This is described in **Box 3**.

Box 3: Building Support for Policies

The example of Guinea's *Programme d'ajustement de secteur de l'éducation* (PASE) is especially interesting as it followed neither Commission/White Paper approach nor that of *Etats Généraux*. Instead, through a series of internal workshops, the education ministry—working with other key ministers—undertook a problem identification and diagnostic exercise. External funding agencies assisted the diagnostic and analytic work by staffing and participating in the on-the-job training of sector staff through these workshops, which led to a shared consensus on the main problems and their respective priorities.

The Ministry of Education then formed a small internal commission to prepare a sector policy declaration that laid out in clear terms the government's goals and priorities. It was deliberately kept short and focussed and did not spell out in detail all the specific operational objectives or strategies (in contrast with Mauritius, where wide consultation in the design phase led to very detailed "Master Plan"). The sector declaration was submitted to the Council of Ministers for official government approval, which was both rapid and unanimous. Thus, the Ministry of Education had—with its own staff—prepared a broad, but short, policy declaration which was endorsed by government, and supported by its own staff and that of the central ministries.

At this point, the real work in building support for the policies of the PASE began. Implementation of the policy statement required a further stage in which broad goals were translated into a series of specific action plans and prepared by the regional and national authorities responsible for their implementation. At this stage, the question was no longer "what should be done?" but rather "how should 'x' be done?". The whole sectoral ministry was mobilized and consultations inside the sector and throughout the country were widespread. Each year for the period 1990-1994, action plans were prepared by the education managers throughout the country. To ensure wide support and understanding of the PASE, the national workshops that prepared each annual action plan took place in a different location of the country. The minister and senior ministry staff undertook regular visits to the regions and wide use was made of the media (press and radio). A special newsletter on the PASE and its progress was produced and widely circulated. The annual participative planning exercise laid out clear operational goals for each region, it identified bottlenecks and delays, and contributed to a real sense of purpose and national ownership in the program. The results of the PASE over the last five years speak for themselves, as the gross enrollment ratio rose from 28% in the late 1980s to 40% in 1993.

How much consultation and participation are necessary?

- ➤ Ownership or appropriation through consultation and participation are necessary conditions for successful policy implementation. How much, can only be decided locally.
- ➤ A wide spectrum of stakeholders should be part of the process.

To be effective, education policy formation must be seen as a social and political process as much as it is a task of technical analysis. Both are necessary, but the latter has tended to take priority, particularly with the funding agencies. After decades of reasoning that the "best"policies were those that made the most sense technically, the development community has come to realize the overarching importance of national/local appropriation for effective policy implementation.[20] Without data and technical analysis, policy will remain vague and will reflect the entrenched interests of the status quo. Without active social and political participation in the policy formation processes, the outcomes can be policies which are not implemented and, even, generate active public opposition.

The goal of the policy formation process is not simply the production of a policy document. The most important goal is to create a social learning process so that key participants in education, including parents and students, come to understand the nature of the problems faced, the resource constraints which exist, and the kinds of tradeoffs which will be needed to achieve the desired educational outcomes. This idea was reinforced at the conference by Mr. Ash Hartwell, USAID policy analyst, who suggested: "We are not building a road, we are raising a family, and that means that you had best consult everybody in the family, including the relatives. Policy isn't a solution to a problem but a continuous process of growth and nurturance." When carried out effectively such a process can produce general awareness of the problems, neutralize potential opposition, and mobilize support for the difficult policy choices which are inevitable in developing contexts. The importance of participation was also stressed by the keynote speaker at Tours, Mr. Timothy Thahane, former World Bank Secretary and Vice President and presently Deputy Governor of the South Africa Reserve Bank, who concluded his speech by noting that the processes of economic and political liberalization "...require broad-based participation and their sustainability depends on the internalization and institutionalization of that participation."

The six case studies all demonstrate—but in different fashions—the importance of strategies for appropriation through participation and consultation. The case studies show that participation and consultation are not the same. Consultation can often take the form of a campaign to explain policies made in an authoritarian manner. Participation, on the other hand, mobilizes those most directly concerned with the policies (teachers, educational administrators and parents).

What parts of government and society need to participate in the policy process? There are many stakeholders who are critical to successful education policy making (which includes implementation): officials in the education bureaucracy, both central and local; officials in other ministries, particularly finance and planning, civil service and often local government; legislators and representatives of groups from civil society such as religious bodies for schools, relevant unions and political organizations; and parents, employers and chambers of commerce. Which stakeholders are particularly important depends on the local context. Not all groups have to participate equally at all stages of the policy process. Some will be more important when identification of issues is being considered, others will be essential as technical solutions are discussed, and still others have the power to block implementation strategies unless they are consulted at that stage. The answer to the question of "who should participate?" depends on thestage of the policy process, the nature of the specific policy being considered, and the local context.

The local context also influences the amount and kind of consultation that is appropriate. It can be useful to ask two key questions:

- What groups benefit from the current distribution of educational services in society? and,
- Who would lose and who would gain if specific policy changes were made?

Reflecting on these groups and their power to either support or hinder proposed changes will provide a good beginning in thinking about who should participate in the process of diagnosis, analysis, and formulation of policies for education. What organizations, religious groups, ethnic associations, or regional groups exist which have a strong interest in education? How are teachers organized? What means do parents and students have of expressing their concerns about education as it is now, or changes which are being proposed? What do employers want from the education system? Finally, it is always essential to ask what groups have the power to block implementation of particular policies, and how such groups can be transformed into supporters of new policies.

One short-term "cost" of high levels of participation is the time it takes to complete the process. This is demonstrated in Uganda and Mauritius where extensive participation delayed the formulation of sector policies well beyond initial estimates. In Uganda and Mozambique this resulted in impatience by the external financing agencies whose timing was not compatible with that of those Governments. In Uganda, the agencies implemented their projects before the policy formulation process was officially completed. Ghana used an explanatory campaign to market policies that were formulated and initially implemented in a rather authoritarian manner. This was deemed necessary in order to take advantage of a "window of opportunity" that policy makers sensed would not last. However, improved learning results were not forthcoming—even five years after initial implementation—and a second policy phase took a more participatory tack. In Guinea, staff from the education ministry and other ministries participated along with union representatives. Parents, however, were largely absent from this process. The success of the Guinean reforms are partly a result of the nature of the consultations and the leadership qualities of the minister.[21]

How important are leadership, institutional stability and coordination?

- ➤ Strong and stable leadership along with institutional stability are crucial for successful and sustained policy formation and implementation.
- ➤ Effective donor coordination requires the active leadership of national authorities; funding agencies, themselves, are learning that this is necessary for the success of their programs and investments.

Strong leadership, institutional stability, and ministerial staff continuity are essential for initiating and sustaining a participatory process, as well as for enabling and empowering ministries to take the active and lead role in the coordination of funding agencies. Ministerial (i.e., political) stability and staff continuity in Guinea, Mauritius and Uganda were closely associated with those countries' ability to formulate their respective policy documents *and* develop their institutional capacities for implementation. Although very different in terms of their respective economic contexts, ministerial and staff stability were crucial factors in enabling Guinea and Mauritius to bring their policies to fruition and implementation. The policies undertaken by these two countries were, in many respects, the most ambitious and complex of the six case studies—ambitious in terms of the nature of the policies tackled as well as their abilities

Box 4: Using Forceful Leadership for Educational Innovation

In 1986 Ghana's military regime decided to undertake a significant reform of the educational system, which had deteriorated so badly that some educators had pronounced it "clinically dead." The government, in keeping with its military, revolutionary style, chose to implement the reform by directive, announcing both the content and timing of the reforms with little prior consultation. The leadership believed that achieving significant reform of education was essential to the social transformation of society and that the regime's political legitimacy depended on succeeding where preceding governments had failed. The content of the reforms were rooted in recommendations of a Commission report presented 13 years earlier.

A small cadre of professional educators who were firmly committed to the reforms was assembled in the Ministry of Education to carry out the implementation. The agency that had dealt with all personnel and professional matters in education in Ghana was abolished, thus removing the protective cover of education officials. Officials at all levels were expected to act as military officers, carrying out orders without discussion. Those who objected or raised concerns were disciplined—sometimes by dismissal, creating an atmosphere of resentment and fear in which problems were likely to go unreported. The government organized a national forum, convened a seminar with district representatives, and used the media for an information campaign about the rationale and structure of the reforms. There was little tolerance for dissenting views; the goal was rapid and effective implementation of the reform as announced.

This approach produced a fairly radical structural reform in a short time period, reducing the number of years in school and implementing a new curriculum. The first cohort from the new system graduated from secondary school at the end of 1993, but did very poorly on the examination. Reforms at the tertiary level were also implemented, some of which were very unpopular with the elites who benefitted from the existing system. On the positive side, the use of strong, centralized leadership pushed through a needed set of reforms despite the inevitable opposition of those who lost privileges. On the negative side, the reforms produced very low quality results in the first groups and created an atmosphere of tension and disillusionment among many of the educators who were needed to run the system.

In a currently more open political environment, Ghana is now re-examining the reforms, holding extensive consultations with a variety of stakeholders, and is embarking on a new cycle of policy formation in education.

to attract external financing. The nature of the leadership exercised by the ministers, combined with their relative stability and staff continuity played a significant role in the outcomes of those countries' policy efforts.

Implementation of policies requires strong leadership to provide an unwavering vision of the goal and reliable support as administrative units confront unanticipated problems and resistance from those who oppose aspects of the plan. Implementation of any significant reform in education, as reflected in a set of new policies, requires not just a single leader, but a group of leaders, preferably organized into some sort of management council or committee. Both Guinea and Ghana have instituted oversight committees to monitor progress in the reform. Institutionalizing such a committee, at least for the period of the reform process, helps to insulate the reform from changes in personnel or over-dependence on the personality and power of any single individual leader. Implementation may also mean reconciling unrealistic "political promises"made by political leaders with technical and resource constraints.

Continuity in leadership is one point often overlooked by African countries and funding agencies alike. One of the major constraints to effective management of education in sub-Saharan Africa is rapid rotation of the political leadership of the Ministry of Education. Indeed, one minister remarked that the post of education ministers has a lot in common with an electrical fuse: when the system gets too hot, the

fuse is replaced! The case for strong and stable leadership of a sector is clear. Education is a system that takes anywhere between six and sixteen years to produce its graduates; rapid change of the sector leadership can only handicap education development. This feeling was echoed by the comments of Christopher Shaw of DAE, who stressed that "Policy formulation requires strong leadership and continuity.... it is the one industry where we keep changing the managing director every one or two years. It's not surprising that the industry is not terribly efficient." Two of the case studies demonstrate that continuity through strong and stable leadership is an essential component for implementing the full set of education reforms throughout the system. It is no surprise that many of those countries that have successfully implemented far reaching reforms of their education systems (Mauritius and Guinea, to name but two) have benefitted from stable and strong sector leadership.

Related to the issue of leadership, is a ministry's ability and willingness to take the lead in the area of "donor" coordination. The question of "donor" coordination has been often raised but barely treated in a systematic manner.[22] One major conclusion can be drawn from the case studies: the only effective and sustainable approach to donor coordination is when it is done under the active stewardship of national authorities such as the minister of education. This was the case in Guinea and Mauritius, although in Guinea coordination became more difficult as the process went from policy formulation to implementation. In Benin, where funding agencies expressed real willingness to support that country's newly democratic political structures, there was little coordination for want of a strong and clear ministerial position on the matter.

What is the relationship between policy formation and capacity building?

- ➤ Effective appropriation or ownership can occur only if capacity building is an integral part of the policy formation processes.
- ➤ Partnerships can effectively promote capacity building.

"Capacity building" has become one of the major themes of the day, and for good reason. It has even become the rage in private industry where it is now recognized that the best firms—the most productive—are "learning organizations" in a mode of continual learning.[23] Clearly, this should also be the case for education ministries which have huge managerial and financial responsibilities that engage the future of a country and all its people. Severalapproaches to capacity building are illustrated in the case studies, including decentralization and the involvement of national experts in a host of policy analysis studies on a learning-by-doing basis. In Mauritius, where technical assistance was needed for work required for the Master Plan, there was little longer-term capacity building for lack of a clear strategy of implicating qualified nationals in the work of the expatriate experts. In this case, the ministry did not have the requisite technicians who could appropriate the work of the experts. Although the technical work (forecast modeling) was useful for the Master Plan, it was not internalized by the Mauritian ministry, for lack of experienced staff.

Benin is a special case here in that it was the site of a large, internationally financed policy analysis project that intensively involved numerous ministerial staff (including staff from planning and finance ministries) in diagnostic sector studies that gave way to investment-oriented action plans. Although the policy options proposed by the studies were only moderately followed by the ministry, which was characterized by rather ambiguous leadership, the results of the studies, as well as the know-how required to carry them out, became very much integrated into the culture of the education ministry. A

disproportionate number of the ministry staff who worked on those studies have been subsequently promoted to positions of responsibility—a fact that augers well for the longer-range capacity building effects of that experience.

Mr. Ingemar Gustafsson, Deputy Director at Swedish Sida and DAE Chairperson, addressed the question of the growing importance of partnerships for capacity building. This is exemplified by the dialogue between funding agencies and African governments that is facilitated by the DAE. Furthermore, the meaning of partnership has evolved with the recognition that donor coordination can only be effectively done by the country. Funding agencies now better understand that they must play a supporting role which assists African governments by promoting capacity building, which he sees as basically a "learning process and the use of knowledge." With this kind of partnership, the activities of the funding agencies should promote the national integrity of the policy formation process. Where necessary, they should adapt agency priorities and procedures to facilitate that process.

How does analysis pave the way for policy choices?

- ➤ Technically sound policy proposals need to be prioritized and confront the opinion of the relevant constituencies.
- ➤ Assessment of the financial feasibility of recommended policies is a must.

Even after a relatively coherent statement of policies has been produced in the form of a commission report or statements from a national seminar, most countries are a long way from a clear set of policy decisions which can be used by governments and funding agencies as a basis for making budgetary and investment decisions. Such reports reflect some winnowing of policy options, but they are valuable primarily because their recommendations are statements of collectively shared values and goals, such as: universal primary education by the year 2000, vocationalization of the curriculum, or substantially increased access to secondary education. Sometimes issues are deliberately left unclear, indicating that the process was unable to reconcile conflicts over key issues. A good example of the latter is often found in language policy, where recommendations are frequently vague or contain a variety of options left to political leaders to deal with.

In Anglophone countries, the next step is often a government White Paper, usually produced by a small committee of educational professionals from the Ministry of Education, in consultation, perhaps, with a few key stakeholders. Historically, most White Papers are short comments on the major recommendations of the commission, approving or rejecting some recommendations and amending others. The result is a somewhat refined list of goals, usually without a time line or any detailed attempt to test the economic feasibility of those recommendations that have been accepted. The White Paper is still essentially a political document, indicating the government's position on the issues. In countries which use other mechanisms, there may or may not be a public document stating the government's position other than what was produced by a national meeting (see **Box 5**).

Policy formation also requires assessment of the financial feasibility of recommended policies. Nearly all African countries face severe resource constraints which make many policy targets unreachable in the medium term—particularly goals like universal primary education or substantial increases in the salaries of teachers. Determining just how fast a policy goal can bereached is a challenging task, requiring fairly sophisticated data and modeling capacity to estimate the financial implications of various options.

Box 5: An Innovative White Paper Process

Uganda's most recent Education Commission engaged in extensive consultation during the process of reviewing national education policy. They held hearings in different parts of the country, received hundreds of written submissions on different policy issues, and traveled to neighboring countries to learn from their experience. Yet, some of the leaders of the national political party felt that the process had been limited to the same elite group which had been in control of the country since independence. They felt that a broader range of participation was essential to build a new Uganda.

They chose to use the White Paper process, normally a quick technical review, to reopen and widen the debate on education policy issues. In the end the process lasted almost three years as the White Paper went through three drafts before being debated in parliament. Several innovations were used. First, the White Paper was a complete re-write of the Commission's Report which meant that it was long, and that it stood on its own as a complete document. Second, the draft policies were discussed at length in many contexts. Early in the process a one month meeting of all senior officials in the Ministry of Education took place outside the capital city. Then, after copies of the draft had been submitted to the political councils at the district level, a national consultative conference for all district and national education officials was held. This was followed by a consultative conference with representatives of various women's organizations, and finally by an extended debate in parliament.

This unusual White Paper process also reflects the tensions between the established educational leadership (of what had been a good educational system in the 1960s) and the revolutionary political leadership of the new government. The membership of the original Commission was dominated by well-respected senior educators from before the revolution. The revolutionary government used the White Paper process to insure that its ideological goals were met and that the resulting document had the full support of its political organizations. A further consequence of the lengthy White Paper process was the preempting of the government process by funding agencies who went ahead with the implementation of selected reforms. The result was a *de facto* setting of priorities for certain educational activities by initiative of the funding agencies.

While progress has been made in this area, there are no sure answers. Both funding agencies and government need to recognize that reconciliation of policy goals and financial capability will be a process of successive approximation. Nevertheless, estimates should be made and incorporated into the dialogue.

How is a legal basis for implementing the policy created?

- ➤ Passing laws is likely to bring new stakeholders into a debate that may, thereby, become increasingly political.
- ➤ The greater the understanding and support for the policies generated during the formation process, the better the chances of success.
- ➤ Strong leadership is needed.

The procedures for converting policy statements into legally approved instruments are specific to each country. To move from policy proposals to implementation require one or more of the following: approval by cabinet, issuing government circulars, promulgation of presidential decrees, or passage of enabling legislation by parliament. At each step of the process, further dialogue and refinement will take place. Sometimes policies previously approved are rejected, or options which were rejected earlier in the process are revived, or controversial policies are sent back for more study. Depending on the context, these steps will bring other stakeholders into the debate, or provide new opportunities for both advocates

Box 6: Dealing with Controversial Issues—National Language Policy

Policy regarding the language of instruction in schools is a matter of some controversy in Mauritius, a small island state which has no indigenous group and is highly multi-ethnic—Indian, African, European and Chinese. Language policy was raised as an issue in the working group for the Master Plan, but it generated strong opposition from those who felt that the issue had been discussed at length for decades with no resolution, and that no resolution was likely in the education plan either. Current policy has most children studying three languages in school, none of them the Creole vernacular, with the consequence that a very large part of the primary curriculum is devoted to language learning. National culture in Mauritius values compromise and consensus. This took precedence over the technical and pedagogical aspects of the debate. The Master Plan, in the end, did not discuss language policy, but recommended a study on the teaching of languages in primary schools. Subsequently, a Parliamentary Select Committee proposed that performance in Asian languages on the primary school examination count toward the ranking of pupils used to determine entry into secondary education. This proposal produced strong reactions that broke along communal lines with opposition centered in the African and European communities. Failure of the Master Plan to address the issue was a conscious, pragmatic decision which recognized the potential harm that could result.

The Ugandan Education Commission of 1987 was charged with making a recommendation on language policy in the schools, but the commission felt the issue was highly political and should not have been in their terms of reference. Ultimately, they recommended that local languages and Swahili be taught in the schools as subjects, and referred the matter for further study. During the long period when the Commission report was being digested by government, a fierce debate took place outside of public view between those in the National Resistance Movement (NRM) who felt strongly about the use of Swahili as one component in the construction of a new Uganda, and professional educators concerned about the proficiency in English needed for the higher levels of education and other effects on learning. The White Paper, when it was finally issued, devoted a long section to the importance of Swahili as an essential component of NRM strategy to unify the country and promote development. Their revised recommendations went much further: Swahili and English were to be taught as compulsory subjects to all children throughout both the primary and the secondary cycle of education. In addition they recommended a series of promotional and developmental activities all aimed at hastening the day when Swahili would be both a national language and the medium of instruction. In the end, the White Paper passes the decision to the Constitutional Commission for final resolution, but makes very clear what outcome it supports. Ultimately the cabinet, recognizing that the language issue was politically volatile and potentially damaging, referred it to committee for further study.

and opponents of policies to use their power to obtain modifications favorable to them. If legislative action is needed, public debate may provide opportunities for new constituencies to make their inputs into the process. In each new venue, different criteria are used to judge the tradeoffs between costs and benefits of a policy, and may result in changes in the policy. Policies which were supported primarily on technical grounds will get evaluated on the basis of a social or political calculus. The issue of language policy provides a good example in many countries of the tradeoffs between the ideological goals of a national movement trying to create a new national consensus, and the political constraints imposed by the potential for instability inherent in such a volatile policy issue (see **Box 6**).

Moving the policy process forward through legal channels requires strong leadership within the government. The Minister of Education, or in some cases a strong, well-placed civil servant such as the Permanent Secretary or group of senior civil servants, needs to take the initiative by pushing the process along, getting the policy statement on the agenda and moving it toward formal approval. Delays in this process are often caused by conflict surrounding unresolved issues, or opposition to part of the policy by a key official who either was not consulted earlier, or who is representing a constituency with vested interests. Completing the policy approval process may require mobilization of outside support to put pressure on the government for action. The greater the understanding and support generated during the formation process, the better are the chances are of favorable action.

What are strategies for building a supportive climate for implementation?

- ➤ A social learning process is needed that builds understanding of the issues and support for policies; mass media can be useful for this.
- ➤ Stakeholder involvement and expression can have long-term benefits and improve the probability of successful policy implementation.
- ➤ It is best to plant the seeds of stakeholder involvement early in the policy formation process.

The case studies provide support for the idea that stakeholder expression—although it can sometimes be embarrassing for government—creates, in the longer-run, a climate in which better education policies can be formulated and implemented. As the Delors Commission Report puts it:

> The main parties contributing to the success of educational reforms are, first of all, the local community, including parents, school heads and teachers; secondly, the public authorities; and thirdly, the international community. Many past failures have been due to the insufficient involvement of one or more of these partners. Attempts to impose educational reforms from top down, or from outside, have obviously failed. The countries where the process has been relatively successful are those that obtained a determined commitment from local communities, parents and teachers, backed up by continuing dialogue and various forms of outside financial, technical or professional assistance. It is obvious that the local community plays a paramount role in any successful reform strategy.[24]

How much dialogue is possible and its content depends on the social and political context in which it is occurring. This points to a dual task throughout the policy formation process: (i) assessing and choosing from among policy options on a technical basis, and (ii) promoting a social learning process which builds understanding of the issues and support for solutions. Setting the stage for implementation of education policies is an unusual challenge because of the number and diversity of people who must agree and cooperate in order for implementation to be effective. The seeds of that collaboration are best planted early in the process, in many different constituencies, and nursed continually throughout the process. The many strategies discussed in the case studies form a repertoire of options from which each country can choose.

The methods used to build support for implementation will depend on what structures are available in a specific context. In a society with a revolutionary government which has built a network of local and regional structures, such as the National Resistance Councils in Uganda, the ten-house cell system in Tanzania, or the system of local councils in Botswana, policies can be disseminated and discussed at all levels and the results filtered back up to national level leaders. In countries which have developed a decentralized administrative structure for education, discussion can be organized using the education bureaucracy. Many countries use national meetings, convened around either general reviews of education policy, or around more specific issues such as the terms of teacher service or curriculum reform. When such consultation takes place early in the process, it provides an opportunity to listen to peoples' perceptions of the problems and to get their reactions to possible policy options. Later in the process, emphasis will shift toward building a consensus on the nature of problems and on the way in which specific policy options can contribute to their solution.

Education policy documents in many African countries are long, complex statements written in academic English or French. Their form and length make them expensive to reproduce and difficult to read—particularly in societies which traditionally communicate more in oral than in written form. Often they are beyond the comprehension of most citizens. As a result, these documents are available and used primarily by the most senior government officials, and byfunding agencies and their staffs. One country tried to promote dialogue around the issues by printing and distributing copies of the White Paper to the party structure in all districts of the country. But the document was nearly 300 pages long and written in academic English. In reality only a fraction of those who might have read it could understand it, and fewer still would actually take the time to do so. If real dialogue and understanding is desired, then a simplified and clear statement of the main policy recommendations, written in local languages when applicable, needs to be made available.

The public media—radio and newsprint particularly—are often under-utilized in the process of building understanding and support for changes in education policies. While education is a constant topic in the media in most countries—focussing on speeches of education officials, school strikes, or complaints about specific problems—rarely have governments consciously made use of the media to promote a dialogue around educational issues. The greater the number of people who need to cooperate for successful policy change, the greater is the need for extensive consultation, dissemination of information, and building of support. Sometimes governments are afraid to provide information to the public in fear of the possible response, but attempting to implement changes by fiat can produce even more disruptive reactions.

Box 7: Using Media for Policy Consultation

In the early 1980s Botswana embarked on an expansion of the basic education cycle to nine years by creating separate junior secondary schools. By 1988, significant opposition and widespread misunderstanding of the value of the system had arisen. In response to this public concern, the Ministry of Education initiated an innovative approach to policy dialogue called "consultative conferences." They decided to use video tape as a way to bring the voices of parents, pupils and communities to the national leaders, and to let the local people listen directly to discussions among the leadership. The purpose of the process was to develop a *common perspective* on the problem which the nation was facing.

Using four policy issues—the problem of school leavers, the curriculum, the role of the community, and the need for education changes—a short video tape was made about each issue. Interviews with key stakeholders like chiefs, teachers, members of the kgotla (a local council), pupils and parents were videotaped. A tightly edited ten-minute tape was produced containing representative sample opinions. Interviews in Setswana had English subtitles, and vice-versa. Each video introduced the issue with powerful visual images. The school leaver video used images of a long line of school leavers standing in front of the employment bureau in Gaborone as a backdrop for the opening titles. Then students in the line, officials, and community leaders were interviewed on how they felt.

The videos were used in a series of four consultative conferences. The first conference was for the national leadership and was opened by the Minister who reminded participants of Botswana's long-standing tradition of grassroots policy dialogue rooted in the traditional kgotla. The conference format consisted of small groups who watched a video, listened to a panel of respondents and then held open discussion. The videos provided a forceful grounding in reality, compelling the discussion to confront the local realities and limiting escape into general platitudes. The outcome of the conference was a fifth video tape of selected discussions and the responses of national leaders. The five tapes were then used in a similar manner in a series of three regional conferences in the country.

Where state-society relationships are open enough, a country will benefit by having a variety of non-governmental organizations which are capable of undertaking policy analysis and carrying on public discussion of issues. Promotion of public policy dialogue as part of the social learning process can be furthered through the activities of: research organizations loosely linked to the university; more narrowly based interest groups; or organizations of concerned citizens having multiple voices able to raise and debate issues along with the government. In Mozambique policy formation on higher education was initiated by a council of university officials who began meeting and drafted a proposal for consideration by government. In other countries there has been a growth of NGOs, some of which have the capacity to articulate problems of the less-fortunate and to raise educational issues in the media. In his keynote speech, Mr. Thahane highlighted the importance of building an environment that encourages the involvement of all parts of society in the support of basic education. He said, "The private sector should be encouraged to provide higher levels of education and training to complement the public sector. We must look at education as a national endeavor. The business community has a responsibility—all of us have a responsibility because of the external benefits that flow from and an education system and from an educated individual."

How and why implementation is an integral part of policy formation?

- ➤ Implementation is policy in practice.
- ➤ The only way to feed the lessons of implementation into the formation process is by rigorous assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

Perhaps the single most challenging step in the policy formation process is to take a list of policy priorities and convert them first into strategies and then into a detailed implementation (or action) plan. While implementation may not, at first glance, seem to be part of policy formation, in reality it may be the most critical part of the process—it determines the form policy takes in reality and how it is experienced in the schools. Some authors argue that implementation should be seen as a series of policy experiments; others would argue that it is part of a continuous, interactive process of policy refinement. Either way, implementation is policy in practice—and actions speak louder than words.

Issues in the implementation of education projects was the theme of the 1993 DAE task force meeting held in Angers, France, where it was pointed out that implementation consists of:

- Operationalization of policy into a detailed plan with a time line and resources;
- Assigning responsibility for implementation to specific people and units;
- Supervision, coordination, and support for the implementation units;
- Monitoring of implementation progress;
- Identification of problems and corrective measures as needed; and
- Periodic review of the adequacy of both policies and implementation.[25]

Leadership style, sensitivity to political realities, technical competencies, clear priorities, local capacity, and participation are all important for effective implementation.

Technical and administrative capacity to produce detailed, costed plans and schedules is crucial for effective implementation. Creating effective plans requires:

- Personnel with the experience and skills to convert prose statements into plans;
- Timely access to a national knowledge base which allows them to estimate the size of the task; and
- Cost data to create realistic budgets.

Monitoring progress of implementation—and, therefore, the effectiveness of policy— means defining useful performance and outcome indicators and finding cost-effective ways of collecting relevant information. Some of the needed information can come from the annual education statistics exercises. Other data may have to be specially collected, probably by using small samples of schools, to provide feedback on progress. The committee charged with overseeing the implementation can use the data to review both implementation strategies and the content of the policies themselves. Constant adjustment and refinement will be taking place during the implementation. Instituting some sort of formal evaluation periodically is also desirable—to the extent that implementation relies on external funding, the funding agency will probably require evaluations and will fund them.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on African experience, as reported in the case studies and by participants at the Tours conference, and on the social science literature on policy formation, this paper has set out a number of central issues. These issues reflect the challenges faced by all African countries as they address the need for a coherent set of national educational policies. The discussions at the Tours conference, using the case studies and the working paper as inputs, developed a more complete understanding of the challenges of educational policy formation. The results of the conference are summarized in two sets of messages which are presented below.

The case studies suggested that the policy formation process:

- Requires a good knowledge base;
- Depends on strong, stable leadership;
- Is most effective when it is consultative and participatory;
- Must include setting realistic priorities and forging compromises between competing goals;
- Requires effective funding and government-wide collaboration;
- Should generate a social learning process and marketing of the national education vision; and
- Is continuous and interactive—even at the stage of implementation.

Using the case studies *and* the experiences of participants at the Tours Biennial (as developed in small discussion groups), the following points/lessons emerge as the **defining issues** for effective policy formation. They are:

(a) The context for national policy reviews is:
  - often initiated by revolutions or major changes of government;
  - driven by internal conditions; and
  - driven by permanent policy review bodies in mature systems,

(b) Strong and consistent leadership is essential that:
- delegates authority and trusts subordinates;
- explains goals and reasons and uses public media;
- works openly with all through transparent processes; and
- promotes stability of technical staff to provide continuity.

(c) Political and technical rationales are present and that:
- political participation is first priority;
- technical work supports and informs political dialogue; and
- political will is essential to overcome resistance of vested interests.

(d) Broad participation of stakeholders is crucial, including:
- government, parliament, political parties;
- students, parents, teachers; and
- active organizations in civil society.

(e) Policy formation should be a social learning process implying that:
- consensus and widespread understanding are major goals;
- reasons for changes need to be clear to all;
- those sacrificing immediate benefits understand resulting societal benefits; and
- the Ministry of Education becomes a learning institution.

(f) Concerning the roles played by Government and funding agencies in policy formation:
- Government must be the leading player;
- Cohesive, prioritized, viable plans empower the government; and
- Funding agencies can learn to be supportive partners in the policy process.

These points reflected a general consensus of the Conference participants. The conference produced an enhanced awareness of the value of national educational policy and a realization that there is expertise and experience within Africa that could be drawn upon in the future. This yielded a shared understanding between funding agencies and governments of their respective roles in formulating educational policy. The feelings of the participants were summed up in the words of Mme, Diallo Aïcha Bah, former Minister of Education from Guinea and presently Director of Basic Education at UNESCO, who stated that "Tours will stay in our memories for a long time because it has marked an important evolution in the relationship between partners in education in Africa. Let us not forget that the concept underlying our Association for the Development of African Education is full of meaning, and that both sides must take on the consequences and obligations."

ENDNOTES

1. The original version of this paper, prepared by Evans and Shaw, was presented as background documentation to the Tours Biennial Meeting. This is an edited and extended version of the original paper. It incorporates the major points made by participants at the Tours meeting, a more extensive analytical overview of the processes of education policy formation and a relevant bibliography for those who wish to pursue the topic further. Earlier drafts have been reviewed by member organizations of the DAE, by the DAE Secretariat and other external reviewers. Karen Tietjen and Ash Hartwell of USAID have provided extensive and useful inputs to this version.

2. Evans, 1994.

3. Donors to African Education, 1994a.

4. Research from the late 1970s (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984) already showed that policy formulation and implementation are not distinct processes but, rather, compose a cycle that repeats itself throughout the life of a program.

5. Haddad, 1995. In particular, see pages 19-39.

6. Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; White, 1990; Porter & Hicks, 1994; Grindle & Thomas, 1991; Feldman , 1989; Haddad, 1994; Evans 1994.

7. Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993, p. 7.

8. Evans, 1994. p. 6.

9. Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993, pp. 11-12.

10. Porter & Hicks, *1994*, p. 22.

11. Simon, 1957, p. 198.

12. Or, to use the terminology of Lindblom & Woodhouse, bureaucrats and elected functionaries, respectively.

13. A number of countries promoted similar schemes. The viability of such approaches is discussed in Sack, 1994.

14. In the words of one interviewee cited in the Ghana paper (p. 19, para. 2.4.10): by "six dedicated very passionate people who believed they had something good to offer the country and they went all out to implement their vision."

15. In addition to the six case studies reported here, this section will also refer, at times, to case studies reported in Evans, 1994. See Box 1 for the ten countries studied.

16. See, for example, Weiler, 1983; Sack, 1981.

17. See J. Samoff & S. Sumra, "From Planning to Marketing: Making Education and Training Policy in Tanzania" in Samoff ,1974.

18. See Feldman, *1989.* In this book, as well as others cited here, the case is made that uncertainty and unpredictability are major characteristics of the policy making process.

19. Feldman, *1989*, pp. 93-95.

20. "Ownership" is the word-of-the-day to express this. The World Bank's "Wappenhans Report" on the quality of the Bank's portfolio brought this issue to the fore within that institution.

21. See Condé, 1995. Staff redeployment—a difficult and perilous issue at best—was one of the major aspects of the Guinean reform. The exercise was largely successful and led to increased enrollments with the same number of staff.

22. Sack, 1995.

23. See Senge, 1990.

24. Delors, et. al., 1996. p. 29.

25. Donors to African Education, 1994a.

Annex 1: Overview of Country Papers

TOPIC	BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Policy event/ instrument	- Etats Généraux de l'Education. -Policy Declaration	Full cycle of education reform, from conception implementation evaluation	• Policy declaration - Education sector Adjustment Program	Master Plan (MP) for Education	Development & redesign of post-independence education system & policies	• Commission: 1987-89 - White Paper (WP): 1989-94
Period covered	1989 - 1993	I 985 - present	1989 - 1993	1990-91	2 phases: 1975-87; 1987- present	1989 - present
Economic context	• State bankruptcy in 1989 • Two adjustment programs over this period	- Shift in policy from self-reliance to extensive cooperation with IMF & World Bank • Adjustment	Adjustment since 1984 with World Bank/IMF support	• Adjustment in early 1980s followed by strong growth in late 1980s leading to increased needs for education. • Education expenditures increased against pressures of international organizations	• Extremely difficult situation. - +/-70% of Government financing front donors. • **Poorest country** in Africa • IMF/World Bank adjustment programs	- Almost total economic collapse in 1986 - Shift in policy from self-reliance to cooperation with IMF & World Bank • Adjustment as of 1988
Socio-political context	New democratic context plus popular concern for education - government use of education fora for additional legitimation.	- Populist regime promoted education reforms as it undertook adjustment programs. - Government of action, not of consultation	Military regime until 1993	Democratic government since independence (1968) with free elections & constitutional guarantees.	Under same leadership, country recently became a multi-party democracy.	• Country recently emerged from long period of chaos & decline. - Vibrant media & new social organizations
Educational context	• *Ecole nouvelle* of marxist regime largely discredited - Enrollments down, costs high & quality low	- Education system "clinically dead"	• Very low enrollment rate. • Little investment. - High inequalities, • Very low primary pupil unit-cost.	- High enrollments • Literate population • Excessive drop-outs alter grade 6 - Inadequate science teaching •	Existing system perceived to be extremely unsatisfactory, rigid & poor quality	- Long-standing demands for reform. • Long tradition of education reviews & policy making at 10 car intervals.

TOPIC	BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Knowledge base	Numerous studies covering entire sector that, largely, Set scene and became unavoidable.	• Planning exercises (1987-91). • Assessment testing (1992-94). • No research.	• Studios undertaken between I 984-88 by World Bank/Unesco plus by nationals • 11 studies during period of policy preparation.	• Studies identifying factors leading to poor performance. • Poor & unsustained national utilization of studies produced by international experts.	• Funding agency driven • New Govt. taking initiative. • National ownership of some studies is disputed	• Study of other countries' systems. • A culture of thorough analysis (many commissions of inquiry) • Poor data • Pre-investment & sector studies. • Funding agencies preponderant
Leadership	• Minister aloof from technical matters. • Minister forms own party for 1995 legislative elections & solicits support from MoE staff.	• Highly authoritarian from above. • Political leadership highly committed.	• Minister demonstrated commitment by actively participating in most matters, went to the field, worked closely with people in various roles, solved problems, and had a thorough understanding of technical issues. • Stability of minister (since 6/89) and staff enhanced both's leadership capacities.	• Activist minister deeply involved in all aspects: masters the details; chairs weekly staff meetings; set clear objectives & stuck to them with persistence; consults extensively with all actors; has relaxed & open style. • Minister has excellent relations with Prime Minister.	• Current minister takes lead role; previous introduced fewer innovations • Current minister has deep knowledge of, & long experience in, education sector	• Strong, participatory leadership from President & all officials. • Dynamic & flexible minister. • Effective Government leadership is outgrowth of popularly supported guerrilla war followed by 9 years of stability.
Continuity **(ministerial & higher-level staff) & Stability**	• Three ministers since 1989. • Ministerial changes accompanied by extensive staff changes.	• 4 ministers & 6 directors-general over period • Numerous institutional changes & a fair degree of institutional instability	• Minister in office since 1989. • High degree of staff continuity.	• Minister in office from 1983-95. • Highly stable: MoE leadership and related para-statals in post for long periods	Three ministers since 1975	• Minister in office since 1989; stability since then, little before.

TOPIC	BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Capacity building	National experts involved in studies have been promoted to important positions in education and planning ministries, thereby also promoting continuity	• Planning, budgeting & monitoring unit established • Decentralization • Increased responsibilities for communities	• Stable teams that acquired professional competencies. • Experts worked with, and trained, MoI: professionals.	National counterparts to foreign technical assistance was unavailable in some areas. This led to inadequate use of technical expertise provided	• An on-going process Technical assistance required for knowledge transfer	• Planning & implementation units strengthened • Decentralization to Districts. • National experts involved in sector studies and policy processes. • Education managers trained
Compromises & priority setting	Political & educational consultations - compromises & consensus	• Little compromise in beginning. • Priority setting established from above. • Accommodation with critics at later stages.	• Studies & group discussions determined compromises & priorities	Process guided by culturally embedded need for consensus, which can take Precedence over pedagogic matters		• Patient negotiations with funding agencies. • Extended dialogue participation
Timing & lime-related factors	Time pressures not ail important issue.	Reforms promulgated rapidly to lake advantage of perceived "window of opportunity".		• MP took much longer that foreseen, but this was reasonable & preferable. • Funding agencies respected MP time constraints	Funding agency timing not compatible with that of Government.	• Funding agencies' Government's timing out of synch. • Funding agencies initiate projects before end of process.

TOPIC		BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Partici-pation, ***consul tation,*** ***coordi-nation,*** & ***marketing***	With in MOE	• Ministerial *cabinet* plays preponderant rote. • Initially, fairly intensive. • Diffusion outside of major centers difficult	• Little-to-no prior consultation. • Dissent not tolerated	• Participation & consen-within MoE during formulation phase. • Autonomous *Comité* de *pilotage for* implementation met 42 times over .3 years. • Ateliers de rentrée.	• Statement of objectiveswas work of very few people • Much of Plan drafted by local technicians • Seminars with teachers, managers, principals, students others. • National seminar held alter publication of first complete draft; attended by school of officials PTAs, unions, employers, NGOs, ++; led to revisions. • Council of Ministers was responsible for broad policy and decisions on major issues & was generally supportive of education development.	Initial post-independence system conceived by a group of professionals on the basis of a foreign model.	• High levels of participation by professionals. • Senior staff involved in consultative processes. • Continual guidance by MOE management & involvement in approval process
	Within Gov	• Relatively weak, given absence of functioning committees. • USAID adjustment financing only marginally improved MoE/Min Finance coordination.	Discussions within inner circle of military govern	- Several ministries participated. • *Comité* de, suivi met 14, times over 3 years.		• Several ministers participated • Council of Ministers, then Parliament, involved	• Cabinet initiated process & approved document • Officials tram other ministries participated. - Parliamentary debate on final document followed by legislation.
	With civil & **politi-*society***	- Relatively weak: education received some press attention and rather little attention from Parliament. • Education Law never passed	Explanatory campaign to market the reform followed major decisions.	• Unions closely associated with elaboration of policy document (which called for staff reduction). • Parents not consulted for lack of organized structure. • No broader consultations, but "open discussions". • Policy document widely disseminated.		• Some consultation in the cities, little in the rural areas • Poor infrastructure hinders communications outside capital.	• Emphasis on consensus at ail levels of politics. • First phase: widest consultation on education ever, but still limited to urban elite. • Second phase (WP): bottom-up, consensus building approach, led by President, • Broad consultation through national local leaders. • Problems in circulating reports.

TOPIC	BENIN	(:MANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	MANDA
Funding agencies: Coordination roles	• Little direct coordination: each agency's internal constraints take **precedence over** effective coordination. • Government refuses to take lead role. • Unesco/UNDP financing of policy studies have coordinating effect. • USAID put in place large project for basic education, based on policy studies. • **World Bank initiates** sector adjustment process, winds up financing investment project.	Generous financing for reform from several agencies (WB, USAID, ODA,).	• Agencies participated in all phases of policy document. • Weekly meetings at the initiative of MoE during implementation, monthly later. • Annual program review meetings. - Agency coordination was more difficult during implementation than during policy formulation. • MoE played lead role.	- Agencies played prominent role - Data identification & use was their major contribution,	• Agencies' orle is preponderant - Coordination is intensive and coordinated through formal mechanism	• Major policy segments developed outside of WP process, with funding agency influence dominant. - Agencies show little interest in govt. priorilies (UPE & vocational education). • Lack of MoE action made it necessary for funding agencies, to be guided by their own agendas. - Local & MoF officials unprepared to negotiate with funding agencies & coordinate their projects.
Policy outcomes	Policy statement adopted to satisfaction of some agencies and not others (who wanted more detail).	Policies adopted.	• The process led to tangible results that resulted in rapid development of the education system over a relatively short time. • Results in 199? exceeded 1989 objectives.	MP accepted by Government & agreed by agencies	Evaluation of initial post-independence system currently underway	- Consensus on contentious issues • Shift of emphasis from access to quality as result of agency influence. - Early signs of improved learners' performance & overall standards.
Implementation experience	- Experimental programs to promote girls' enrollments. - Ministry reorganization underway, although timidly.	• Initial critics within Ministrv were fired and later reintegrated. • Enrolment rates not keeping up with populafion growth. • No improvements in student learning.		• Machinery established for MP implementation • Action plans prepared & implementing agencies, identified	• Current situation is one of "policy ferment" • On the verge of new policy directions	- Partially driven by funding agencies' preferences, • Early implementation limited to policies supported by funding agencies

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THE CASE OF BENIN

by Djibril M. Debourou

EARLY REFORMS (1975–89)

Like other African countries, Benin participates in the community of nations, with all the consequences that flow from that status, including a rich exchange of technology casting Benin in the role of passive consumer. Competition among nations carries with it the need to train an ever more qualified labor force, and this has implications for its education system. Events in the life of the nation prompt the education system to address specific problems in response to development issues raised by the society at large.

By 1989, Benin had negotiated its Structural Adjustment Program with the Bretton Woods institutions. National economic conditions were disastrous, and social problems acute. 1990 saw a change both in the government and in the political system as the country moved from a 17-year-old militarist-Marxist regime to a multiparty democratic system. Establishing the rule of law created conditions ripe for change of all kinds. The weight of the past, the utter bankruptcy of the dictatorial regime, and Benin's grave economic difficulties made the social repercussions of the Structural Adjustment Program particularly significant. Protest movements became inevitable, forcing an inherently repressive government to begin contemplating a change in its basic philosophy.

This report discusses the events that have taken place to reform education in Benin, particularly those surrounding the time of its crisis in 1989.

The legacy of colonialism

Independence resulted from negotiations between the French and the nation's elite. This reinforced the mission and social role of an education system that had become profoundly influential. But academic institutions were soon revealed to be bastions of conservatism inherited from colonialism. The new regional leaders structured education along the lines of the French model, kept French as the only official language, adopted the French academic curricula, and established a social and educational context far removed from traditional Dahomean education. The choice of French indefinitely postponed efforts to reassert the value of the national languages—fundamental elements of culture disdainfully referred to as dialects.[1]

An elitist policy uses academic exams as its basis for selection. But professional life does not always mirror the conditions that determine success on an exam, so we should not be surprised if some professionals—or quite simply some graduates—were unable to apply the theoretical formulas taught in school to real-life situations.

All in all, the concept of post-colonial Dahomean education based on the French model was an alienating one. Its design was imposed from the outside, and its operation and objectives made a distressing spectacle. The system remained ineffectual because it reached only a small number of students. By 1975, the number of children in school was actually less than 60 percent.

A military coup in October 1972 ushered in a revolutionary regime, which commanded a radical change in the Beninese education system.[2] The regime established the New School, based on the theories of an elite that had never suffered imperialist exploitation.[3]

The New School

Objectives

The New School reform was organized around several guiding principles: to abandon elitist-influenced education; to establish equality of opportunity, to build an education system with ties to everyday life, to transform the schools into a driving force for economic and social development, and so on. The members of the National Commission on Education Reform gave the New School the task of promoting economic and social development. It would be built as a production unit and would pay for itself, with the support of students, parents, and local government.

Dahomean intellectuals expected the schools to form the intellect, to encourage personality development, to educate and to prepare the student for professional life. They also wanted the schools to impart a certain culture to students. But the population as a whole viewed the schools as the sole means of social advancement, a beacon that enjoys massive support among Dahomeans. Education was once their pride; they did brilliantly on tests and were famous for their performance in competitive examinations. It was difficult to adapt this image of the education system to meet the demands of revolutionary changes in the economy and society. That is why the new regime developed a campaign to strip academic degrees of their mystique and disparage degree holders.

Fierce competition, a corollary of elitism, operates on the basis of inequality. The reform's provisions were to eliminate regional disparities and strengthen rural areas that were poorly equipped with schools and instructional materials. This would offer justice to rural students who faced their counterparts in relatively well-supplied urban schools.

The social prejudices standing in the way of the emancipation of women and preventing girls from attending school would be smashed in order to establish equal opportunity for both sexes. Free and compulsory education would break the barriers between the children of wealthy parents and their counterparts from poor families and would allow for a maximum number of Beninese youth to attend school.

School counseling would make it possible for all children to learn a trade. Linking the school system to the environment would provide the tools to shape a generation of intellectuals quite different from their predecessors educated in the colonial schools.

The decision to bring national languages into the schools constituted a veritable revolution. This highly political gesture would prove that African languages are entirely capable of adapting to the scientific process.

The New School brings together every possible quality to the maximum degree. It now remains to be seen whether these intentions can be appropriately translated into action.

Implementation

Government created several institutions to ensure that the reform would actually go into effect. It named a vice rector responsible for implementing the reform, designated several expert commissions, created a committee responsible for monitoring implementation of a new academic calendar, and so on.

These authorities constituted an enormous administrative machine that stifled initiative rather than fostering decisive action. The impossibility of coordinating decisions and actions doomed the reform to immediate failure. The mistakes that followed took on the air of a disaster, to the extent that they seriously compromised the future of several generations of young people.

The New School grew out of the insights of a few individuals, although some represented one organization or another, and as a result, it was a set of decisions imposed on the people, who had no means of evaluating them. In addition, people were unable to judge the intrinsic value of the changes, because haste—the Original Sin where reform is concerned—contributed to misrepresent the spirit of good will behind the effort to improve the Beninese education system.

In fact, the public information campaign announcing the advent of the New School was not launched until after the legislation governing the reform had already been adopted. Since the population had been presented with a *fait accompli*, the information came across as propaganda. The sequence of events made it difficult to give the population a role in setting up the New School with an eye toward running it better. An effort of this magnitude should go through experimental stages in pilot locations. After all, Article 42 of the General Principles Act stipulated that "the present reform shall be implemented progressively beginning at the start of the 1975–76 school year, and in accordance with a schedule established by executive order of the Cabinet as proposed by the National Education Minister."

What happened to the financial support intended to promote the New School? The significant contributions required from local governments, parents, and even the students themselves bear witness to the contradiction among the New School's objectives. It was meant to be free of charge; for the first time, an official document[4] had announced free and compulsory education, and respecting this principle would boost the regime's prestige. But the sweat equity invested by the various actors (parents took part in the construction of buildings in some rural areas, and students spent a large part of the school day working in the cooperative's fields) in no way contributed toward reducing tuition for families enrolling their children. This was essentially the result of maintaining the framework of an economy dominated by international capitalism.

Results

Like the Republic of Dahomey, the Republic of Benin retained the characteristics of peripheral capitalism. As a result, the worldwide crisis disrupting the economies of the industrialized countries had repercussions in Benin, where it reached dramatic proportions. Economic inequality grew and, in turn, established inequality of opportunity in the schools. In fact, the complete elimination of private schools—primary and secondary—provoked a mass exodus among the children of the wealthy, who went abroad to continue their studies in the hope of finding higher academic standards. Children from less fortunate backgrounds either accepted their fate or gave up when the burden became too great; for those who gave up, there was no legal penalty to discourage violation of the New School's guiding principles.

De facto, compulsory education remained a purely theoretical concept. After six years of implementing reform, an evaluation concluded that the new system was a complete failure. The results of this evaluation were kept quiet. A precautionary crackdown reminded everyone of the need for silence. The damage control measures that followed clearly reflected the ruling political regime's panic and its ipso facto inability to solve the system's underlying problems, which surged to the surface in short order.

Despite the system's potential richness and the political courage that had marked the change, the reform as a whole appeared as an infinite series of half-measures, incoherent and therefore impracticable

in light of the economic, political, and social conditions in Benin. The New School was trapped in a financial dead end.

Results were disappointing despite the allocation of 30 to 40 percent of the national operating budget to education since 1975.

(a) The number of students rose in absolute terms, but the percentage of children attending school declined.

(b) The internal effectiveness and quality of primary education declined.

(c) The average student-teacher ratio was relatively low (33 to 1) and not affordable, given the country's financial and human resources capabilities.

(d) Fewer than 50 percent of students reaching their final year of basic instruction succeeded in passing the exam marking the end of their studies.

Teacher salaries represented 87 percent of spending for primary education, leaving scarce resources for instructional materials. Irregular salary payments were killing teacher motivation.

Conditions were poor at the lower-level secondary education. The student population grew approximately 280 percent between 1975 and 1983, then fell roughly 27 percent between 1983 and 1988. The number of candidates for the lower-level secondary education exam (the *brevet d'études du premier cycle* between the first and second parts of secondary education) declined approximately 35 percent between 1986 and 1988, and the average success rate for the last three years was 18.5 percent. The number of students taking the *baccalauréat* exam dropped roughly 37 percent between 1983 and 1988.

In higher education, the number of students at the National University of Benin had grown rapidly. Although students in higher education represented only 2 percent of the students in the entire education system, they received roughly 28 percent of the sector budget. Scholarships and subsidies consumed 50 percent of the available resources, while 30 percent went to administrative expenses and only 20 percent to salaries. In addition, secondary and higher education saw poor external effectiveness.[5]

Private contributions (from families and communities) represented a significant portion of unit costs in primary and secondary education, while private costs disappeared for scholarship recipients in higher education. Nonetheless, there was a persistent tendency to identify "lack of resources" as the main trouble with the system.

Under this bleak picture simmered a crisis that was seen both by the Beninese authorities and by international organizations, who agreed to attempt a rescue effort.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS (1989)

At the end of 1989, Benin's poor economic performance began to aggravate an already difficult situation. The industrial sector had seen negative growth since 1985. The lack of liquidity in the banking sector, continued growth of foreign debt, tripling of the government payroll as the number of civil service employees rose from 29 thousand in 1980 to 47 thousand in 1987, and finally the dysfunctional

relationship between the labor market and the education and training system all combined to plunge Benin into an unprecedented crisis.

By the time the new decade arrived, the country was facing bankruptcy. As government went into debt with the banks, salary payments were delayed by several months. The social consequences of the Structural Adjustment Program and the recession's negative impact on all areas of society sparked a protest movement, which began at the National University of Benin and gradually spread throughout the civil service. The government saw the crisis coming, but a final Cabinet reshuffle enlisting experts to address the nation's problems could not stop the headlong rush toward challenge and protest.

Union leaders, students and teachers of all sorts were arrested; the military appeared in impressive numbers in the streets, in public places and in the schools; the media broadcast overblown threats in all the national languages; but nothing could defuse the crisis. Every day the gigantic administrative machine of the single-party government lost a little more of its power to control and repress. The isolated strikes appearing in the third quarter of 1988 took on unusual scope and vigor throughout 1989. Street protests proliferated, heralding the failure of the dictatorial regime that had presided over the country's fate for 17 years.

Against its will, government began to contemplate superficial reforms, but political crisis was inevitable. In 1989, a new, democratic government replaced the Marxist regime that had entered 17 years earlier.

KEY EVENTS IN POLICY REFORM (1989–91)

Beginning in 1989, a series of events, some overlapping in time, characterized the formulation of policies in education that promoted reform. These were

(a) The Education Policy Analysis project, which was instigated in September 1989 and ran through early 1991;

(b) The National Conference *(Conférence nationale des forces vives),* held in February 1990;

(c) The *Etats Généraux* for Education, held in October 1990;

(d) The comprehensive audit by the National Education Ministry, which began in June 1992 and ran for ten months.

(e) The Declaration of Education Policy in January 1991.

The Education Policy Analysis project

Project goals and plans

Within the larger context of structural adjustment, the Beninese government hoped to develop an adjustment policy for the education sector and investment strategies to allow implementation of this policy. In mid-1989, before the change in regime, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) planned to arrange two Round Tables to develop this policy and strategy: the first in June 1990 in Geneva,

where Benin would meet with its main donors to discuss overall financing of its (macro) structural adjustment program; and the second in early 1991 in Cotonou, where sector-specific investment strategies and financial needs would be presented. Benin was to undertake a series of policy studies to serve as a basis for these two Round Tables.

In response to an appeal from the Beninese government and UNDP representatives in Cotonou, UNESCO proposed a project aimed at finding solutions, within the scope of the country's economic constraints, to the following problems:

(a) Declining quality and internal effectiveness in all subsectors of the system, particularly primary education;

(b) Decreasing numbers of students in primary and secondary education and the lack of apprenticeship facilities for students who had dropped out or never attended school;

(c) Relatively low enrollment and success rates for girls in some regions;

(d) Harm inflicted on primary education from bias in the sector's financing structure and accompanying inefficiencies in allocating resources;

(e) Poor external effectiveness in lower-level secondary and technical education and in higher education, where costly curricula were poorly adapted to working life. The marked discrepancy between the training provided and the needs of the economy was particularly striking in the technical and farm sectors.

(f) The need to develop planning and resource management capabilities;

(g) Weak capability for analyzing the policies needed to develop a viable strategy for sector development within the context of current constraints;

(h) The need for thorough reflection on the education and training system required for the country's development.

The Education Policy Analysis project (also called the UNDP/UNESCO project) was designed to involve those concerned with the education and human resources sector. This included not only the National Education Ministry and the Planning and Statistics Ministry, but also multilateral agencies (the World Bank, and the African Development Bank) and bilateral agencies (France, Germany, and Switzerland). A Beninese coordinator was to manage the project, and qualified Beninese nationals were to do the studies with qualified expert assistance provided and coordinated by UNESCO. Although largely financed by UNESCO, the project was to lay the groundwork for ongoing dialogue among donors in order to promote dialogue between them and the Beninese authorities.

Sector studies began in September with one on the quality of primary education, which revealed that the operation of the Beninese school system was breaking down. Contributing factors to poor academic performance, however, seemed difficult to affect directly by policy changes, since they involved the personal characteristics of both students and teachers.

Project activities

It is important to summarize briefly the work performed by the Project, because it serves as the foundation for programs designed to correct the sector's problems. The position occupied by the Project has earned it often contradictory and occasionally justified criticism. While it is true that most people acknowledge that the work was necessary and well founded, no one accepts the *de facto* authority that grew out of the Project's dynamism.

- Sector studies

The study on primary education in Benin yielded interesting conclusions: The system went awry because government no longer fulfilled its role as monitor and supervisor. Policies aimed at improving quality and efficiency in primary education would require trade-offs in cost and effectiveness. Recommendations focused on pedagogical and institutional changes: Raise the student-teacher ratio to 45 to 1; develop a book policy; sever the link between teachers' salaries and the possession of academic degrees such as the *baccalauréat,* which do not reflect professional competence; provide continuing education for teachers; give absolute priority to reorganizing administrative machinery, monitoring and supervision, and employee motivation and retraining programs.

The study examining general secondary education offered a complete assessment of that subsector and recommendations for the first steps toward modernization.

(a) Teachers were poorly qualified. Nearly half were teaching interns, while only about 40 percent of teaching positions were held by certified teachers and assistant teachers (with a *brevet d'aptitude à l'enseignement moyen*).

(b) The curricula often seemed inappropriate, and teaching supervision was undeniably clumsy. The lack of textbooks and the dilapidated state of the laboratories accurately reflected the condition of the facilities in general.

(c) It was something of an admission of failure for the secondary education system to spend 36 student years per lower-level graduate and 19 student years per upper-level graduate and to lose more than a quarter of its students in the space of several years without preparing the dropouts for out placement. It was therefore urgent to re-evaluate the overall structure of the subsector. Recommendations focused on objectives, access, regulating the student flow, school counseling, curricula, career preparation, and supervision.

Vocational and Technical Training (ETP) is the only branch of education (before the *baccalauréat*) that prepares young people to hold skilled jobs and the only one to teach professional expertise. Here the causes of poor performance lay not with the students but with the poor state of material and human resources in the schools:

(a) The majority of schools were in considerable decay, and the absence of workshops and equipment made it physically impossible to provide any real vocational training.

(b) Curricula were inappropriate; long, cumbersome, and obsolete, they offered career paths that were too specialized in light of the uncertain job market.

(c) Instructor training levels were poor.

(d) Unit costs were very high, with the cost for each level two graduate reaching 14 times the cost for a *baccalauréat* graduate in general education.

The study recommended implementing measures with a three-pronged focus on overall policy, internal organization, and financial assistance.

The study on higher education highlighted the following points:

(a) The student body at this level represented barely 2 percent of Benin's entire student population. While the rates of primary and secondary attendance had been falling for the previous ten years, however, the number of students in higher education had grown considerably in the same period, rising from 3,390 in 1979 to 9,545 in 1989, for an increase of 282 percent. This sector alone enjoyed 28 percent of the education budget (1989), or 7 percent of the national budget.

(b) However, internal performance was mediocre, with costs that seemed disproportionate in relation to the results. The opportunities offered by higher education were increasingly limited, if for no other reason than the freeze on recruiting by the civil service, which had served as the principal supplier of jobs for higher education graduates in the past.

(c) The priority was to redistribute the resources assigned to higher education so as to improve its quality and bring it into closer conformity with the national job market.

A study on job market conditions synthesized numerous studies and seminars of various administrative entities. It showed that the job market presented a fairly gloomy outlook: the structured modern sector offered few opportunities and job prospects were largely limited to the informal sector. No one, however, had given much thought to developing the sector or undertaking a detailed analysis of it.

A study on the costs and financing of education concluded that any new education policy or development strategy that failed to take resources into account was doomed to failure, like the New School launched in 1975. This concerned not only the marshaling of financial resources made available to the system but also their complete, efficient, and economic use. The report made recommendations consistent with this analysis.

Tools for analysis, planning, and steering were developed to help evaluate situations and rapidly identify the appropriate action. The two management tools developed were a financial simulation model and the computerization of education statistics.

- Seminars on the sector studies

The majority of these studies were finished off in seminars designed both to provide information to school system users and to ratify the work that had been done. The partnerships and teams made up of national and international consultants reflect the project's dual concern of building national expertise and producing scientifically valid work. Two other issues were constantly raised: integrating the data from various sources and ensuring that all of the actors would abide by the implications of those data. Exchanges among political authorities, experts, teachers, students, parents, employers, and others gave people the sense they were participating in a common task.

Seminars were held on the following topics: higher education, the financial simulation model, vocational and technical schools, general secondary education, and primary education.

The overall objectives for these seminars were the same everywhere, but because they were held in different parts of the country, they offered an opportunity to inform and hear from people in rural areas, often isolated from the flow of information at central offices.

The National Conference

The National Conference *(La Conférence nationale des forces vives)* was called for on February 19, 1990. Government was on its last legs, and the National Conference stepped in to begin the arbitration that led eventually to the removal of the existing regime. Trade and professional groups, religious congregations, the newly founded political parties and development associations[6] all sent representatives to the National Conference. The outpouring of opinion was unrestrained, since there was no agenda formalizing which issues would be discussed when. Only committee work was ordered by such guidelines.

The conference addressed issues much broader than education. Though intellectuals had a monopoly on many of the conference's process and many political issues, education issues drew everyone's interest—intellectuals, religious leaders, craftsmen, and people from rural areas. The New School was thoroughly condemned, and all agreed that its poor performance had been poor.

> Our children can't manage to read or write letters anymore. They spend most of their time working in the teachers' fields. Why send them to school when we have our own fields to tend? We are now building the schools and equipping them, and sometimes we even house the teachers, and our children are not getting anything out of these schools.[7]

A man sporting a beautiful Western-style suit commented that "today's lower-level secondary education graduate [*brevet d'études du premier cycle*] can't express himself as well as students in the sixties who left school with a basic primary studies certificate [*certificat d'éudes primaires élémentaires*]."

There were pathetic moments in the trial of the New School and its advocates. The judgement of many participants echoed this question: "If the schools were good, why did government dignitaries send their children to be educated abroad?"

In fact, people were comparing education that had been provided under two very different sets of circumstances. The political, economic, and social changes affecting Beninese communities since Independence in 1960 were enormous. When they said, "Our children have more resources for education but are less successful. Have they suddenly become backward?" the speakers were expressing ill-founded nostalgia. Yet this outlook influenced the conference's work on education.

The resolutions reached by the Education, Culture, Science, Sports, and Environment Committee began with these words: "It is not necessary to invent a completely new education system, but to draw on past experience in an effort to improve existing programs and encourage their implementation by providing adequate financial support."

Thus, the conference did not challenge what already existed but proposed reworking structure and content. The participants declared primary education to be free and compulsory and demanded that secondary education emphasize vocational training and at the same time be more open to private initiatives. The preference for elitist education emerged; an entity responsible for academic counseling was created, which would select the best students and send them to top-level boarding high schools entirely financed by government. The desire for an extensive boarding-school system was expressed by many speakers, returning again and again like a leitmotif.

The new curricula would turn away from the New School to restore the importance of morality and the artistic disciplines. They would be modeled on the curricula used in French-speaking countries, but with a twist: knowledge and protection of the environment would also be taught.

Where was the funding for this all-encompassing, irresistibly noble, and particularly ambitious project? The government seemed to be the primary financier, though Benin had just begun its painful journey down the path of structural adjustment. True, the conference recommended that regional and international cooperation be developed to bring in financial help, but abstract economic rhetoric without hard figures can produce nothing more than vague desires and mere declarations of intent.

Unfortunately, the new policy directions did not provide for any study of the scope and cost of these proposals or how to implement them. Were we destined to repeat the problems that ultimately brought the New School to a standstill?

The *Etats Généraux* for Education

The spirit of consensus built at the National Conference inspired the *Etats Généraux* for Education (EGE), held in October 1990. This was the only event of this kind recommended by the conference. The poor performance of the 1975 New School reforms and Benin's economic, political and social problems had raised the question: What kind of education system for what kind of development? The social, economic, and political effectiveness of the Beninese education system instituted by the militarist-Marxist regime urgently required a review and some policy decisions. Broad-based dialogue seemed like the first step toward improving the Beninese school system's public image.

The National Conference and the Education Policy Analysis project had begun without any plan to connect their efforts. The first was spurred by financial difficulties aggravated by the authorities' inability to pay civil service salaries. The second was designed to address the acknowledged failure of the education system. Although they ran parallel at the start, the two processes ultimately converged to solidify the *Etats Généraux* for Education.

Preparations

High hopes for the EGE required that the National Education Ministry give special care to its planning and preparation. The minister accurately assessed the scope of his responsibility and mounted an intensive effort to ensure the EGE's success. The ministry formed four teams that traveled to the Côte-d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, and Ghana to talk with leaders and experts and gather information on their respective education systems, education policies, and particularly strategies for revitalizing and improving the education system.

The reports of the Beninese emissaries revealed a rich diversity that reflected the serious problems confronting West African education systems still seeking to define their images. The Beninese recognized that the French colonial school system had left an indelible mark on French-speaking African countries. Their diseases presented the same symptoms and the cures were similar. But Benin would have to design its own specific solution.

Other participants prepared in different ways. National and departmental offices of the ministry did not arrange for any preparatory consultations in advance of the EGE. Only the National University of Benin produced three documents. The labor unions were confident that they knew the education system's problems and negotiated grimly for their right to participate in the EGE. Teachers identified with their unions and held no meetings to mark the event as something out of the ordinary, though preliminary

working sessions would have allowed them to frame the debate and to reflect in advance on solutions. Civil society—Parents' Associations, employers, craftsmen, and so on—had little or no information, and they too limited themselves to an improvised contribution based on the facts available.

Although the National Education Minister had hoped to convene the EGE in July 1990, it was postponed in order to allow the Education Policy Analysis project time to complete more of its sectoral studies. The minister's advisors asked the project to prepare a summary of each study, and these documents were featured among those presented at the EGE.

The UNDP agreed to finance fact-finding trips as part of the EGE preparations, room and board for Beninese coming from outside Cotonou, and production of the proceedings. UNESCO and the French also contributed. It was this enormous mobilization of material, financial, and human resources that made it possible to convene the EGE.

Convening the *Etats Généraux*

The EGE took place October 2–9, 1990. Nearly 400 people attended, representing every ministry and central and outlying office of the National Education Ministry, selected teaching establishments, all trade associations, development partners, students at all levels, representatives of parents—in short, the entire nation.

Since preliminary meetings had not been held among groups of participants, neither the delegates from organized entities nor those from the informal sector held any specific, clearly defined mandate. The mandates that had been articulated and recognized were reflected in the opening remarks made by the National Education Minister and the Prime Minister. The National Education Minister commented:

> The EGE will need to focus on these problems and many others as well. I hope that the delegates will take a calm and responsible approach to their deliberations, bearing in mind both our legitimate desire for collective advancement and the limitations imposed on us by particularly difficult economic conditions. . . . If we are to shape transition in the education sector, we cannot be content with maintaining a holding pattern. We must make it possible to move progressively, and in fairly short order, from one type of school system to another; away from the schools as refuge, as asylum, as alibi; away from a system that is going nowhere and operating in a vacuum with no other end than itself, and toward a system that actually leads to something else and prepares students for the job market with renewed confidence and hope.

The Prime Minister (and future President) concluded his opening remarks by saying:

> This competition will be won by those with the best technical, technological, and scientific assets, those who turn resolutely toward basic and applied research. All of this, I hope, has been taken into account, and I am convinced that the project you will present to us will contain all the elements needed to restore the value of our education system.

Quite clearly, these instructions represent both objectives and ultimate goals whose scope could be measured by the extent of the real problems in need of solution. But did such a heterogeneous collection of individuals possess the necessary technical expertise to encompass the depths of this eminently political and strangely complex issue? The composition of the special committees did not leave much room for optimism.

Each of six committees addressed one of the following topics: General principles and organization, preschool and primary education, general secondary education, vocational and technical schools, higher education and scientific research, and financing, managing and renewing the status of the teaching profession.

The committee on general principles and organization made a thorough assessment of the Beninese education system and reiterated the conclusion of the National Conference that what was needed were not new policies but resources to rehabilitate and consolidate what already existed. Considering that a good third of government's budget had been devoted to education for 15 years, we could comment at length on this mentality. Two theories can be offered:

(a) The feeling of nostalgia expressed in repeated references to "Dahomey, Africa's Latin Quarter" was so strong that it obscured the need for reforms that could be adapted to the various changes in the world;
(b) The committee members subconsciously accepted the idea that no bureaucrat would agree to radical changes in a system where he had made a comfortable niche for himself. Teachers feared that civil society would interfere with their old and prestigious institution, though its image had become deeply tarnished; parents saw the schools as having the clear mission of providing a toehold in the civil service.

The other, more specialized committees listed problems and offered solutions resembling catalogs of wishful thinking or labor union demands. All of them emphasized the "lack of resources," in complete contradiction with government's financial efforts. Prudent use of resources did not interest the committee members at all; they were quite willing to take shortcuts that left many questions unanswered. It could hardly have been otherwise, given the diversity of interests and the conflicts that had to be handled. Such conflicts are inevitable in a dialogue where interest parts company with responsibility.

Outcomes

In reality, government was seeking legitimation and support to reinforce its credibility in confronting the demands of its international partners. Government seized upon the limits of dialogue with the people, prompting the National Education Minister to say, "it is important to remember that the EGE delegates made recommendations, not decisions....It belongs to government to make decisions according to the means at its disposal and the goals it is pursuing."[8] Yet some participants believed that they had made decisions, not merely recommendations. This difference in understanding endured beyond the event.

In the EGE, union leaders discovered a forum for presenting their lists of grievances, with the whole nation as witness. Nor was there a better opportunity for students to allow youthful confusion and helplessness to explode in protests demanding scholarships and academic assistance. Less heavily represented and less active, civil society denounced its habitual exclusion from the debate, despite its apparent lack of interest in continued involvement. There remained the silent majority, which is also a part of civil society, and which so many public bodies claimed to represent.

Special interests were very much in evidence. Conflicting opinions left an indelible mark on relations between the unions and the National Education Minister. Teachers would never tire of using EGE decisions to support protests of every kind. The National Education Minister would always refuse to give in because of his conviction that the EGE's conclusions were only recommendations. The EGE follow-up committee's unwillingness or inability to act allowed the parties to reach a *modus vivendi*, but the dialogue remained fruitless.

All of these perfectly understandable conflicts raise the issue of how to manage democracy. The permanent nature of the conflicts grew out of the frame of reference each party brought to the EGE in defending its cause. Nonetheless, the sector studies and the results of the audit that followed were disquieting to many.[9]

Actions to be taken based on the general assessment of the education system and the analysis of each major issue were scheduled (short-, medium-, and long-term). For the immediate future, priority was given to improving vocational and technical training. In spite of the importance assigned to primary education in the Constitution of December 11, 1990, the measures envisioned by the EGE were aimed at improving self-employment training and restoring excellence.

A Council created to follow up on the EGE's decisions would have guaranteed effective action, but it was never convened—a negligence that no one has ever deplored.

The recommendations issuing from the EGE were seductive, but at the same time they raised enormous problems. Indeed, how it is possible to maintain an education system that is both selective and democratic? What exactly does "self-employment training" mean? Would everyone who left the Beninese education system be capable of self-employment? Moreover, the institutional and financial groundwork for meeting such goals was never laid.

The EGE's official conclusions implied a complete reworking of society as a whole.

> The EGE's mission is to translate the Conference's social project into an education project with the three objectives of general education, job training, and character development.[10]

But it is society that creates and defines schools, not the reverse, and social change has a long development cycle.

Impact

We interviewed heads of school districts, political-administrative authorities (sub-prefects and mayors, for example), primary and secondary schoolteachers, parents, civil servants, people living in rural areas, and so on. Most of these people have never seen the *Proceedings of the Etats Généraux for Education*. Clearly, no public information or awareness campaigns had focused on the political, economic, and social stakes in the outcome of the dialogue. One might conclude that neither the National Education Minister, the unions, the press, nor the EGE delegates have done their respective jobs of providing information and reports. Poor circulation of information limited the scope of an official document that, *a priori*, defined government's willingness to work with the people.

The legal value of the EGE has yet to be proven in the eyes of the general public, whose members feel that they are involved in an adventure about which they know almost nothing. This is the eternal problem of practicing "modern" democracy in a largely illiterate population. Given these conditions, we might ask whether the reforms launched by the EGE are consistent with the will of the people, and whether national dialogue has a truly democratic character.

Nevertheless, the issues specific to Benin demand appropriately nuanced decisions. And the prerequisites for bringing about change are slowly but surely falling into place.

Comprehensive audit by the ministry

Included in the Beninese government's commitment to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in connection with the Structural Adjustment Program were audits of several ministries, National Education among them. The key working elements of the Beninese education system brought to light by the study on personnel management in national education constituted the beginnings of an audit that called for a broader and more comprehensive examination. In addition, the report on this study, begun

in June 1992 and lasting ten months, served as a preliminary document for the ministry's audit on human resources.

The terms of reference presented to the various donors were the subject of endless discussion. The World Bank expressed skepticism, due to its desire to see the audit lead to a rapid assessment of the number of possible cuts in civil service personnel. It viewed the terms of reference as too ambitious and believed that the operation had little chance of surviving in a ten-month time period. The other donors wanted to obtain additional information on the actual objectives and procedures for the audit. This was true for France and for the German cooperation agency (GTZ).

Talks among the National Education Ministry, UNDP, and the World Bank led to an agreement authorizing the Education Policy Analysis project to carry out the National Education Ministry audit after presenting proposed terms of reference to all of the parties concerned. The terms of reference were to take several factors into account:

(a) Considerations related to the Structural Adjustment Program involved: (i) streamlining and increasing efficiency in the central offices: (ii) improving both the quantity and quality of investment in human capital; (iii) strengthening management capabilities by reducing unproductive personnel; (iv) improving use of personnel; and (v) reinforcing discipline on budget issues.

(b) Then came objectives specific to education sector policy. Areas requiring close scrutiny included: (i) assessing the quality, relevance and cohesiveness of instruction; (ii) revitalizing primary education, (iii) examining curricula and pedagogical factors; and (iv) regulating the flow of teachers and students.

(c) Sector study results were to serve as the foundation for the work performed under the comprehensive audit.

The audit concerned all of the functions at work in the "education enterprise," particularly strategic management functions and the operational management functions involved in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the measures outlined in the plans of action that had been approved. The audit was expected to identify malfunctions and their causes, propose methods, tools, and organizational measures to be put into place, and arrive at an overall organizational blueprint for the "education enterprise." Three families of sub-audits emerged: the strategic management subsystem, the pedagogical subsystem, and the operations subsystem. Each family contained several operations.

Ten months after work began, a seminar was held to ratify the results of the audit. Present at this seminar were Beninese executives, representatives of Career Public Servants, union representatives for all branches of teaching, national and international consultants, donors, and the Project team.

The seminar had two purposes: to inform school system users of the audit's results, and to build consensus on the evaluation and simultaneously point toward the path to renewal. The best possible description of this seminar is summarized in the opening remarks by the National Education Ministry representative, who said essentially that the Beninese authorities sought to use the audit to streamline administration of the education system and rehabilitate the system as a whole. The minister stressed the his staff's special interest in the audit and expressed delight that the consensus reached by the seminar participants would make it possible to take a dispassionate approach to the next phase, which would focus on pursuing a better understanding of ideas that had been mentioned but not developed during the presentations. In this way, the audit's outcome was appropriated by the ministry.

There followed a series of workshops on the problem of the teaching force. The primary objective of these workshops was to clarify ideas on managing the budget; the workforce, personnel, and the organizational framework (job descriptions). These workshops were designed primarily for officials in the head office of the National Education Ministry, officials at the finance and civil service ministries, decision-makers in the area of human and financial resources allocation, departmental directors of education (the top decentralized level of the National Education Ministry's operational management of these resources) and leading officials in the departmental offices of education.

The results of the workshops can be grouped into several types: (i) issues that met with consensus at the level of the decentralized offices; (ii) operational issues requiring further study without need for dialogue outside the National Education Ministry (for example, outsourcing a position, revising regulations on transfers); (iii) issues requiring further study in cooperation with other ministries (regionalized recruiting, delegating to the National Education Ministry, authority to sign certain official documents); and (iv) issues requiring additional work (tools and data storage media for projecting teacher needs; adaptation of the financial simulation model for use at the department level).

The next step was to develop action plans. Initially the Education Policy Analysis Project was to develop an investment program, allowing the Beninese government to attend an donors' Round Table meeting. The entry of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank in the sector, however, moved Benin into a different process that no longer led to a traditional Round Table.

Plans of action with cost estimates needed to be developed. In particular, it was urgent to prepare plans of action on primary education to accompany government's letter of intent to USAID on launching its project. This plan of action was broken down into three major sub-plans: planning, pedagogical methods, and institutional reforms. In addition, to prepare for a World Bank evaluation mission, the education ministry staff asked the Education Policy Analysis project to work on plans of action for implementing the audit recommendations.

The Declaration of Education Policy

Moving the changes along a clearly defined path would required a policy document approved by all the parties. Once again, the donors played a decisive role. As part of its conditionality, the World Bank required a Declaration of Education Policy for its second Structural Adjustment Program and a sector adjustment project (which was ultimately replaced by a traditional investment project). To produce this blueprint for policy, government tasked the project with providing technical support to a Select Committee set up by the National Education Minister.

While the project's national and international consultants began studies on organization and methods and personnel management, the project also assisted the Select Committee in laying the groundwork for a Declaration. This document drew on the broad guidelines set by the Etats Généraux for Education and the National Education Minister's contribution, detailing his staff''s projects as well as the materials produced by the sector studies and ratified by the national and regional seminars. After several revisions by National Education Ministry staff, the minister finally presented the document to the Cabinet, which adopted it in January 1991.

Then the conflicts among donors began. The declaration adopted by the Cabinet was held up as an expression of the will of the Beninese government. Although the World Bank had participated in working sessions of the Select Committee (as part of the preconditions for setting up its program), it would not vouch for the document's technical legitimacy. It demanded greater detail, dwelling on issues of both

form and content. Whether deliberately or not, the World Bank sought to block the declaration in order to justify its objections to that document.

The French Cooperation Agency (*Coopération Française)*, which had remained indifferent after helping to finance the study on higher education, rushed to join the World Bank in its struggle with the Education Policy Analysis project over the Declaration. Minor incidents, indicative of the tension among the donors, arose during the bargaining process.[11] In addition, the community of donors grew to include Germany's GTZ, Switzerland, and, in the summer of 1991, USAID.

Whatever views expressed to the contrary might have been, the summary of the Cabinet meeting actions reflected the adoption of this important document. This summary was not usually published, and the World Bank, seeing this as an opportunity to quibble, maintained that the document had not been adopted. Yet it was recognized and referenced by ministry experts involved in the effort to develop dossiers for the donors in the sector.

In the absence of a General Principles Act, the National Education Ministry was obliged to mount a broad information campaign via seminars, television appearances, articles in the press, and so on.[12]

The Cabinet's consideration and approval of the Declaration of Education Policy gave it official status. This document represented a legitimate agreement by government for the entire National Education Ministry, which could now make commitments on Benin's behalf in talks with donors, in strict compliance with the terms of the Declaration. Donors could use the document as the basis for negotiating their programs.

Then there was the Beninese population. It had rightfully taken part in the dialogue through the information and ratification seminars organized around the conclusions of the sector studies, and through their representatives at the Etats Généraux. Government's affirmation of the Declaration constituted the completion of a democratic process.

The declaration consisted of three sections:

(a) An assessment of the sector, its strengths and weaknesses;

(b) A description of the process leading to education reform (a national dialogue to disseminate the results of the sector studies; sector talks with donors where government's strategy and investment program would be presented; the National Education Ministry audit);

(c) The fundamentals of the new education policy; particular emphasis was given to equality of opportunity, quality instruction at every level, and training students for self-employment.

Reforms in place

One thing is beyond dispute: During and after the EGE, the Beninese school system reestablished its pedigree. The desires expressed by professionals and users of academic institutions and the concerns and issues raised proved the Beninese people's renewed interest and confidence in the school system. Thus, it is easy to see that immediate steps marked the start of a new era.

Of course, the changes affected structures first. The new organizational chart put in place by the National Education Ministry took into account the recommendations produced by the audit to improve management of the reform. The minister's staff, which had been the sole locus of decision-making, was

broken up to make way for other decision-making hubs, both local and national.

The reforms in place can be credited with producing stronger institutions. The National Education Ministry's adoption of a new organizational chart required giving real responsibility to the staff. All but one of the National Education Ministry officials who took part in coordinating the Education Policy Analysis Project received appointments raising them to outposts in the executive body of the overall reform.[13] Outside the National Education Ministry, in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Reform, three staffers who worked on the project were given significant responsibilities. Finally, another official showed outstanding performance at the Ministry of Finance. In their current posts, these officials represent the institutional memory of the key events in the overall process of change that has begun and is inexorably following its course.

Content reform is slowly taking shape through important changes in the development of new curricula. This burdensome and complex task is moving patiently toward its goal, supported by increased responsibility among the people involved and financial assistance that is unprecedented in the history of Benin's academic institutions.

The National Education Minister is gradually gaining more control over his budget, a concrete budget based on a schedule of activities. Budget support from USAID, implementation of a World Bank project (which is somewhat slow to be implemented), Canadian involvement in vocational and technical education, and the work of the French Cooperation Agency are likely to make it easier to administer the reform.

ANALYSIS

Pedagogical considerations, which are certainly subject to debate, lead us to devote a special chapter to a more thorough examination of the questions raised during the description of the policy-formation process. This kind of analysis protects the reader against easy conclusions and gives the proper weight to each step in the process.

Strengths of the process

Before we examine the Beninese case more closely, we invite the reader to set aside any theoretical frameworks of democracy, the better to understand the merit of the actions proposed by the Beninese in their search for a new socio-political balance.

The National Conference, the *Etats Généraux* for Education and the development of a national education policy formed the Beninese leadership's response to pressure exerted in various ways by the entire nation. The new regime had no choice but to seek popular loyalty and support. In a democratic system, decisions come from the people, and that was the justification for the national dialogue. These meetings, broadened to include national and international partners and the entire civil society, were important events in a country where the majority of an illiterate population seems to have been shaped by a long succession of dictatorial regimes. Government set itself the task of soliciting the opinions of the silent majority and involving it in the decision-making process without considering at the outset how well informed that majority was. Of course, the deputies representing them were intellectuals, though one wonders to what extent the people saw their own views reflected in the debates at the National Assembly.

A strength of the policy-making process was its furtherance of democratic ways. Government restored confidence by reconciling the concerns of the people with goals for the education system. At the

same time, it provided itself with the wherewithal to negotiate with the development partners, who pressured it to consider the interests expressed by Beninese citizens. Policy-making took on a national character that demanded concurrence of all parties, local and international. In this way, government made use of a legitimacy that reassured the donors. The information-sharing and dialogue that shaped the process must thus be seen as an effort toward consolidating democracy.

Any list of the strengths of the process must include the background documents. By 1991, Benin possessed a wealth of documents that had been debated and approved by at least a fringe of the population.[14] These documents set the conditions for informed choice. They also preserved information and analyses for others who enter the education sector. USAID, for example, benefited from them when it entered the education sector in mid-1991.

In sum, the first advantage resulting from the changes was a political context that allowed for criticism; it shaped the involvement of the users, who were anxious to express their desiderata. It cannot be denied that the National Education Ministry felt societal pressure, but was the message clear enough to make the ministry accept rigorous compliance with the popular will?

Weaknesses

The *Etats Généraux* assumed a national and democratic character, even if the level of representation raised the problem of the participants' technical expertise in academic issues. The major weaknesses of the EGE were the circulation of information before and after it and the aftermath of the decisions reached during its course. Officials from the ministries and teachers from the cities of Cotonou and Porto-Novo were over-represented, to the detriment of civil servants in areas removed from the decision-making centers.

Nevertheless, the information shortage affected delegates both from the interior and from cities near the capital to such an extent that the preliminary debates with the potential to chart new directions and to support deep-rooted change were dominated by lists of demands. This narrow focus on special interests imposed a regrettable myopia among ministry employees (teachers included, of course). All parties agreed to make "lack of resources" the decisive factor in explaining the failure of the Beninese education system, obscuring the significance (repeated incessantly in the background documents) of the financial efforts made by government, communities, and families. By courting special interests, National Education Ministry staffers and students ultimately lost the sense of solidarity that should have been the key to redistributing financial benefits within the system. That sense of solidarity never emerged. The link between resource issues and the decline of the political system is well beyond the scope of the education sector.

While people who participated directly in the policy-making events generally had easy access to the information they produced, this was not the case for most people, especially those in rural areas. This is not entirely the fault of the National Education Ministry, as it could do little in the absence of any modern communications infrastructure. Using the telephone is impossible in most of the school districts, and using a fax is unthinkable. Mail postmarked in Cotonou reaches its recipient in a northern school two or three weeks later. In the northern departments, national radio news broadcasts cannot be heard during certain hours of the day. Most disquieting is that schools do not have copies of the *Proceedings of the Etats Généraux*, the document containing the fundamental principles of the reform.

Although the education sector has little choice but to welcome the support of donor and donor agencies, their involvement raises problems of sovereignty, effectiveness, philosophical orientation, and money.

Implementing the reform reaffirms the usual inertia of any educational system. Structures are easy to change, and content can often be modified, but attitudes remain rigid. As a result, institutional issues slow the march of change to some degree. The key words of the reform, deconcentration and decentralization, collided with the power of habit and the comfort of routine. The result was half-measures that the minister himself has been unable to influence. Goals have been set, but the General Principles Act has spent the past three years gathering dust in the National Assembly. In fact, the National Education Ministry staff shows signs of opposition to actually implementing decentralization, which is nonetheless proceeding step by step.

When asked about the legal problem raised by the absence of a General Principles Act on National Education, one donor said, "The General Principles Act is a Francophone concept; its absence doesn't bother me at all." In fact, this legal vacuum may be seen as giving the National Education Ministry the latitude to ignore some demands by the people, to drag its feet on long-awaited decisions, or simply to appoint itself the sole spokesman on fundamental issues.

People continue to vacillate on what were considered decisive actions. Two examples illustrate:

(a) A National Education Minister asserted during a working session that the National Education Ministry staff did not consider itself bound by the decisions of the EGE.

(b) Student representatives invited to the seminar ratifying the study on higher education expressed complete agreement with the conclusions and proposals for resolving issues at the National University of Benin. Several months later, the same students launched a strike to denounce the minister and the study's author and to condemn the recommendations.

In the final analysis, the National Education Minister can hardly behave like a pocket of revolution in his dealings with partner ministries such as Civil Service and Administrative Reform, Rural Development and Finance. The National Education Minister is a link in the chain. While he may be able to set an example of decentralization and significant change, he will only be able to complete the process when the other ministers are in full cooperation.

How these problems are resolved dictates the pace and the realities of the process now under way. We must resist the temptation to rush to the conclusion that nothing (or almost nothing) is actually happening.

In conclusion, we can see that the leaders, who, after all enjoy unaccustomed financial comfort, must bear greater responsibility for managing the decision-making process in this complex context. Their comfort exacerbates the conflicts between government and the unions on the one hand and between government and civil society on the other. In urban as well as rural settings, there is a recurring leitmotif: "Government has announced that it is injecting billions of francs into the education sector. We don't see the effect of this huge inflow of money, either on our standard of living or in our classrooms. The bosses are the only ones who benefit from this money." What lies behind these words? Perhaps it is inadequate dialogue and involvement among partners in the reform (teachers, teacher unions, students, and civil society). Whatever it is, change seems slowly to be taking place, even if it has not yet reached every subsector.

Coordination among the donors

Interms of formulating education policies, donors operate as independent agents, each exerting what pressures it can on various Beninese institutions. From time to time they shoot one another in the back. The National Education Ministry staff never mediates these disputes and sometimes exploits them,

since the cacophony among the donors allows the ministry to drag its feet on changes that it is not anxious to implement. A picture is emerging of a patient with numerous doctors at his bedside, a common diagnosis, but no agreement on the treatment. Each donor issues demands or conditionalities. Whatever the justification for these demands, they are nonetheless a source of pressure, disrupting habits and imposing disciplines that are incompatible with the national temperament. Meanwhile, each institution hastens to assert that it is only contributing financial support, while key issues come under the sovereignty of government receiving the assistance.

Diversity among the donors in their views on what the goals and priorities of the reform should be cannot be overcome, a situation that reflects the broad scope of opposing interests and raises the question of the effectiveness of their involvement.

The relative autonomy of the Education Policy Analysis project and its isolation from the ministry staff has caused problems in implementing recommendations that resulted from studies in that project. Procedural flexibility that disregarded administrative orthodoxy paid off in the short term, but showed flaws in the long run, since the Project's dynamism ultimately engendered indifference in those who used its services. This is not to be regretted, as the project became too dominant, took up too much room, and consequently deprived other institutions of living space.

At the implementation level, however, the National Education Ministry remains in control of program implementation and coordinates external contributions, taking into account the philosophies and procedures proper to each donor. This explains in part the relatively slow pace of implementing the reform. The strong points and difficulties of the process are visible just below this surface of this slow pace, which could provide material for any number of commentaries.

Finally, the introduction of foreign money has had a fatal influence on philosophical and economic orientation. At least 90 percent of the Beninese population does not now and perhaps never will understand structural adjustment measures or the well-known scope of the CFA franc devaluation. As a result, no action within this larger framework will guarantee easy or complete success. With these issues, the full concept and the full reality of democracy suddenly return to the surface.

Compromise

The national capacity for managing strengths and weaknesses simultaneously will be a determining factor in the success of the process, which remains a long-term task.

The choice of information methods, the discreet involvement of all actors, and the subdued but effective presence of foreign aid will strengthen the nation's convictions and smooth the continuing process. The invasive presence of foreign technical assistance reflects a lack of confidence, resulting in an attitude of rejection and refusal among nationals. The procedural differences among the donors do not help. For example, USAID makes extensive use of national facilities and expertise after having shaped them. UNDP hopes to use a Round Table to define the terms of its involvement. The French Cooperation Agency insists on offering largely unwanted assistance. UNICEF's program is based on the sections of the Declaration of Education Policy on improving school attendance among girls and is recruiting local managerial staff. The World Bank is in agreement with the USAID method but is dragging its feet because it insists on obtaining assurances that its project funds will in fact be administered by the National Education Ministry.

Formation of a Parents' Association can compensate for the limitations of dialogue in a country that is 75 to 80 percent illiterate. By making this a priority, the process is laying the groundwork for

success and longevity. In the meanwhile, however, we must keep in mind that conflict is part of the process; it acts as both restraint and catalyst.

Education and the process of democratization

If we consider the geographic dispersion of all of the various types of teachers around the country, and if we remember the profoundly influential role of education, then we may say that education has yet to find its place in the national debate.

As the second estate, established in April 1991, after the EGE had been held, the National Assembly has seemed to limit itself to a strictly legislative role, remaining unaware of the realities confronting the nation and gathering information on issues requiring urgent legislation.

The fourth estate, the press, is supposed to take an interest in everything. It cannot wait until information is brought to it; its role is to seek out information. The Beninese press is thriving, but it nonetheless has serious gaps. As one moves away from Cotonou and Porto-Novo, newspapers become scarce and eventually disappear altogether in the rural areas. It is impossible for the press to consolidate democracy under these conditions. In addition, television is a luxury, and radio broadcasting is made ineffective by its programming and its national coverage.

The most recent legislative campaigns revealed the limits of each of these institutions. Issues related to the advancement of education were extremely rare. What is more, several ministers created political parties designed to strengthen their position within government. The National Education Minister relied on his ministry's political machinery, and people and facilities were pressed into service in the sole cause of gaining seats for the minister in the Beninese Parliament. The results were disastrous.

CURRENT STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Reform policies are being implemented largely in one subsector, through USAID's program supporting primary education reform. This program is assisting the Beninese government establish an effective, efficient, fair, and viable system of primary education. Other subsectors have plans of action in place but are still waiting for them to be carried out. The difference lies in financial structures and provisions connected with the priorities identified by the donors in the Declaration of Education Policy.

Under the impetus of USAID, implementation is progressing in curriculum reform, improved training and pedagogical supervision for teachers, strengthened capabilities for producing, acquiring, and distributing textbooks and teaching materials, and development of a system for evaluating student knowledge. Various groups are working to ensure that the National Education Ministry's central and departmental offices improve their ability to plan and coordinate sector activities.

In light of the conclusions of the study on school attendance among girls, the ministry announced the elimination of school fees for girls in rural areas, beginning at the start of the 1993–94 school year. This action met with a mixed reception. Some school district heads refused to apply the measure. They told us the measure represented lost profits for local decision-making bodies. Whatever the case, the measure does not take into account the specific problems of each region, though it had an immediate effect in departments where girls do not go to school because their families cannot afford the fees. This phenomenon has yet to be seen in departments where girls are kept at home for cultural reasons.

USAID has undertaken surveys to measure the real impact of the ministry's action. Whatever results or information these surveys may produce, a question remains: Will the girls encouraged by schooling without fees stay long enough to finish primary school?

Another issue is the effect on secondary and higher levels of the present focus on primary education. USAID says its interest is limited to primary education. Yet teachers in higher education see this as an international plot against their institution. Consider the following remarks:

> The donors have chosen higher education as their target and are working to eliminate it. Since cutting-edge expertise is no longer being developed here, the guardianship of the old scientific research institutions in Europe will be perpetuated.

The indictment is lengthy. We have retained only its essentials to show that, in spite of the efforts to begin implementation, the imbalance that it has created within the sector may dampen spirits and raise insurmountable obstacles.

CONCLUSIONS

Benin had at its disposal a body of knowledge adequate to provide a basis for dialogue. Throughout this document, we have acknowledged that education policy formation is a cycle sustained by daily activity. An enterprise such as this requires a well-charted path, defined by a knowledge base that serves to facilitate the playing out of the process. There is something in it for everyone. The donors are certain to appreciate the logic and discipline of this step and will commit themselves with full knowledge of the facts. National policy-makers will make informed decisions and have access to reliable information for talks with both civil society and the development partners.

The National Education Ministry's innovations have had an impact on procedures in other ministries. To prevent the education reform from remaining a half-measure, we must find a mechanism capable of inspiring these ministries to support change.

In moments of euphoria or distress, we do not always weigh the consequences of declarations of principles. By writing into the Constitution that primary education would henceforth be compulsory, the Beninese adopted a philosophy that has served as a guide, certainly for the donors in making their decisions. Dealing with the difficulties inherent in this philosophy demands real commitment on the part of our leaders. The principles that serve as the focus of consensus must outlive the politicians, who by definition are transitory but are nonetheless charged with safeguarding the national interest.

Just as dialogue marked the beginning of the process, it is important to maintain it through the key steps of the reform, involving all parties by training those who need it and giving real responsibility to officials and to parents.

Responsibility for coordinating donors falls entirely under the authority of government.

ENDNOTES

1. In the language of linguistics, the word dialect is not pejorative. It refers to a sub-group or variant of a language spoken in a given geographic region.

2. The administrative and territorial reform of 1975 changed the country's name; Dahomey became the Popular Republic of Benin

3. Rural workers resigned to the daily struggle for survival never preach about imperialism; they live it. They are Benin's exploited class.

4. Edict No. 75-30 of 23 June 1975 on the General Principles Act on National Education. Article 33 of the first chapter specified: the New School is democratic and popular, compulsory and free of charge, public and secular.

5. According to estimates by the Planning Ministry, job openings represented roughly 18 percent of demand among holders of technical degrees and less than 10 percent among holders of all other degrees in secondary and higher education.

6. Development Associations were the only mass organizations allowed under the "militarist-Marxist" regime. As the government had become unable to fulfill its responsibilities in every area, communities organized in an effort to find solutions for local development problems such as building schools, opening rural runways, and sinking wells. These organizations gathered all of the natives of the respective regions, be they civil servants, craftsmen or farmers.

7. Remarks by a rural worker from Borgou at the National Conference

8. *Proceedings of the EGE:* Preface by the National Education Minister, Contonou, February 20, 1991, p.7.

9. Our enquiries yielded some incredible admissions, but anything that is not said publicy and written down remains fragile because no one is committed to it.

10. *Proceedings of theEGE*, page 147.

11. During a courtesy visit to UNDP, a World Bank mission complained of incompetence on the part of an official who had been praised to the skies by the same mission several months earlier. The mission also criticized the attitude of an international consultant, and finally forgot to invite the Project's national officer to the working dinner for all of the national and international players working on the various efforts to rehabilitate the education system.

12. It was not until March 1994 that a summary of the declaration appeared in a UNICEF publication: *Aujourd'hui et Demain: Bulletin de liaison de l'UNICEF* No. 005, January, February, March 1994, pp. 5-6.

13. For example, one heads the "Organization and Methods" department, another heads the "Budget Coordination" department of the Office of Vocational and Technical Education, a third heads the "Follow-up and Evaluation" department, and a fourth holds the very important position of Departmental Director of Education.

14. Because it was rare for sector studies to reach the school districts.

THE CASE OF GUINEA

by Joseph Pierre Kamano

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the stages in the education policy development and implementation process since 1990 in the Republic of Guinea. The study begins with a general analysis and goes on to assess the specific situation of the education sector. It summarizes the results achieved by the translation of policy into a sector adjustment program in education (the PASE) covering a three-and-a-half-year period (1990–93). The stages of its development and implementation are discussed to give the reader an example of a process that has improved an education system. Finally, the section outlines the guidelines to be followed to restore the education system during the 1990–2000 period. These guidelines do not prescribe actions but rather assign priorities and indicate the direction to follow to achieve the stated objectives.

Rather than taking an historical approach to the education system, this study is based on the circumstances that drew attention to the need to develop a policy, which is the point of departure of this analysis. In 1988, the Education II project with the World Bank was coming to a close, and adjustment programs dominated the national scene. The results of the project were mixed, and new approaches seemed necessary to reform the education system, one of the world's least developed.

At that time, international organizations making significant loans to Guinea indicated their interest in a plan to salvage education that would draw support from changes underway in other sectors and impact national life as a whole. A national policy for the sector and an implementation plan for the first three-year phase was achieved through a synergistic combination of efforts and tools.

Transforming this policy into a three-year program was achieved through the Sector Adjustment Programme for Education (Programme d'Ajustement du Secteur de l'Éducation—PASE) for the 1990–94 period. The three principal donors,[1] the World Bank, USAID, and France, supported the program by both supplementing the balance of payments and directly managing funds. The implementation of the program required formal and informal structures and mechanisms, which, along with other resources, constituted the tools necessary for the program's success. These mechanisms and structures emerged during the course of the program's development and made it possible to solve problems that arose during implementation.

The mechanisms and procedures are described in this study, along with examples of problems encountered. The purpose of their description is to share lessons learned in Guinea with those who become involved in the development and implementation of policy in the education sector, even if these lessons are not wholly or partially transferrable to all contexts.

BACKGROUND

The economic, social, and political situation

Guinea achieved Independence in 1958. For 26 years thereafter, a socialist government managed all sectors of national life in a centralized and politicized fashion. In 1984, a military coup changed the

political scene, and a military regime ran the country until the end of 1993, when presidential elections were held.

Its natural resources make Guinea one of the richest countries in Africa, but economic and social indicators paradoxically place it among the least developed countries in the world. In 1958, Guinea was one of the principal exporters of agricultural products in the world. The majority of the population worked in agriculture and animal husbandry, while only 10 percent participated in the secondary and tertiary sectors.

The country saw its economy transformed during the 1970s, when it became an importer of foodstuffs, and bauxite became practically its only source of exports. Most of the nation's economic activities shifted from the rural to the urban sector, and management of the economy was entrusted to an inefficient and bloated public sector. The national economy became dual in nature, with a growing part of the demand for imported goods and foodstuffs satisfied by the black market. By 1988, per capita income was $380, life expectancy was estimated at 43 years, infant mortality was 160 deaths per 1,000 births, and the rate of illiteracy was 72 percent. All of these indicators reflect a low standard of living for the majority of the population after a quarter of a century of independence from colonial powers.

Attempted macroeconomic changes

By 1979, still under the First Republic, some economic and institutional reforms had been initiated. Their aim was to increase tolerance for private enterprise, encourage foreign investment and diversification, progressively introduce efficiency criteria, and foster greater fiscal austerity. It was not possible, however, to implement deeper reforms due to the persistent contradictions between planned structural reforms and the need for a transition that did not jeopardize previous achievements. Guinea was faced with price liberalization, a currency devaluation without the means to control inflation, and a reform of the public sector to make it more productive.

In view of this situation, in 1982 Guinea signed an initial agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) based on a financial and monetary Structural Adjustment Programme. The essential elements of this recovery program were controlling employment and consumption, improving investment programs and their external financing, promoting the autonomy of parastatal enterprises and improving their efficiency, pursuing price liberalization, and reforming the exchange rate. The implementation of economic measures, particularly the distribution of improved seeds to the rural population in the agricultural sector, extension work to disseminate modern techniques with the support of the World Bank, and the elimination of regional trading companies, all contributed to introducing some changes.

Following the military coup in 1984, the new government accelerated negotiations with donors. In 1986, an economic adjustment program was launched. Its objective was to remove the state from the productive sectors of the economy, improve the system of economic incentives, and strengthen the regulatory and institutional environment with a view toward promoting private initiative. Specific measures were drawn up with the aim of (i) remedying the overvaluation of the country's currency; (ii) establishing a new banking system; (iii) eliminating price controls and liberalizing trade; (iv) reorganizing the ministries and departments; (v) eliminating jobs in the public sector and reducing the state's participation in industrial and commercial activities; and (vi) reorienting public investment in order to support productive activities.

The results of this first phase were encouraging: There was considerable development in agricultural production intended for domestic consumption and export as well as in activity among small-

and medium-sized enterprises and in the traditional sector. Launched at the end of 1988 with the support of the World Bank and other donors, the second phase of the adjustment program included specific measures intended to (i) consolidate the choice of a free market economy; (ii) strengthen the management of the national economy; (iii) restore the growth potential of key sectors; and (iv) implement a coherent overall strategy. These different reforms and their objectives are a good indication of how committed the government is to pursuing the rewards of growth and equity.

The state of the education system

Data gathered on education in 1988 revealed that, with only 28 percent of children full-time in primary school, Guinea was among the ten least developed countries in the world in terms of its education system. The disparity between enrollments in the urban and rural areas (54 percent and 18 percent) was deep, as it was between girls and boys (only 17 percent of girls were in school full-time). The education system accommodated 382 thousand students, 77 percent of whom were at the primary level, 20 percent at the secondary level, 1.4 percent in the technical schools, and 1.6 percent in universities.

Classroom capacity was also insufficient and outmoded. Due to inadequate classroom equipment, 20 thousand students were turned away at the beginning of the 1988–89 school year in the city of Conakry alone. In the rural areas, there were often only one or two classrooms for the community. Teachers were underqualified and did not possess the teaching credentials that would allow them to provide high-quality instruction. This had an effect on the students' level of preparedness and the quality of their education; the system's performance was so poor that on average, a student took ten years to complete primary education. These characteristics also fit schools beyond the primary level. Of the education budget, 98 percent went to salaries; only 2 percent was earmarked for operating expenses.

In 1894, at the end of the first Republic, instruction was being given in eight national languages, and French was taught as a subject beginning in the third year. Teaching time was taken up by "productive work" and political activities at school. This was all abandoned at the beginning of the 1984–85 school year, when the political changes began.

Attempted changes in education

In 1979 and 1988, with support from the World Bank, government began two projects, Education I and II. Their objective was to improve the operation of certain elements of the education system, such as technical instruction, textbooks for primary education, renovation of infrastructure, and training of professionals in the central divisions of the ministry. Although the results of these projects were positive in terms of their stated objectives, they had no substantive effect on the sector, because they were not part of any coherent sector policy framework and did not address the need for a change in the existing strategy for education.

The second project ended in 1989. By that time, preparations for the Sector Adjustment Programme in Education were already underway (these are described in a subsequent section). Experience in other countries had shown the Guineans that a coherent education policy and training framework, linked to an overall macroeconomic adjustment program, can lead to changes in the education sector that have a profound effect on the nation's schooling. On this basis, educators and politicians in Guinea decided to build a reform founded on a declaration of policy for education.

DECLARATION OF EDUCATION POLICY

The Declaration of Education Policy, a 20-page document, was approved in September 1989. It puts into writing specific objectives, procedures, and strategies that provide a blueprint for subsequent interventions in the education sector, and it presents the general framework for involvement of government and external assistance necessary to improve the education system and determine priorities for the years 1990–2000:

(a) Education's share of the government budget will increase from 14 percent in 1989 to 20 percent in 2000, and the bulk of financial resources will be devoted to primary education, which is the top priority.

(b) The goal will be to achieve a maximum level of first-year enrollment of 70 percent for children who are seven years of age during this period, with 60 percent considered a realistic figure, due to the efforts needed to improve quality through limiting the number of children who repeat grades or dropout and improving teaching methods. These efforts will allow the raw percentage of children in full-time schooling to be raised to 53 percent by the end of the period.

(c) These objectives have implications for teachers as well as for infrastructure and improvements in teacher training. Teachers will be recruited in keeping with the increase in the numbers of children attending school and the number of classrooms available. Disparities between rural and urban areas in the number and quality of schools will be reduced, and the gender gap will be eliminated.

(d) The increase in the number of students attending primary school and the improved efficiency of the system will affect other levels. Thus, secondary and higher levels will be examined in terms of their relationship to the objectives established at the primary level and to the new human resource requirements of the national economic situation.

Although the general guidelines, objectives, and priorities are clearly defined in the declaration, the procedures, mechanisms, and strategies are not. For example, the textbook section includes statements such as: "The government shall make available to students and parents appropriate textbooks at an attractive price." This directive gives no indication of the approaches to be pursued in order to attain the objective. The problem arises that more than one foreign donor can choose to intervene, each with its own strategy, based on its own culture, and perhaps in conflict with each other or with how the Guineans would like to proceed. On the other hand, the Declaration's succinct style is easy to read and exhibits realism and flexibility. It can orient future interventions and thereby serve as a compass.

Sector Adjustment Programme in Education (PASE)

The objectives of the Sector Adjustment Programme in Education are derived from the declaration. The program covered the period October 1990 to June 1994 and translated the first stage of the policy into concrete actions for the initial phase. The program covers four components:

(a) Administrative restructuring and improved management capabilities;

(b) Training for education personnel;

(c) School construction and equipment;

(d) Pedagogical tools, including school textbooks.

Each of these components was covered by an action plan described in documents attached to the policy statement defining how it would be implemented. The first three action plans were launched in 1990. The fourth was not launched until early 1992 because a reliable administrative system had to be in place first. Donors agreed with the components and the approach to implementing the action plans.

Contributions from donors

Initially, three donors agreed with the government to act in concert to support the education reform process in Guinea: the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and France's Cooperation and Assistance Fund (*Fonds d'Aide et Coopération*—FAC). They provided $57 million, $18 million of which were directly managed by donors.

As the program was part of the macroeconomic adjustment process, most of the funds were made available to the government in the form of supplements to the balance of payments. It was up to the government to allocate budgeted resources effectively to the education sector. This proved difficult, because the education sector became dependent on the performance of other sectors, particularly since the donors' credit agreements contained measures to which they all subscribed. The performance criteria consisted of 18 measures, such as improving the policy framework, national strategies, management of the sector and financial resources, improving and expanding classroom capacity, and finally improving personnel services.

RESULTS

The PASE was characterized by the broad mobilization of all actors involved, streamlined management, and the transparency of its activities. An assessment of progress revealed that these successful implementation strategies and methods had helped to produce the following results:

(a) An increase in the portion of the national operating budget allocated to education from 14 percent in 1990 to 26 percent in 1993, with 39 percent assigned to primary education;

(b) Announcement of special status for teachers and the reassignment of 1,806 teachers from the secondary to the primary level;

(c) Retraining of 8 thousand teachers in French and mathematics and training of 64 professors from the teachers' training college and 111 education consultants;

(d) Construction of 3 thousand classrooms, 1.5 thousand of which resulted from the involvement and spontaneous contribution of communities, and renovation of school and administrative sites;

(e) Improvements in school furniture and supplies, as well as production and distribution of approximately 1.4 million textbooks for primary education;

(f) Improvement in the collection of statistical data, allowing the organization of mixed-grade classes and the annual publication of increasingly reliable data;

(g) An increase in the raw percentage of children in full-time education from 28 percent in 1989 to 40 percent in 1993, and an increase in the first-year registration rate from 39 percent in 1989 to 51 percent in 1993.

TABLE 1: PASE OBJECTIVES (1989) AND ACHIEVEMENTS (1994)

Areas	Objectives (1989)	Achievements (1993)
Budgetary Allocations		
- State's contribution to education	14%	26%
- Portion of educational budget going to primary education	15%	36%
Registration rate		
- Overall	28%	40.14%
- In the first year	39.42% (1990-1991)	50.72%
- Of girls	19.66% (1990-1991)	26.2%
Working Conditions		
- Classrooms	7,312	10,443
- School textbooks	n.d.	1,400,000 books distributed
- Value assigned to job		Salary x 100% and publication of special status
Training		Retraining of 8,000 teachers 111 educational consultants 64 professors from teachers' training college
Organization and Facilities		
- Mixed-grade classes	4.2% (1991-1992)	6.57%
- Double session	10.7% (1991-1992)	11.5%
- Reassignment of teachers		1,806 schoolmasters from the secondary level to the primary level
- Collection of Statistics		Improvement in the collection method
- Facilities	Only one minister	Facilities audits, creation of two ministries and moderniza tion of the directorates

In spite of these encouraging results, problems arose that exposed weaknesses in the program. Next we examine these weaknesses, bearing in mind the various planning and implementation phases of the reform program.

ESTABLISHING THE PASE

Preparation for the PASE began in late 1987 continued through August 1989, lasting about 20 months. The main features of this preparation period were the PASE Interministerial Preparatory Committee (COPASE), missions by foreign experts to help assess the situation, specific studies, drafting the policy statement, consultations with groups in Guinea on various drafts, and adoption of the policy statement by the Guinean government and donors. We discuss each of these.

The PASE Interministerial Preparatory Committee (COPASE)

Composed of five high-ranking officials representing the ministries of planning, international cooperation, economy, finance, and national education, this committee was run by the Director of the Office of the Minister of Education. His mandates were to

(a) Manage and coordinate activities needed to develop the program;

(b) Ensure coherence between the PASE and the macroeconomic program;

(c) Prepare and coordinate negotiations and meetings with donors;

(d) Supervise the drafting of an education policy statement.

COPASE operated between January 1988 and August 1989. During this time, it initiated 13 foreign missions and 11 studies on issues that needed clarification for the program to be developed.

Assessment missions

In February 1988, the World Bank sponsored a workshop on the meaning of the sector adjustment program in education, which brought together 15 officials from the Ministry of Education and helped to launch the preparatory activities of the program. In the next months, COPASE commissioned 13 missions involving foreign and local experts; eight of the missions were supported by World Bank experts and five by consultants chosen by the government. These experts supported teams of Guinean professionals in their assessment of the education sector and preparation of the program. With their rich experience and outsiders' perspective on problems and strategies for resolving them, the experts assisted officials. Foreigners and locals worked together; decisions were not made unilaterally but rather after numerous discussions during which it was difficult to distinguish the foreign expert from the country official.

During these discussions, differences emerged among the experts and also among the country officials, to the point where heterogeneous groups were formed. The discussions were often stormy and could have gone on for days; however, all participants expressed their points of view, listened to others, and were given wide latitude to speak openly and honestly. In plenary sessions, these groups almost always reached consensus.

When a mission could not reach consensus, it designed assessments to be carried out by country officials and used to clarify issues and facilitate decisions. It was the need to clarify an issue, not requests made by particular donors or researchers for their own interests, that led to the identification of studies.

Before beginning its actual work, each mission reviewed the level attained in terms of specific research conducted to date, the draft documentation, and the fulfillment of commitments made by one party or another. At the end of the mission, the program of activities for the next period and the commitments of the various parties were recorded in a memorandum and communicated to the authorities. Each group submitted its conclusions to the PASE preparatory committee, which considered them from the perspective of the macroeconomic development plan and financial and accounting procedures in effect. Only after this step were the measures validated and communicated to the decision-makers.

A mission took place about once every six weeks. Each was structured to ensure the training of local professionals in the work underway. As a result, local professionals who participated in the PASE's work have a clear and precise view of the current state and future of Guinea's educational system and have been able to take over the PASE's work. The frequency of missions also attested to the donors' support.

Expert groups for conducting the studies

The twenty experts on the World Bank's eight missions worked with 35 Guinean officials to conduct specific studies and assessments, draft documents, and prepare workshops. Among the 35 Guineans, four were from the Economy and Finance ministries, two from the Planning and International Cooperation ministries, one from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and 28 from the Ministry of National Education. The Ministry of Education organized the work groups. Additional officials from the Ministry of Education and other ministries participated in orientation, presentation, and concluding discussion workshops.

The various teams conducted 11 studies on issues needing clarification in order to define the objectives and procedures of the future program. One example is the study on the cost and financing of education, which became necessary when quantitative objectives in terms of the percentage of children in full-time education had to be determined.

The creation of teams composed of foreign experts hired by the government representatives of the donors, officials from ministries other than education, and education officials established a dynamic allowing for greater coordination of activities, integration and harmonization with other national constraints, the search for consensus, and better dissemination of information among all of the program's partners. The presence of officials with differing perspectives enlivened discussions. Education officials had the opportunity to inform those from other ministries while themselves learning about the constraints and realities of the environment in which a reformed education system would have to evolve.

Consultations with unions and the community

Union representatives were intimately involved in discussions and assessment activities. Their participation was necessary because cuts in public sector employment had reduced numbers from 90 thousand in 1986 to 51 thousand in 1989 (a reduction of 43 percent), while the social services sectors, including education, enjoyed a doubling of salaries during the same period. Union groups called the attention of policy-makers to the costs of reasserting the value of teaching and the need to increase the number of teachers in response to demand for increased school capacity.

Although the Ministry of Education maintained an ongoing and fruitful dialogue with national organizations during the policy preparation phase, there was not enough dialogue between the government and communities. Parents of students could not be consulted because there was no organization to facilitate this. Debate and discussion among the community did not develop. (At this time, the national political landscape was dominated by a military regime; no assembly or other body was elected by the people.) Although there was no dialogue at the grass roots level, working group meetings and plenary sessions were open and welcomed the participation of anyone interested.

Working groups did have access to documents in the education sector dating back to May 1984, which contained reliable data and gave an unflinching assessment of the situation. These mitigated the lack of direct consultations with communities.

Drafting the policy proposal

The proposed policy was drafted by a select group of officials from the Ministry of Education: the National Director for Primary Education, the Assistant Inspector General, the head of the Education Planning and Statistics Department, and other experts. The group was supported by a foreign consultant,

who was hired by the government and reported to COPASE. Within three weeks, the drafting group presented COPASE with a document, which was used as the working draft until adoption of the policy. Before this final proposal was presented, however, the group had produced five drafts and thereby acquired experience in drafting a policy.

Guineans' adoption of the proposed policy declaration

Within the Ministry of Education, the participation of many people in the policy preparation phase helped to facilitate their consensus on the policy from the outset. Eventually, those who had participated in the preparation of the policy were also able to make a greater contribution to its implementation because they understood it better. Ministry employees joined together as a block to submit the policy proposal to other government agencies. Nine ministries responded in writing; all were in favor of the policy, particularly the provisions to improve the living conditions of teachers, who, they felt, were at the center of any sustainable reform in the sector. The Ministry of the Economy and Finance's commitment to provide for all the expenditures estimated to attain the objectives was nothing short of remarkable. The support given to the document by all ministries confirmed the importance of their participation in its preparation.

Some thought the document should have been more detailed. In addition to the list of objectives, they argued, it should have presented a strategy with projects and initiatives whose implementation would make it possible to achieve the policy's goals. Some believed that such an elaboration would demonstrate that the objective of 70 percent enrollment rate in the first year was too high. Others believed that although it might be possible to reach the 70 percent attendance at the primary level, it would then be difficult for the other levels of education to sustain the growth rate needed for cohesive and balanced development of the education system as a whole.

Another suggestion was that the policy provide a better platform for rural areas and local development collectives by making the curricula more practical. In addition, the remodeling of schools and staff assignments should give priority to rural areas, and parents should be brought into the process.

After comments and suggestions had been analyzed and integrated into the document, it was submitted on September 19, 1989, to the Governing Council for approval. Once adopted, the education policy was copied and distributed to all national organizations, including senior officials of the national and local education organizations down to the sub-prefect level. It became a working tool, which helped remove obstacles to its implementation.

Approval by donors

The policy had to be approved as well by external partners who would commit their assistance to pursuing the initiatives necessary to implement it. On behalf of the government, the Minister of Finance addressed a letter to the President of the World Bank, presenting the relationship of the macroeconomic reforms to the proposed reform of the education sector. The letter described the actions intended to guide the reform.

The participation of donor representatives in all phases of preparing the policy and the PASE provided those donors with the opportunity to exchange information and views regularly during the process. This, in turn, resulted in documents that held no surprises for the international partners. They knew the education policy document reflected government's commitment to implement consistent and sustained reforms, and this reassurance accelerated the process of approval of credits the government needed to implement the first phase of the program.

MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM

Once the education policy declaration had been adopted by government and agreed upon by donors, new structures and mechanisms had to be put into place to implement it. Managing a reform process requires a broad range of formal and informal approaches, each of which is used in a specific context. It also requires clear criteria for measuring progress. The donors assisted in this effort, in part by offering a set of conditionalities, which served as criteria for measuring the reform's performance as well as qualified the government for additional foreign funds.

Implementation structures

The Monitoring Committee

The PASE Monitoring Committee replaced the COPASE, whose mandate expired upon the adoption of the education policy declaration and the signing of credit agreements to launch the PASE. The Monitoring Committee was created on May 3, 1990. It is comprised of high-level experts charged with the strategic management and the monitoring and evaluation components of the program. The committee represents the ministries of pre-university education, higher education, administration and financial affairs, administrative reform and civil service, international cooperation, and the State Secretary of Decentralization.

This committee is not responsible for implementing initiatives or carrying out action plans. Rather, it provides policy guidance and management oversight. It meets quarterly to

(a) Ensure the detailed monitoring of companion measures and implementation of key elements from the point of view of scheduling;

(b) See to it that the education policy declaration and the allocation of resources are respected;

(c) Maintain consistency between the PASE and the macroeconomic program;

(d) Prepare joint reviews and participate in them together with the donors.

The committee frequently helps to refocus the program on the policy and to manage financial and personnel problems that arise. Monetary credits destined for education were made available to the government by donors in the form of supplements to the balance of payments; it was up to the government to allocate the corresponding amounts to the education sector. This was not always easy, but the presence of high-level officials in the organizations directly involved helped see that it happened.

During the implementation of the PASE, important political events were occurring at the national level—the democratization process was underway, political parties were created, and presidential and local elections were held. These events affected the education sector, which was vulnerable in some aspects to manipulation or misinterpretation when initiatives such as the reassignment of teachers could be interpreted negatively. The committee helped to forestall incidents and prevent political problems.

The Monitoring Committee met 14 times over the course of the first phase of the PASE. It helped coordinate the donors by encouraging an ongoing dialogue among all parties. Donor representatives posted in the capital, who were invited to meetings, took an active role in the discussions, helping to prevent and resolve donor-related problems. Now that procedures for allocating funds to the education sector based on what donors give for balance of payments have been established, the committee plays a different role. For

the rest of the program, the monitoring committee in its current form appears to be less necessary. The establishment of an internal select Monitoring Committee composed of the minister and several high-level ministry officials for whom these structures are a program priority, in addition to a possible representative of the economic and financial board, may be all that is required by the new situation.

The Technical Secretariat

Created in October 1989 to replace COPASE during the preparation of dossiers required for negotiations with donors and to coordinate initiatives before the actual launch of the PASE, the Technical Secretariat was originally composed of three members: a national coordinator (the minister's adviser responsible for education policy, who sat on the Monitoring Committee), and two expatriate technical advisers.

Initially responsible for providing logistical support, the Technical Secretariat's function was revised to be responsible for coordination, motivation, training, and information missions. It is not a project management unit; rather, its activities are intended to foster new habits and attitudes consistent with a philosophy of reform. It helps to integrate the different intervention styles of the donors into the PASE. It also helps to coordinate activities among different levels and different groups. Early on, it became clear that formulating coherent objectives was not enough to guarantee harmony of action and integrated results. If real coordination is not achieved at all levels of the process, serious threats of conflict are likely to arise in the implementation phase or in on-site results. The Technical Secretariat became the coordinating authority at the same time as it stimulated activities in different divisions or reminded each party of its commitments.

The many activities of the PASE touched all departments in the ministry. The intent of the program was to work through these departments, not to replace them. The secretariat needed to ensure that ministry officials received the training they needed. It also prepared dossiers for the 14 meetings of the Monitoring Committee and the 42 meetings of the Steering Committee.

The secretariat suggested the development of component action plans (PACs) for planning and monitoring activities of the ministry's local authorities (regional inspection offices and prefect administrators). These plans present a list of activities, projects, deadlines, and objectives for the completion of each unit's program. They are prepared by each division and discussed to bring them into line with each other and promote an exchange of information. They strengthen the relevance of initiatives proposed by the various departments, prevent conflicts and duplication of efforts, and ensure that the proposed budget can cover the various proposed expenditures.

In view of the extent of the Technical Secretariat's tasks and the need to transfer the different roles to local officials, it would be useful to include four or five more officials, including technical experts within divisions of the ministry who would remain attached to their divisions but devote two days a week to working with the Technical Secretariat to prepare the reports. This approach would increase their own expertise and help institutionalize the reform measures once the PASE ends.

The Steering Committee

Also created on May 3, 1990, the Steering Committee is charged with:

(a) Ensuring internal direction and coordination of the initiatives planned by the ministry's various divisions;

(b) Monitoring the coordination and cohesion between the sector's routine activities and the PASE's directives;

(c) Preparing the action plan modification proposals;

(d) Examining the decisions made as far as the program's implementation is concerned;

(e) Assessing the activities of the program component coordinators.

The committee is comprised of national directors and division heads from the Ministry of Pre-University Education and Professional Training and from the Ministry of Higher Education. It meets once a month or as convened by the chief of staff of the Ministry of Pre-University Education, who chairs meetings. It is served by the Technical Secretariat.

The Steering Committee met 42 times during the PASE's first three years to consider problems related to the program's implementation and the activities of different divisions, even if they were not financed by the donors. Technical education, for example, benefitted from support beyond the PASE's initial outlays, but its implementation was discussed by the Steering Committee in order to maintain its consistency with the other initiatives. This suggests that ministry officials had successfully adapted to the adjustment process, which was important to the system as a whole, because it indicated the reform was a change urged by the government and not imposed by the donors. Far from focusing only on the program, the Steering Committee became the main entity responsible for monitoring, strategic decision-making, and technical management of the sector.

The committee's working sessions were opportunities for the exchange of information, monitoring the coherence of initiatives from both a vertical and horizontal perspective, and coordinating different initiatives so that they could produce the best possible outcome where expected. This was also the forum for discussion and negotiation of the internal conflicts that often arise among entities committed to obtaining the best results in a context in which new functions and new mandates arise as a result of the adjustment. Training initiatives, for example, call on many organizations to participate and require coordination. On these occasions, any professional likely to make a contribution to the issue at hand might be invited, and the committee helped to decide who should attend.

The demanding schedule and commitments made for the program's implementation were analyzed at these meetings, and corrective measures were adopted to maintain deadlines. When sensitive phases were addressed, the spirit of solidarity among the professionals involved in successfully completing the initiative was impressive.

This spirit of solidarity was the result of both internal and external factors:

(a) First, the government's willingness to meet the challenge to implement a broad education program; in fact, the reform was unprecedented both within the country and abroad. International partners as well as the government could take pride in the program's success.

(b) Second, the commitment of the minister and her command of the various dossiers encouraged division chiefs to make an effort to master their respective areas and make a personal commitment to the reform process. The minister frequently stepped in to address technical issues, forging closer links with participants at the grassroots level.

(c) Finally, the participation of so many professionals in the design phase and implementation of the reform. The division chiefs who were in place at the time of the program's preparation remained

during its implementation. Professionals who participated in the design phase continued to hold key positions and were able to exert pressure on others to meet objectives.

Technical working groups

Technical groups were formed whenever the need arose, such as around the issue of school attendance among girls, environmental education, or technical education to reintegrate students who had dropped out of school. In each case, a group was formed when a permanent organization did not seem necessary to conduct the activity or where flexibility was required. The working group was dissolved as soon as its activities were completed.

In some cases, working groups were consolidated and became entities whose activities cut across departmental lines and harnessed support from several divisions to achieve a complex objective. This is the case of the working group on school attendance among girls in school, which currently constitutes a unit attached to the minister's office. This unit manages a set of activities with donors and has its own operating budget.

Other implementation measures

Back-to-school workshops

The desire to involve all officials at the central, regional, and prefect levels led the Minister to hold annual workshops before the start of the school year. The goals of these workshops, which were presided over by the Minister, were to

(a) Inform officials of the objectives and strategies of the program;

(b) Develop coherent annual action plans for each region and sub-prefect area, bearing in mind their specific needs and available resources;

(c) Ensure an adequate level of information and commitment for the program to succeed.

When the program was launched, the workshop was held in the capital. In the second and third years, workshops were held in each province, and they brought together authorities from the area's regional and prefect level, supported by a team of national officials led by the minister. Along with broadcasts about the program on national and local radio and newspaper reports, the workshops provided information about the program.

These workshops provided an occasion for the minister to demonstrate her commitment to the program and to inform and encourage all of the officials involved to reach the objectives. An intense and fruitful exchange occurred between national officials and the local organizations, which resulted in flexible and consistent implementation of the initiatives. This in turn allowed the planning process to focus on each division and to take the goals of all of the various parties into account.

Donor reviews

Regular meetings with donors were initiated at Guinea's request, with the aim of putting a high-level monitoring and discussion mechanism into place. The national coordinator of the PASE and representatives of the donors stationed in Conakry participated in the meetings. During the PASE's implementation, meetings were weekly; subsequently, they were held monthly, as the problems needing

discussion became less frequent. The meetings eventually became routine, however, and did not always serve their purpose.

Annual reviews are also held to help donors, as well as Guinean officials, evaluate the programs. The main objective of the reviews is to verify how the program is being executed and whether measures agreed upon are being adhered to. The deadlines determined for the reviews serve as benchmarks for national officials in planning activities and strategic management of the program.

The joint reviews also establish the donors' rigor, commitment, and solidarity with the national authorities in making the program successful. These reviews, far from being a cursory exercise to correct mistakes, present an opportunity to examine objectively and jointly the program's principal elements and to make recommendations as to how to pursue the activities.

The coordination and solidarity of the donors remained in effect during the development and implementation phases of the program. However, as the discussions began to address practical implementation issues, difficulties arose as a result of differences in approach in the field. It would appear that cultural differences are at the root of such conflicts. They were most apparent during the joint review conducted by the donors and the government to evaluate the PASE and identify initiatives for the remainder of the program.

Because the corporate cultures of the donors differed, the ministry sometimes had to mediate conflicts among them. An example is the issue of textbook procurement. Some donors suggested textbooks be marketed to parents through the private sector. Others argued that parents could not afford to buy textbooks. As for the ministry, it did not want to embrace an approach without looking for lessons from past experience and examining all the implications of various options. Thus, it began testing one means of distribution and collecting information on the results. It maintained dialogue with the donors on the test, and eventually, all were able to reach agreement on a solution.

Other issues, such as evaluation, constituted points of disagreement among the donors. Approaches to solving these problems were diverse: In some cases, the national authorities, conscious of the extent of underlying conflict, tried to resolve problems without direct confrontation, that is, by giving the donors time and negotiating. In other cases, the local authorities invited the donors to the table for open and constructive discussions.

Training national officials

Throughout the reform process, from development through implementation, officials acquired experience that contributed to professionalizing the education sector. This was largely possible because those who helped carry out the studies and develop the program were present during implementation. The numerous training sessions, contacts, and exchanges during the course of the process provided an enormous quantity of information, which officials used to improve their performance.

When the process was launched in 1988, officials began to learn from experts. Subsequently, as the process evolved, they took over the initiatives and the management of the implementation process. In the early days, they received training from donor experts during in-country sessions such as the February 1988 mission organized by the World Bank. Once they had a grasp of reform issues, they began to take the lead and use donor experts as consultants.

Thus emerged a strong group of education officials with a solid understanding of the problems in the sector. They were able to serve as a counterweight to initiatives that were not appropriate for the

circumstances. The group was large enough to provide leadership in implementing the program, making it a national program both in design and implementation.

Leadership

The strength of the leadership at two levels has been an invaluable factor in implementing the reform. First, the principal leader, the minister, was decisive in ensuring the success of the initiatives. Second, officials leading each level of the organization made decisions and exercised initiative in the implementation of activities. The two leadership functions are related, because if the minister does not delegate certain responsibilities to the officials, the latter cannot take any initiatives.

The officials were able to provide leadership thanks to the training and experience they gained on the job. Their training and knowledge of the national context led them to make realistic and appropriate proposals, which underscored their expertise. Moreover, these people were amenable to discussion, and the teamwork style that had marked the preparatory and implementation phases reassured all of the actors in the program and allowed for open discussions and genuine consensus. It was not difficult to meet with any high-level official or even the minister herself to discuss education issues without a prior appointment. This working style lessened the burden of protocol and made work more efficient.

The minister's easygoing attitude was often a determining factor in the program's success. Very frequently, she went to the field to meet with teachers, students, parents, and officials of local organizations; she discussed the program's development with them, listened to their points of view and defended the initiatives. By working in such close contact, she gave the reform a human face.

During this period, political parties had formed, and the opposition tried to exploit the decision to assign some secondary school teachers to primary schools, which threatened to cause protests and even street demonstrations. This was resolved without incident, thanks to meetings between the minister and the teachers involved. In addition, when a teacher or official made an error, the minister called him or her in and discussed the issue directly. The resulting decision was generally accepted. When union demands were announced, their representatives were invited for direct talks, and a solution was always found. This contributed to the program's proper implementation with minimal conflict.

For issues like schooling for young girls—about which many ministry officials knew little or nothing—a progressive approach was implemented. This consisted of launching the project and creating a critical mass of supporters to counter the effects of those who had not supported it at the outset. A working group sponsored by the minister and under the supervision of the chief of staff was formed. This expert group enjoyed the ongoing support of the minister who, when she traveled to the provinces, defended education for young girls and thereby raised the awareness of parents and the community.

An important factor contributing to the minister's strong leadership is the length of her term in office and her training. Appointed in June 1989 and still in office today, the minister participated in finalizing the education policy declaration and preparing the sector adjustment program. She assessed the work of country officials and put together qualified teams, to whom it was often possible to delegate tasks and duties. She is unquestionably qualified; she has a university degree in teaching and has held administrative responsibilities within the ministry and elsewhere before being appointed minister. Her time spent with committees helped to create a team spirit in education, which was evident during discussions, in which the solidarity of the group was always put first and problems were presented as the group's.

The successful implementation of this kind of program is based on ongoing collaboration. Although at the level of the ministry, the officials who participated in developing the policy have

remained in their positions during implementation, representatives of the donor organizations have turned over among frequently. This has often created a feeling of disruption in the continuity of the project. It is not easy to establish a trusting relationship right away or to use the same working style with different people, and some have observed that newly arriving individuals representing donors need to adjust their own approaches and philosophies to the reforms that have been well established when they arrive.

CONCLUSIONS

The design and implementation of the PASE produced tangible results that allowed the education system to develop rapidly in a relatively short period of time. This was possible because of a confluence of factors, such as changing national economic conditions, a motivated and stable group of country officials, the willingness of donors to assist in the readjustment of the system, and the existence of a coherent program-development framework resulting from the development and promotion of an education policy.

Other factors, such as the training of officials and leadership exercised by authorities, were decisive for the success of the program in its initial phase. Indeed, it is difficult to steer a reform process without competent individuals and leadership within the group charged with implementing the initiatives.

The results to date have prompted discussion of a second phase to reinforce the initiatives underway. Conditions have changed, however, and the World Bank is no longer able to pursue a Sector Adjustment Programme, which could lead to a break in the continuity of initiatives in the education sector. This could undermine the effort to preserve achievements for the program's continuation.

The change in the program's design has led to adjustments in implementation that could create tensions in the search for balance. The donors, along with country officials, must design interventions that fit into the broad reform program. It is up to the national partner to see to it that actions proposed and the measures to be implemented are consistent, while bearing in mind that consistent actions do not by themselves guarantee consistent results.

Country officials are in the process of proving themselves in the design and implementation of the second program. An open posture is advisable here, especially in a situation where partners could view major changes as a threat to their coordination and solidarity, among other achievements. Nationalism undoubtedly remains a fundamental virtue, but we must also recognise the need to accept others with all of their differences and idiosyncrasies. These are the numerous contributions that so enrich the reforms we are undertaking, especially in education.

Donors, at the same time as they help readjust the education systems, must improve their practices by making them more transparent, particularly at the time they are implemented. Very often, fruitful exchanges take place during the design phase, and they fall off during implementation for reasons often linked to political, strategic, or economic interests. Exchanges of information should also be improved so that information is shared at all levels. This type of approach leads to greater success by strengthening the trusting relationships needed to meet the challenges ahead in education.

ENDNOTES

1. The term donor includes organizations that lend funds as well as those that donate funds and/or provide technical assistance.

THE CASE OF GHANA

by Dominic Lwaku Fobih, Albert K. Koomson and Ebenezer F. Godwyll

INTRODUCTION

The education reform initiated in Ghana in 1987 has gained international support and recognition for being comprehensive and well-conceived. Within Ghana, the reform has been a central focus of public concern and debate. It stands out as a unique event in the evolution of education in Ghana. Its uniqueness stems from the integration of older policies and concerns with new educational thinking, leading to the formulation of a comprehensive reform.

The reform arose out of a crisis situation. Ghana's education system in the 1980s was in near collapse and viewed as dysfunctional in relation to the goals and aspirations of the country. Academic standards, support for teachers, instructional materials, school buildings, classrooms, and equipment had declined for lack of financing and management. By 1985 the system could be described as "clinically dead." These circumstances and government's orientation toward social action favored a radical reform to reverse the downward spiral of educational standards, particularly in basic education. The content and structure of the reform touched all levels of the education system and attempted to address the perennial problems of access, retention, curriculum relevance, teacher training, provision of physical structures, and financing.

The eight years that have passed since the announcement of the education reform have seen many changes in the system. Yet today, many people believe the reform requires significant adjustments if its objectives are to be realised. This has initiated a new cycle of policy review and analysis.

This case study examines the initiation of a major education reform and follows it through implementation and review. Specifically, the context of policy formation, implementation processes, and outcomes that characterise the reform are examined. Conclusions and generalisations have been drawn as lessons for the guidance of other African governments and education leaders embarking on similar reforms of their education systems.

CONTEXT OF REFORM

Political

The swiftness of an undertaking of this magnitude and its freedom from strict adherence to conventional procedures can be explained by the political culture and educational and economic contexts of the time it was conceived.

In 1981, the Third Republic of Ghana was ousted. The government that came to power was a revolutionary military regime with an agenda of social and economic transformation of the status quo. The new leaders saw education as the vehicle for achieving change and perceived that most Ghanaians supported this strategy, despite persistent opposition from the elite and the bureaucracy.

By 1987, government had consolidated its power, but in the meantime, problems facing the education sector had worsened as a result of political instability, ad hoc measures, and frequent changes in education policy. Government had become aware of the centrality of problems related to the education sector and the people's expectation for change in this direction. To win political legitimacy, government decided to tackle what successive governments had attempted without success–a significant reform of the education sector.

Economic

Constrained by decline in revenues government had, for nearly a decade, dramatically cut back financing in the education sector. By 1985, its education budget had declined to one-third its 1976 level. The percentage of GDP going to education fell from 6.4 percent in 1976 to 1.0 percent in 1983 and back to 1.7 percent in 1985. In that same period, education's share of the national recurrent budget fell from 38 percent in 1976 to 27 percent in 1984, when basic education's share of the total education sector budget was 44 percent. In 1986, 88 percent of financial resources went into payment of salaries and allowances, leaving only 12 percent of the education recurrent budget for non-wage items. The unit cost for a primary pupil's education dropped from US$41 in 1975 to US$16 in 1983.[1] The education sector thus lacked the financial resources needed to expand education services and improve their quality.

Educational

Conditions within the education sector also provoked the initiation of the reform. Prominent among them was a system unresponsive to the socio-economic changes taking place in the country because of the highly academic nature of its content, processes, and product.

As a result of Ghana's economic decline and the harsh repressive revolutionary zeal of the military regime that took charge in 1981, a significant number of trained and highly qualified teachers left the country, mostly for Nigeria. By the mid-1980s, as many as 50 percent of teachers in primary and middle schools were untrained. Textbooks, teaching materials, chalk, notebooks, registers, and desks were in short supply. Teaching and learning at the basic education level had deteriorated to the extent that the mass of school leavers lacked literacy skills.[2] Confidence in the once enviable Ghana's education system was shaken.

In the face of these setbacks, enrollment declined at all levels. Yet the school-age population was growing. By the 1985–86 school year, about 27 percent of six-year-old children were not in school.[3] Enrollment ratios varied across the country, being lowest in the northern part. The attrition rate at the primary level averaged about 60.4 percent. About 75 percent of primary school graduates did not go on to secondary school–an alarming rate, considering that there was no substitute apprenticeship training programme for the dropouts. Added to these problems was the long duration of the pre-tertiary course, inadequate procedures for assessing students' progress, and a lack of data needed for meaningful planning, policy, and management decisions.

THE REFORM PROCESS

Leadership

The political environment in the education sector within which the reform policies were being formulated was tense. The Ghana Education Service Council (GESC), which had the final authority in appointments, promotions, discipline, and other professional matters in Ghana Education Service (GES),

had been abolished in the early 1980s, and a new law at that time replaced the GESC with an Education Commission, which had no more than advisory powers. All the executive powers of the proscribed council, therefore, became vested in the Secretary of Education. Thus, professionals enjoyed no protective cover, and no single officer was too strong to be dealt with if he or she stood in the way of the ministry.

The period following this law witnessed numerous dismissals, interdictions, redeployment, and premature retirements of GES staff. Sometimes officials were punished for their candor. For example, regional directors who told pressmen they had not received enough textbooks and equipment (when government claimed that they had) were dismissed, retired, transferred, or demoted for incompetence. This situation created fear among professionals, who buried their reservations and refrained from comments that could be interpreted as counter to the reform. These affected directors at nearly every level of the ministry as well as heads of institutions.

Some dismissals were explained by adverse audit findings, others by inadequate qualifications. A number of officials eventually returned to post. But some measure of damage had been done, as they had been publicly disgraced when their dismissals were announced over radio and television; their return to work did not receive public notice. Their silence thereafter and the silence of others led to a breakdown in communications between the regional, district, and institutional directors on one hand, and the ministry and GES officials at headquarters. By failing to report problems that regional, district, and institutional directors faced, government created the impression that all was ready for the take-off of the reform when this was not so. The whole system operated on authoritarian arrangements characteristic of the revolutionary political milieu, with officials and technocrats carrying out orders without questioning.

Events leading to the adoption of the reform

Between 1982 and 1985 the reform became part of government's revolutionary rhetoric. In 1983, through the first Economic Recovery Programme and support from a World Bank Health and Education Rehabilitation Project, government injected some urgently needed materials such as stationery items and books, into the education system.

In 1983 government negotiated with the IMF and World Bank for lending support through a Structural Adjustment Program. As one condition, government agreed it would improve public sector management and, in particular, rehabilitate the decaying education system.

To do so, it turned to a report issued in 1974, "New Content and Structure for Education" which had never been fully implemented, and convened in 1983 a conference of Directors of Education to appraise the report's suitability for adoption. Participants at the conference noted that the capital outlay proposed in the 1974 report was huge. For instance, it called for building schools and providing equipment at a standard of secondary technical institutions, which had well-constructed workshops, science laboratories, home science blocks, and so on. But the directors at the conference agreed that these capital intensive components had to be reduced and proposed that the Planning Division of the ministry devise a five-year plan for implementing the reform within the budgetary constraints of the GES. Thus, the main goals of the plan adopted by the Directors of Education were cost savings and improvement of the curriculum.

The ministry also asked the Education Commission to review the state of the education system and make recommendations to government. The commission was made up of a cross-section of professionals such as clergy, army personnel, university lecturers, teachers, writers, politicians, lawyers, and educators. It was assisted by three consultants from Nigeria, Kenya, and Brazil. It collected information

through a number of channels: (i) visits to institutions; (ii) interviews with individuals and organizations; (iii) advertisements to the general public to submit memoranda or educational literature; and (iv) distribution of questionnaires to individuals and organizations to solicit their views on basic education.

The commission reviewed the critical mass of reports of nine commissions and committees formed since 1960 on higher education, the structure and content of pre-university education, research, technical and vocational education, and education costs and finances.

In 1984, the Education Commission issued an initial report, which began with references to an address by Ghana's president to the commission:

> The fundamental message of his (Rawlings) inaugural address was that our children must "grow up free from the stultifying influence of the educational oppression which has prevailed for far too long." He observed that a system which denies the majority of children equal educational opportunities, which values conformity before creativity and which encourages self-interest cannot be described as anything other than oppressive. He, therefore, charged the Commission to formulate "recommendations of national policy on education such as will enable the realization of the objectives of the revolutionary transformation of the society in the interest of social justice."

In 1986, the Education Commission submitted another part of its report to government. It noted among other things, that its proposals represented the views of a cross-section of the population and that

> they do not differ in many ways from those made by Dzobo Committee on which the 1974 New Structure and Content of Education in Ghana is based. They can be regarded as endorsing, emphasizing and amplifying those proposals, save in some crucial areas where novel proposals are advanced.[5]

The commission recommended that the new scheme commence in 1990, with entry into grade one of the first cohort of pupils in the nine-year basic education course. This arrangement would

> give the country some breathing space (three years) to prepare the teachers, to procure sufficient textbooks and other teaching materials, to have improved the building and other equipment base, and to have obtained prior commitment to the new scheme. By 1999, the old system would have been phased out as the first Certificates of Basic Education are awarded.[6]

It further concluded that:

> The new ideas will have to be explained widely, using all available agencies such as the mass media, Information Services Department, religious organization, Traditional Councils and the revolutionary organs so that they are understood by parents, teachers and the general public ... for a smooth transition to be attained.[7]

On October 15, 1986, in the face of public and bureaucratic disenchantment with the existing education system and in a spirit of revolutionary zeal, the Secretary of Education pronounced a sweeping policy reform. Assuming that primary schools had been reformed in 1975, its strategic thrust was to start large-scale at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level rather than piecemeal at the primary level–a decision that raised the eyebrows of critics.

Critics argued that the reform policies had not been adequately vetted within the education sector. The apparent lack of elaborate consultation can be attributed to the top-down philosophy of government. The regime viewed itself as a government with a decisive policy and action rather than a consultative government. Therefore, to engage in elaborate discussion and sampling of views from the public would mean a show of weakness and retraction from its role of directing the destiny of the country. Moreover, the Education Commission was representative of the society and working within tight time constraints.

The commission could argue that the reforms it proposed reflected the content and structure of education proposed and thoroughly discussed in the 1974 report. Yet the final structure and content of the reform approved by government in 1987 was not the same as that proposed in 1974. Even though substantial components of the reform emanated from the 1974 report, the time lapse between 1974 and 1987 was more than a decade, and that period had seen great transformations in societal structures, science, technology, education theory, practice, and so on.

Policy statement

Principles

The Secretary outlined the principles of the reform: Education is a basic right for every citizen, yet the majority of citizens do not participate in national development because they are not fully literate or well educated. People need a cultural identity and dignity. Education all too often leads to unemployment because it is not geared toward practical skills. Citizens must acquire scientific and technological skills for adaptability, and they need an awareness of their environment.[8]

The reform measures were to include:

(a) A reduction of pre-university education from 17 years[9] to 12 years in order to make funds available to improve access and quality. The 12-year course would consist of a nine-year basic education followed by a three-year senior secondary education, as proposed by the 1974 Reform Commission. This would replace the existing six-year primary, three-year junior secondary, two-year senior secondary lower and two-year senior secondary upper cycles. An estimated 30 percent of junior secondary pupils would continue on to senior secondary schools.

(b) A philosophy of education would influence national thinking and planning.

(c) Entrants into teacher training would possess a secondary education.

(d) Teacher trainees would be paid allowances and treated on a parity basis with all other trainees.

(e) Local community participation in the provision of basic education would be mobilized without waiting for decentralization to be completely implemented.

Operational guidelines

To achieve the objectives outlined for basic education, the following operational guidelines were established:

(a) Each pupil will learn his or her own language plus another Ghanaian language. The local language will be the medium of instruction for the first three years of primary school. English will be taught as a subject from the first year at school and become the medium of instruction in the fourth grade of primary school. The study of Ghanaian languages will be compulsory up to senior secondary school.

(b) To ensure that teaching at the basic level does not degenerate into rote learning and memorization of facts and that teaching encourages inquiry, creativity, and manipulation of manual skills, teaching and education will be reoriented to imparting skills rather than purely academic knowledge, which by itself does not promote full development. Continuous in-service training

programmes for practising teachers will eradicate ineffective teaching. Teachers who are untrained and inefficient middle-school leavers will eventually be replaced.

(c) To minimize the incidence of drop-outs, a national literacy campaign will be mounted, and all Committees for the Implementation of the Junior Secondary School Programme at regional, district, and community levels will be assisted in carrying out the campaign on a continuing basis. When drop-outs cannot reenter the formal system, provision will be made for them in adult and nonformal education programmes.

(d) All schools, whether private or public, will be expected to run a 40-week school year.

(e) Progress throughout basic education will be based on continuous and guidance-oriented assessment by teachers and headmasters. Terminal assessment and certification for basic education will be based on 40 percent internal continuous assessment and 60 percent external assessment, to be conducted by the West African Examinations Council. This terminal assessment and certification will form the basis for selection into senior secondary schools and other post-basic training institutions.

(f) Provision of basic education is the joint responsibility of both community and central governments. The national government will continue, therefore, to rely on and encourage the efforts made by communities to provide infrastructures for schools. It is also expected that various education committees, church and voluntary organizations, as well as private individuals, will continue the vital roles they have so far played in support of the provision of basic education.

(g) Government will rely on policy-makers and implementers, communities, parents, religious bodies, teachers' organizations, nongovernmental organizations and all well-meaning Ghanaians to join together in partnership to work toward achievement of the national objectives of providing basic education to every Ghanaian child as a right and, thereby, lay a sound foundation for socio-economic development.[10]

The reform also sought to

(a) Contain and partially recover costs;

(b) Enhance sector management and budgeting procedures through a merger of planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation functions;

(c) Decentralize decision-making and supervision from the region to the district and circuit levels, and increase the level of school visitation and supervision;

(d) Withdraw feeding and lodging subsidies from secondary and tertiary institutions.

In 1986 government had as a basis for the reform policies the report of the Education Commission (which was based on the 1974 report), and the five-year development plan for the implementation of the reforms submitted by the Conference of Directors of Education on behalf of GES. In line with the major recommendations of these reports and the framework of the Education Structural Adjustment Programme, government began to restructure pre-university education to meet national educational objectives.

Tertiary reform

The reforms of the tertiary system were started under the first Education Sector Adjustment Credit of 1986, supported through the Second Education Sector Adjustment Credit of 1990, and further elaborated in the 1991 White Paper on University Rationalization.[11]

The Ministry of Education requested proposals from the tertiary institutions for inclusion in the proposed project in mid-1990. These proposals and others for system-wide development and financing plans were worked into an integrated and coherent proposal for tertiary education reform and development and presented to a World Bank identification mission in July 1991. In the same year government issued a White Paper on Tertiary Reform.

Prominent among the features of the tertiary reform are:

(a) All institutions of higher learning come under the general supervision and direction of the Ministry of Education, especially in the areas of policy formulation and monitoring. Academic autonomy of the institutions, however, remains unchanged.

(b) The Education Commission is to advise the Ministry of Education on all matters related to tertiary education, to assist in the formulation of policies on the totality of the national education system, and to act as a vehicle for continuous dialogue between government and the tertiary institutions.

(c) Tertiary institutions such as diploma-awarding institutions are to be restructured to improve cost-effectiveness, upgrade the quality of teaching, and increase output. This involves establishing university colleges from the existing diploma-awarding institutions.

(d) A university in the north of the country is to be established to increase access to tertiary education and introduce new action-oriented degree programmes in priority areas of development, including agriculture and industry.

(e) A system of cost-sharing for the financing of tertiary education is to be established between government, students, and the private sector.

(f) Tertiary institutions are to adjust their curricula so that, by 1994, they are compatible with that of the new senior secondary school system.

(g) Distance education is to be pursued as an alternative mode of delivering and increasing access to university education.[12]

Public information campaign

An important feature of the education reform was a systematic and widespread campaign to inform educators and the public. In 1987, several months after the Secretary's pronouncement of the reform, government organised a forum for stakeholders and other groups to air their views. Participants included the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), the Trade Union Congress (TUC), the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS), the Association of Principals of Technical Institutes (APTI), Principals Conference (PRINCOF), the Ghana Education Service (GES), and so on. This forum was intended as a campaign to inform these groups about the rationale and structure of the reforms, not to get their input or suggested amendments.

As part of the public information campaign, in 1986 the National Planning Committee held a seminar at the University of Science and Technology at Kumasi. Representatives from all district administrations and groups such as revolutionary organs, churches, professional groups, and the Ghana Education Service participated. The aim of this seminar was to sensitize and inform these representatives of the objectives, structure and implications of the reforms so that they could, in turn, educate their membership.

Another dimension of the public information campaign was use of mass media–newspaper articles, radio discussions, television programs–and meetings with leaders and members of church groups and other organizations. The *Ghanaian Times*, a daily government newspaper, for example, devoted its back page to information and updates on the reforms. Officials at all levels of the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service used public gatherings such as durbars, speech and prize-giving days, Open Days, and other community meetings to educate people on the reforms. One problem emanating from the involvement of political figures in the education drive was that some, in their revolutionary zeal, did not always accurately present the reform to the people. This led to distortions and misrepresentations among the very large illiterate population.

Dissenting views

The provisions of the reform were not universally accepted. Dissenting views were expressed by the GNAT, NUGS, educators, the Christian Council of Ghana, the Bishops Conference, and other professional bodies, as well as by the general public. These included the following:

(a) The competence of the average primary-grade-six child was too low to grapple with the junior secondary school curriculum.

(b) The training of teachers required more time.

(c) The pace of the reform was too fast.

(d) Logistics were not well planned.

(e) The reduction in the duration of pre-university education was too drastic.

The reform pronouncement had agitated many groups, which submitted their own views to government. Notable among these were GNAT and NUGS. The former, at its congress in November 1986, invited the Vice Chancellor of University of Ghana, Legon, to address its members. The congress used the newspaper as a forum for expressing its reservations and recommendations to government. The NUGS invited the Secretary of Education to explain more clearly the purpose and reason for the reforms. It used the occasion to clarify pertinent points and to offer suggestions. The crux of its recommendations are summarized here:

> The NUGS recommends that the Junior Secondary School package should not be implemented in a rush. It proposes that a national Implementation Committee be set up to do feasibility studies and to see to the provision of vital ingredients like school buildings where there are no basic and vital equipment for teaching vocational, technical and science subjects, the required numbers of teachers well schooled in the various demands and challenges of the new system in order not to bungle this fine package. Grave doubts were expressed as to whether the economy could shoulder the burden of having to provide infrastructure, equipment and teaching skills in all schools in the country.[13]

Generally, dissenting views were not tolerated, creating tension between policy implementers, students of tertiary institutions, academic elites, certain professional bodies, and the Catholic Secretariat, just to mention a few. For instance, students in the tertiary institutions, particularly the universities,

demonstrated and submitted memoranda to government on their reservations about the reform. These demonstrations led to the dismissal from the university of some members of the NUGS Executive Committee and the Students Representative Council of the University of Ghana. This, in turn, led to prolonged struggles between students and government until those who had been dismissed were called back.

Seven years later, the Education Review Committee (set up in 1994) echoed the concerns about omission of religious education from the curriculum, extension of the senior secondary school programme by at least a year, and the overloaded nature of the curriculum. They contended that if some of these views had been considered and incorporated into the reforms, the abysmal performance of the first cohort of the senior secondary school graduates in 1993 could have been averted.

An observation by a former GES Director General is illuminating. Instructional time had declined, content of the curriculum had increased, and the available time to the teacher had been further tasked with more paper work generated by the continuous assessment system. Yet government did not allow debate on the package. It appears that the reform took off without clear insight into the state of education in the country.[14] One person commented that the reform was pushed through by "six dedicated very passionate people who believed they had something good to offer the country and went all out to implement their vision."

IMPLEMENTATION

Institutional strategies

Based on the belief that the reform at the primary level had begun in 1975, the 1987 reform started at the middle of the education ladder–at the JSS level.

The implementation of the reform started with a school mapping exercise to gather statistics and information to aid in planning. At the start of the reforms, there had been hardly any data on school sites and population, and the over 4,000 middle schools had been heavily concentrated in a few towns. A committee made up of district assistant directors of education, district political heads (district secretaries), national service personnel, and members of the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) was formed in each of the 110 districts in the country. These committees were to identify the middle schools, determine the distances between them, and propose the new sites for junior secondary schools (JSS). They were also to gather statistics on the number of pupils and teachers, qualifications of teachers, and recommended number of JSSs in each community.

This was an intensive, useful exercise, which lasted three months in early 1987. Though the involvement of community representatives on the committee made them feel part of the whole exercise, the data tended to be unreliable because they were sometimes biased by the community's self-interest and the methods they used to collect them.

The analysis of the data–as well as construction of schools–involved a large capital outlay provided by a World Bank sector adjustment loan.

JSS school buildings were adequate but in poor condition because the middle school buildings that were converted to JSSs had not been renovated for years. In 1986 there were 5,462 middle and JSS schools in the country. After the school mapping exercise some were amalgamated. When the reform took off in September 1987, there were 5,260 JSSs in the country. Though the number of schools in 1987 was

smaller than that of the previous year, the schools now had a wider coverage, and the distances that students traveled to get to school were much shorter.

Using the data collected, the daily newspapers published names of teachers and their category and the venue for in-service teacher-training programmes. Throughout the country, the ministry embarked on a massive training drive. Subject-matter experts wrote syllabi and developed textbooks. Teachers were trained for the new syllabi, methodologies appropriate for subjects and themes, and the instructional materials that could be developed.

Teachers

A large number of Ghanaians who were qualified teachers had left the country during the period of economic decline in the late 1970s, and teachers in many critical subject areas were not available at the start of the reform. Teachers of science, technical studies, and Ghanaian languages were in critical short supply. In addition to exposure to the new syllabus, teachers urgently needed a change in attitude and improvement in motivation.

Because the majority of practising teachers were not qualified, improving teacher training received high priority. The four-year post-middle teacher training programmes were phased out, and there was a marked increase of intake into post-secondary institutions. Trained teachers holding the middle school certificate were moved to primary schools. All JSS teachers were given in-service education and training.

Policy implementers were faced with a situation in which teachers were scarce, yet they could not use post-middle school trained teachers because their level of competence was deemed too low to teach the JSS curriculum. Experienced head teachers in the primary schools who were not technically qualified for their positions were replaced. Yet their replacements were not those who knew better the methods to do the job, but those with a higher level of academic training. This had serious repercussions on the teaching and learning process. Government's choice of focussing on academic qualifications rather than teaching experience and skills proved to be unfortunate and underscores the need to place the consideration of availability and training of teachers at the heart of reform strategies.

Resources for the reform

Infrastructure

In Ghana the responsibility for providing school facilities rests on the shoulders of the district administration. The other sources of finance to cover capital costs are the local communities, religious organizations, and foreign donors. The reform of 1987 emphasized the responsibility of the district administration.

A process was initiated whereby the local communities contributed to the building of JSS schools and workshops. Chiefs and community leaders, in concert with the political wings of government, were to mobilize people for the task. Most communities had not done this by the time the reform began. Their failure was due not to opposition to the programme but to their inability to find the resources to provide school workshops (for practical training) within the space of eight months. As a result, in September 1987, few communities had managed to provide workshops for their schools. Since the thrust of the programme was to depart from theoretical instruction, the absence of workshops made it much harder to offer practical training–a critical objective of the reform.

The central government provided the equipment and benches for these workshops. Every district received a grant of 10 million *cedis* to provide benches. A standardized design was adopted by the Ministry of Education and local carpenters contracted to produce them. But many did not deliver, and for those who did, there was often no workshop to put them.

Equipment

Some technical, agriculture, and science equipment was available in some schools at the start of the reform, but there was not enough to supply every school in order that all teachers could use the activity/discovery method of teaching emphasized in the curriculum of the new syllabi. Basic tools needed for effective learning were selected by panels of experts. Policy planners imported prepacked and pre-labeled equipment for the schools. The World Bank Sector Adjustment Project provided technical and agricultural tools. About 7,000 kits were imported and supplied to about 5,260 JSS schools, and a surplus is available for newly established schools.[15] The Overseas Development Agency (ODA) provided science equipment. Here again kits were imported prepacked. Each kit contained basic science equipment for use in exposing pupils to science and technology. Every school received a kit. The ministry solicited the help of the military, police, and other organizations to assist with the transportation of the equipment to the schools.

Capacity building

To consolidate and strengthen the benefits achieved by the reform programme, a Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Division was established in May 1988 at the Ministry of Education with financial support from UNDP. The division supports the sector-wide programme in budgeting, policy analysis, monitoring, collection and collation of statistical data and analyses, and medium-term planning. The new division:

(a) Established a statistical database for the whole sector, to form the basis for a comprehensive management system for the entire ministry;

(b) Established a computer centre to facilitate the treatment and analysis of required data for policy decisions;

(c) Prepared courses on planning, budgeting, enrollment projections, manpower demand, and micro-planning;

(d) Organized seminars and workshops for the staff of the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service at headquarters, regional, and district levels in the fields of planning, statistics and budgeting.[16]

Community participation in development projects has been part of Ghana's tradition since independence in 1957. Schools, health centres, public toilets, markets, and drainage systems are constructed mostly through labour mobilized by town and village committees. Although Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) have been set up in all public and private schools in order to raise development funds and mobilize community labour for school-related projects, members of the association are not involved in management issues of the school.

To get communities more involved in the activities of the schools and thereby sustain the reform, government took two giant steps. First, community leaders were expected, under the World Bank Primary

School Development project, to participate in the selection of head teachers of their local schools. District Assembly Common Funds were created in all the districts from which funds are utilized for, among other things, the construction and rehabilitation of school buildings. Decision-making on school facilities, equipment, and furnishing now rested primarily with the district assemblies, which are composed of elected members. It was not uncommon to hear on Radio Ghana and read in the dailies, concerns and measures by communities to reduce school drop-out rate, teenage pregnancies, as well as improvement in the quality of education.

Donor support and coordination

Donor support

Prior to 1986, a lack of funding had contributed to the failure of most education reforms in the country and kept good reform proposals on the shelf. With its strong ambition to reform the education system, government did not leave any stone unturned in restructuring the nation's economic base to bring it into conformity with the credibility levels required by the World Bank. With this condition met, Ghana had the opportunity of negotiating for credits and grants to finance a colossal education reform. Between the inception of the Education Reform Programme in 1987 and the end of 1994, the sector received approximately $US400 million in credits and grants from the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, ODA, and other donors. A greater part of this donor assistance was directed to basic education. It supported the development of new curricula, syllabi, textbooks, in-service training for teachers; it helped to restructure and strengthen management and to provide classroom pavilions, furniture, and houses for head teachers and teachers. The World Bank alone provided US$ 232.1 million in credits for seven key projects. This package is one of the largest World Bank funded education programmes in the world.[17]

Apart from the World Bank credits, several donor agencies came to the aid of Ghana in her reform implementation. Table 1 shows the credits and grants provided by the donor agencies and the purpose for which the assistance was granted.

Under its Primary Education Project (PREP), USAID gave Ghana a grant of $35 million. As noted earlier, the reform of 1987 was conceived as a continuation of the education reform launched by a previous government. Assuming the reform was already in place at the primary level, the reformers in 1987 focussed on the junior and senior secondary levels. But public criticism of weaknesses in primary education attracted the attention of USAID, which wanted to help strengthen the policy and institutional framework required to assure an effective, equitable, and financially sustainable primary education system in Ghana by the year 2000. The PREP project was established in 1990 as a subunit of the Project Management Unit (discussed below). Conditionalities related to school financing, policy formation, and programme implementation were spelt out to ensure that grant funds were properly utilized.

Donor coordination

Prior to 1987, donor agencies operated independently of each other. Each stated its own terms and conditions for assistance, without any coordination among them. Moreover, top personnel of the GES, who had access to donor funds, had been prosecuted for embezzling and misappropriating millions of dollars of state funds. In an effort to make better use of all donor funds, the donor agencies demanded that a special unit be established in the ministry. It was intended that the unit would be an integral part of its Office of Evaluation, Planning, Monitoring and Budgeting. But in the press to establish a management body competent to coordinate donor funds, the Project Management Unit (PMU) was formed, independent of the PBME.

The PMU has four main divisions, each of which is headed by a director and manages a project area. A director-general manages the entire unit. PMU meetings are held weekly. For closer collaboration, the PMU receives regular feedback from its management, procurement, disbursement and civil works sub-units. It shares the expertise among projects in handling all issues affecting the on-going projects.

The PMU has become a forum for all donor-supported projects. It ensures that objectives and timing are strictly adhered to, monies released expeditiously, and activities monitored constantly. The PMU has eliminated inefficiencies in the implementation process and thus advanced the reform to its present stage. By dint of a monitoring mechanism introduced by the World Bank: (i) funds are released upon the submission of detailed cost estimates, and (ii) the release of further funds is subject to proper accounting for earlier disbursements. It is only after these conditions have been satisfied that further negotiations for more funding are allowed.

TABLE 1: DONORS' SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION REFORMS IN GHANA

DONOR	TOTAL CREDIT/GRANT (US$ millions)	PURPOSE
World Bank	232.1	General improvement of basic secondary and tertiary education
USAID	35.0	Improvement of primary education
AfDB	20.0	Tertiary education
Canadian CIDA	14.0	Basic and technical education
British ODA	8.0	Literacy and teacher training for basic education
Norway	4.0	Literacy and school pavilions for basic education
OPED Fund	(not specified)	School pavilions and sanitation
WFP	(not specified)	School feeding
UNICEF	(not specified)	Primary and pre-school
Switzerland	(not specified)	Secondary school equipment
The Saudi Fund	(not specified)	Secondary school development
GTZ	(not specified)	Vocational school development
UNDP & ILO	(not specified)	For institutional strenghtening

Source: World Bank, 1994 Report on Ghana

Leadership, consultation, and participation during implementation

A National Planning Committee for the Implementation of the Reforms was created after the forum of late February 1987. Although its membership was supposed to be made up of a cross-section of the population, the committee was not truly representative of the associations from which members were drawn. None of the key institutions or constituted bodies in the field of education was directly or formally represented. These groups were not invited to nominate committee members. Instead, the reform leaders selected individuals. For example, they appointed university lecturers to the committee, claiming these individuals represented the university, even when that was not the case. The reform leaders argued that time constraints and the need for rapid implementation–within the short space of one year–required that they select those who shared views consistent with the reforms. They needed a cadre of officials dedicated to the course of change if government was to be seen as credible by the financial institutions lending support. Thus, as one critic summarized, "bureaucrats became apostles for the propagation and implementation of the reforms."

The reluctance of ministry and GES personnel to express critical views can be inferred from the lack of public discussion about two significant events in 1993. Primary school test results (Criterion Referenced Tests–CRT) and secondary examination results (Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination) provided ample reason to believe that the reform was not providing the expected outcomes. The CRT indicated that 95 percent of the sixth grade pupils had not mastered basic skills in mathematics and English. But this was not officially announced in Ghana when the results first came out. Also, 95 percent of the candidates who sat for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in 1993–the first cohort of secondary students in the reform–failed to qualify to take the university entrance examination. This was made public only by a nongovernmental, noneducational body, the Institute of Economic Affairs, in June 1994.

OUTCOMES—A NEW CYCLE OF POLICY ANALYSIS

In the light of the evidence and results now emerging from the reform process, this section examines government and public responses to the policies and implementation strategies adopted in the reform and how they have given rise to a new cycle of policy analysis.

The education reform of September 1987 was fully in place by December 1993. The former middle and secondary school structures had been replaced by the new junior and senior secondary structures. In the 1994–95 school year, the first cohort of the reform was eligible for university admission. Entrance of this cohort into the universities was preceded by structural and curricula modification of the universities' programmes between 1991 and 1993.

Major results of the reform

Learning outcomes

An important conditionality stipulated in the USAID project was the development and adoption of a policy on assessing students' scholastic achievement in English (reading, writing, oral) and mathematics. A Criterion–Referenced Testing (CRT) programme based on Ghanaian syllabi was developed and adopted for these subjects. A unit was set up in the PMU and charged with the development and administration of curriculum testing on a representative sample of sixth-grade pupils.

Pupils' performance at the basic level left much to be desired. It was estimated that only about 15 percent of grade six pupils could read. The result of the first CRT in 1992 is revealing. Of 11,488 grade six pupils sampled, only 1.1 percent correctly answered more than 55 percent of the items in mathematics. On the English items, only 2 percent of 11,586 grade six pupils answered more than 60 percent correctly.[18] On the second CRT, conducted in 1993, performance was marginally improved, with correct responses to the same portion of items in mathematics and English at 2.1 percent and 5.3 percent respectively. The poor performance of pupils in English proficiency was confirmed in a similar study by the research team of the Centre for Research on Improving Quality of Primary Education in Ghana (CRIQPEG) based in the University of Cape Coast. The result of that study, conducted in 14 primary schools in the central region of Ghana, indicated that only 5 percent of pupils achieved full mastery of reading, writing, and speaking English.

Performance at the senior secondary school (SSS) level was also deplorable. Of 42,105 students who took the SSS certificate examination in 1993, 3.9 percent passed in nine subjects and 12.9 percent passed in seven or more subjects.[19] Only 1,354 of the total of 42,105 candidates qualified to enter university. Although university entry requirements should not be the parameter for success or failure of the reform programme, comments from headmasters and headmistresses of senior secondary schools confirmed the low standard of attainment of the SSS students.[20]

The confusion and anxiety that these results created among education officials and parents was enough to compel government to call for a prompt review of the entire reform. A popular weekly, *The Statesman*, published the concerns of an eminent educator, Professor Djangmah, once the Director-General of GES.

The education system still emphasizes academic achievement and access through secondary school to the university as its ultimate goal. No programme exists for terminal students and dropouts at JSS and SSS levels. Hence the great majority of school pupils and their parents measure success in terms of examination performance and judge the reform on the basis of examination results. By this measure, the reform has been found wanting.

Teacher education

One significant effect of the reform is the increase in the number of qualified teachers in the schools. According to government document *Basic Education–A Right*, the number of trained teachers has risen between the 1987–88 and 1992–93 school years from 58 percent to 68 percent at primary level and from 67 percent to 75 percent at the JSS level. For basic education as a whole the percent of trained teachers now stands at 71, but the shortage of trained teachers for vocational and technical skills remains serious. As a consequence, the practical training workshop concept at the JSS and the SSS levels remains a mirage. A survey of JSS and SSS reported that only 24 percent of the schools had functioning workshops.[21]

Enrollments

Structural changes and the commitment of human and financial resources to improving and expanding basic education have resulted in pupils' increased access to and participation in schooling. After the long period of stagnation prior to the reform, enrollments increased at all levels, and large regional and gender disparities among children in school are being reduced.

However, with a closer look at the rate of increase at each of the three levels–primary, JSS and SSS–a different picture emerges. While enrollments have continuously increased at the SSS level, they declined between 1988 and 1990 at both primary and JSS levels. Although the decline in both cases is

attributable to the rising private costs of education, the decline at the JSS level reflects parents' initial negative attitude toward the reform. To avoid JSS completely, some parents forced their wards in sixth grade to take the last session of the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) in 1989–90 so as to gain direct admission to the five year-old secondary programme. Thus, while enrollment in the JSS declined sharply in 1990–91, that of the SSS showed a marked increase that same year. With the CEE abolished and the middle school programme scrapped, school enrollment is on the increase again.

The gross enrollment rate for the six-to-eleven-year-old population, which stood at 73 percent in 1987–88, had risen to 77 percent by 1992–93, leaving 23 percent not in school. Similarly, the first grade enrollment ratio of 84 percent in 1987–88 increased to 86 percent by 1991, but with the introduction of fees at the district level it fell back to 79 percent in 1992. Thus, enrollment declined about 5 percent during the fifth year of the reform, and relatively high dropout rates at the basic level still persist.

Infrastructure

The effect of the heavy injection of foreign assistance in infrastructure led to the provision of over 1,000 pavilions for the new JSSs. Under the USAID project, the weakest community in each district was selected and given a million *cedis* to improve its school buildings. As a result of improved financial standing through higher taxation and improved revenue collection, some district assemblies have turned their attention to renovating existing schools and building new ones to replace temporary structures. The number of classrooms at the primary level grew from 53,914 in 1988–89 to 58,230 in 1992–93.

However, the physical structures of both old and new schools are still in deplorable condition. Most of the old structures have not seen any rehabilitation for years. One study found that 50 percent of the primary schools had inadequate classroom furnishings such as desks, chairs, and cupboards.[22] Recently there has been an attempt to build quarters for head teachers at some remote primary schools, but this policy has been questioned by the village communities. "Why pay 7 million *cedis* to house one person when pupils and teachers must survive in dangerous classroom sheds open to the vagaries of weather? "

Change of political context

In April 1992, a change in Ghana replaced the Provisional National Defence Council (PDNC) with the constitutional government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The accompanying change in the political, economic, and education context has ushered in a new orientation to the education reform. The government now has a constitutional obligation to provide universal, free basic education by the year 2020. This task requires enormous financial and human resources, much of which must come from outside the Ministry of Education. The government is therefore obliged to adopt a democratic attitude and give consideration to public sensitivity in dealing with educational issues. Cabinet leadership has also changed since the new constitution, bringing in a new minister.

The education sector is now in a second cycle of policy analysis–one that is being carried out in a manner notably different from that of the mid-1980s. Thus, the arbitrary dismissals, compulsory retirements, and unexpected transfers that characterized reform implementation under the military regime have given way to a new order. This has allowed a more open and critical review of the education system than was tolerated at the outset of the reform.

Furthermore, the liberalization of the economic and political system in Ghana and the performance of government in its overall reform has enhanced its image and increased its leverage with donors. Donors are prepared to give more financial support to the reform. A condition of that support is

additional critical data and analyses that will initiate a new policy adjustment framework.

It is against this background that the educational leadership has organized a series of fora, studies and seminars involving a cross section of the society, stakeholders in the education system, and donor agencies to strengthen the knowledge base. Public pressure has also influenced the change in policy climate.

Consultations

In 1992, before the senior secondary students had performed so poorly on the December 1993 examination, the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) had argued that three years was not enough time to complete the syllabus. Through the Minister of Education, they petitioned government for an initial extension of the three-year SSS programme to four years to enable them to prepare adequately the first cohorts for the secondary school leaving examination. The lack of textbooks, late arrival of core instructional materials, and lack of adequate teacher participation in the new curriculum had deprived students of optimum preparation. Still suspicious of the intentions of the CHASS, government did not accept its recommendations. With the shocking results on the examination, the critics of the reform were vindicated, and government became more sensitive to concerns of the education establishment and the public.

In March 1994 the Ministry of Education organized a one-day National Forum on Basic Education to the Year 2000 for about 150 representative educators, including teachers, head teachers, circuit and district supervisors, government departments outside the Ministry of Education, donors, and technical specialists, to review reform policies and experience. The Minister of Education established the purpose of the forum by noting that:

> Since 1988 we have been able to reorganize the financing and rehabilitate the infrastructure of the education system. But today we see that this is not enough. In spite of the excellent work that has been started, pupils are not learning what is expected. The great majority of primary-6 pupils are functionally illiterate in English and Mathematics. Without functional literacy pupils won't gain comprehension and skills in other subjects, they won't be prepared for further education, nor will they be prepared for the world of work. How can we justify continuing expenditures on expanding a system that doesn't lead to learning? Reaching a target of universal participation in primary schooling is not a sensible goal unless that participation leads to learning and skills. To examine strategies for providing effective basic education, to revitalize the teaching and learning in the schools–this is the focus of our policies, and of this forum.

The document that was produced, *Towards Learning for All*, laid out a broad program of action to be considered for improving the quality and performance in basic education.

In June 1994 the minister convened a national open forum in Accra that focussed on the secondary education level. In attendance were groups such as GNAT, CHASS, NUGS, and TUC, as well as the general public. At that forum, the minister said:

> We have heard a lot from the public and from the media on the results of the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination published by the West African Examinations Council. Views have been expressed by concerned citizens of the country and well-meaning educationists, and more views are still coming in. May I take this opportunity to formally invite institutions and individuals who may feel inclined so to do to submit to my office memoranda, comments and other views to enable the Committee I am putting in place to consider them in the review exercise which will soon be under way. I can assure you that every input will be seriously considered.[23]

This forum and the new ministry leadership led to the formation in July 1994 of an Education Reform Review Committee, composed of 53 educators from all levels of the system, representing key institutions (GES, GNAT, CHASS, post-secondary training institutions, universities, and key donors).

The committee, under the chairmanship of a former pro-vice chancellor of the University of Cape Coast, comprised eminent educators from the universities, heads of second-cycle institutions, and officials from the GES headquarters. Members agreed unanimously to set up two subcommittees instead of three, namely Basic Education and Senior Secondary Education. The rationale for setting up one subcommittee for primary and JSS education was to focus on basic education as a composite whole, comprising primary and junior secondary education, thereby ensuring continuity and providing linkages between primary and junior secondary schools. The committee studied memoranda and other documents submitted by the public to get a clear view of what people thought about the issues at stake.

Among the major terms of reference for the committee were:

(a) Courses should be arranged to create linkages from primary to junior secondary level and from junior secondary level to senior secondary level;

(b) The number of compulsory (core) subjects at all levels should be determined;

(c) The number of optional subjects (electives) at the senior secondary school level should be determined;

(d) The content of the curricula, syllabi, and their accompanying textbooks and other instructional materials should be examined with regard to their suitability, adequacy, and availability.

The committee has called for a reduction of subjects taught at the primary school level and an increase in instructional time. Although the report is awaiting government's white paper, the Ministry of Education has issued a statement in the *Ghanaian Times* rejecting the 6–3–4 structure recommended by the committee.

Strengthening the knowledge base

The first phase of the reform programme in 1987 focused on restructuring and rehabilitating the basic education system. Critical inputs, including textbooks, classrooms, and in-service training were provided. While these inputs were necessary, they did not seem sufficient to transform the behaviour of teachers and the learning of the pupils. The initiation of the second phase of the reform, marked by the consultations of 1994, is focussed on issues of rationalization of curriculum, school management, motivation of teachers, community participation, and reaching those who are now out of school, as well as continuing to improve the quality of instruction.

In order to move toward universal enrollment and to estimate the resources required to do so, the ministry has collected data and made projections. It estimates that the proportion of children entering first grade will increase from the 1992–93 level of 85 percent of the age cohort to a 90 percent level by the year 2000. At an annual rate of increase of 157,038 pupils in primary school enrollments, the gross enrollment rate is projected to reach 87 percent by the year 2000, and 100 percent by the year 2005. The ministry's plan calls for sufficient resources to improve learning, not just increased enrollments.

In July 1994, shortly following the establishment of the National Reform Review Committee, the ministry organized a series of meetings and sector studies called the Ministry of Education-Donor Forum.

The purpose of the forum is to help the ministry and donors collaborate on the design and implementation of studies and analyses leading to an education sector strategy. In February 1995, the ministry convened a meeting of all major donors and ministerial divisions to review the status of sector

studies and analyses. A workshop followed that defined the following key areas for further, in-depth analyses:

(a) Teaching and learning, including (i) curriculum, (ii) instructional methods, (iii) assessment of pupil learning, and (iv) teachers and teacher in-service and pre-service training;

(b) Management and quality assurance, including (i) management functions, and (ii) structures and performance at school, circuit, district, regional and central levels;

(c) Access, participation and infrastructure, including (i) enrollment projections based on studies of supply and demand specifically for girls, under served areas and for the poor, and (ii) design alternatives for classrooms and facilities.

(d) Costs and financing, including (i) analysis of unit costs, (ii) the wage bill and staff utilization, (iii) non-wage costs (e.g. texts, materials, in-service training, supervision), (iv) capital costs, (v) cost sharing and cost recovery, and (vi) strategic choices for financing the reform.

Studies that required field work, such as examining schools, teacher training colleges, and the management system at school, circuit, district, and regional levels were undertaken, and analyses made of the costs and financing of policy proposals. A school mapping exercise is to be launched throughout the districts to look at household demand for education and distribution, location, and adequacy of schools. The data and analyses from this exercise are intended to contribute to an overall sectoral strategy for improving the problems of quality and learning.

In a simulation of the strategic planning process based on a costing of policy intentions, a capital budget was proposed that put 194 billion *cedis* into basic education. This represents a revolution in patterns of capital expenditure, which have hitherto focussed on secondary and tertiary education.

Institutional issues

The new policy analysis cycle has involved a number of administrative and institutional changes. Presently there is a bill before parliament to re-establish the Ghana Education Service Council, the abolishment of which in the early 1980s gave the Secretary (Minister) of Education direct and absolute control over staffing and implementation matters. Re-establishment of this council would diffuse power, making the appointment of teachers and professional staff relatively independent of ministerial and political intervention, and re-establish the role of the ministry as policy-maker and the Ghana Education Service as a policy implementer.

Another institutional change recently effected is the establishment of a Tertiary Council, replacing many of the functions of the defunct Council for Higher Education. Prior to the reform, tertiary education was given special consideration, and the Council of Higher Education answered directly to the President. But when the reform began, the Higher Education Council was abolished, and its powers were assumed directly by the Minister of Education, who directly controlled the policies and operations of the universities. The establishment of a Tertiary Council brings a wider range of representative institutions and bodies formally into the policy and planning processes.

A third process underway is the decentralization of power from the central ministry to districts. This process, which reflects a strong political commitment of government, has been adopted to give greater responsibility to districts and communities in the management and supervision of schools. It is

expected to result in a greater degree of local participation in school affairs. The new bill for the re-establishment of the Ghana Education Service Council includes the setup of District Education Committees, which are to have planning and oversight functions. An issue yet to be addressed is the disparity between local resource capacities and the new responsibilities intended for districts and communities.

CONCLUSIONS: LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS

What lessons can be learned from Ghana's experience? In the first place, the school mapping exercise of 1986, which gathered vital statistical data to enable decisions and management strategies, was useful. Presently, as part of the plans to launch Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in Ghana, the Ministry of Education is to undertake another large-scale school mapping exercise at the district level to update data and ensure that schools are sited within reasonable distances to population concentrations.

The involvement of the local communities in locating sites for their schools, as was the case in the school mapping exercise, is commendable. It makes the communities feel a part of the whole process. It also avoids possible litigation and agitation over being side-stepped or left out in the provision of schools.

Government also ensured that structures are put in place to improve project management skills and supervision. These include the Project Management Unit and the Planning, Monitoring, Budgeting and Evaluation unit. These have contributed in no small way to the level of success achieved with resources provided by the donor agencies.

The decentralization of education administration to the district levels and the subsequent strengthening of the personnel has facilitated educational delivery. The district officers are now headed by better qualified directors of education and they are assisted by the group of assistant directors. Many decisions can now be made and processed at the district level. Hence, the frustrations teachers and other personnel in the Education Service encountered in carrying almost every small issue to the headquarters level has been minimized. Supervision is bound to improve, and district directorates have some measure of autonomy to initiate education programs within the broader framework of national education goals.

Though started at the basic level, the reform has tackled all the other levels of education to ensure that changes at the base have their corresponding inputs at the higher levels. Particularly, efforts at increasing access to tertiary education have been commendable. Though much needs to be done, what has been put in place so far is a fair indication that the dream of opening up tertiary education to a larger population will become a reality.

People generally resist change and will reluctantly relinquish the security that an old system offers. Thus, sufficient time must always be allowed between the intention and proclamation of reform policies and their actual implementation. This allows the populace to become convinced and elicits their voluntary support and participation in the reform process. What is done in a rush often encounters serious problems because it leaves little time to stop and ponder the effects of steps taken, especially in education. Even when responding to a crisis situation, policy-makers must allow sufficient time to analyze the situation and to bring together experts to brainstorm problems and issues. New strategies should be pilot-tested to correct pitfalls before applied on a large scale.

The economies of developing countries have rarely been strong enough to initiate, support, and sustain reforms that demand a huge financial outlay. Thus, the involvement of donor agencies and bilateral organizations will continue to be necessary for large-scale overhaul of education systems. Governments should therefore put their houses in order, prioritize their needs, and be in a position to negotiate conditionalities that are manageable and will not jeopardize the welfare of their citizenry. On the other hand, a fully adequate financial base may not be necessary before the implementation of an education reform policy. All that may be needed is a strong political will, determination, leadership, and marketability of the reform.

There is the need for African countries to develop a culture of tolerance of dissenting views and not always to regard them as "anti-progress." Those who do not share the same vision as the state's can sometimes go a long way to enrich proposed policies and create an awareness of weak spots in reasoning. In Ghana, those who raised questions early in the reform about certain questions were later vindicated when the flaws became evident. As an example of how government can respond positively to problems, after the poor results of the first cohort of SSS candidates were released in 1993, consultative bodies were formed to review the education system. Reform is not one short declaration but an on-going activity with flexibility to review strategies as the realities of the circumstances dictate, and it requires ongoing dialogue with all interested parties.

In systems in which strong elitist opposition is imminent, a top-down, authoritarian approach may be more feasible than piecemeal or gradual transformation. The disadvantage of such an approach, however, is that it can create an atmosphere of fear and kill initiative, creativity, and the spirit of cooperation necessary for the effectiveness of any organization. Without full and open consultations of all those concerned with the education system, the best decisions may not be made, and significant adjustments may be required at a later time. Hence, governments should not be seen to pursue goals at the expense of maintaining harmony among those who implement the programs. When an environment of give-and-take characterizes the implementation of a reform, bottlenecks, inherent weaknesses, and unanticipated issues that might threaten its success can be corrected or avoided.

ENDNOTES

1. Ministry of Education, *Education Reforms Programme: Policy guidelines on basic education*. Accra: 1994
2. UNICEF, *Education Mid-term Review*, Accra, UNICEF, 1993
3. Ministry of Education, *Education Commission Report on Basic Education*, Accra, August, 1986.
4. For example, between 1983 and 1995, the position of Director-General of GES has been occupied by six different persons, two of whom did not even have a background in education theory and practice
5. Ghana, *Report of Education Commission on Basic Education*, 1986, (Preamble No. 4 p. iii).
6. *Ibid*., paragraph 193.
7. *Ibid*., Paragraph 192.
8. Ministry of Education and Culture (1986), *The Educational Reforms Programme Policy guidelines on Basic Education*, pp. 2-3
9. The 17 years used to describe the duration of pre-university education was misleading. It was calculated as follows: six years primary education, plus four years middle school, plus five years secondary education, plus two years sixth form education. In practice, however, most pupils did not attend the full four years of middle school. Some pupils sat and passed the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) in primary six, middle form 1 or form 2 and then left for secondary school. Others sat from JSS form 1, 2 or 3, and still others sat after the sixth or seventh grade from the preparatory

schools. Only very weak pupils or those with some peculiar problem ran the full length of the middle school before sitting for the CEE. Thus, in practice, the duration of pre-university education ranged from 13 years or less for those who sat for CEE in primary six to the theoretical maximum of 17 years.

10. *Ibid*., pp. 5-10.

11. Government White Paper on University Rationalization, 1991, pp. 60-61.

12. *Ibid*. pp. 64-68

13. The National Union of Ghana Student Reaction to PNDCs New Educational Reforms - Memorandum - 1986.

14. Djangmah, J.S. (1994), *Educational Reforms in Ghana: The Dream and its Implications.* A memorandum to the Education Reform Review Committee, p.5.

15. GES, Basic Education Division, 1987.

16. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, *Public Investment Programme 1991-1993, Vol. 1, Main Report*, April 1991

17. World Bank (1994), *Ghana: First Education Sector Adjustment Credit (Credit 1744-GH) Project Completion Report No. 12622,* Washington DC.

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20. Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools. *Review of Education Programme*, 1992; and *Review of the Education Reform Programme*, 1994.

21. Amenuke, S.K. (1993), *A background paper prepared for the National Programme of Action*.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Report of the Education Reform Review Committee*, 1994, p.3.

THE CASE OF MAURITIUS

by Percy Selwyn

CONTEXT

Changes in the Mauritian economic and social structure over recent decades have been summarized as follows:

> The economy and society of Mauritius were until recently determined by three principal factors – its size, its isolation and the colonial system. Because it was small, with a limited local market and a narrow range of resources, its economy was both specialised and heavily dependent on exports and imports. Because of its isolation – especially before the days of mass air travel – it lay out of the main stream of new ideas. The colonial powers promoted the cultivation of sugar, and brought in slaves – and later Indian indentured labours – to work in the cane fields. They also worked in close association with, and helped protect, a small plantocracy, which controlled most of the economy. Thus, at the time of independence, Mauritius possessed a more or less static, monocrop economy. Many occupations were distributed on communal lines; progress from generation to generation was slow and irregular.
>
> The economic and social structures have changed radically since then. The relative importance of sugar has declined steeply. In September 1967, 41 percent of those employed in "large enterprises" were in the sugar industry; in 1992, the proportion had fallen to 13.9 percent. Over the same period, the proportion employed in manufacturing increased from 5 percent to 38.7 percent. In 1967, sugar and molasses accounted for over 96 percent of total exports, and tea for a further 2.8 percent. Exports of manufactures were negligible. In 1992, sugar accounted for 29 percent domestic exports, while exports from the Exports Processing Zone (mainly clothing) accounted for 67 percent of total exports.1

Thus, the Mauritian economy has become more diversified over the past decade, It has also become more productive . During the 1990s, real GDP has increased by more than 5 percent per annum. There is full employment. Service industries – especially tourism and financial services – have appeared. Beyond economic growth, Mauritius has experienced major social change. In particular, the demographic picture has changed beyond recognition. Whereas the crude birth rate averaged 38.8 per thousand during the five years between 1961 and 1965, it had fallen to 20 per thousand during the five years between 1986 and 1990. The annual rate of natural increase fell from nearly 3 percent to 1.3 percent over the same period.

The Master Plan for Education sums up these social changes as follows:

> Mauritian society is far more mobile than it was twenty years ago. Parents have enlarged their ambitions for their children. Economic development has brought about a wider range of occupations. New and expanding enterprises have been less concerned with ethnic origin in their hiring policies, and more concerned with academic or other qualifications. All this has made it reasonable for many young people to entertain wider expectations than their parents could. Thus, Mauritius is rapidly becoming a western-style competitive society.

The changes have taken place within the context of a highly democratic political structure. Since Independence in 1968, free elections have been held against the background of a Constitution that guarantees freedom of speech.

Three elements of the Mauritian context have remained unchanged–its smallness, its multi-ethnicity, and the openness of its economy to outside influence.

With a population of 1.1 million inhabiting an area of 186 thousand hectares, Mauritius is small in size and in population. Small countries tend to have "open" economies.

> Countries with a narrow range of resources, a small domestic market and a small population will tend to have a narrow range of activities. Because they are specialised, they will depend on exchanges with the world outside their border. A high proportion of local income will be generated by the export of goods and services; a high proportion of expenditure will be on the import of goods and services...The counterpart of...openness is that the internal economies of many small countries are weakly integrated. Internal supply is not closely geared to internal demand; both are more closely linked to markets outside the country's own borders.2

As internal communications in small countries are inexpensive, decision-makers and consumers of education services can be well informed without difficulty. Yet, in formulating policy, it has been argued that

> the relatively small numbers of people involved in formally identifying policies in the system leads to a much closer identification of ideas with particular individuals. As a result, policies can become personalised to an extent which is unlikely to apply in a larger system. This can be a force of enormous benefit if the person to whom the policy is attached has high status and is respected .... There is no real escape from the very personal nature of the small system.3

Another effect of small scale and an open economic system is the difficulty in making forecasts. In such a country, where important policy decisions and events occur abroad, it is even more difficult to forecast than it is in larger, more populated countries. Two examples illustrate this phenomenon:

(a) In the 1940s and 1950s, Mauritius was under great pressure to institute universal primary education–a pressure to which Government responded by building more primary schools. This policy was criticised at the time. It was argued that greater proportional effort should be put into secondary and technical education. A sufficient demand for people with primary school leaving qualifications was unlikely. Twenty years later, a critical factor in the success of Mauritius's industrial development was the existence of a substantial body of literate workers.

(b) In the early 1980s, Mauritius was in the depths of a depression, with high levels of unemployment and severe balance of payments problems. Nobody forecast that, by the end of the decade, Mauritius would have full employment with an annual growth rate of over 5 percent and a substantial balance of payments surplus. Thus change came about partly because of market and manufacturing decisions taken outside Mauritius.

This unpredictability of critical events in small, open economic systems puts a major constraint on the planning process.

BEFORE THE MASTER PLAN

The education context

The history of education in Mauritius is one of the gradual extension of provision from serving a privileged group to a system covering all children without distinction of class, sex or ethnic origin.

Until the 1940s, there was little education provided for the children of the poor. The turning event was the Constitution of 1948, which accorded the vote to everyone who was literate in any of the

languages spoken in the country. "Education for all" thus became a slogan with strong political overtones. This gave a powerful incentive for those opposed to the existing plantocracy and colonial system to press for universal access to basic education. Thus, by the time of Independence in 1968, Mauritius had achieved virtually universal primary schooling.

The expansion of primary education, which was largely in the public sector, was accompanied by a mushrooming of private secondary schools. This resulted from decision by government in 1977 to pay fees for all students in secondary schools. In 1988, courses at the University of Mauritius were offered free of cost to students. Thus, the whole system from primary to university benefited from state funds.

By 1990, the Mauritian education system had the following profile:

(a) Some 80 percent of children attended pre-primary schools. These were financed principally by fees. Government helped with teacher training, teaching materials, and some buildings.

(b) Nearly all primary schools had six grades leading to a Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). The proportion of children who failed the CPE after two attempts and dropped out of the formal education system reached 25–30 percent.

(c) Admission to secondary education depended on passing the CPE; admission to a good secondary school depended on the student's ranking in the CPE. There were seven years of secondary education, including five years leading to the School Certificate and an additional two years leading to Higher School Certificate (university entrance qualification). Some 80 percent of pupils attended private secondary schools (including confessional schools). The state schools were generally regarded as of higher quality than private schools, and there was strong pressure for children to be admitted to the more prestigious government schools. The private schools were almost entirely financed by government, operating through a parastatal organisation, the Private Secondary Schools Authority.

The University of Mauritius had five faculties: engineering, science, law and management, social studies and humanities, and agriculture. It was supplemented by the Mauritius Institute of Education (mainly for teacher training), the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (the arts) and the Mauritius College of the Air (use of the media in education). Many young people went abroad for university education.

Those preparing the Master Plan estimated that for every 1,000 children entering grade 1 in primary school, 734 entered secondary school, 445 reached grade 11, of whom 276 passed the School Certificate. Of these, 75 passed the Higher School Certificate. The proportion of youth of the relevant age attending full-time tertiary education in Mauritius was less than one in a thousand; even allowing for part-time courses, enrollment was only 1.3 per thousand.

Thus, while Mauritius's record in basic education was among the best in Africa, the system had not caught up with the needs imposed by industrial growth. This was one of the central themes running throughout work on the Master Plan. The problems facing the system were identified by the Master Plan as follows:

(a) Some 10 to 20 percent of children did not attend pre-primary schools.

(b) About 25 percent of all children failed the CPE examination and dropped out of the system at the age of 12 or 13.

(c) At the secondary level, 24 percent of students fell out after grade 10, while two thirds dropped out after grade 11.

d) Repetition rates were high.

(e) The gap between the best and the worst was wide.

(f) The system was highly competitive; it relied heavily on private tuition to improve performance in examinations.

There had been under-investment in certain areas, especially in private secondary schools and the university.

The system had not caught up with the changing needs of the economy. Instruction in scientific and technical areas did not meet the nation's needs.

Planning activities preceding the Master Plan

Mauritius has a long history of planning activities preceding the Master Plan, which appeared in 1991. There were studies and reports covering elements of a plan but nothing like what might reasonably be regarded as an education plan. Those characteristics that might be regarded as essential to a plan are:

(a) Reasonable comprehensiveness and internal consistency;

(b) Evidence of being informed by some overall social view;

(c) Commitment by government toward its implementation;

(d) Likelihood that the resources needed for its implementation can be found.

The literature available prior to the Master Plan covers a wide range. There are studies of the education system as a whole (such as the Glover Report of 1982–83,[4] and the Report of the International Symposium on Education of 1989). There are statements of government policy on education (such as the Jagatsingh Report of 1979[5] and the White Paper on Education of 1984). There are studies on particular education issues, such as the University of Mauritius study of the private costs of education,[6] and the Report of the Workshop on Low-Achieving Schools (1987). Finally, there are studies of education in the context of the overall economic and social structure of the country (such as the Meade Report of 1961),[7] but none of these had all the necessary characteristics of a plan.

Although the Master Plan was the first comprehensive plan for education, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development had already produced a series of three-year plans concerning the economy as a whole. The National Development Plan for 1988–90 covered the principal economic and social sectors, including education, and provided the analytical background for much of the Master Plan for Education, in particular, its view of the future development of the labour market. The National Plan emphasized the need to upgrade the skills level of the labour force–a need reflected in the objectives of the Master Plan. It also emphasized the difficulties in forecasting:

> The preparation of employment projections is a hazardous exercise even in times of economic stability. It is particularly fraught with difficulties when future growth depends as much on exogenous factors as on local variables. Employment creation is largely a function of development in the export oriented industrial sector. The role of public policy is basically one of creating conditions which are favorable to private investment and to the growth of export-oriented manufacturing. Mauritius has not done, and in fact cannot do, the type of industrial planning which can translate growth into firm demand projections.

Thus, the colonial and post-colonial periods saw a continuing stream of reports and specialised studies, with a continuity of argument running from the Ward Report, issued in 1941, through the Master Plan (1991). But the Master Plan can be readily distinguished from preceding studies:

(a) Only the Jagatsingh Report (1979) and the White Paper on Education (1984) committed government to a particular body of policies; virtually all the other studies were advisory rather than executive.

(b) Only the Meade Report placed education in a social and economic context.

(c) None of the earlier reports involved public consultation to the extent of the Master Plan.

(d) Most of the earlier reports were concerned with a particular sector or problems–primary education, secondary education, tertiary education, or low-achieving schools. The Master Plan tried to present a comprehensive picture and was concerned with everyone involved in education–teachers, students, families, communities, and voluntary organisations.

The production of *ad hoc* studies and reports became increasingly unsatisfactory as a means of giving direction to the education sector. As recognised in the Master Plan itself, times of rapid economic and social change tend to result in a growing disparity between education provision and economic and social needs.

> Education systems are slow to change. In Mauritius and Rodrigues, we have nearly 400 schools with some 9,000 teachers. Each school has its own history, its own ethos and expectations, its own strengths and weaknesses, habits and preconceptions. What happens in a school is principally determined by what happened last year and the year before. Change tends to be gradual and incremental. Established custom is not easily broken.

The growing gap between advances in economic and social conditions and perceived needs for changes in the education system may have helped create a demand for a comprehensive plan.

INITIATIVES FOR THE MASTER PLAN

Several events in 1990 gave impetus to the preparation of a comprehensive education plan. Two in particular provided the initiative for the project: first, the impact of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, to which Mauritius had adhered, and, second, a donors' meeting on Mauritius's Human Resources Development Programme (HRDP) for 1990–93, which took place only a few days after the Jomtien Conference.

These two events were complementary: the emphasis of Jomtien was on basic education; that of the HRDP meeting was on technical education and training, but they were also closely linked. The HRDP meeting emphasized the need for "an effective education system responding to the needs of Mauritius in the medium- or long-term perspective," and the Mauritian delegation to the HRDP announced its intention to prepare an overall plan for education.

Other events and circumstances contributed as well. First, there was the general economic climate. Although the early 1980s had been a period of economic and financial stress, the Mauritian economy had since experienced a remarkable upturn. The early 1980s had been a period of economic and social stress; but the Mauritian economy had since experienced a remarkable upturn. The contrast between the

beginning and end of the decade appears when we compare the 1984 White Paper on Education with statements at the 1990 HRDP meeting. The 1984 White Paper said:

> We are necessarily governed by financial and economic constraints. In the present budgetary situation, any expansion in the system or any improvements in quality must be paid for either by finding savings elsewhere or by drawing on resources from outside government. Moreover, we will be highly selective in our capital spending; no major capital expenditure is envisaged over the next two years, and no projects involving heavy recurrent spending will be undertaken. These financial constraints will necessarily be reflected throughout our programme.

Compare this to the statement of the Minister of Education at the 1990 HRDP meeting:

> In the context of the HRDP, I am confident that government will release some additional resources to enable the formal education sector to play its full role.

This is hardly a blank cheque; but the change is striking.

Political factors played an important role. The current government had been brought into power under the slogan of change. Education is probably that area of government activity with most impact on the Mauritian family. In the democratic Mauritian system, this impact is readily translated into pressure for political action. No Mauritian government could afford to ignore public concern in such a sensitive area.

The policies of the international agencies were influential as well. These organisations were concerned that projects for which assistance was requested form part of a total plan, reflecting national objectives, needs, and priorities.

Lastly, pressure came from the success of the Mauritian economy, which had earlier depended on a supply of literate, semi-skilled labour. Future development was seen to depend on skill-intensive activities, depending in their turn on a more highly educated work force. Thus, there was a body of support for a radical look at the whole education system and, in particular, for more emphasis on science and technology.

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

The Master Plan was a compromise. The statement of objectives represents a compromise between the Jomtien principles and considerations of external efficiency, between education as something with inherent value and something that meets other objectives, particularly industrial growth. The compromise is also reflected in broad statements of principle:

> Education is not only a means to an end; it is also an end to itself. It is better for people to be literate than illiterate. It is right that they should acquire a range of interests and knowledge beyond their immediate experience and concerns...
>
> With the weakening of family influence in the transmission of values, more responsibility falls on the schools. The teacher's job is not merely to teach facts and skills; it is also to influence attitudes and conduct.

The plan reflects the complex aims of the education system as a whole, which is intended to give future citizens the knowledge, skills, and awareness of the environment they need to function effectively in society; a degree of social mobility; opportunities to develop their individual skills and abilities – both mental and physical; and awareness of cultural roots and appreciation of the cultures of other communi-

ties and thus helps build the nation. From the perspective of the economy as a whole, the system is intended to help to provide the manpower needed for future development.

The plan has six concrete objectives:

(a) Every child should reach an agreed standard of basic education;

(b) The quality of education should be improved at all levels;

(c) Differences in lifetime opportunities resulting from inequalities in the education system should be reduced by improving standards in low-achieving schools;

(d) The education system should contribute to the continued economic and social development of the country;

(e) The abilities and aptitudes of each individual passing through the system should be developed to the fullest practical extent;

(f) The management and structure of the education system should promote the most effective use of resources.

(g) These objectives have been summarised as access, efficiency, equity, relevance and quality.

They reflect the range of concerns held by different people and groups and the wide range of consultations held in the course of plan preparation. The simple, direct, non-technical style, in which the plan is written demonstrates the interest of those who drafted it in reflecting this range of concerns.

The organisation of the Master Plan responds to the needs of the groups of people whom the plan's authors wanted to address. A plan can be organised in one of two ways–by objectives or by subsector programmes. The advantage of organisation by objectives is that the plan's proposals have a built-in justification, while a plan organised by subsector may effectively become two documents–a statement of objectives and a list of proposals ; and the two may have little connection. But organising a plan by objectives also creates problems. It implies a one-to-one relationship between objectives and proposed programmes, while, in fact, any particular programme may meet a number of objectives.

In this case, the Master Plan was organised by subsectors–a decision justified on grounds of utility.

> The Master Plan has been designed to be user-friendly. It has been arranged in such a way that those with particular concerns can readily find those sections of the Plan in which they are most interested.

The distinguishing feature of the Master Plan is its comprehensiveness. It has over three hundred specific proposals. Comprehensiveness, however, is both a strength and a weakness. Its strength is that it provides a framework for the system as a whole. This is particularly useful to participants in the education system who normally do their job out of habit. What is done this year will reflect what was done last year. The plan offers an incentive to think about what we are doing and how we might do it better. It provides a framework for looking forward, for a positively critical regard to what is happening in all parts of the system. The weakness of its comprehensiveness, on the other hand, is that the plan gives insufficient indication of relative priorities, and activities are not well matched with resources.

PLANNING STAGES

The principal element of the Master Plan is the proposal for a minimum of nine years of schooling for all children. This element, in its complexity and importance, offers a good example of how the plan emerged through stages:

(a) Identification of a problem;

(b) Analysis of potential solutions in the context of the plan's objectives;

(c) Formulation of proposals at official and technical levels;

(d) The acceptance of solutions at the political level and their incorporation in the plan.

(e) We will describe each of these stages.

Identification of a problem

Inequalities in the school system have long been recognised. These inequalities may be seen at the level of the child and at that of the school. The most visible sign of inequality in the Mauritian system is the failure rate of children at the end of the primary cycle. Some 30 percent of all children fail the CPE examination after two attempts and drop out of the formal schooling system. Some 8 percent of those who leave primary school are believed to be unable to read or write in any language. Though this proportion is low by international standards, educators in Mauritius still saw it as a challenge.

During the 1980s, studies on school profiles not only confirmed that some children do better than others in school but also revealed that some schools had consistently better results than others. While in certain schools more than three-quarters of the children passed the CPE each year, in other schools the pass rate was regularly below 30 percent. A system in which one-quarter to one-third of children failed was seen as wasteful, inequitable, and failing to meet the needs of the country. Moreover, the education system rejected a mass of children at the age of 12 or 13 while the law did not permit them to be employed until they were 15, thus creating the environment for illegal jobs and exploitation of young people.

Analysis of data

This growing awareness of the problem stimulated two sets of studies: one qualitative, concerned with low-achieving schools, and one quantitative, concerned with low-achieving children. First, a widely representative workshop on Programmes for Low-Achieving Schools was held in 1987. It identified a range of possible causes of poor performance:

(a) Parents may lack interest in what the children are doing at school or have low aspirations and few expectations for their children. They may place insufficient pressure on the school;

(b) Living conditions may be poor; [families'] houses may lack books;

(c) Children may be poorly fed.

(d) The school may lack the human and physical resources for effective teaching;

(e) The curriculum may not suit the needs of the child;

(f) The examinations may use language which the children cannot understand;

(g) Teachers may lack knowledge and the ability to teach classes of low achievers;

(h) The pupils may have little motivation.

Secondly, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate carried out a study based on a sample of 800 children from 40 schools. The most important predictors of success at the CPE were found to be the general intelligence of the child, available extra-educational facilities (including private tuition and extra reading materials), and the socio-economic status of parents.

Neither of these reports suggested that six years was too short a period for many children to acquire a basic education. That notion emerged as one among many at an International Symposium on Education held in Mauritius in 1989: "In a developing country like Mauritius, children will need more education than they can acquire in six years. There may be a need to extend the quantum and level of education, with special consideration being given to quality and equity."

The first comprehensive study of the notion of nine-year schooling was undertaken by a High-Level Committee.[8] The committee did not specifically recommend a nine-year schooling structure, but it estimated the resources required under several possible arrangements, and it listed certain basic considerations. These included the principles stated in the *World Declaration on Education for All* (the Jomtien declaration), the need to eliminate illiteracy and innumeracy, the democratisation of education, the use of positive discrimination for promoting equality of education, and the need to take account of the legal age of employment.

Formulation of proposals

The High-Level Committee reported in May 1990, shortly after the establishment of the committee structure for the Master Plan. The report was discussed by the Master Plan's Steering Committee and the Working Group. A special committee was set up to clarify the proposal. Following the work of these committees, a broad structure was agreed for nine-year schooling.

Two sets of measures were proposed: measures designed to improve pupils' performance up to the sixth grade and measures to increase access at the post-primary level. The former included a system of continuous assessment, remedial teaching for slow learners, and revising the CPE examination to measure the acquisition of essential learning competencies. The latter included establishment of "basic secondary schools" for pupils who had not reached an acceptable standard by grade 6. The main function of these schools would be the attainment of a minimum level of basic education, but they would also emphasize practical subjects.

The proposed project involved an extensive range of activities. At the primary level, a workable and acceptable system of assessment had to be developed, and teachers had to be persuaded to use it. Teachers had to be trained in remedial work. The CPE had to be adapted so as to provide a better picture of the child's abilities. New basic secondary schools had to be planned and constructed and their curriculum developed. And all these activities had to be implemented with some degree of synchronisation.

Incorporation of solutions

The project was submitted to Cabinet in December 1990 and approved for inclusion in the Master Plan, but incorporation of the project in the Plan was not final. After its original submission, several changes were made. But the broad purpose of the project – that all children should benefit from a minimum of nine years schooling – remained unchanged. This included information beyond that presented in the Master Plan. In particular, it spelled out in greater detail the impact of the nine-year schooling system on the education structure as a whole.

Conclusions

These stages–identification of problems, analysis of data, formulation of proposals, and incorporation of solutions into a programme–apply to individual projects but not necessarily to a comprehensive education plan. A previous Minister of Education expressed it thus:

> The process of educational development is a continuous one....Efforts in our field are never ending and continuous....Purposive change brings in its trail other changes with have not necessarily been forecast.9

At any one time, there are a number of projects or proposals at different stages. Some relate to problems which have just been recognised, others are at various stages of formulation, and still others at various stages of implementation. This flow of projects is influenced by the presence or absence of a master plan and of the resources available at the time. But many important decisions will be taken without regard to an overall plan. Some of the most far-reaching decisions in the history of education in Mauritius were taken without any analysis. The policy of universal primary education in the 1950s and that of free secondary education in 1977 responded to perceived needs–partly political, partly social. Each policy has had a major impact stretching over decades and, as Jagatsingh points outs, with effects not foreseen at the time.

This example of how the nine-year schooling programme shed light on the general process of how the larger Master Plan was developed:

(a) There was an element of chance in the identification and timing of important issues developed in the plan. Thus, the Jomtien Conference was a major influence on the structure and content of the Plan.

(b) Several factors lay behind the ready acceptance of the nine-year schooling project. Few people recognised the complexity of the project or how difficult it would be to implement. Indeed, its apparent simplicity and the way it was seen as an extension of the existing system made it appear natural and inevitable.

(c) Projects incorporated in the plan are statements of broad intention; their incorporation in the published plan marked one stage in a continuing process. The main significance of including a proposed project in a published plan is to demonstrate a commitment by government–not necessarily in detail but in broad outline. The detailed proposals normally emerge in the course of implementation.

(d) A major proposal for a project will normally meet a range of objectives. Thus, the nine-year schooling project was designed to reduce waste, to improve the quality of the labour force, and to lessen inequality. Because of this range of purposes, it appealed to a broad constituency. Business welcomed a project which might increase labour productivity. Many teachers wel-

comed reductions in rates of failure. The question facing planners is whether the range of support will be sufficient to maintain the momentum of the project if it proves more difficult to implement than had been anticipated.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Mauritius Master Plan was the fruit of consultation and compromise. In the course of its preparation, a wide range of people and groups were consulted. At the outset, the planners placed advertisements in the press, requesting views on the problems in the education system, what should be its long-term objectives, and what measures should be taken as a matter of urgency. Schools were asked for suggestions; they proposed over 200 measures. As we have seen, seminars were held: one in Rodrigues, to consider the specific education problems of that island, one on teachers' conditions of work, and a national seminar to consider the draft plan as whole. Separate meetings were held with head teachers, teachers, school managers and students.

The preface to the Master Plan describes the process of its preparation:

> Many people have helped in the preparation of the Master Plan. Work started in 1990 with a Workshop which raised the broad issues with which we were concerned. A high level Steering Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Education .... A Master Plan Working Group was also established. Following the Workshop, sectoral sub-committees were set up to draft papers on particular areas of concern. These papers were discussed at meetings of the Working Group.
>
> It soon became evident that, before we could proceed, basic decisions would have to be taken on proposals which had been made for changing the structure of the schools system. These proposals were discussed in the Working Group and the Steering Committee. Following these discussions, we proposed the introduction of a universal nine-year schooling system. These proposals were submitted to and agreed by the Council of Ministers. They were published as a "Green Paper" in December 1990.
>
> In the light of this decision, the papers were further revised. A drafting group was set up to edit them and bring them into a coherent whole. In so doing, earlier reports have been heavily drawn on, and we have been greatly helped by technical papers prepared by experts provided by UNESCO, the World Bank, UNDP and ILO.
>
> Throughout the course of the preparation of the Master Plan, there has been wide public consultation. The Minister of Education has held discussions with teachers, managers, principals, students and others. At an early stage, we invited comments and suggestions from the public. The ILO helped in the organisation of a seminar on the status of teachers. A seminar was organised in Rodrigues to consider the specific problems of education in the Island. Many of the recommendations of both these seminars have been incorporated in the Master Plan. Some members of the Working Group participated in a UNESCO Workshop on the use of models in education sector analysis and implications assessment. After the publication of the first complete draft of the Master Plan, a national seminar was held to discuss its proposals. The seminar was attended by teachers, heads of schools, school managers, educational administrators, representatives of tertiary institutions, PTAs, trade unions, educational authorities, employers' and non-governmental organisations, as well as others with a concern for the education system. The draft Plan was amended in the light of proposals made in the Seminar.

Institutional and political support

Thus, a wide range of participants made input into the planning process. The organisation of the Plan itself reflected the organisation of those participants. As in much public sector activity, it incorporated a hierarchy of committees. At the centre was the Cabinet (Council of Ministers), responsible for broad policy and decisions on major issues. It is not possible to estimate the impact of the Cabinet on the content or structure of the Master Plan or the extent to which it responded to pressures from constituents

and others. As far as can be judged, the Cabinet played a generally supportive role. Major elements of the plan were submitted to Cabinet as they were approved by the committee structure.

By the time the complete draft of the plan was submitted to Cabinet, it had already approved seven major elements. These included:

(a) The Nine-Year Schooling Project;

(b) The review of the primary examination system;

(c) The setting up of a national curriculum development and research centre and a national curriclum development board;

(d) A review of the administrative structure of the Ministry of Education (including the establishment of a National Inspectorate);

(e) The establishment of a Teachers' Council; and

(f) Measures to improve teachers' conditions of work.

Thus, while Cabinet had theoretical responsibility for the total structure of education development policy, in practice, decisions appear to have been taken on an incremental basis. This had the practical advantage of speeding up the process of decision-making at Cabinet level.

An official Steering Committee was established at the central level. The committee was designed to bring together all the principal decision-makers in the education sector. It comprised the senior administrative and technical staff of the ministry, the heads of educational parastatal bodies, the Vice-Chancellor of the university, experts from the Ministry of Economic Planning, Ministry of Finance, and the Resident Representative of the UNDP. It was chaired by the Minister of Education. It was a large committee; it therefore met seldom. Day-to-day operations were carried out by a Working Group, chaired by a coordinator. The Working Group, in principle, reported to the Steering Committee, which in turn reported to the minister. In practice, hierarchy was by-passed. The minister himself chaired many of the meetings of the Working Group. Actual drafting took place in the technical subcommittees and in the Working Group.

This picture of the planning structure is somewhat misleading. Drafting is normally an activity of individuals; committee discussions concentrated on marginal issues. Drafts that emerge from the committee may well reflect the views of the person who prepared the original draft. Some issues were seriously debated at all levels, but some important questions were little discussed. Thus, the statement of objectives was the work of very few people and was approved after little debate.

Other sources of input

In addition to committee members, there were other streams of inputs into the plan. Local technicians made contributions and actually drafted much of the plan. The value of their contribution lay in their knowledge of the education scene and their judgment of what was and was not possible. The planners did not start from a *tabula rasa*; many of the issues raised had been discussed for years. Local technicians were the repository of what was known, but they had little experience in educational planning. Their contributions were thoughtful, well informed, and imaginative but tended at times to be wordy with little content.

One problem faced by planners was that data on the education system were available but geared for administration rather than for planning. Data informed planners of the number of schools and of pupils, but they did not specify the efficiency with which resources were used or how far the system met the needs of the labour market or other community requirements.

The other major source of input from within the Ministry of Education was the administration. The distinction between technicians and administrators is not always clear; many technicians perform administrative jobs, while many administrators posted to the Ministry of Education absorb a great deal of knowledge about education. Indeed, two chapters in the Master Plan–and these not the least important–were drafted by members of the administrative cadre. But administrators *qua* administrators also played an essential part in the planning process. They ensured that papers were prepared in time, adequate records kept, and follow-up actions taken on decisions. Indeed, without a competent administration, the planning process can last indefinitely and lead to no useful result.

Other parts of government also made inputs. The section on economic background was drafted by the Ministry of Economic Planning. Other ministries commented on sections within their areas of competence.

Another input into the planning process was time. In June 1990, a provisional timetable proposed by one of the international agencies scheduled completion of the Master Plan by December 1990, but the Plan was not completed until August 1991. Thus, it took more than twice as long to prepare as was originally estimated. There were several reasons for this slippage. First, many of the proposals were interconnected. A delay in agreement on one proposal could have impact throughout the plan. This was clearly the case with the Nine-Year Schooling Project. Second, some proposals brought before the Working Group were controversial. Any proposal which might affect vested interests–even indirectly–would delay the process of arriving at a consensus. But the main reason for slippage was the unrealistic timetable itself, which reflected the lack of experience of nearly everyone involved. Though producing a timetable invites skepticism, it is still needed. Though it may be misleading, it provides at least a list activities to be undertaken in preparation of the Plan. It just cannot be imposed too rigidly.

Coordination and leadership

Drafting the plan requires a coordinator whose job is complex. The coordinator must act as intermediary between the executive and political aspects of plan preparation; propose structures for the plan; be aware of the social needs which the plan has to meet; become aware of relevant data; and be ready to produce drafts single-handed if necessary. Finally, the coordinator must have a view of the plan as a whole – not merely as a sum of its individual parts.

The final, and in many ways the most critical, Mauritian input into the planning process was leadership. Good leadership comprises the ability to identify goals, mobilise the resources needed to achieve these goals, persist in the face of difficulties and discouragement, and encourage others to share in one's commitment. In the case of the Mauritian Master Plan, the Minister of Education provided the leadership without which many of the other inputs into the process would have been negatory.

As we have pointed out, studies of policy formulation in small countries cannot ignore personal factors. For that reason, the lessons learned from such studies may have limited applicability to other countries. The attempt to depersonalise the experience may well be self-defeating. In the Mauritian case, the minister initiated the exercise; he selected the principal actors in the project; he monitored progress; he helped to raise morale when this was flagging; he reconciled warring participants; he mobilised sup-

port from fellow ministers; he took the initiative in approaching potential donors; he initiated and carried through wide popular consultation in the preparation of the plan.

Several of his achievements and professional characteristics assisted him in his role:

(a) At the time of the preparation of the plan, he had been Minister of Education for seven or eight years. This unusual longevity in office provided a background of knowledge and command of a mass of detail. It has been said of him that he knows his files.

(b) He had the continuing support of the Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister reshuffled his Cabinet, the Minister of Education was one of the few ministers left in place.

(c) Many ministers have been professionals, often doctors or lawyers, but the Minister of Education had been a secondary school teacher. It is possible that ministers with an independent profession are less committed to their ministries than those without such a profession.

(d) The minister's style was relaxed, open, and not dictatorial. Freedom of speech was taken for granted in plan discussions. This may have helped ensure that all relevant views had the opportunity for expression.

(e) Lastly, like any successful leader in a democracy, he had a strong political sense. He knew how to identify and recruit potential allies, consult those with concerns in his policy area, maintain contact with parents, teachers, students, trade unions, employers, religious groups, and non-governmental organisations, and appreciate their concerns. Yet he also had his own agenda. His political sense enabled him to reconcile his own vision with the demands of those with a direct or indirect involvement in the system.

Over the years he has had to compromise. Thus, government proposed that teachers in aided schools (such as Catholic schools) be recruited without regard to race or religion. The Catholic church, however, wished to apply its own criteria for the recruitment of teachers–an arrangement government considered inappropriate, since Catholic schools admitted children of all religions. Eventually, however, in order to avoid a damaging conflict, government agreed to a compromise. The experience of this potential conflict undoubtedly added to the minister's political understanding and helped him to face the problems of the plan.

International cooperation

A gap in resources was brought to the minister's attention in May 1990 in a letter from UNESCO:

> [UNESCO and the World Bank] believe that the preparation of the Plan and subsequent action programmes require competent and experienced international inputs, and that UNESCO and the World Bank joining their forces and working together under your leadership might be a good way of providing such inputs.

International agencies played a prominent part in the planning exercise and made important contributions. The international agencies identified and sent experts, but the Mauritian team would know little about their competence or their willingness to work as part of a Mauritian team until they had actually arrived. And their quality varied. At one extreme were experts who met a genuine gap in the country's resources, due to either their technical knowledge or their relevant experience. At the other extreme was the expert who produced a study that might well have been done with Mauritius's own resources. And in one embarrassing moment one expert accused another of incompetence. Perhaps their principal contribution was their ability lacking among the Mauritians to use data effectively.

International experts can make two contributions: they can provide technical inputs directly, or they can strengthen the capacity of the administration to do the technical work. While international experts undoubtedly contributed directly to the analyses employed in the plan, their continuing contribution was limited. This partly reflected the failure of the Mauritius government to appoint counterparts to carry on the work of the experts. The preparation of the plan was looked on as a self-contained activity terminating in a published document rather than as part of a continuing planning process. Thus, UNESCO experts had provided guidance on the use of models in education sector analysis and implications assessment. A model was prepared for the Mauritian education system–a model requiring regular up-dating. Once the plan had been prepared, the model was little used, and demand from within the administration for such analyses was infrequent. Without demand, such analytical work will not be carried out.

The main risk in the use of foreign experts is that they take over the whole of the preparation of the plan. This danger arises from the lack of local expertise and commitment: In disagreements, the views of the foreign expert are likely to prevail. The plan thus becomes a UNESCO plan or a World Bank plan rather than a national plan. The weaker the local team and the less clearly the local administration has formulated its objectives, the more likely is this to happen.

In the course of preparing the Master Plan, tensions did develop, but they were kept within bounds. One year before the work on the plan commenced, an International Symposium on Education had been held in Mauritius, which had encouraged Mauritians to consider many of the issues later covered in the plan. Also, elements of the education system had been studied earlier, and there was broad agreement on national priorities. It was thus possible for the Mauritian team to determine the structure and content of the plan and not depend on foreign experts for the broad lines. Without underestimating the contribution of international agencies, it is fair to say that Mauritians had a sense of ownership in the plan.

The international agencies played a broader role than simply providing technical experts. They were closely involved in the production of the plan. The Resident Representative of UNDP was a member of the Steering Committee and participated in other committees. Officers of the World Bank and UNESCO made periodic visits to note progress and discuss particular issues. They applied pressure on the Mauritian team for timely completion of the plan. Thus, they were more or less committed to much of the Plan by the time it was completed. Upon the plan's completion, UNESCO organised and hosted a meeting of potential donors. It seems likely that the plan received more international support than it would have without the active participation of UNESCO and the World Bank. But as with the technical experts, there was inevitably a risk that the agencies would take over the operation. This did not happen, although there were occasional tensions.

CONSULTATION AND COMPROMISE

The wide range of consultation described earlier was part of a search for consensus, reflecting a deeply embedded element in Mauritian culture. Avoiding conflict has a positive value in a small, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society, in which compromise is a valued procedure. It had its effect on the plan. Its most visible sign was the avoidance of controversy.

This avoidance of controversy is illustrated by how the issue of language policy was resolved in the Master Plan. The language of instruction in primary schools has long been a matter of dispute–partly along ethnic lines. Mauritius had no indigenous people. Its people come from voluntary or involuntary immigration since the 18th century. The majority of the present population is of Indian origin, but sub-

stantial groups are of African and European origin, and the Chinese have a community. Those of Indian origin are mainly Hindus or Muslims; most of those of African and European origin as well as most of the Chinese are Christian, and of these, most are Catholic. The most commonly spoken languages are Creole and Bhojpuri; the language of instruction and of government is English; the most commonly written language is French, and Asian languages are taught in the schools to children who wish to learn them. In these circumstances, language policy tends to become a communal issue.

Bunwaree has listed specific objections to language policies in schools:

> The fact that most children study three languages in schools (none of them the vernacular) is responsible for the number of children who leave schools without having obtained functional literacy in any language....In spite of the fact that Creole acts as a unifying function... it remains an unacceptable academic language for reasons of status and sophistication.10

Language policy was raised in the Working Group as an issue to be covered by the Master Plan, but the proposal came under strong opposition. It was argued that language policies had been discussed *ad nauseam* for decades with no conclusion and consensus in the plan was unlikely. In the event, the Master Plan did not discuss language policy. The issue was covered by an anodyne paragraph.

> Mauritius has the advantage of being a multi-lingual society. All pupils study English and French, both international languages. Some 70 percent of children also study an Asian language. Therefore, the teaching of languages in schools is a matter of major importance. A study on the teaching of languages in primary schools will be put in hand. Special attention will be paid to the teaching of English and sustained efforts will continue for the effective teaching of French and Asian languages. Research will also be undertaken in the teaching of reading in a multi-lingual society.

The search for consensus thus took precedence over pedagogic and social considerations. The result was a failure to act. It is of course possible that this was a desirable outcome: Any change in existing arrangements could have been dangerously divisive; pedagogic advantages might have been far outweighed by its disruptive consequences. This likelihood was confirmed by later events. In 1994, a Parliamentary Select Committee proposed that performance in an Asian Language at the CPE should count toward "ranking" on the CPE examination. Pupils with high ranking can gain entry into the best secondary schools. The reaction to this proposal was mainly along communal lines. Opposition came primarily from those of African and European origin (most of whom do not study Asian Languages), and support came from those of Indian origin. What might ideally have been regarded as an issue for rational debate became a matter for communal division. The failure of the authors of the Master Plan to say anything about language policy is therefore defensible in pragmatic terms; the acceptance of the "second-best" is sometimes necessary as a strategy in plan formation.

TWO PROBLEM AREAS

Teachers

Education is a labour-intensive activity. An essential element in any education plan is an estimate of the number and qualifications of the teachers required. The Master Plan, however, went further: It also recognised the importance of the cooperation of the teaching profession:

> The Master Plan places additional responsibilities on teachers. They will be expected to play a more active role in assessment and remedial work. They will be encouraged to take more initiatives in the adaptation of curricula to the needs of their own pupils as well as in curriculum development generally. Head Teachers will be expected to take on further responsibilities in the management of their schools. The teaching force in

> general will be expected to adhere to the highest professional standards. But if more is to be expected from teachers, they, in return, will reasonably wish to see improvements in their conditions of work, in their access to training and upgrading and in their career prospects. A teaching force with a higher level of commitment is central to any programme for educational improvement....

Thus, the Master Plan saw the improvement of the teaching force not merely in terms of numbers and qualifications but also of morale and commitment.

For many teachers, the central question was that of teachers' pay. Teachers–in particular primary school teachers–have long considered themselves underpaid. Many of them saw the planning exercise as an opportunity to press for higher salaries. This placed the drafting group in some difficulty. Public service pay is determined by a Pay Research Board, whose remit covers all state employees except the police. The pay of one group is not treated in isolation; it is determined in relation to the pay of other comparable groups. To overcome this difficulty, a seminar proposed the establishment of a special pay review body for teachers. But such a body could not have treated the pay of such a large group in isolation from other comparable groups. In the event, the question of teachers' pay was approached indirectly: Many deputy head teachers–a promotion post–were appointed. Also, a major programme of in-service training for primary school teachers was initiated, successful completion of which entitled a teacher to a salary increment.

As we have seen, one of the central objectives of the Master Plan was the improvement in the quality of teaching. Such improvements were identified with training courses. As proposed in the plan, virtually every primary school teacher was to follow an advanced course. Yet no evidence was available of the impact of such a course on classroom performance. Although the Master Plan proposed that the impact of specific training courses on teaching be studies, such studies have not yet been carried out.

This suggests an important weakness in the planning structure, an undue reliance on the views of professionals. Teacher training was the job of the Mauritius Institute of Education; it was inevitable that its representatives would be biased toward teacher training and not unduly critical of specific courses. Because those drafting the plan were under pressure of time, taking issue with the views of the professionals would have delayed completion of the plan–perhaps indefinitely. This is another example of the application of "second-best" criteria. In an ideal world, it would be possible to find ideal solutions; in the real world where decisions have to be taken, there are necessarily many compromises with perfection.

Budgetary impact

The most serious gap in the Master Plan is the absence of any estimate of its budgetary impact. The cost of projects was estimated – projects being defined as self-contained activities to be carried out over a definite period of time. But most projects involve recurrent costs. A new school employs teachers; it has to be maintained; it will create a demand for consumables. A teacher training course may imply higher pay for those whose qualifications are improved. A university or a polytechnic will require special equipment that has to be maintained. And these costs continue indefinitely: there is no cut-off point. Those preparing an education plan must ask the question: Is it reasonable to expect the budget to carry all the recurrent costs likely to be generated? Or will the plan place a burden on the recurrent budget that is difficult or impossible to bear? Thus, schools are built and left empty, or sophisticated equipment is acquired but without funds for its use. An education plan therefore requires a budgetary plan.

The drafters of the Master Plan recognised this. Estimates were made of the residual recurrent expenditure generated by the plan. Anticipated growth in the education budget was set against various alternative estimates of the growth of GNP. The exercise suggested that, on moderate assumptions con-

cerning the growth of the economy, it was reasonable to conclude that the education budget would not impose an excessive burden on the national budget.

These estimates were not included in the published plan. There may have been various objections to their publication. Ministries of Finance may view published projections of budgetary spending as equivalent to a commitment on future budgets; such commitments are unwelcome. Ministries of Finance may view published projections of budgetary spending as equivalent to a commitment on future budgets; such commitments are unwelcome. Whatever the cause, the sole reference to the budgetary issue is the following:

> The greater part of the recurrent expenditure generated by the Plan will be met from the Recurrent Budget. But savings can be effected within the Budget. A committee has already been set up to examine means of improving cost-effectiveness within the education system – and in particular in the management of assets.... Any savings will be used to finance part of the additional budgetary spending arising from the Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Master Plan suggested in broad terms the arrangements for its implementation:

> The Master Plan is a highly complex set of proposals; it will involve action by several ministries, departments, parastatal organisations and non-governmental bodies. It will give rise to major problems of coordination; it will require serious commitment by all partners in the education system as well as arrangements for minimising conflict and inconsistency.

The main proposal for implementation was the establishment of a Master Plan Implementation and Coordination Unit (MPICU) to be set up in the Ministry of Education, with overall responsibility for initiating and carrying through action on all the proposals in the plan. Its initial functions would be:

(a) To analyse all the proposals in the plan and identify the division, parastatal body, or other organisation to be immediately responsible for relevant action;

(b) To request those concerned to work out phased programmes for the implementation of that section of the plan for which they were responsible, specifying actions to be taken, resources required, and expected achievements at different times;

(c) On the basis of these submissions, to prepare a coordinated programme of work on the Master Plan, together with estimates of resources required at different stages, and expected outcomes.

Some of the proposals in the plan were too complex to be treated in this way. As we have pointed out, the Nine-Year Schooling Project involved action by several institutions; it was not practical to identify one implementing agency for the whole complex of activities involved. The MPICU was to identify any such complex proposals and take responsibility for them.

The broad lines of these proposals were followed, with certain significant exceptions. The notion of a central implementation body was found to be impractical; responsibility for implementation had to lie with the implementing agencies themselves. The central body was accordingly renamed the Master Plan Coordination Unit (MPCU).

Second, a special coordinating unit for nine-year schooling was never established, although a blueprint for the Nine-Year Schooling System was produced in 1992. This listed the activities required and resources needed over a wide range of relevant activities.

The MPCU identified implementing agencies for the greater part of the plan. These agencies were required to prepare action plans for their sectors. The results were uneven. Those programmes for which there was relevant experience or where the implementing agency was a professional body were usually translated into action plans and implemented. Thus, the ministry had experience in the building of schools; projects involving new buildings were implemented without unreasonable delays. The Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) had responsibility for the revision of the CPE examination. The MES is a professional body with experience in the field; it was involved in both the formulation of the programme for revising the CPE and in its implementation.

Other parts of the plan encountered problems in implementation.

(a) There was at the outset an insufficient appreciation of the need for synchronisation among different elements of complex programmes or for the creation of appropriate networks. The lack of any clear responsibility for coordinating such projects involved delays and confusion.

(b) Like public services everywhere, the organisation of the Ministry of Education is hierarchical. The MPCU lacked the authority needed to instruct other branches of the administration in what they should do and how they should do it.

(c) Most of the implementing agencies were divisions of the administration. Some of the officials concerned had not been involved in the preparation of the plan and felt no sense of ownership in its proposals. It was hardly surprising that they should give priority in their work to day-to-day issues rather than what may well have appeared to be additional and burdensome tasks.

(d) There was no machinery for the clear establishment of priorities. Action plans were prepared for individual sectors, but no overall picture emerges. Arrangements were made for regular monitoring of progress on the plan, but these reports lacked any sense of relative importance. This partly reflects the plan's lack of a statement of priorities, although in each sector it distinguishes between short-term measures and long-term objectives.

If we can judge from the Mauritian experience there are several conditions for successful implementation:

(a) A project involving action by one small group is more likely to succeed than one involving coordination between a number of agencies performing a wide range of activities. Thus, as we have seen, school building programmes are more likely to be successfully implemented than proposals involving a wide range of disparate activities.

(b) A programme is more likely to succeed if the implementing agency has relevant experience or professional skills. Thus, as we have seen, the revision of the CPE depended on the professional skills of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate.

(c) A project that has a strong body of support will be easier to implement than one lacking such support. This support can be of several kinds. In a democratic system such as Mauritius's, it can be translated into votes. Thus, free secondary education was introduced in 1977 following promises made at a general election. Again, building new primary schools is popular. Questions are frequently asked in Parliament about progress in school construction or improvement.

(d) A project that is a continuation of an existing programme has a greater chance of success than one that involves a new departure in education policy.

(e) Projects that threaten the jobs, promotion prospects, convenience, or even habits of a substantial number of people are likely to prove difficult to implement. Thus, the proposal to establish a National Inspectorate has faced problems because of its possible effect on existing inspectors. A proposal for the introduction of continuous comprehensive evaluation in primary schools is proving difficult to implement, perhaps because of the additional burden expected to fall on the teachers.

(f) A free flow of information is an essential element for success. For radical changes to be accepted, they must be understood. Those principally affected–teachers, parents and others–should understand what is intended and why, and what is expected of them. One of the weaknesses of the Nine-Year Schooling Programme is that few people appear to be informed about it or understand it. In these circumstances, knowledge is replaced by gossip, rumour, and prejudice.

The Master Plan made provision for a major review of progress after three years of operation. This review took place in April 1995, three and-a-half years after the completion of the plan. It provided an opportunity for a critical examination of successes and weaknesses. The conclusions of the review are being analyzed.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Many people have called the Mauritian Plan as a success. They probably judge it successful for several reasons:

(a) It addressed itself to important issues;

(b) Its proposals were relevant and realistic;

(c) It attracted a reasonable level of support, both domestically and internationally;

(d) It led to a succession of decisions and events that would not have occurred without it.

Reading the Master Plan three years after its completion, one is aware of both its strengths and its weaknesses. Undoubtedly, it identified important issues. Many of its proposals have commanded general support, including financial support from international agencies. Many of its proposals have been implemented. It is still a matter for controversy; but it has not been allowed to gather dust on a shelf. As we have noted, however, there were deficiencies. Its comprehensiveness implied a failure to establish priorities. In many of its proposals, it is unclear how resources were to be found.

Judging success or failure is a matter for the long run. It requires knowledge of an uncertain future. Today's students may be tomorrow's industrial leaders or tomorrow's unemployed. Planning for the future involves an act of faith. Equally, the decision-making processes through which the plan emerges must allow for compromise, for the acceptance of uncertainty and of the second-best.

How can the Mauritian experience help educational planners elsewhere, that is, to what extent is the Mauritian experience specific and to what extent able to be generalized? Governments differ in their objectives, values, present and future resources, and political structure. Situations differ. A country with 50 percent illiteracy or under severe financial and balance of payments difficulties may find the consultative processes used in Mauritius as an unnecessary luxury. The open style adopted by Mauritius may have little relevance elsewhere.

There is also the difference of values. The Mauritius Plan laid emphasis on equity; it had an egalitarian element, reflecting one strand in Mauritian social attitudes. The conflict between egalitarianism and elitism is not fully resolved in the Master Plan, though reducing the disparity between different standards of education provision is an important element in the programme. Other administrations will have different priorities, reflecting contrasting values. Such values will suggest different procedures.

Perhaps the main contribution of the Mauritian experience is as an encouragement of thought–a source of questions about a plan rather than answers. Have the main issues been identified? To whom is the plan primarily directed, and how appropriate is the style and approach to such groups? How far is pragmatism a sufficient guide to action? How far and in which circumstances is pragmatism preferable to scientific rigour in analyses? And how, and in which circumstances, do we have to accept the second-best? These are questions toward which the Mauritian Plan does not provide clear answers. Each participant in the Mauritian Plan, as well as planners elsewhere, will provide his or her own answers, based on background, experience and values.

ENDNOTES

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2. Percy Selwyn, "Some Economic policy issues in small countries," in *Educational Development for the Small States of the Commonwealth*. Pan-Commonwealth Experts Meeting, Commonwealth Secretariat 1985.

3. Commonwealth Secretariat (1984), "The Challenge of Scale", *Educational Development in Small States of the Commonwealth*.

4. *We have all been children*, Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Education, Chairman Victor Glover.

5. Hon. Kher Jagatsingh *The Future in our Hands*, Mauritian Education for Today and Tomorrow.

6. University of Mauritius, *The Private Costs of Education*, January 1988.

7. J.E. Meade and Others, *The Economic and Social Structure of Mauritius*, 1961.

8. *Proposal for Structural Reform. Report of the High Level Committee on a Proposed Nine Year Schooling System*, May 1990. The Chairman of the Committee had been a member of the Mauritian delegation to the Jomtien Conference.

9. Kher Jagatsingh, *The Future in our Hands*, Mauritian Education For Today and Tomorrow (1979).

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APPENDIX

Objectives and principal proposals of the Master Plan

The Plan reflects the aims of the educational system as a whole. As is emphasised in Chapter 1, these are complex. The system is intended to provide the knowledge, skills and awareness of the environment required to enable future citizens to operate effectively in society; to make possible a degree of social mobility; to develop the skills and abilities - both mental and physical - of the individual child; to encourage an awareness of the child's cultural roots and an appreciation of those of other communities, and thus to help in nation-building; and from the point of view of the economy as a whole to help to provide the manpower needed for future development.

The Plan is a means of achieving these purposes in the conditions of the 1990's and to do so through a system which is adequate, appropriate, equitable and cost-effective. The central objectives of the Plan for the year 2000 may be summarised as follows:

(a) Every child should reach an *agreed standard of basic education.* This should include the acquisition of the skills of literacy and numeracy, and the development of values and attitudes conducive to the healthy growth of Mauritian culture and society. The principal means of meeting this objective will be the introduction of a minimum of nine years of basic education for all children. Other implications of this objective include:

- every child should attend a pre-primary school;
- the primary curriculum should be amended in order to specify *essential* levels of achievement, and to permit the early identification and remediation of low achievers.

(b) The *quality* of education should be improved at all levels. This implies:

- The commitment and professionalism of primary school teachers should be improved by the provision of better career prospects, a system of rewards for good work, and improved entitlement to in-service training. All teachers in secondary schools should receive pedagogical training.
- The system of recruitment of heads of schools and teachers should select for a maximum of commitment, competence and managerial skills.
- Minimum standards of infrastructure, teaching aids and other equipment should be specified and provided for each school.
- The examination and assessment system should be used as a positive means of improving standards in the schools.
- Academic standards in tertiary education should be raised through the professional development of academic staff and, where necessary, through the temporary use of scholars from abroad.

(c) Differences in life chances resulting from *inequalities in the educational system* should be reduced by improving standards in low-achieving schools. This implies:

- resources such as specially trained teachers, regular assessment and planned remediation.
- Low achieving private secondary schools should, where possible, be helped and encouraged to improve their standards.

- The level of adult literacy should be raised.
- Special measures should be taken to improve educational standards in Rodrigues, including accelerated teacher training and up-grading, the establishment of appropriate administrative and supportive arrangements, revision of the curriculum and the improved provision of teaching aids.

(d) The educational system should help in the continued *economic and social development* of the country. This implies:

- There should be an expansion in the teaching of science and technical subjects in secondary schools.
- The process of localising examinations to meet local needs should be continued.
- The links between the secondary schools and the world of work should be strengthened through career guidance and other means.
- More places should be made available in undergraduate and post-graduate courses in the tertiary institutions, and greater emphasis should be placed on appropriate research.
- Provision should be made for lifelong education, both in order to enable adults to update their professional knowledge and skills, and for the development of social and leisure activities.

(e) The *different abilities* and *aptitudes* of those passing through the system should be developed to the fullest praticable extent. This implies:

- The Certificate of Primary Education should be amended in order to act as a record of the child's achievements across the range of activities.
- More time should be made available in the schools for co-curricular activities.
- At secondary level, the abilities and aptitudes of different students should be assessed as a means of orienting them towards appropriate courses.

(f) The *management and structure of education* should promote the most effective use of resources in this sector. This implies:

- All practicable measures should be taken to delegate authority from the centre of the educational system. In particular, powers should be delegated to the schools or regional centres.
- Parents and local communities should be brought more closely into the running of the schools.
- A national inspectorate should be brought more closely into the running of the schools.
- The development of tertiary education should be jointly planned under the aegis of the Tertiary Education Commission.
- Closer cooperation should be established with tertiary institutions in the region.
- Action should be taken for the wider and more effective use of distance learning systems.

The Case of Mozambique

by Venancio Massingue in close cooperation with Narciso Matos

Context

Historical roots

Before Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975, a dual system of education reflected the social policies of the colonial power. The "official" system, open principally to the Portuguese population, was identical to the Portuguese system, using the Portuguese curricula. The "indigenous" system, by contrast, was the responsibility of the Catholic Church, under the *Concordata da Santa Sé*, an agreement, ratified in 1941, between the Portuguese government and the Vatican. The indigenous system, with a poor and uneven distribution of schools in rural areas, provided rudimentary education up to third grade. Anyone wishing to continue had to seek admission to a school in the official system and was more often than not turned down, generally on the grounds of age.

As soon as the country gained independence, the *Concordata* ceased to exist, and responsibility for the entire education system was vested in the newly formed state. The new government, headed by the Frelimo Party, found that

> Mozambique had inherited from colonialism one of the most dramatic educational situations in the Third World, and that in line with one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world, of serious inequalities in the distribution of educational opportunities for the school-age population, the educational system established by the colonial power was corrupted by racial and class barriers, by elitism and by cultural alienation.[1]

The almost exclusive concentration of educational resources in the urban centers acted as a brake to mass participation in the workings of society. For this reason Frelimo directed that

> In Mozambican society education is the fundamental human right of every citizen, and is the central instrument for training and improving the technical and scientific knowledge of the workers.[2]

First steps to reform

The first education reforms following Independence were established at a National Education Seminar held in 1975, attended by civil servants in the Ministry of Education and by politicians. In addition to deciding that textbooks referring to the history of Portugal and religion should be withdrawn, the meeting's participants agreed to introduce experiences from the liberated zones (the areas controlled by Frelimo before Independence) into the curriculum. They determined that new textbooks would contain the history of Mozambique, political education, and efforts to consolidate the current ideology. Although members of the party in power may have had a clear understanding of how the education system operated in the liberated areas, most of the staff of the Ministry of Education had no such experience or knowledge.

These decisions were taken on the spur of the moment, without consideration of educational planning techniques, the process of adjustment to new curricula, or testing of new teaching materials. The capacity of the education system to implement the decisions was not assessed.

Frelimo directives

Following the 1975 seminar, Frelimo began to establish the framework for sector policy at its congresses. The Third Congress, held in 1977 (and the Fourth Congress, held in 1984), confirmed the Marxist-Leninist orientation of the Party. The congresses were attended by elected members of the Party, and decisions were made through votes by a show of hands, after open discussions generally led by members of the *Bureau Politico*.

Thus, during the period from Independence until the multiparty elections of 1994, an important role in directing education was played by the *Directivas Economicas e Sociais do Partido Frelimo*, the only official party until 1993. These directives defined education as a fundamental human right of every citizen. The strategic changes that took place in education after Independence were orientated toward the complete transformation of the existing education system by following two main paths: The education praxis of Frelimo, developed in the liberated zones, and the formation of a national cultural identity through an autonomous education system..

During the first phase of reforms (1975–76), the most important events were

(a) Bringing all education within state control;

(b) Curricular reform, especially in history, geography, and political education;

(c) Creation of new teacher training courses, especially for primary school teachers;

(d) The more democratic organization of schools and the institution of new, centralized administrative structures.

In 1983, the People's Assembly approved the SNE, giving it the status of a law. In 1992, the SNE was revised to incorporate the *Lei do Ensino Superior* (LES). These two laws form the basis of the present education system in Mozambique despite recent political changes and the mixed results of the SNE to achieve its objectives.

War destruction

For ten years between 1964 and 1974, Mozambicans conducted an armed war for their independence, and for another 16 years thereafter (1976–92), the country faced a devastating and destabilizing civil war. During the civil war especially, Mozambique suffered great damage to its physical infrastructure. Schools in the rural areas were often destroyed. A 1988 Report of the Ministry of Education gives an indication of the destruction. According to that report, in the five years between 1981 and 1987:

(a) 2629 primary schools (45 percent) were closed;

(b) About half a million primary school pupils were affected, including an estimated 100 thousand who were deprived of tuition and 250 thousand who were relocated or lodged in accommodation centers;

(c) About 6,750 primary teachers were affected, of whom 192 were assassinated, 185 captured, and 14 mutilated;

(d) 22 secondary schools (grades 5–9) were closed (13 percent) and about 8,000 students and 200 teachers affected;

(e) 36 hostels were closed, displacing more than 5,000 students;

(f) Four teacher training centres were closed, of which three continued to operate in temporary premises, affecting about 600 students;

(g) Two technical schools were closed;

(h) An indeterminate number of literacy and adult education centres and units associated with economic production units, communal villages, and social institutions were closed, affecting the whole management and performance of the campaigns;

(i) Access roads to schools were destroyed, mined or simply not maintained.

EDUCATION POLICY SINCE INDEPENDENCE

The National Education System
(Sistema Nacional de Educaçao—SNE)

In 1983, the government created a National Education System (SNE) as a means of consolidating the initiatives taken since 1975. New planning and administrative structures were introduced, among them provincial- and district-level bodies concerned specifically with the management of schools. Educators at the National Institute for the Development of Education developed curricular planning and started pedagogical research. Teacher training programs were introduced, including training of teachers for technical education. Government introduced large and successful national campaigns for literacy and adult education.

On March 23, 1983, the People's Assembly passed a law that made the SNE the legal instrument for the implementation of the principles outlined in the Frelimo Party Directives. According to this law, the National Educational System "is a process which contributes to the education of the Mozambican, with a patriotic conscience, scientifically qualified, professionally and technically able, and culturally liberated." The SNE had three major objectives:

(a) The eradication of illiteracy;

(b) The introduction of compulsory schooling;

(c) The training of professional staff for development and research.

The implementation of the National Education System was not viewed simply as a change in the structure of the learning cycles. It was to usher in,

> Above all, unity and interaction between: the elimination of illiteracy; the generalization of primary education; entry to the labour force after acquisition of a basic education; and the quality and quantity of technicians necessary for economic and social development.[3]

Officials stressed that, without this integration, the social impact of the new system would be limited, and the imbalances of the past could re-emerge in the near future.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for administering the National Education System, creating and directing educational establishments, and coordinating scientific activities. In response to

this decree and in order to execute the Economic and Social Directives of the third and fourth congresses of Frelimo, the Ministry of Education made the design and implementation of the SNE the principal focus of its work. Objectives were traced out until the year 2000. The implementation process was expected to include a complex collection of multilateral reforms, covering, among others, pedagogical, legal, administrative, management, organizational, and financing matters.

Against the background of the current ideological forces, ministry personnel studied various systems of education in communist and socialist countries. Most attractive was the education system of the German Democratic Republic (the GDR, which, in 1990, became part of a unified Germany). Although Mozambican educators played an active role, GDR education experts also contributed much to the design of the SNE.

Results of the SNE

The results of the SNE were unsatisfactory. The system began gradually to collapse from the moment of its introduction, although the effects were not felt until five years later, when an evaluation process commenced. By that time (1988), the system was characterized by:

(a) An asymmetry in the structure of the school population, with 97.3 percent of students in the primary level (grades 1-7), 2.6 percent in secondary and technical education, and only 0.1 percent in higher education. In other words, for an annual intake of approximately 500 thousand pupils in the first grade, only about 1,000 entered grade 10 and about 300 entered higher education;

(b) A teaching body inadequate in numbers and without the desired qualifications, especially in primary education;

(c) High drop-out and failure rates at all levels;

(d) An inadequate school network, somewhat dispersed and not rationalized;

(e) A weak foundation in teaching material.

Aggravating this set of internal weaknesses was the targeting of the system by RENAMO, the opposition force, during the civil war, and the physical damage brought on by that conflict.

The Ministry of Education admitted that the SNE had introduced new distortions, the elimination of which should be the objective of actions taken in the following years. According to the Ministry of Education Report of 1988,

> The .... insufficiencies and distortions of the educational system, whether caused by inherited historical social factors or by the present situation, reveal the size and scale of our cultural and economic backwardness. Their impact, in educational terms, will continue to be felt in the longer term.

Yet it was still considered that the education situation had seen significant progress, above all in the fulfillment of the major strategic objectives of the national educational policy.

The collapse of the SNE may be partly attributed to external factors such as the destruction of the rural school network during the war and severe shortages of resources for education due both to the war and to the introduction of a Structural Adjustment Program in 1987.

Yet other, internal factors can also be identified:

(a) New teaching materials were introduced without being previously tested and evaluated.

(b) The teaching staff did not fully support the new system. Those who were already teachers when the system was introduced were reluctant to change from the old (colonial) system to the SNE, mainly because they had not been involved in its design and felt it was inadequate. Most of the teachers who started work under the SNE had serious deficiencies in the "basic disciplines" (Portuguese and mathematics) Moreover, they had not been recruited voluntarily or on the basis of a vocation for teaching.

(c) There were severe shortages of textbooks and other teaching materials to support the new system.

(d) Some maintain that the political orientation of the SNE's design contributed to its collapse.

As the SNE was conceived and designed at a time of single-party politics and before the introduction of a market economy, many now believe that it was too tightly controlled and delimited. Critics comment that the lack of success of the SNE can be attributed to the process of its formulation. It was conceived and designed in a office, without taking clear account of the regional differences within the country, or of the conditions of accessibility, communications, and the schools themselves. It is now widely considered that the expansion of education should have been guided in part by financial requirements, not only political needs. Moreover, the alteration of the curriculum should have been gradual and phased, with periods for evaluation and reflection on the results.

The Higher Education Law *(Lei do Ensino Superior — LES)*

Within the SNE, in 1993 the Assembly of the Republic passed the *Lei de Ensino Superior*. Before this law, higher education was orientated by directives of the governing party and presidential decrees. The law defined the objectives of higher education, institutional autonomy, the criteria for entry to higher education, types of institutions, the functions of the rectors and vice-rectors of higher education institutions, the procedures for creation of higher education institutions, their obligations, courses and degrees, personnel, and inspection. It also authorized the *Conselho Nacional do Ensino Superior*, composed principally of the Minister of Education and the rectors of the different institutions, as the body that coordinates higher education and defines its attributions and responsibilities.

The LES was prepared jointly by the various higher educational institutions on the initiative of the Council of Rectors. Eduardo Mondlane University led the preparation process by drafting a law for discussion with the other institutions *(Instituto Superior Pedagógico and Instituto Superior de Relações Internacionais)*. In 1993, after agreement at the Council of Rectors, the proposal was approved by the Assembly of the Republic.

Under this law, the higher education system, formally dependent on the Ministry of Education, enjoys great autonomy. Some believe, however, that it lacks coordination and the authority and capacity to manage a balanced development of higher education or of scientific research and the application of its results to the production process. In the view of these critics, in effect, there is no national higher education policy.

NEW DIRECTIONS

The new framework

Following multiparty elections in 1994, the new government, also Frelimo, presented its five-year program, based on the program presented by the Party in its electoral campaign. There is general agreement that the SNE requires revision and that it does not amount to a national policy for education. People are aware of the need for a national education policy.

At present, the policy framework for education is the program of Frelimo. This framework was included in its entirety in the five-year plan of the new government and will presumably be the main source for new education policy.

The main goals of the government program are as follows:

(a) To provide equal access to all levels of education by expanding the network of schools and other institutions and providing financial and assistance to students from poorer families;

(b) To promote greater participation of girls and women through curricular and material incentives;

(c) To reintegrate orphans, abandoned children, and those traumatized by the war into the school system;

(d) To support initiatives at any level or type of education by religious, private, and other social organizations;

(e) To reinforce the school network through distance learning, initially for teacher training, and then for teaching;

(f) To increase funding for the education sector;

(g) To improve the quality of teaching through: (i) developing realistic schemes for teacher training and professional development; (ii) developing other incentives to improve teachers' motivation and morale (better working conditions, higher salaries, and housing in rural areas); (iii) combating failure at school through curricular reform to improve relevance and flexibility; (iv) improving provision of books and other materials to students, through improved texts, production and distribution; (v) creating an efficient schools inspectorate at the central and local levels; (vi) improving the administrative system and its institutional capacity through creation of competence at the local level and eventual administrative decentralization and involvement of the community in school decisions.

Toward a National Education Policy (NEP)

Formulation of education policy since the 1994 election is just beginning. It is too early to say how far the formulation of education policy will follow the recommendations for a democratic and participatory process, but it is unlikely that any process of education policy formulation undertaken today would take place behind closed doors. This would make its approval more difficult, especially if it had to pass the Mozambican Parliament. On the other hand, the electoral program of Frelimo, including the section on education, was prepared by a team of leading members of the Party and had the participation of influential members and sympathisers. Recently, the President of the republic charged a senior

minister with the task of coordinating a study on the expansion of higher education in Mozambique. This may be seen as the first stage in developing a methodology for the analysis of the system and in policy formulation.

Many are demanding the formulation of a National Education Policy (NEP). Feeling the need, the Ministry of Education has already called meetings with different parties for brainstorming sessions for policy development. The National Director of Planning, the Minister of Education, the rector of the university, representatives from UNESCO and Swedish Aid (SIDA), and others, have stressed the difficulty of implementing education reforms without a national education policy. In his foreword to the Master Plan for Basic Education, the previous Minister of Education stated that "if universal basic education is to be achieved, substantial and radical changes must be made in the education system."

The current minister has pointed out that a national education policy document would also contribute to and facilitate government negotiations with donors. At the moment, however, the ministry recognises that it does not have the necessary know-how to develop such a document and that it requires external technical and financial support. Some officials believe that, in the present circumstances, the SNE is inadequate as a guide to planning. For example, although the SNE and the LES foresee the existence of private institutions, they cannot say whether these must operate within the SNE or LES or can set up their own systems, such as a religious-oriented system.

Consultation and ownership

During the design of the SNE, ministry officials held little consultation with the administrators, teachers, and other users of the system. After the conceptual and design phases, there was to have been ample publicity, and in cities, the SNE was explained and publicised. But in rural areas, which are less accessible, there was no effective publicity. Moreover, publicity must be distinguished from participation in the process of formulating the SNE. There seems to have been no consultation with social groups during the design of the SNE. It was simply modeled on the education system of the GDR, selected for political reasons. Even the LES, planning for which generated wide discussion among the organisations responsible for higher education and in Parliament, was not presented for public debate or consultation. In addition, consultants, foreign or local, almost always conduct policy studies in closed environments, limiting their research to consulting documents and holding highly directed interviews.

Foregoing such consultation has its price. Mozambique has a segmented society. The most salient groups are the poor, who expect a free education system, those who are well-off enough to pay for education, groups based on a shared ideology, and expatriates. Few of the people in most of these groups had a chance to express an opinion as the SNE was being designed. Another consequence is the failure to develop consensus and strategic thinking among those doing sectoral studies. Coordination on the need, scope and the terms of reference for the studies has no basis in popular support.

This lack of consensus may have various explanations, but an important one may be that the funds allocated for such studies are insufficient and do not allow enough time for widespread debate. Many educators express the urgent need for a policy formulation process that takes account the variety of social, religious, and economic groups of people whom the education system should serve. It should also take into account the multiparty system and the current open market economy.

RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS

Information and databases

With few exceptions, the Ministry of Education is the source of information on education at the primary, secondary, and technical levels. Information generated by the higher education institutions is maintained by those institutions. Databases are maintained by the Planning Directorate (DP) within the ministry, both manually and electronically. Data collection is normally started at the school and district levels, using forms prepared in the ministry. Data collected at the district level are sent to the provincial level, where they are compiled and sent to the ministry. At the ministry, the DP maintains the data. A couple of information systems on personal computers allow the DP to create data banks from which school statistics are produced. For example indicators for the effectiveness of primary schools (*indicadores educacionais e efectivos escolares, ensino primário, 1993–92*) provide statistical information about school population and staffing for primary school grades 1 and 2. The statistics cover only two grades, because the DP wants to launch the computerized procedures progressively, since they are new.

In 1994, with a wider coverage, the DP produced *"Estatistica de Educação, Levantamento Escolar - 1994."* The report covers general education, adult education, and teacher training and lists numbers of existing schools; student enrollments by grade, sex, and level of education; number of teachers with pedagogical training, by sex and level of education; students by age, enrolled in first grade; enrollment rates in first grade for specific age groups; and similar statistics.

One important issue raised by officials at the DP is that although data are systematically collected and reported, few institutions use them. They are used mainly by donor agencies and consultants to prepare reports, not because they are not made public but because the level of interest among national bodies and individuals is low. The National Director of Planning suggested two reasons for why the ministry's data on schools get little use: people are not accustomed to consulting data, and the data themselves, as well as the process of collecting and analyzing them, are undervalued. This was recently illustrated when the unit in the Ministry responsible for coordinating primary education went directly to the schools to request data, while these data were already available in the Planning Department. The head of the Planning Department suggested a campaign was needed to publicize information in the Ministry and to encourage educators and other planners to use that information.

As a first step in implementing this suggestion, the Planning Department presented at a workshop the information it has in computerised databases and how to access this information. The workshop was attended by the Minister of Education, national directors and many heads of departments in the ministry. Although the department produces an annual bulletin on the databases, it seems that most people heard of them for the first time at the workshop. The minister instructed the head of the Planning Department to organize more workshops of this kind, both for people working within the education sector and for others whose work is linked to education.

Data collection and analysis appear to be adequate for the ministry's purposes, but that the ministry should continue to promote more use of these data. A more stable information system based on information technology should be considered. The quality of the data is important, since it will contribute to good planning and projections.

Studies of the education sector

In parallel with the first stages of the formulation of national education policy, though not necessarily as part of this process, a series of sectoral studies was initiated. Master plans were developed for primary education (*Plano Director da Educaçao Básica*), secondary education (*Plano Director da Educaçao Secundária*), technical education (*Plano Director da Educaçao Tecnica/Vocacional*), and higher education (*Educacao Superior de Moçambique no Horizonte de Dez Anos*).

For primary education, the *Plano de Direccao de Educacao Basica*, was financed by UNICEF and UNDP. The purpose of this study, as stressed in its preamble, is to provide guidelines for action plans for investments and financing. It is not regarded as the last word. In fact, the role of the donors here was merely to finance the study as such, with little specific interest in the sub-sector beyond the study.

The plan for secondary education was drafted in-house by the Ministry of Education. It conducted a study using the UNICEF/UNDP primary education sectoral study as a framework. The study was not financed by a donor (motivation to work on a study funded by donors is higher than to work on one as a normal staff duty). A commission conducted the field research, visiting the provinces and asking for information. The information collected was compiled and presented with recommendations to the Ministry's Consultative Committee.[4] That committee wanted the report to be more strategic than descriptive, presumably leaving the details of implementation to local educational authorities.

The World Bank is financing a study on higher education, a sector in which it has provided a substantial amount of support. The study looks at the sustainability of the existing facilities, as well as expansion, taking into account the financial consequences in both cases. It is intended to lead to a more financially, socially, and politically stable solution.

SIDA and DANIDA (Danish aid) financed a study on vocational education, based on a relationship these two agencies have had with the Ministry of Education in this subsector. The ministry and these donors agree on the need for more middle-level technicians and on the importance of vocational education.

At present, there is little coordination between the ministry's own studies and those of donors. The number of studies appears to depend on the number of donors. Although some studies refer to others, it is not clear what relationship there is between them or what becomes of their recommendations. This concerns the ministry, because, while the ministry has its ideas about how education should be conducted, donors have their own ideas as well, and they do not always reflect those of the ministry. In some cases these contradictions are not resolved, yet the donor sets forth on its own study. This can easily result in conflicting policies among subsectors and different structures within the education system. At an even later stage, these differences may become unmanageable.

Several examples illustrate the lack of connection between studies.

(a) One donor discovered that another donor had funded a study on the same area of education it had already studied.

(b) USAID prepared an education sector assessment jointly with government as a basis for considering the future involvement of the agency in the sector.

(c) Government is developing a study on higher education, yet a World Bank study also covered this subsector. It is not clear how these studies will be used.

The plan for the primary sector was presumably prepared by the Ministry of Education, yet the document states that

> this plan was prepared with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Technical Commissions were supported by the Swedish International Development Agency, UNDP, UNICEF and the World bank. Opinions expressed in the document are not necessarily shared by the sponsors and/or the Ministry of Education.

How is it possible to have a document called a master plan when the opinions of the authors may not be shared by those who are supposed to implement it? What is the use of such a document?

Another example is the February 1995 study on "Higher education in Mozambique: Prospects for the next ten years." The study was prepared by Mozambican and World Bank experts. Because of lack of effective agreement on the terms of reference, ownership of the study, and its working methodology, World Bank experts were saying in the final stages of the study's preparation that it was a Mozambican study or a joint study, while the Mozambicans were saying that it was a World Bank study. There is a danger that the study will lose a good part of its significance because of these differences of opinion, which could have been resolved in the process of identifying the need for the study.

In May 1995, the ministry began a survey of all the studies made in the field of education, including those prepared by the ministry itself and those prepared by others. This survey is a step toward the formulation of a National Education Policy.

Infrastructure

Education policy must take account of infrastructure conditions, not only of the educational establishments themselves but also of access roads and communications systems that provide essential links between the managers of the education system, the teaching staff, and the population they serve. In Mozambique, the lack of rural infrastructure is a particularly serious problem. While in the cities schools are functioning (although in some cases under very bad conditions), in rural areas schools often do not exist at all.

The SNE was formulated without taking into consideration the physical conditions and resources of the country. According to a senior official in the Ministry of Education:

> The SNE was intended to encompass the whole country, but if its design had taken account of the real existing circumstances, such as the enormous difficulties of communications by road in rural areas, it would not have proposed national implementation in the form defined.

In current policy formulation activities, the communications infrastructure in particular is essential for collecting information from and disseminating it to rural areas. The design of consultation processes, with administrators, teachers, and the general population must take into account the great difficulties in communication outside the major towns and cities.

The infrastructure obviously plays an important role in planning new schools. The criteria used by the Office for Educational Projects Management(GEPE) in selecting sites for school buildings are the population density of the district, as recorded by the National Statistical Directorate, and the results of the survey by the Planning Directorate of the Ministry of Education. However, these surveys do not always reflect the actual situation. Thus, in some districts schools have been built which are too small to accommodate the student demand, while in others new schools have too many classrooms.

It appears that GEPE intends to maintain its present approach to school building, meaning without reference to the National Directorate of Roads and Bridges. One of the immediate consequences of this strategy is that access to areas to which displaced persons have returned will continue be difficult. These people will be doubly disadvantaged, since their inaccessibility will make it difficult for them to take part in the process of formulation of the National Education Policy. Although peace has now been established, the problems of poor infrastructure will continue for some time.

DONOR SUPPORT AND CO-ORDINATION

Donor support

A characteristic of the Mozambican economy is that most of the General State Budget is provided by donors. Although the national administrative structure is active, many policies in many sectors are currently being reformulated, and the influence of donors is clear. In the education sector, external support covers about 70 percent of costs, and the extent of political influence mirrors the level of this contribution.

The ministry is eager for the National Education Policy to be prepared, since this document will serve as the basis for negotiations with donors on their support to the different areas of the education system. This is not to imply that relations between the ministry and donors are bad. Within the ministry, the consensus is that donors do not try to impose their will in decisions on the main guidelines for educational funding programs but prefer to integrate their assistance with government-designed programs. The World Bank has said that as long as the government has a coherent program accepted by the RECODE, it will give support.

Donors who support the education sector in Mozambique generally attempt to coordinate with each other and with government. Though most people do not feel that donors have a negative influence, they see a tendency among donors to want to support the areas of greatest interest to themselves. Right now, for example, secondary education faces the greatest difficulties in obtaining donor support, because donors are more sympathetic to primary and tertiary education. Yet donors like to know what areas other donors are interested in funding so that they can complement that.

Minor issues with donors arise during implementation. One is that approximately 60 percent of what donors make available for cooperation in the education sector is earmarked for technical assistance. These funds are used to pay the salaries of advisors and supervisors and are not available for investments. Moreover, donors do not want to be accountable to the Mozambican government for technical assistance funds.

Donor coordination

RECODE (*Reunião de Coordenação das Actividade de Doadores à Educação*) is the consultative organ of the donors and the Ministry of Education. It was set up by the ministry in 1993 to formalize meetings taking place between these organizations. The concept (called RECOD—without the "E" for education) originated in 1987 with the Minister of Finance. In that year the Economic Reform Program was introduced, signifying the transformation of the socialist economy to a market economy. RECOD was initiated to gather information about donor activities, avoid duplication of efforts, and rationalize the financial resources made available by donors. RECODs were established in line ministries.

RECODE meets once a month; its members represent the Consultative Council of the Ministry (Minister of Education, Vice Minister of Education, and National Directors) and certain donors and lenders, selected on the basis of the size of their financial contribution to education programs. The donors currently represented in RECODE are UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP, the World Bank, SIDA, FINIDA, DANIDA, the German Embassy, and the Dutch Embassy. RECODE used to have a secretariat coordinated by someone nominated by a donor agency. In late 1994, the ministry suggested the coordination of RECODE be managed by a Mozambican, and offered to assume this task. Since January 1995, the coordination of RECODE has been undertaken by the Department of International Relations of the Ministry of Education.

RECODE has faced some problems. At one point, donors felt that decisions were not being implemented. The meetings had lost substance. Another problem was that some donors were carrying on marginal activities outside the scope of RECODE. In an attempt to solve both these problems, the ministry has recently promoted the idea of establishing RECODEs at the provincial level. A problem that has not been solved is difficulty in reaching a consensus on the agenda of RECODE.

In addition to RECODE, the Ministry of Education has an annual meeting attended by all donors in education, even those not included in RECODE. At this meeting the ministry's main programs of work for the following year and their anticipated costs are presented and discussed. Eduardo Mondlane University holds a similar annual meeting with donors.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Formulating a policy

Officials at the Ministry of Education, including the minister, who concur with the general criticisms of the SNE, must be key players in organizing the National Education Policy (NEP). They have expressed their intention to formulate a policy that includes objectives, implementation plans, and costing. The plan should be more than a set of goals. It should indicate also how to reach the goals and at what cost. Source of financing should be foreseen. Plans for the education sector should be compatible with plans in other sectors, such as roads, telecommunications, and electricity.

Development of the NEP requires a variety of expertise. The definition of objectives and implementation plans should include those who will implement, not only those with political interests. Mozambicans and donors alike are interested in seeing the NEP fully formulated. Donors would like to see the Mozambicans take the lead. Mozambicans likewise want to act, but feel they lack expertise in policy formulation and the funds required to build this capacity.

Mozambicans need donors help in introducing reforms in the education sector. Donors, however, must not forget the need for harmony during this processes, taking into account cultural and social factors. Education reforms are not academic planning exercises nor the transfer of educational models from countries with different contexts. Everything that can influence the reform must be taken into account. This takes time.

Mozambicans, be they education professionals or just members of society, are all interested in debating questions related to the education sector. The prospects of such a debate, however, are limited by poor roads and communications infrastructure, the low level of education of most people, and the prevailing uncertainty about the future—the post-war experience. Enough time should be allowed for consensus-building. The debates on

a National Education Policy should cover a wider range of subject matter than the sectoral studies have, because the latter are conducted only on the basis of SNE, not on a national plan.

It is difficult to predict the best consultative process for the National Education Policy formulation. However the existing interest groups (political parties, religious, civil association, tradition power, and so on), could provide the base for an effective process. These groups are active and easy to identify. Attention should be paid also to the educators and parents who may not be part of any of the interest groups.

Given the number of studies and their origin, it is difficult to judge if there is a formal decision-making or a clearance process for initiation and use of the studies. An objective of a consultative process is to provide as much input as possible into goals and plans. Thus, the methods for studies should include interviews as well as review of documents. If the studies are initiated, developed, and concluded under the appropriate authorities, it is easier to influence the level of participation and debate. It is important to define the best consultative approach for each study.

The studies could be approved directly at the ministry level or by donors or NGOs, or they could go through a broader consultative process, that is, a wider debate. The advantages of this wider debate would be to reduce the number of parallel systems of policy-making and planning within the sector and to optimise the use of financial, human, and material resources in this process.

Implementation considerations

The implementation of plans requires good management and a good team of implementers. The completion of a plan and commencement of its implementation should not be regarded as a success. Monitoring and flexibility for progressive project adjustment between the implementers and the donors is particularly necessary in the Mozambican context.

Well-established information systems have a positive effect on management and administration. Therefore, databases must be established to concentrate relevant data in the appropriate places and to avoid redundancy and inconsistences. Different databases should be compatible, and the data should be easily accessible by more people than highly trained computer software technicians.

Donors and lenders should help government solve the problem of funds for investments and recurrent costs by considering a flexible-funds approach. They should be more flexible in the allocation of their support between capital and recurrent costs.

Specific policy recommendations

A central policy that includes all aspects of the education system will reduce the development of parallel systems (for example, a Catholic subsystem or a Muslim subsystem), which do not have clear or immediate equivalence of academic standards.

Education reforms should explore the use of information technologies, especially for distance learning in rural areas.

The war had an impact on social and psychological factors related to development of society. To improve the moral situation in the country, it would be useful to strengthen the social sciences, which are weak compared to sciences and technology.

ENDNOTES

1. Ministry of Education Report to Council of Ministers, 1988
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. The Minister and Vice-Minister of Education, and National Directors of Education

The Case of Uganda

by Katebalirwe Amooti Wa Irumba

Introduction

Over the past nine years, Uganda has been simultaneously democratizing society, instituting economic reforms, and framing a new constitution. During these years, government has been reviewing its national education policy alongside similar efforts in other sectors. The procedures used to review education policy have departed significantly from the approaches used for decades.

The most significant innovation has been extensive consultation, dialogue, and debate between government officials, professional educators, and a wide variety of stakeholders at all levels of civil society. Using various mechanisms to encourage mass participation, the process has generated widespread understanding of the proposed policies and willingness to cooperate in their implementation. It has also helped produce compromises and build consensus around controversial issues in education. One consequence of the protracted process has been the need to move ahead with the implementation of selected policies before the process was complete, raising questions of prioritization and issues of power relationships between donors and government.

The central purposes of this report are to highlight the innovations and to share the lessons learned from Uganda's experience. As they formulate their own education policies, other African countries may find these lessons help them increase their effective ownership of both the process and the resulting policies.

The context for the policy making process

In 1981, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) commenced a guerilla struggle against the government in power. This movement followed numerous crises in Uganda's history since Independence in 1962. After nearly a decade of some limited degree of national progress, a military coup in 1971 had ushered in a fascist dictatorship and genocide. The fifteen years that followed were characterized by continuous breakdown in the economic, political, cultural and social systems. The struggle to end this situation and effect positive change was manifested in different forms on different fronts. On the political and military fronts the struggle became increasingly violent. On the social and cultural fronts it provoked intellectual, professional, and mass public criticism of the situation and loud outcries for change.

The socio-economic situation

When the NRM took power in 1986, the colonial economic system and structures still existed but in a modified form that suited the neo-colonial economy. Agricultural exports were the mainstay of the export-oriented economy. The export volume of coffee, the main crop, had declined precipitously. There was little industrialization and almost no basis for modernization of the economy. Worse still, by January 1986 Uganda's economy had almost totally collapsed. Revenue collection stood at 4 percent of GDP, the growth rate was very low, inflation was above 200 percent, and nearly three-quarters of the national budget was financed externally. Scarcity of commodities and social services was widespread, causing hardship to almost everyone.

The policies of the NRM government in 1986 favored self-reliance and avoidance of the Bretton Woods institutions. But in 1987–88 this policy began to shift, mainly as a result of the politics of realism and reasoned dialogue between government leaders, especially the President, and top officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and other Western donor agencies. Yet government maintained the essence of its economic vision and accepted donor conditionalities only when convinced they were necessary and their negative impact on society would be limited.

Nevertheless, the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), which began in 1988 and was aimed at improving the productive sectors, caused public concern about its negative effects on education, health, water and sanitation, and child care and protection programs. For instance, people protested that, under the SAP, government regarded education as a non-priority sector, a view reinforced by unfortunate public statements from high-ranking NRM leaders.

Thanks to its own principles and vision, as well as to public outcry, government shifted policy again in 1992-93, placing more budgetary emphasis on the social sectors, which it deemed a priority for manpower development, national unity, peace, and development. The 1993-94 national budget included for the first time what was known as a Core Development Budget Program, which gave 60 percent of the recurrent budget to selected social sectors; education received 20 percent of that. As a result of government persuading donors to revise their own policies and its agreement to conditionalities in the social sectors, external revenues continued to pour into the national treasury. Government's establishment and vigorous utilization of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) began to increase local revenue collection. Thus, local revenues rose from 4 percent of GDP in 1986–88 to 10 percent in 1993. In that same year, economic growth rose 7 percent and inflation fell below 30 percent.

The education sector

Some colonial and post-colonial education policies became increasingly unpopular and adverse to national development. Secondary school education and academic education was supported at the expense of primary and practical, skill-oriented education. The politically motivated, unplanned expansion of teacher training colleges and other educational institutions, especially during the early 1980s, adversely affected the quality of education. Inadequate attention was given to goals, content, and operational aspects of education. Resources were allocated disproportionately to tertiary education and non-pedagogical needs. The teaching service had poor terms and conditions. The country also suffered from a decline in the quantity and quality of manpower, a serious decline in moral and intellectual levels, and a lack of adequate discipline, patriotism, and productive skills. Unemployment and under-employment also increased, and education opportunities and benefits became less equitable.

Through various policy conferences and documents, targets had been set for the year 2000:

(a) Release of citizens from disease, poverty and ignorance;

(b) Free, compulsory Universal Primary Education (UPE);

(c) Universal adult literacy;

(d) Expanded secondary and tertiary education and primary and secondary school teacher training;

(e) Special attention to education for people in remote areas and communities;

(f) Improved quality and relevance of education, especially at primary level;

(g) Emphasis on science, math, and practical subjects in curricula, especially at the secondary level;

(h) Education for self-reliance and production of sufficient manpower for Uganda's economy;

(i) Fairness in access to formal education, especially through emphasis on day schools.

But expectations for education generated by the Independence movement and commitments of successive governments and international agencies were not being met. People cried out for a new approach to education, and new ideas and expectations were espoused by Ugandan elites returning from exile abroad. Inequitable political and economic conditions also pressured the education sector to change.

Foreign donors also had an interest in Uganda's education system and wanted to influence changes. Indeed, their influence intensified toward the end of the 1980s as conditions in the country improved, the Cold War approached an end, and a new era of international relations dawned. They demanded observance of human rights (as they are generally understood in the Western world) and democratization, including the adoption of a Western multi-party political system. They also urged government to exercise proper planning of policies and development action programs, to produce transparent budgets and become accountable for how resources were used, and to keep pace with implementation time lines and agendas set by donors.

In the 1990s, donors' demands increasingly characterized their negotiations with government, including negotiations in the education sector. Moreover, since education was recognized by both donors and Ugandan leaders as being of prime importance for change. Hence, change in education appeared to be a pre-condition for change in the other sectors.

The political context

When the NRM came to power in 1986, the institutions of political organization and governance developed during colonial times were still largely intact. For instance, religious and tribal-based political organizations still existed, reinforcing polarization of the society. The educated and the propertied elite dominated leadership roles in the parties and the governing structures. The principle of "winner take all" guided the formation of national governments. Important social groups like women, youth (particularly the uneducated), orphans, and the poor were kept out of the mainstream of socio-economic development. This situation perpetuated the conditions that had created the crises plaguing Uganda.

NRM leadership and the new political structures

Among the most important socio-political innovations introduced by the NRM are the Resistance Councils/ Committees (RC) system. RC members are popularly elected, and the RCs have brought unity and participation by large numbers of people in governance and development activities. This political structure is supported by a vigorous process of raising awareness of citizens.

The RC structure is an elaborate hierarchy based on a village people's assembly to which everyone over eighteen belongs unless one chooses not to. Village-level committees in a parish constitute a parish assembly, whose members elect from among themselves a committee to lead the parish. This process is repeated upwards to set up Resistance Councils and Committees at the sub-county, county, and district levels. Urban centers, institutions of education, medicine, and security, and large work places are also organized within the same structure. The system ascends to the National Resistance Council (NRC), whose members are elected at the county level. The NRM Secretariat is headed by a National Political Commissar, above whom are the Chairman and Vice Chairman, responsible for all RC affairs in the country. District RC chairmen are the political heads of their respective districts. Starting at the district level, all NRM leaders are elected through universal suffrage and can be recalled or removed from office by their electorate. People

vote for candidates by lining up in public behind the candidates of their choice. Anyone can stand for office and vote. The bottom-up principle is an important aspect of the system.

The RCs are responsible for development activities in their districts or areas. This responsibility has been recently reinforced by the law and process of decentralization to the districts of government administration, resource management, service delivery, and management of all development processes. Large percentages of taxes collected are retained at sub-county, county, and district levels. The central government also provides grants to district governments. The sub-county is a corporate body and can initiate development programs and obtain credit to support those programs. Because of the centrality and importance of the RCs in the process of socio-economic-political development, almost all RC officials have undergone awareness education.

The RC system is important in all levels of the education system, which gets special attention and one of the biggest budgetary allocations at all levels. At each level, an Education Committee is chaired by the RC Secretary for Education and Mobilization. District Education Officers serve as secretary to these committees.

Media and civil society

Uganda has never enjoyed such a vibrant media environment as that of the last nine years. Government controls only one of at least four television stations; two of the three radio stations are private, and no less than twenty national and regional newspapers, journals and other print media publications, several drama, theater and music groups, and other information media compete for attention and use. The liberal atmosphere has also enabled organizations of women, youth, religious groups, marginalized and minority groups, workers, manufacturers, farmers, and others, to rise up and operate freely. Not all media organs and social groups support government. This atmosphere has provided ample opportunities for wide national debate on educational issues, which are of concern to most people.

A new system of governance and the NRM political vision

The principles of reconciliation, cooperation, and national unity form the basis of the NRM system. This system deliberately avoids the multi-party arrangements that in earlier years plunged the country into sectarianism, intrigue, deceit, elitist minority domination, corruption, and genocide. Emphasis has been placed on the establishment of consensus and national unity at all levels rather than divisions and conflicts. Yet, the system has worked alongside political parties, which continue to function, although large-scale open party campaigns and other similar public activities have been suspended. Generally, the gentlemanly sort of agreements made between the NRM and the four major political parties to cooperate in a broad-based government during the transitional period until a new constitution could be put in place and general elections held have continued to work well. Consequently, with the exception of some areas in the north, where some political rebellion still occurs, national harmony and tranquility have predominated, providing an atmosphere conducive to participatory constitution-framing and fundamental reforms.

NRM leadership has been dominated by young men and women, most of whom received a post-colonial education and have been exposed to progressive philosophies. This is a different breed from the political, bureaucratic, and professional elite that led Uganda to Independence and ran the government until the 1970s. This leadership champions the principle of fundamental change and espouses new principles:

(a) The process of change in Uganda must be systematic, taking into consideration the prevailing conditions and reacting to them accordingly, without loosing sight of the strategic goals of liberation and national development.

(b) Every situation to be changed must be critically and scientifically analyzed in order to determine the inherent potentials and possibilities for positive change with minimal losses.

(c) All possible options for tackling problems must be considered before the best and most relevant one is selected.

(d) Action plans must be prioritized according to the importance and urgency of the situation being tackled and the availability of resources needed for implementation.

(e) Popular participation in the process of change remains fundamental.

(f) Flexibility in implementing remedial and developmental actions must be maintained in accordance with prevailing circumstances and the demands posed by the specific situation.

(g) These principles were key in the education sector analysis, policy review, and formulation of the new policy.

The culture of popular participation

The guerilla struggle that NRM waged relied on mass acceptance and support. Throughout the guerrilla activities and subsequent pacification campaigns in northern and northeastern Uganda, NRM victories over opponents have resulted from this approach. Programs of awareness raising (popularly known as *Chaka Muchaka* or political education) are geared toward helping people analyze their own situation, understand how the country is influenced by its geography, history, economy, culture, society and ideologies, and appreciate the possibilities for change. These programs are intended to increase citizen participation in community and national programs for change, though their development throughout the country has been uneven. In the northern and northeastern areas, for example, the violent rebellions have retarded the development of the new political structures for some years. In peaceful southern Uganda, the RCs and education programs have been gaining more and more popularity.

Though this culture of enlightened participation in policy analysis and development activities had been widely established by 1990, when the constitution-framing process began, it had not been so at the beginning of the educational policy review process in 1987.

The culture of effective situation analysis

After the NRM came to power, it embarked on an ambitious analysis of the extent of corruption and inefficiency, sectoral and institutional problems and needs, and capacity and resources for rehabilitation and improvement. Commissions of inquiry and situation analysis teams were set up to probe various sectors and public institutions. Although most of their reports were never made public, which raised concerns among the media and the public, officials argued that government made use of them in its programs for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The constitution-framing exercise involved an unprecedented form of national situation analysis, involving wide consultation and mass participation. The Constitutional Commission worked from 1990 through 1993, mainly carrying out sensitization and consultation activities on the process, the issues, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals and communities in the exercise. The commission's report was abridged, translated into major local languages, circulated, and discussed widely, leading to a year-long constituent assembly debate with simultaneous public consultations by delegates.

In contrast to the wide public discussions which marked the constitutional discussions, most sectoral analyses were characterized by more traditional political practices: they were dominated by

elites, lacked reliable data and information, and were burdened by bureaucratic obstruction, and the desire for personal gain by professional and technical members and officials. Research and policy options were heavily influenced by donors, and donors determined implementation time lines and allocation of resources.

The education policy formation process, like others, was characterized both by the benefits of critical and thorough analysis and the constraints of the problems noted above.

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION POLICY-MAKING

Policy formation approaches of the past

Various methods have been used in Uganda to conduct education sector reviews and to formulate policy. The most common method has been to constitute a commission about every ten years for these purposes. The commission's findings and recommendations then become the basis of major sectoral policies. Commissions reports have also provided the principles, guidelines, and rationale for subsequent analyses of specific areas within the sector and the formulation or re-evaluation of related policies and action programs. Multi-sectoral analyses are conducted at regular intervals of five years, resulting in five-year development plans.

Education sector policy-making has been characterized by an absence of a framework for continuous sector analysis, policy review, and monitoring. This results in ad hoc policy-making and sector management-by-crisis. Roles, studies and interventions are duplicated. The work of various agencies and institutions is not coordinated. Scarce resources are wasted, and recommended policies and programs are not always coherent. In addition, policy-making suffers from the problems encountered by all sectors.

The traditional education commission approach

The first education commission in Uganda was the Phelps–Stokes Commission of 1925, which carried out reviews of the educational systems in many British colonies in east and southern Africa. The colonial government policy was subsequently influenced by the 1928 Hilton-Young Commission, which reviewed the relationship between the educational activities of government and missionaries. The de la War Commission of 1938 recommended the establishment of Makerere College as a regional post-secondary institution, and the Thomas Education Committee drew up a development plan for 1941-45. Following the war, the Worthington Development Plan provided for the expansion of education and for teacher training. In 1952 the de Bunsen Commission provided the policy framework for the decade prior to independence, and in 1963 the Castle Commission provided the first post–Independence review and policy recommendations for the national educational system. The social and political turmoil of the Amin regime in 1971 interrupted the tradition of regular education commissions. An attempt was made to revive it in 1977, when the first Kajubi Commission was appointed.

The commissions of colonial times were made up of non-Ugandans of British origin. These men acquired their values and attitudes through "observation and imitation of the behavior of elders in that remarkably coherent set of socializing agencies": the upper-middle-class family, public school, university, and specialized institutions. This group shared a broad view of the nature of the colonial situation and of proper behavior within it of administrators, traders, planters and educationists.

These people

> developed a specialized set of assumptions relating to their particular role within this general framework of overriding ideas and values...and their coherence as a group and their commitment to the colonial ethic...secured by a careful process of selection and socialization.[1]

The methods of reviewing the education system and the recommendations made by the commissions were strongly influenced by the social and professional culture and orientations of commission members. More recent commissions included Ugandans, but whose ideas, values, ideals, and functional skills were generally similar to those of the British officials and professionals who came to work in Uganda. Lugard, one of the leading architects of British colonial philosophy, said that most educated people in colonies like Uganda went through socializing educational systems that

> removed (them) from the subversive influences of (their) normal environment. (The school) influence (formed) the character and ideals of the (students), and introduced the English ..... school code of honor ..., training the youth according to Western standards... to imbibe the traditions ... discipline and training which have fitted them for the work of the Empire.[2]

Another British scholar concluded that the university-educated Ugandan elites were overwhelmingly white-collar, comprised predominantly of teachers, professionals in government, business men, managers, and self-employed entrepreneurs.

> This pattern (was) the result of decisions, made over the years, about the nature of education in East Africa, which has to be related to the structure of the demand for the services of highly educated Africans under British rule.[3]

In addition to the imposition of this point of view, which does not represent that of most Ugandans, reliance on commissions appointed at ten-year intervals has prevented development of a process of continuously reviewing existing policies and formulating new ones.

In 1979-80, top policy-makers in the Ministry of Education seriously considered the possibility of adopting the Kajubi report of 1977 and implementing its recommendations. But there was general agreement that the Amin dictatorship had not permitted an atmosphere conducive to consultation and open discussion of education issues. The disruptive political changes that had taken place following the end of Amin's rule did not foster constructive action.

The second Obote government of 1980-85 did not improve the situation. The subsequent Okello military junta was too short in power and, more seriously, incapable of tackling the important issue of education policy formation.

THE EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW COMMISSION OF 1987

NRM's approach to the work of the commission

The situation changed when NRM came to power in 1986. The NRM leadership was convinced that the public was "rightfully calling for...a redesign of the education system..." so that it could be "properly tuned to and more adequately fulfill the needs and aspirations of Ugandans and...function as a powerful instrument for society's progress."[4]

In contrast to the intermittent policy-making activities of most of the twentieth century, the NRM's policy review and formulation process endured a long time. Between 1981 and 1986, NRM had

conducted a general appraisal of the national situation and articulated its liberation and development principles, goals, and strategies. The decision to carry out protracted sectoral analyses, chart new sectoral policy paths, and engage broad-based participation in the process arose from the experiences of the NRM struggle during those six years.

Although NRM's Ten-Point Political Program does not specifically address the education sector, it nevertheless clearly states the philosophical and political tenets within which the education and other sectors were to be assessed and developed. On January 26, 1986, when he was sworn in as President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni stated that NRM was not ushering in a mere changing of the guard but rather, a fundamental change. Thus, the political program of NRM indicated that the prevailing education policy was "outdated and irrelevant to the needs of the country." It appointed an Education Review Commission to review the entire spectrum of education in light of "the objective that education in Uganda should be able to produce job makers rather than job seekers.[5] The political program included other visions that had implications for education policy:

(a) Establishment of popular democracy built on the pillars of a sensitized, literate citizenry enjoying a decent level of living standards;

(b) Consolidation of national unity in order to establish a broad-based front to confront the common enemy of underdevelopment and backwardness;

(c) Defense of national independence;

(d) Citizens who can build a self-sustaining integrated and independent national economy;

(e) Establishment of regional and African cooperation as well as observance of human rights.[6]

Decentralization and accountability to citizens by all leaders are also important principles in NRM leadership and development program.

The education sector review had to be geared toward the establishment of an education system that could provide the basis for achieving this vision, which represented a sort of encapsulation of the earlier aspirations for education that had not yet been attained. The approaches that were adopted in the processes of sector analysis, policy review, and new policy formation were themselves influenced partly by inherited traditions and partly by innovations stemming from NRM's philosophy of fundamental change.

The Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC)

Government's 1987 terms of reference to the Education Policy Review Commission were wide-ranging. The commission was mandated to:

> ... review the present education policy, appraise the current system at all levels, review the general aims and objectives, give advice on effective ways of integrating the teaching of commercial/business and technical subjects and ... re-assess the current system of funding education at all levels including the possibility of students contributing toward their upkeep without impairing academic standards. Furthermore ..... to assess the role of qualifying examinations and the adequacy of the current methods of assessment; ... review the role of the private sector in the provision of education at all levels, and to examine the structure of primary and secondary levels of education bearing in mind the tender age at which children leave primary school. Above all ..... to formulate new policy for education, and to suggest ways and means of bringing about improvement in the quality of education and in the efficiency of management of the education system, ensuring greater welfare of the staff and students.[7]

The Minister deliberately did not specify in the terms of reference the timing for the commission's work. It was, however, given a mandate to propose changes for both short- and long-term implementation.

The commission began its work with preparatory sessions in Kampala before plunging into the consultative process. It held a series of meetings to identify issues and relate them to the commission's terms of reference and to national goals of development.

The professional expertise of the members of the commission was particularly useful in steering subsequent work and influencing the consultation process and its outcomes. A secretariat was set up, comprising senior professionals in the Ministry of Education and supported by local and foreign consultants. The commission's work, including the secretariat's, was supported by funds from the World Bank. The secretariat gathered historical documents on sectoral studies, policy documents and papers, both within Uganda and from other African countries.

After this preliminary stage, the commission embarked on two major field activities, including foreign study tours and extensive consultation with stakeholders in Kampala and people in other parts of the country. The commissioners that went abroad visited eight Anglophone African countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia) as well as India and the United Kingdom. Those who stayed in Uganda traveled in small groups to different regions of Uganda to solicit views on the education system and recommendations for change.

They explained the purpose of the policy review exercise and their methods, invited participants to raise issues and exchange views, and asked them to make written submissions of their own ideas and to encourage members of their communities to do the same. They also organized more focussed group discussions around specific issues raised during these sessions. Such discussions were more analytical and directed toward specific local situations. Education and other government officials, teachers and members of the elite communities, mainly in and around the urban centers, took part in these discussions. The Ministry of Education in Kampala had advertised the commission widely through the media and asked politicians and education officials in the districts to mobilize people for participation in these consultations.

The third phase was pooling information and processing it into usable material for focussed analysis. This was done in Kampala. The commission split into subcommittees that looked at specific areas, levels, and issues of education, using the data that had been gathered.

The fourth phase was preparing a report, which offered significant insights into the background of Uganda's education and the problems that had seriously eroded its quantity and quality. The commission also redefined the aims and objectives of the education system they proposed. Following an unprecedented extensive analysis of the different levels and types of education and of the most pervasive and contentious issues, the commission made 220 recommendations; its report was submitted to the Minister of Education in January 1989.[8]

Limitations of the commission's work

Problems involved in the consultation process

The commission's review was the widest consultation on education ever in Uganda and produced a much larger volume of memoranda than did the Castle Commission of 1963. To a significant extent, the political environment enabled this achievement. Yet the commission did not fully exploit the supportive conditions to consult with citizens and key education stakeholders at all levels of society and in all

regions of the country. It held consultation sessions only in urban centers, so rural communities, particularly those in remote regions, were not directly consulted. Even within urban areas, marginalized groups with special needs did not take part in the dialogue. Members of important security agencies like the army, police, prison department, and intelligence were not asked for their views. The impressive list of the 496 memoranda and resource papers does not show any involvement of these kinds of people. A disappointed group of teachers at an in-service course at Makerere University reflected the complaints of many:

> The majority of people, including the key stakeholders like communities which support and benefit from education, community leaders, parents, students and others, especially in the rural areas were not consulted by the commission. Probably the commission was allowed limited time.... maybe it was deemed useless and therefore unnecessary to consult such people; or it was the fashioned approach. On the other hand, the commission could have assumed that after all, they–the members of the commission–knew everything because they are experts or veterans in the education sector; and the chairman had, in any case, chaired an earlier commission in 1977. Many people expressed and still express, ignorance of the starting of the consultation exercise, the position it finally reached and, they ask: "What has happened to the work of the commission that we heard about?". ...It was the elite in urban centers who were consulted, and who also probably know the Commissioners' Report.[9]

One member of the commission has confirmed those observations:

> There was no time to stay in the districts longer than we did, so as to go beyond urban centers to meet rural communities, say at the counties and sub-counties in order to make more informal as well as formal contacts. Shortage of time and resources dictated our total reliance on the methods of open meetings in towns and at district headquarters, and collection of memoranda. Most of the people who were consulted, certainly at least half, were professionals. The commission tried to consult beyond the professionals. However, consultation with the communities outside urban centers was inadequate, or in some cases not there at all. For instance, where I went for consultation ... it was mainly the urban elite group that we met. Even then, some of these people asked us to use their local language during dialogue, so that they could express themselves freely and adequately. Therefore, our dialogue was conducted in Luganda–yet, this was an elite group. More important even, the metaphor of the dialogue was that of an elite group.... People want to break the language barrier....Future commissions should break the language barrier, as your question suggests, in order for real dialogue with those key stakeholders to take place....The elite group I am talking about was a sort of self-selected audience, knowing what they wanted to say and to get. The ordinary people were certainly not reached to state and discuss the real problems and needs of education in their own areas and those that related to themselves directly. Some of the contributions that were made by the elite audiences did not represent the real needs and problems of the local stakeholders. For example, for the ordinary people almost everywhere in the country, it would have been the cost of education (or school fees) which is too high for them to bear, that they would have highlighted most emphatically, instead of making demands for controlling school funds, as the elite audiences tended to do....On the other hand, the commission itself was seen by many people as being part of the old system of education and the usual managers of education coming from Kampala.[10]

The commission's failure to involve some of the most important stakeholders may not have been avoidable. It did not work continuously but rather only intermittently and for a short term. It had limited time, resources, and manpower, and it worked within a limited range of objectives, determined in a selective manner. One member noted that donors, who provided financial support, demanded that its work be concluded speedily so that a new education policy could be put in place and enable implementation of the reform programs they were supporting.[11] Some donors apparently believed that since the 1977 commission, also chaired by Professor Kajubi, had analyzed and reviewed the sector, it was now a question of quick work to up-date the previous findings.

In addition, the education officials who drafted the commission's terms of reference and the top officials who sanctioned and issued them did not encourage the commission to maximize stakeholder participation. Thus, the commission's methods were consonant with the signals it received from the ministry. And, with the exception of the appointee from the NRM secretariat, the members' ownorientation did not clash with their instructions. They were individuals who had been to institutions established during colonial times and socialized to serve without raising fundamental questions about the status quo.

If the commission had been constituted by a more broad-based membership, stakeholders of different categories, including those at the lower levels of the social strata, might have found it easier to identify with members. They might have discussed issues openly. The commission could have worked in even smaller groups throughout the regions. The constitutional commission, which did its work two years later when NRM's power was more firmly stabilized, was given much better guidance from different quarters including the President himself. It carried out important and decisive consultations and solicited memoranda through the RC system. Had they been established country-wide when the Education Commission was at work, the RCs may well have been effective channels for consultation, especially among the ordinary people. However, the Commission itself did not appreciate the importance of the existing Rcs. A scrutiny of the list of memoranda and resource papers gathered by the Commission reflects a glaring omission of the RC channel of consultation.

Students are the most important stakeholders in the education system, followed by teachers, parents, and communities, especially at primary school level. The commission did not consult adequately with these groups. Primary school teachers in particular were ignored, and even teachers at higher levels were not frequently consulted. Some of the memoranda purported to have been written by groups of teachers were actually written by either a few individuals or some members of the leadership executives of such groups, without proper or any consultation with the general membership. This was the case with a good number of the memoranda attributed to PTAs. Where teacher centers still existed, they were not utilized, even though their potential was tremendous. The effectiveness of consultation through school staff memoranda was not widespread. Where teachers and ordinary people participated in the public consultation meetings, they generally did so under fear of the dominant officials, bosses, the wealthy elite, and some politicians who are still undemocratic in their behavior. In addition, unlike the constitutional consultative process, the Education Commission did not sensitize stakeholders to their rights and obligations in the education sector.

Problems of data availability

The EPRC report reveals that the commission's work was handicapped by "lack of reliable and up-to-date data on a number of important educational indicators." This had been "a handicap in [the] planning and administration of education....for about a decade... the machinery of data collection, data analysis and reporting of educational statistics [had] virtually been in a state of disarray. Most of the planning and budgeting was based on ad hoc estimates, some of which were suspected to be grossly inaccurate."[12]

The Education Planning Unit (EPU) of the ministry had done limited analyses until its capacity was seriously eroded during the 1970s and early 1980s. By 1985 it had almost totally collapsed, and no statistical abstracts were being produced. Even when it was revived with African Development Bank and UNESCO financial and technical support in 1987, it carried out a school census without analyzing the survey questionnaires and producing statistical abstracts. The unit concentrated on producing statistics for determining how to allocate government grants and construction materials.

The culture of data collection and utilization

The culture of record keeping and of data collection, processing, and utilization is at a seriously low level, not only in the education sector but also, throughout the Ugandan society. Consequently, reliance on data support for the assessment of social problems, decision-making and planning,implementation and evaluation of development action programs is limited among the majority of policy-makers and implementers.

Within the education sector, record keeping–especially in the primary grades and rural schools–is extremely limited and, where they exist, the data are generally unreliable. Even keeping a class register is difficult for many teachers. There is no effective method of verification of data transmitted upwards. Corruption at all levels has rendered most data unreliable. For instance, inflating figures of student enrollments and teaching staff or deflating those of available instructional materials in order to facilitate graft has been widespread for many years, in spite of recent government efforts to curb such practices.

Most data flow from bottom levels to the top, with little going the other direction. Districts, for example, do not received analyzed data in a form they can use to guide improvements in the development, implementation, and evaluation of action programs in the local areas.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) has made significant achievements in producing up-to-date and reliable statistics. The record and filing system of the ministry headquarters deteriorated starting in the mid-1970s. Since then, communication between headquarters and the districts has been unsatisfactory. Important departments like the Inspectorate, autonomous bodies like the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC), UNEB, universities, and the National Teachers', Commercial and Technical Colleges or institutes–all which engage in important data collection–are not coordinated to facilitate useful and integrated processing, distribution, and utilization of data and information. In spite of assistance from external sources and government, the Education Planning Unit, which should be the best situated to do this work, is still handicapped by inadequacies of its terms of reference, skilled manpower, equipment, and financial support.

Foreign donor agencies and NGOs tend to collect more complete and reliable data than the ministry does. They have the resources, the will, and the know-how to collect and use data. Most of the important research on education is donor-supported and, therefore, donor-driven. In the absence of a determined, focused local effort to collect, process, and use data, external influence undermines the authority needed to control policy-making and implementation processes. This problem is likely to worsen with the process of decentralization, if it is not addressed.

The EPRC consultation process might have overcome some of these problems to improve the quantity and quality of the data it received. It might, for example, have used the RC system where it had been established to cross-check and verify and to obtain data on selected education indicators on a sampling basis. Or, it might have mobilized teachers' centers where they still existed, PTAs, teachers' associations, students' organizations, NGOs, community organizations, and tertiary institutions to make a contribution, however inadequate or problematic.

THE WHITE PAPER PROCESS

Major steps

During the period in which the EPRC was at work, NRM had not yet fully implemented its participatory approach to policy formation. Thus, when it came time to draft the White Paper, government made an effort to broaden the participation of citizens in policy-making to include more than just the urban elites. Table 1 on the next page presents a chronology of the education policy formulation process, including events that are described in the paragraphs below.

Introducing the White Paper, the Minister of Education and Sports wrote that:

> Government has examined the various proposals made by the Commission, and has taken serious note of the observations, discussion, comments and suggestions made by different sections of the Ugandan people on the Report...(and) has even started implementing some of the most important and obviously urgent recommendations. However, most of the recommendations require careful consideration and detailed examination...(striking) a balance between what is desirable from the point of view of pedagogy, and education development, and what is feasible in view of the financial and other resource constraints.... It was also necessary to work out strategies and to draw out an action plan for implementation.
>
> Government, therefore, adopted an innovative and democratic approach, and appointed a White Paper Committee consisting of eleven members...to examine the report of the EPRC and to identify the recommendations which are acceptable and feasible to implement, and to make amendments where necessary, after a proper appraisal of the present and future needs of Uganda, the objectives and development programs of Government, as well as the current and the anticipated future resource constraints.
>
> The Committee co-opted forty more people from different parts of Uganda, and it carried out consultations as extensively as possible and discussed thoroughly all aspects of the EPRC report before writing this White Paper and presenting it to me for presentation to Cabinet. This White Paper deliberately departs from the established traditional approach whereby a White Paper is prepared to be read side by side with the Commission's report at every stage. The White Paper makes revolutionary innovations and, therefore, simplifies the reading process ..., it is easily readable and adequately intelligible on its own.[13]

In November 1989, the Minister appointed twelve professionals and four consultants from within and outside the Ministry of Education as members of the White Paper Committee. The committee started work immediately under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary for Planning and Development. After a few meetings, the chair was transferred to an educator from the university. One month later, the committee grew by forty people so that it could include non-bureaucratic professionals and other stakeholders in the more technical work of policy formation. The new members were retired civil servants, teachers, politicians, and representatives from workers' unions, student and youth organizations, parents' organizations, the major religious denominations, RCs, employers, small scale industrialists, rural communities, NRM Secretariat, Parliament, political parties, district education officials, the media, and representatives of other groups. The White Paper preparation process was no longer the exclusive business of the traditional monopoly of bureaucrats and professional elites. The committee was more broad-based and socially diverse than the EPRC had been. A strong element of progressive ideological orientation was also injected in the ranks of the committee.

This large and diverse committee, however, was initially allowed only three weeks to complete its work. Some donors were demanding that a White Paper stating government's stand on the EPRC report be produced quickly to sanction the reforms they planned to support. Government had agreed to enter into a Structural Adjustment Program,and donors were eager to exploit the changed circumstances. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) were in the lead. Several delegations representing these and other donors visited the Ministries of Education and Finance.

Donors were constantly monitoring the progress of work on the White Paper. They interviewed officials of the EPU, the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), commissioners, the chairman of the White Paper Committee and ministers. Through their collaborators in the PIU, World Bank officials obtained copies of successive drafts of the White Paper. The prevailing sentiment among donors was that political leaders in the Ministry of Education were purposely delaying government's approval of the EPRC report and even trying to change what the report had recommended–a tactic with which the donors disagreed.

The need to grasp the issues raised by the EPRC's report – some of which were highly controversial– and to formulate a new policy based on consensus, necessitated extended and innovative

processes of dialogue. Realizing the challenges posed by the task, the expanded White Paper Committee asked for and received an additional three months. The duration was later on extended further and left open. Seven subcommittees were set up. Their tasks included: deepening and sharpening the sector analysis that had been done in the EPRC report; determining the relevance, reliability, and feasibility of the report's recommendations in the context of national development goals; assessing public attitudes toward the report; re-costing recommendations, taking into account the unstable economic situation and the fluctuating government budgetary position; and prioritizing the implementation plan in order to establish its sustainability. The committee was to look closely at a report of a consultancy team that had calculated the costs of implementing the EPRC report.[14]

An open and lively public dialogue continued for about two-and-a-half years as the committee did its work. For several months, panel discussions over Uganda Television and Radio Uganda involved government officials, White Paper Committee members, professionals in the field, politicians, and members of the public holding different and, in some cases, opposing opinions on issues. These discussions were usually initiated by leaders of the White Paper Committee who were, at times, rebuked by top bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education for departing from civil service traditions and publicly discussing a government document that was not supposed to be discussed in public.[15]

The Education Policy Commission Report was sent to all major post-primary schools, and district headquarters and education offices, with a call for organization of public debates and discussions. President Museveni himself led public discussions on the education reform, particularly on important issues such as UPE, vocationalization and democratization of education, and cost-sharing. The Minister of Education, the White Paper Committee chairman, and ministry officials helped to raise awareness of the proposed education reform by discussing the White Paper in gatherings throughout the country and at the National School of Political Education. Participants in these discussions included district leaders, undergraduate students of tertiary institutions, youth leaders, RC leaders, civil servants, employees in private and public sector enterprises, donors, religious leaders, teachers, and media representatives. The autonomous government newspaper, *New Vision*, serialized some of the major recommendations and featured analyses of the EPRC report and related letters to the paper. All the major dailies and weeklies in Kampala received copies of the report and were asked to participate in the dialogue (though not all did).

The ensuing debate was open and in some cases highly charged politically. When issues like cost-sharing were the main concern, the debate took on emotional and sometimes violent twists, particularly on the part of Makerere University students. Nevertheless, government kept the arena open, and the Minister of Education and his colleagues at the ministry went all out to meet students, university dons, and others to discuss the contentious issues.

The RCs and awareness-raising programs were used at this stage of the dialogue process. Consultations were more scientific in the analysis of issues, they had a clearer political and philosophical context, and they treated education issues within the context of the broader issues of national development. This dialogue involved social strata and groups that had not been involved by the EPRC. By this time, peace was coming to northeastern and some parts of northern Uganda, and communities in these regions had an opportunity to air their views.

The preference for a quick dialogue at the beginning of the White Paper process gave way to a recognition of the importance of extended awareness-raising and discussion. Donors who were using this period to push their own arguments began to realize the importance of the extended dialogue, though sometimes their strong positions contributed to delays.

These country-wide consultations did not, however, occur within the same clear legal framework that the EPRC work did. Nor were they backed with financial and material resources to facilitate a nationwide coverage and effective contacts. In addition, the EPRC report had not been widely circulated, and many of those consulted were ignorant of its contents. Editing the report took time, as it was left to one foreign expert who did not complete the editorial work until the second edition of the White Paper was on its way to Cabinet toward the end of 1991.

Data analysis and intra-ministerial coordination

Although the data collected for the school census of 1988 were not immediately processed and published, the White Paper Committee was able to use them to update statistics in the EPRC report. Nevertheless, many critical gaps remained, including data to clear up conflicting figures on teachers' salaries.

Poor coordination between different ministerial departments made it difficult for the committee to obtain better and more reliable statistics. Coordination between the education Inspectorate, which still gathered some scanty reports from schools and districts, UNEB, which had reliable statistics on examinations, and tertiary institutions and other departments of the Ministry of Education was inadequate. And none of these departments were coordinated with the EPU, which should have coordinated data collection, processing, and use. The committee was also trying to develop new professional and administrative promotional structures for the teaching profession. Their work was frustrated by suspicion and mistrust among officials in different ministries, a lack of commitment by many officials to their duties, broken-down channels of communication, outdated methods of work, and low morale among officials.

For example, in spite of serious efforts, the committee could not establish the correct number of primary teachers' colleges in the country after some had been closed in a reform of teacher training. The matter was political; some officials hesitated to provide figures for fear of being caught on the wrong side or antagonizing politicians who had direct interest of influencing the restructuring of college distribution. Similarly, the lack of coordination complicated consultations by the Committee to ascertain, for instance, the number and remuneration levels of teachers in schools and on the payroll.

Continuing consultation

The White Paper Committee submitted its first draft to the ministry in March 1990, which began a long approval process. As further drafts were being produced and sent through the approval process, consultation and dialogue was extended to reach more groups.

In 1993, after Cabinet's approval of the White Paper in late 1992, the Minister of Education convened a one-day conference of government officials and key representatives of all 39 districts in Uganda. They included the political heads of districts – who are also the chairmen of the District Councils – chairmen of the District Education Committees, central government representatives to the districts, District Education Officers and District Inspectors of schools, heads of autonomous bodies and the headquarter departments of the Ministry of Education, and selected government officials and community leaders. Participants were about two hundred in total. Conference participants, who had consulted with stakeholders in their respective districts, discussed the key issues in the White Paper.

Universal Primary Education (UPE) was the issue that attracted the greatest interest of the participants, especially those from the districts. Both government and citizens regarded UPE as the most important education policy issue. The President of Uganda had on many occasions discussed UPE. The White Paper raised the issue of whether free primary education should be granted only to citizens who do

not possess means to pay for their children's education, while others continue to pay. Related to this issue was the new policy that primary school attendance would be compulsory for all children of school-going age; failure to send one's child to school would be punishable under the law. The debate also touched on the possibility of local district authorities providing bursaries and grants to some of the needy and deserving children, as well as allowing parents and guardians to pay in-kind for their children's education. These measures were to help achieve UPE as soon as possible, in any case not later than 2002.[16]

This national conference unanimously agreed and recommended that UPE was absolutely necessary, that government and communities should do everything possible to achieve it within the target time, and that most citizens could pay for their children's primary education. Political leaders would therefore mobilize people in the districts to realize this capacity. This decision received widespread support. The conference decisions were included in the minister's statement to Parliament along with presentation of the White Paper.

Another one-day conference was organized in 1994 and attended by top religious leaders. It provided an opportunity for this group to air views on the White Paper and to suggest improvements. Among the issues discussed was the controversial one of democratization of all the governing bodies of educational institutions. While these leaders had been among the most vocal advocates for democracy, in this case they sought to retain the dominant presence of their denominations on governing bodies of educational institutions. As a result of this consultation, a compromise was struck without compromising the main objective of establishing democratic governance of educational institutions–a long-standing demand of many stakeholders.

In 1994, after Parliament had debated the White Paper, a conference was organized of representatives of women's groups and officials of the Ministry of Education to discuss gender concerns in the White Paper. This occasion represented yet another form of extension of the dialogue and consultation process to stakeholders that had not been reached by the EPRC and yet are central to the success of the new education policy and to economic development.

Even as two new Education Acts were being drafted, consultations were continuing between Ministry of Education and other government officials and university students on the issue of cost-sharing and enhancing the implementation of the education policy. Because the consultation process continued alongside early implementation of some policy decisions made outside the process, the issues began to include those of implementation as well as formation of policy.

Approval of the new education policy

The top management team of the Ministry of Education was continually briefed and consulted by the White Paper committee during weekly meetings and, when needed, during extra-ordinary meetings on controversial issues. The process of policy-making was thus checked and kept on course through (at least) initial approval of the ministry on specific individual issues.

After production of the first White Paper draft in April 1990, a one-month meeting between all key ministry political and bureaucratic officials and the White Paper committee was organized away from headquarters. It scrutinized the document almost word by word, made final amendments and gave a mandate to the minister to submit the amended draft document to Cabinet. This type of rigorous and lengthy political and professional approval of a policy proposal by a Ministry was unprecedented in the history of policy formation in Uganda. A similar approach by another Ministry had been far less rigorous. Top leaders in the ministry participated actively in the meeting, though the dominating style of some tended to instill fear among junior officials, who either remained silent or spoke with caution, fearing to

appear to disagree with the views expressed by top officials and saying only what would be expected to be agreeable to those leaders.[17]

The second draft of the White Paper, dated April 1991, was discussed and approved in principle by Cabinet with minor amendments later on that year. The high degree of Cabinet's agreement with the document confirmed that areas of concern and controversy had been adequately addressed. The amendments made by Cabinet related to the issues of language policy for primary schools and the implementation of UPE. The third White Paper edition of April 1992 incorporated Cabinet's amendments and became the official government policy document.

It took two-and-a-half years after Cabinet's approval before the White Paper could be discussed by Parliament. There are two explanations for this long delay. The first was government's decision to de-emphasize education, health, sanitation and child protection during its early years and place priority on economic stabilization and reform and revitalization of the production sector. At the same time government–and the nation–were framing the constitution. These important reforms attracted most of the attention and resources of government and major donors. Second, though some of the non-controversial policies in the White Paper were already being implemented, because of the level of controversy surrounding policies such as the cost-sharing and the funding of boarding school education, especially among the vocal university students and the Kampala elites, government was slowing the speed of full implementation. This affected the overall speed of processing the White Paper through political institutions, especially at a time when donor-supported economic measures were causing hardships, and elections for the Constituent Assembly were underway.

Accelerating the pace of discussions on issues in the White Paper might have forced government to resolve the contradictions involved in simultaneously implementing UPE, which appealed to voters, and improving the quality of the existing education system, which many realized had to be done. Government was not at this time under pressure, either from its agenda for national reforms, from donors, or even from the public (including the media) to approve and implement the new education policy. Government, therefore, relaxed and moved slowly in initiating parliamentary debate on the White Paper and gave priority to bills on the constitutional process, economic reforms, security, economic investment, and restoration of traditional leaders.

These two explanations notwithstanding, the two-and-a-half years of lost time between Cabinet and Parliamentary approval could have been avoided, especially if the policy-making exercise had been carried out according to a systematic master plan. In an interview, a leading educator and government official summed up the effects of the delay in approving the White Paper:

> This kind of distribution of emphasis affected the processes of education policy formation and approval of the White Paper. Delayed approval of the White Paper also led to the loss of momentum, steam and public interest in the education reform process, that had been well built up. When the White Paper was discussed in the NRC (Parliament) in spite of the Minister's eloquence and superb presentation, the debate was already overshadowed by other national issues. There has, therefore, been a danger of losing visibility of the education policy reform. The kind of guidance the country needed was not forthcoming from the legislature. Maybe it will be necessary to take more determined and bold initiatives in order to provide effective guidance to the process. On the other hand, implementation of selected decisions from the White Paper and others, has been untidy and piece-meal, mainly due to the absence of the necessary guidance. Although some of the reforms being implemented are generally fairly well coordinated, there is nevertheless a serious danger in dealing with problems in a piece-meal manner. It may take another year or two at least, before there is a return to a general debate and a concerted approach to effective dialogue on the new education policy and well coordinated and prioritized implementation of the same.[18]

The parliamentary debate on the White Paper did not end with clear-cut, formal approval. The debate that took place was generally lively, although on some occasions it was marred by cheap politicking

by some members who used it to catalogue commonplace problems of education in their own constituencies in the hope of being heard back at home through media coverage. Minor amendments tothe White Paper were suggested. Government felt that Parliament would conclusively legislate later on through the new Education Acts.

Major benefits of the consultative process

The five-and-a-half years of dialogue and consultation resulted in significant deepening of the sectoral and national analysis done by the EPRC. By far, many more opportunities–some of them unprecedented in form and in essence–were provided for stakeholders to participate in the policy formation process. Much was done to take into account the interests, needs, and opinions of key stakeholders. Although full consensus on all issues, and particularly the contentious ones, is not possible, effective consensus has, however, been established on the overall policy and most issues. Even on issues like cost-sharing, where some limited opposition continues to come from small groups of university students and dons and from opposition politicians, there is broad consensus among the majority of citizens on the need for cost-sharing.

DONORS AND DONOR COORDINATION

The donor-government round table

In July 1991, the World Bank and the Ugandan government cosponsored a round table of donors to education, which initiated at least 17 pre-investment studies, including studies on primary education and teacher development, primary school curriculum reform, secondary school science education reform, and instructional materials for technical education.

This meeting initiated a process of policy analysis and subsector policy formation that was not only outside the White Paper process but also ran parallel to and sometimes ahead of it. Donors had their own agendas and did not want to operate within the slower education policy formation process linked to the White Paper. They benefitted from the vacuum created by the absence of a government master plan or framework. Consequently, for example, the World Bank's study on primary education and teacher development resulted in a major policy component developed outside the priorities established by both the EPRC report and the White Paper. Another study by USAID entitled *Uganda Education Sector Review: Issues and Options* was done outside the policy formation process. Subsequently, the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS) project supported by the World Bank and Support Uganda's Primary Education Reform (SUPER) project supported by USAID became major reforms, moving ahead of the White Paper process.

Even more significant is that as a result of the dynamism and commitment of the experienced expatriate staff implementing the above-described projects, and the detailed and well coordinated planning of the projects, government's education policy implementation emphasis shifted from the issues of increased *access* to education (benefitting those out of school) to improving the *quality* of education (benefitting those already in school). Although the EPRC report and the White Paper recognized the importance of both access and quality, they gave more emphasis to the former.

Public statements by government have continued to emphasize access, especially to primary school. This was one of the justifications for cost-sharing at tertiary levels, so as to shift resources to the primary level. Yet the donor-driven re-allocation of emphasis to quality has meant that the focus and emphasis on

UPE stated in the EPRC report and the White Paper has been played down during early implementation of policy decisions. Furthermore, donors have shown little, if any, interest in supporting UPE. So, as of now, the emphasis that has been placed on improving quality rather than access is likely to result in continued benefits for those who are lucky to have access to school and prolonged exclusion from the mainstream of formal education and social development of large sections of the people who are marginalized.

The argument for placing priority on improving the quality of primary schooling rather than on expansion does not carry the conviction and support that it would have had if this had been central in the public discussions on education policy.

Early implementation of selected policy decisions

The two-pronged approach of continuing dialogue while beginning implementation of selected policy decisions derived from the dynamics of the history of the education sector and from political and professional considerations and judgements of government officials and donors. Two kinds of policy decisions have been implemented before completion of the policy formation process.

Those on situations that have long generated public outcry and a widespread desire to act on them: increasing access, especially at tertiary level for some of the marginalized groups; democratization and decentralization of the management of educational institutions and the education system; improving teachers' conditions of service; rationalization of educational resource allocation and of the school map.

Those that required a lot of resources to implement and attract donors' interest and immediate support: primary education quality improvement and supply of instructional materials.

Donors' influence

Donors have been able to influence policy decisions such as reform of primary school and primary teacher training programs and improvement of education quality because:

(a) Donors are generally well organized, can negotiate effectively, and have strong resource bases.

(b) In preparation for negotiations and other decisive events, they benefit from a culture of thorough analysis of the most minute aspects of the matter in question.

(c) They select the best and most loyal professionals and skilled technical people from around the world, and remunerate them well, thus exercising powerful control over them.

(d) They operate from positions of superiority given credence by historical experiences, particularly in their former colonies.

In countries like Uganda, the culture of serious research is still limited. Poverty is rampant and adversely affects even the professional elites, some of whom sell their labor to well-paying bidders from abroad, on almost any terms. The culture of thorough analysis, preparation for negotiations, record keeping, and appreciation of data are poorly developed, if at all. In this situation, donors are likely to dominate in policy selection, formation, implementation, and evaluation processes.

IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOMES

Policy decisions taken outside government's consultative policy formation process do not conform to the implementation program, budgetary projections, and time line envisaged by the White Paper. This must be expected to cause problems in making financial commitment to implementing policies not foreseen in the White Paper.

The most important problems related to this approach, however, have to do with ownership and control of programs developed outside that process and the benefits of such programs. Several times, for example, implementation measures of the USAID-supported SUPER project slackened because government could not remit its financial contributions on time, due to budgetary problems and uncoordinated planning of policies and actions. In such cases, USAID had to threaten to withhold its own contributions in order to push government to act.

It is not clear what will happen to donor-driven projects when foreign experts return to their own countries and the loans and grants run out. For example, when UNICEF support for the School Health Education Project (SHEP) ended this year, the project came to a halt in an untimely and untidy way. Also, donor priorities sometimes result in irrational implementation decisions. In 1990, curricula reform started with the secondary school mathematics syllabus because that is where donor interest lay at the time.[19]

Many complaints are heard from district-level people about lack of their involvement in government-donor negotiation of decisions that they must implement. The negotiations are a monopoly of a few national bureaucrats and politicians. Unless this arrangement changes, problems with donor-supported interventions are likely to become worse with decentralization of administration to the districts.

These problems do not, however, negate the crucial resources that donor interventions have brought to the education sector and the positive impact they have had. Nor do they imply that without donor interventions the situation would be better. In many cases, donors must be guided by their own agendas and push government bureaucrats to act and to maintain programs. Government operations and systems have weaknesses, in spite of which the NRM government–and the Minister of Education in particular–have maintained commendable overall control of the process of policy formation and critical decision-making.

Some concrete results are beginning to emerge from the implementation of policy decisions. For example, under the TDMS and SUPER projects, the grade three teacher training reform program is at an advanced stage. The construction of teachers colleges has begun, and the rehabilitation and expansion of selected primary schools to be used as coordinating centres is underway in a number of districts. A new Grade Three teachers' curriculum, which integrates pre-service and in-service training, is partly completed and in use, together with newly written teaching modules. Schools are receiving more textbooks, and communities are being mobilized to support the reform in primary education. Selected communities are being offered incentives to send girls to school and keep them there. In addition, cost-sharing in tertiary institutions has been phased in. Some of the non-salary monies have been reallocated, with the released funds re-channeled to support the pedagogical needs of tertiary institutions and primary schools and to increase staff salaries.

Measures like these are beginning to have results, such as improved scores in the primary school leaving examination, better morale among teachers and a willingness to remain in the teaching force,

and higher standards, even in some of the rural schools. But it is too early to present a full assessment of the outcomes.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A number of management training programs for ministry staff at senior and middle levels have been carried out with financial support from donors. The capacities of the EPU and the PIU are being improved through staff training, equipment, increased personnel, and use of expatriate advisors. The decentralization of administration, service delivery systems, and resources to the districts is increasing their capacity to implement reforms and to respond to local needs. The minimum level of qualification for district education and inspection officials is being raised to university graduate. The Ministry of Education is undergoing restructuring. All these changes are intended to increase capacity to implement the policy reforms set forth in the White Paper, yet significant unresolved problems remain.

In order to implement the policy reforms of the White Paper, government and the Minister of Education have yet to build teams of committed and determined progressive-minded staff at headquarters and in the districts. Decentralization to the districts has made building these teams an urgent matter. The rigid administrative structure of headquarters and the predominantly conservative bureaucrats, gripped in a culture of timidity, tend to alienate anyone who tries to change the existing order. The few bureaucrats who do their best–and they have done a commendable job–are bogged down with day-to-day administrative duties and have little time for serious thinking, planning and coordinated management of the demanding policy reforms of the White Paper.

LESSONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The innovative approach to education policy formation in Uganda resulted from a protracted struggle to end economic, social, and institutional breakdown, cultural alienation, moral degeneration, disregard for human rights, dictatorial rule, and undemocratic governance. In spite of the teething period and the inevitable problems noted in this paper, the Ugandan approach to education reform is progressive and developmental. The use of extensive dialogue, consultation, and debate among key stakeholders and all citizens, along with scientific policy analysis, have helped to establish consensus on policies and broaden the base of their ownership, thus increasing the likelihood of their effective implementation. Such an approach should be consolidated and institutionalized. New and innovative structures and institutions for socio-political organization may be necessary to support the consultation process with community sensitization, mobilization and effective participation, where this approach is adopted by other African countries. This has been the case in Uganda.

The commission approach, in its original form, as the main method of policy formation has proved to be inadequate to effect fundamental change, especially when the paramount need is to establish and practice democratic governance and work methods. The traditional commission approach should therefore be modernized, divested of the trappings of conservatism, elitism, inflexibility, and temporariness.

A permanent institutional framework should be developed to facilitate continuous participatory policy analysis as well as policy formation, implementation, evaluation, and renovation–all designed for consensus building, endogenous policy formation, and ownership of the policies by citizens. This framework should facilitate both bottom-up and top-down initiation of policies, with greater emphasis

on the former. Existing systems, institutions, and mechanisms should be harnessed and adopted to the required institutional framework.

The Ministry of Education should develop a culture of appreciation of the importance of data and of thorough critical analysis of phenomena to the smallest detail. It should encourage individuals to develop the skills required for record-keeping, data collection, processing, dissemination and utilization. The traditional methods and mechanisms for data collection should be reformed and updated in order to suit the needs of developing countries and their unique conditions.

UPE and basic nonformal education are the key catalyzing policies in an innovative and democratic approach to education. Government should do everything possible to implement these policies, beginning with UPE.

Ministries of education and governments as a whole should have in place master plans or broad frameworks to guide policy formation, donor-government negotiations, and the implementation of projects and programs. Then they should ensure that those plans are adhered to and implemented. This will minimize the amount of time and resources needed and prevent uncoordinated actions, piecemeal development of polices and action plans, and their untidy implementation.

Donors' contributions to national development and to the education sector in particular is undoubtedly important and highly commendable, yet donor interventions have had some negative effects. Measures that could be tried to minimize these are:

(a) Have donors invest in the development of the new approach to policy formation and institutional framework;

(b) Get special support for capacity building in research at all levels of society, especially in areas where responsibility, power, and resources for planning and implementation of development programs are particularly needed (with special attention to the decentralization reforms);

(c) Make donor-government negotiations more open and transparent to avoid contradictions between them and the processes of democratization and decentralization;

(d) Help donors cease to use their agendas and conditionalities in a domineering and inflexible manner, thereby causing problems of uncoordinated action programs, waste of valuable resources and, above all, prevention of endogenous policy development.

More efforts should be made by government to encourage greater media participation in the processes of policy formation: dissemination of relevant information and gathering relevant data, information, and opinions. The media should be encouraged to make efforts to overcome narrow, superficial, and sensational journalism, sectarian reporting, distortion of truth and reality, and misinformation.

Sector review reports and resulting policy documents should be widely circulated at little or no cost to stakeholders, who should be encouraged to read and discuss them. Translated and abridged versions should be available.

During processes of planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and action programs, everything possible should be done to eliminate the culture of domination by politicians, political and bureaucratic leaders, professional and wealthy elites, both inside and outside government, over junior

public servants and ordinary citizens. Popular democratization of societies in the African nations is absolutely essential to guarantee the success of the above processes. However, imposition of external models of democracy should be avoided.

Serious efforts should be made to develop national languages that can be easily taught to, and spoken by, all the citizens of the African countries, in order to accelerate national unity and development, as well as to facilitate effective community sensitization, mobilization and participation in policy making, implementation and evaluation.

ENDNOTES

1. Brett, E.A., 1978, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa*, Heinemann, pp.38–40.
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3. Goldthorpe, J.E., 1966, *An African Elite: Makerere College Students 1922-1966*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi, p.63.
4. Ministry of Education, 1989, *Education for National Integration and Development: Report of the Education Policy Review Commission*, Kampala, p. ii. Henceforth, this report is referred to as *EPRC report*.
5. National Resistance Movement (NRM) Secretariat, 1988, *Political Program of NRM: Two Years of Action*, NRM Publication, Kampala, p.35.
6. *Ibid*., See the whole of Chapter One: "NRM Political Programme".
7. EPRC report.
8. For an extensive description of this process, see Evans, D. and Kajubi, S.W., "Education Policy Formation in Uganda: Continuity Amid Change", In Evans, D. (Ed), *Education Policy Formation in Africa: A Comparative Study of Five Countries*, USAID Technical Paper No. 12 of June 1994, Washington D.C.
9. Based on interviews conducted for this study.
10. *Ibid.*
11. According to the group of student-teachers interviewed by the author. They had participated in the discussion that was led by a member of the NRC, at Makerere University, and had heard the professor give this explanation.
12. EPRC report, p. 9.
13. *White Paper*, pp. xi - xii.
14. Levine, V. and Sentongo, C., 1989, *Report on Consultancy: Financing and Efficiency of Education in Uganda, 4th IDA Project*, Ministry of Education, Kampala.
15. The author of the present report experienced such rebukes and reprimands directly. However, public dialogue was continued.
16. *White Paper*, p. 3.
17. This culture of an intimidated bureaucracy had been evident at other times, and its pervasiveness in the civil service is well known. This was confirmed by complaints and opinions expressed by most people interviewed for this study. It is part of the wider culture of elitist and authoritarian management of public affairs and the related dictatorial dominance of conservative politicians and other elites which still lingers in Uganda's public life, in spite of NRM's efforts to eliminate it.
18. Based on an interview with a consultant who was unhappy about the Ministry's arrangement.
19. When the consultant asked why the process did not start with the primary school curriculum, she was told that the process had to start somewhere, and that there was donor money for secondary school curriculum reform at that time.

Notes on the Authors

Djibril Debourou is Professor at the National University of Benin. He has advanced degrees in history and the sociology of education. In 1995, he was elected Member of Parliament.

David Evans is Professor in the School of Education at the University of Massachussetts and Director of the Center for International Education. He has been involved with education in Africa for the past 35 years, and recently, in issues of policy formation, teacher supply and demand, and computer models for educational planning.

Dominic Lwaku Fobih is Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He is also Dean of the Faculty of Education and Head of the Department of Primary Education at the University of Cape Coast.

Ebenezer F. Godwyll is Lecturer in Special Education in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Katebalirwe Amooti Wa Irumba is a prominent Ugandan educator, a former professor at Makerere University and former Director of the national primary teacher education reform. In the early 1990s he chaired the Education White Paper Committee.

Joseph Pierre Kamano was formerly Chief of the Division of Textbooks and Publications at the National Teaching Institute *(Institut pédagogique national),* Conakry, Guinea. He is currently pursuing advanced graduate studies in the US.

Albert K. Koomson is Lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of the Cape Coast, Ghana.

Venancio Massingue is specialized in information technology and information systems management and control. He is currently Director of the Center of Informatics of the University Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, Mozambique, and Lecturer at the Faculty of Science. He has worked closely with the Department of Planning of the Ministry of Education. He has been involved in university pedagogical planning.

Narciso Matos is Secretary General of the African Association of Universities. He was formerly Rector of the University Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, Mozambique.

Richard Sack is currently Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of African Education. Prior to that he had been a consultant in educational policy analysis to bilateral and multilateral agencies. His field of specialization is the sociology of education.

Percy Selwyn was Advisor to the Ministry of Education in Mauritius from 1983 to 1995. He was Coordinator for the Master Plan of Education. Prior to that he had been Director of the Economic Intelligence Unit of the Ministry of Finance, Mauritius.

Christopher Shaw was formerly Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of African Education. He is currently Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank.