

NORRAG NEWS

Northern Research Review Advisory Group

NUMBER 8

JUNE 1990

Editor:

Kenneth King

Department of Education
Edinburgh University
10 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9JT
Scotland, U.K.

Tel: 031 667 1011

Fax: 031 667 7938

Telex: 727441 UNIVED G

NORRAG NEWS is financed by the Swedish International Development
Authority (SIDA).

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE IN JOMITIEN?	3
1. The shaping of Draft D - the final version of the Declaration and the Framework for Action	3
2. The great themes of the Conference: Literacy, Primary Schooling, and Development Communication	10
3. Some non-agency comments and reactions to Jomitien	19
4. Report on the RRAG Roundtable at Jomitien	23
THE FOLLOW-UP TO JOMITIEN	25
5. The official and multilateral follow-up	25
6. Follow-up to Jomitien: the bilateral perspective	32
7. Researching education and training post-Jomitien	40
8. LITERATURE REFERRED TO IN NORRAG NEWS 8, OR RELATED TO WCEFA	52
9. AGENCY EDUCATION PROFILE: BRITAIN'S ODA	58
10. OTHER AGENCY ACTIVITIES: IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING, IN SCIENCE, IN TECHNOLOGY	60
11. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN NORRAG	67
12. MEETINGS, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS	68
13. REPORT ON LITERACY ROUNDTABLE	70
14. END-NOTE ON THE FOLLOW-UP: THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION (IWGE); UNESCO'S PLANS	71

EDITORIAL

**SPECIAL ISSUE: WHAT HAPPENED AT JOMITIEN - THE WORLD
CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION FOR ALL? AND WHAT MAY HAPPEN AS
A
RESULT??**

There will appear during May and June the published versions of the World Declaration on Education for All, as well as the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. There will also be available a new edition of the valuable Background Document, expanded and updated. And an official Report on the Jomtien Conference. Soon, therefore, what has been in the possession of the 1500 people who were at Jomtien in Thailand will become available to a larger world.

This special issue of NORRAG NEWS will take for granted the availability of this Jomtien documentation, and thus not take up space in reproducing it. Instead it will focus on the different elements within the consensus that emerged from five days of hectic work. Carrying forward the preconference analysis we offered in NORRAG NEWS 7, we shall examine the shaping of the final drafts of the 'Declaration and Framework'. Secondly, it will be important to analyse selectively what role the thematic and illustrative Roundtables played in the process of conceptualisation of the Jomtien agenda. They were the flesh on the Jomtien bones. Within this, the role of the joint RRAG Roundtable on 'Research to Action in Basic Education: the Potential of Networking and North-South Partnerships' will be considered. Thirdly, we shall illustrate some of the riches contained in the 70 odd Exhibits - small cubicles stacked with documentation.

But the big question, both for the world that went to Thailand and the larger world that didn't, must be 'JOMITIEN - SO WHAT?' What is the follow-up or the fall-out of Jomtien? We shall examine the beginnings of what may be termed the official follow-up, especially by the agencies most closely concerned. As NORRAG NEWS reports on the NORTH, our account of follow-up will be able to say much less about what is happening in the SOUTH. However, NORRAG organised a special meeting on May in Stockholm to examine the implications of Jomtien for NORRAG itself. With its close links to donor agencies, and research networks in the North (and South), what role could NORRAG play in information exchange, advocacy, or critical judgement

about the outcomes and follow-up to Jomitien?

'Like NORRAG NEWS 7, this issue will be much more concerned with the World Conference than with International Literacy Year (ILY). Nevertheless, we shall pay some attention to developments on the literacy agenda, and note the specifically literacy-related outcomes of Jomitien, as well as documentation generated through ILY. Here too there will shortly be a crucial text emerging, A Year of Opportunity, which will plainly be concerned with this special literacy year.

Finally, NORRAG has been restructuring, and we report on the outcomes of that process too. The beginnings of a much larger NORRAG range of activities are anticipated. And new arrangements for distributing NORRAG NEWS.

Kenneth King, Edinburgh

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE IN JOMITIEN

1. THE SHAPING OF DRAFT D - THE FINAL VERSION OF THE DECLARATION AND THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

The process that started with the UNICEF consultation on education, 15-17 February 1988 came to the end of its first phase on 5-9 March 1990, two years later. At the initial meeting, participants had available a single paper alerting readers to the emerging crisis in the worlds of literacy and of primary education: 'A brief overview of literacy and primary education: current status, issues, and broadening the approach'. During the one week in early March 1990, however, the participants had access to a treasurehouse of documentation on literacy, basic education, and primary education through some 70 exhibits. Probably over 1000 separate items were on show, and many could be carried off by the strong-armed. Most important, of course, participants in the March conference had the two key documents harvested from the two years of increasingly intensive international consensus-building:

World declaration on education for all and

Framework for action to meet basic learning needs

Or rather the 1500 or so delegates arrived with Draft C of these materials, and they went away with the final version which was adopted on the last day of the conference. An important question for the shape of these final documents, and therefore the form of the follow-up must be to what extent the conference was allowed substantially to alter the texts they arrived with.

Even to contemplate the possibility of significant change in the documentation was a high risk posture. Unlike the earlier 9 regional consultations, the Jomitien meeting afforded the possibility of cross-regional caucuses amongst NGOs, donor agencies, and national delegations. There were opportunities for South-South caucusing, as well as North-South. Delegations were actually encouraged to propose changes. But what came of this last round of consultation and lobbying? What major changes were proposed and accommodated in the final version?

LOBBYING AT JOIVITIEN: SPECIAL INTERESTS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL

Once it had been agreed that a drafting committee should be set up (with 2 people from each of the 9 regions, 3 from NGOs, and at least one from each of the main sponsors), and should receive amendments in writing, the process of caucusing was underway. By the deadline on the 3rd day of the meeting, 67 national delegations, donor agencies, or groupings of countries, and NGOs had produced some 200 pages of closely argued amendments. Out of these hundreds of suggestions - many reflecting the special pleadings and interests of particular groups - only some made it to the final tape.

Without going into, a detailed analysis of which amendments survived, and which dropped out en route, it can be safely suggested that those that emerged from coordinated clusters of NGOs or countries, and which also had strong supporters in the drafting committee, reached the final version. Correspondingly, it was obvious that when a region did not rapidly organise, and did not liaise closely with its representatives in the committee, an amendment - however valuable - did not affect the final text. A few illustrations of the key changes between the arrival and departure draft will indicate some of the most important outcomes of the lobbying process.

THE DISABLED AS AN ACCEPTED PART OF EDUCATION FOR ALL

A very substantial grouping of NGOs from the North and the South lined up behind a set of amendments to make the disabled more visible. This was probably an important intervention, since at least some of the thinking about 'realistic' targets was probably based on a view that universal access to education would be unobtainable because of the presence of large numbers of children with special educational needs. There had been special acknowledgement of the learning needs of the disabled in Draft C, but the final version had a much more powerful acceptance of the need to treat the range of disablement as an ordinary part of education:

Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system. (iii. Hereafter Roman numerals for Articles of Declaration; Arabic for paragraphs of Framework)

STRONGER EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

This was another area where powerful clusters of NGOs from both South and North, as well as the grouping of the international teachers unions, were effective in sharpening still further the awareness of the gendered nature of the deficiencies in literacy and basic schooling. Just as in the previous subject, there had been reference to the UN Decade of Disabled Persons, so the existing Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women could be pointed to along with making explicit the gender-relatedness of several of the key principles. The two most critical insertions concerned making all of the six suggested targets for action include gender equity. And as far as international assistance was concerned, a whole new section was adopted to emphasise the need for the programming of aid to be much more gender conscious:

Education programmes for women and girls. These programmes should be designed to eliminate the social and cultural barriers which have discouraged or even excluded women and girls from benefits of regular education programmes, as well as to promote equal opportunities in all aspects of their lives. (44)

TEACHERS' RIGHTS AND STATUS

Here too the organisational effectiveness of the four international teachers' associations was translated into a stronger emphasis on teachers' trade union rights and professional freedoms (33). More generally, this was an opportunity to stress that there existed for teachers, as noted earlier for disabled and women, a UN recommendation about their terms, conditions and status. This ILO/UNESCO recommendation had been on the books for 25 years. While noting these very worthy interventions on the trade union rights and professional freedoms of teachers, it could be suggested that these international teacher bodies perhaps insufficiently took account of what could be called the 'informal sector' of teaching, -the huge numbers of low paid, untrained and usually un-unionised teachers, and the stark facts of the decline in the value of teachers' salaries over the past 10 years.

PROTECTING HIGHER EDUCATION IN URGING BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

The historical tendency for international interest in basic education to translate into a lessening of priority for higher education was one of the reasons that a whole series of countries were prepared to lobby for more explicit safeguards for higher education, research, and access to high technology. The thrust of this concern was from Latin America but a few other signatories came from the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and Asia. IDRC was also instrumental in successfully inserting a parallel recommendation which argued that basic education was 'fundamental to strengthening of higher levels of education and of scientific and technological literacy'. (preamble) Once the spirit of the Latin American resolution had also been accepted, there was secured a dual justification of the need for higher education in relation to basic education:

Societies should also insure a strong intellectual and scientific environment for basic education. This implies improving higher education and developing scientific research. Close contact with contemporary technological and scientific knowledge should be possible at every level of education. (viii)

It is worth noting that on almost exactly the other end of the spectrum from higher education and contemporary (i.e. Western) scientific research, IDRC was also instrumental in introducing in the final text an emphasis on 'traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage' as having 'a value and validity in their own right'. (preamble)

DEBT, TERMS OF TRADE, STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT: A THREAT TO EDUCATION FOR ALL

Pressure from particular special interests succeeded in inserting a key phrase here and there, such as libraries, fertility awareness, sound and sustainable development, or refugee return, into the text, but by far the most contentious issue was related to the trade-off between the debt burden and the search to extend education to all. No fewer than 13 Latin American countries along with France and Ivory Coast were signatories to a recommendation that targeted debt as the main problem, presented debt-service or attending to basic needs as alternatives, and placed responsibilities on the North to take the initiative. In the rather rushed

translation from the Spanish this read:

The debt problem is definitely the main obstacle confronting many countries in order to achieve social and economic development particularly in education since it largely exceeds their capacity to pay.

This debt conspires against the tasks of development. New unconventional and equitable formulas are required in order to solve this problem since for many countries the options are either to pay this debt or to attend basic needs especially those of education.

Creditor countries must come up with equitable and fair answers to the debt problem.

1

A different version of this dilemma about debt versus education for all was prepared by World University Service, and the International Coalition for Development Action, along with 20 other NGOs. In a proposal for the preamble, they argued the need for rethinking debt in the context of macro-economic relations:

A resolution of the economic crisis associated with debt and North-South economic relations is a necessary precondition for the achievement of Education for All. Resources currently flowing from South to North in debt service, if reoriented to the service of education and development, could provide the debtor countries with an enhanced capacity to ensure the survival of children to school age, and release families, communities and nations from the poverty which prevents universal participation in pre-school, school and adult education.

Even stronger than this was the set of proposals from the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) and the association for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), supported by several other NGOs also. These too set the responsibility solidly in the North for the framework of conditions that constrained the South. It is worth quoting an excerpt at some length since it illustrates some of the positions that the drafting committee had to seek to accommodate:

We call on all governments of the North and all international financial institutions to cancel all existing debts as these are an

intolerable burden on the people, make it impossible for them to mobilise the resources necessary for basic education, and ferment revolt and strife. It is necessary further to put an end to structural adjustment programmes and attendant conditionalities which have caused so much suffering to the people and undermined their capacity to mobilise resources for their basic needs.

Education for all is the business of all, to which each should contribute according to their ability and strength. As such therefore, we appeal to the governments of the North and all international financial institutions to set up a special development fund into which all cancelled debts would be deposited in local currencies and to which they would make additional contributions to finance development activities in the South, including basic education.

The final text on debt was not easily arrived at, since it had to run the gauntlet of many different interests, including those of the European Community. The agreed text was much closer to that proposed by Latin America than by AALAE and PRIA, but by the time it was settled, it was no longer only the North that had to act, and it was no longer a straightforward trade-off between debt service and educational development. An altogether more two-sided affair.

Creditors and debtors must seek innovative and equitable formulae to resolve these burdens, since the capacity of many developing countries to respond effectively to education and other basic needs will be greatly helped by finding solutions to the debt problem. (x)

SHARPENING THE AIM ON A PARTICULAR EDUCATIONAL TARGET

In some way, one of the most important changes during the final stages of drafting was just to drop 2 words and add 4 more. It concerned the setting of an indicative target for primary education. Originally, back in Draft B in 1989, the wording for this very crucial target had stressed 'universal provision of primary education' to be reached by the year 2000. Several regional consultations, and especially South Asia and West Africa, had felt it unrealistic to set down a target that could not possibly be reached in 10 years' time. Hence Draft C had retreated to what was thought a more realistic position:

Progress toward universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as 'basic') (8)

At the very last moment in the drafting process, UNICEF interceded with the committee to consider something stronger than merely 'progress toward'. After all, progress might include a rise in provision from 5% to 10%. With the Summit for Children on the horizon in September 1990, it would be helpful to have a much stronger statement on universal primary education, with a deadline attached. Otherwise the target was too hazy to offer any focus at all. Agreement here was finally reached, and the strength of the earlier version was fully reinstated:

Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as 'basic') by the year 2000. (8)

This may appear like a cosmetic change but, as we shall see later, it was a very important accompaniment to the very strong emphasis that a number of the agencies wished to attach to primary education.

SUMMARY COMMENT ON THE SHAPING OF THE JOMITIEN DRAFTS

Enough will have been said to indicate that the text was significantly strengthened here and there, mostly by additions. It was also altered by deleting some of the very heavy emphasis on the potential of new communication technology that had entered the penultimate Draft. In general, however, the documents retained their original flavour and assumptions. They could certainly be invoked in favour of the following:

A stronger emphasis on access and on equity

A focus on educational achievement and on completion, not just on enrolment and attendance

A broader scope for basic education, but no secondrate alternatives Many pointers to new partners in education provision 'cutting across government, NGOs, the private sector and communities

New pressures to rethink external aid to basic education in the context of the wider macro-economic environment

2. THE GREAT THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE: LITERACY, PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

From the early drafts of the Declaration (Charter) and the Framework, it was clear that there were two channels for basic education - the primary school, and basic knowledge and skills for adults. There had seemed more emphasis on primary than on adult basic education (including literacy). Then in the race towards Jomtien a third channel - mass communication - had emerged as a promising way to extend basic knowledge effectively to adults. At Jomtien itself, the crucial question was How would these three channels fare? What was the real 'curriculum' of Jomtien felt to be? Would one channel be marked for priority attention?

There were really three sources for exploration of these questions: 1. the final drafts of the main documents (Declaration and Framework); 2. the messages and documentation provided at the roundtables and exhibits, and 3. the key conference speeches of the 'big four' sponsors, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and UNDP.

THE STATUS OF THE THREE CHANNELS IN DECLARATION AND FRAMEWORK

We have just noted above that **primary education** was quite specifically targeted in the drafting process to ensure that there was a goal of universal access and completion by the year 2000. In the area of **adult literacy**, the final text did not stress universality, but rather a reduction that would differ by country, but would emphasise women:

Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate ... to, say, one-half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates. (8)

Although there is a deadline on this suggested target, the tentativeness of the phrase 'say, one-half' offers some latitude to countries. The positive

action in favour of women's literacy also serves somewhat to complicate the target since it implies more attention to female than male. The result is that adult literacy did not emerge from Jomtien with a clear mandate for action on the 900 million illiterates. This may well have been entirely realistic, especially for countries with very high illiteracy rates.

The second aspect of adult basic education was concerned with 'other essential skills required by youth and adults'. All that was said here was that there should be 'expansion of provisions'. This scarcely amounted to an entitlement. But indeed in an area as complex as skill acquisition it is difficult to imagine that any clearer target-setting would have been feasible.

The third channel of the mass media communication of knowledge, skills and values was given no specific target either, but just 'increased acquisition'.

Overall, the formally approved documentation made primary education the clearest goal in terms of coverage and deadline. THE CURRICULUM OF THE 48 ROUNDTABLES AND 67 EXHIBITS

The real meat of the World Conference was to be found in the roundtables which dealt with major themes or with illustrative cases drawn from countries and regions. And there were no less than 67 exhibits, - cubicles piled up with materials and documents about a project, an agency's actions in literacy, a country programme. Taken together these two provided the curriculum of the conference, and they provide some indication of how many 'periods' were dedicated to primary school, to adult basic education, and literacy. A very approximate division of the roundtables would suggest the following:

Principal focus of roundtables by education sub-sector

primary education - 17 (of which 3 relate to rich countries)

literacy - 7 (of which 4 relate to rich countries)

other basic skills - 5

combinations - 15 (mostly primary education with literacy/NFE)

other - 4

Not too much should be made of these rough divisions, but there is at least a strong indication that more than 30 of the sessions were in whole or in part concerned with primary schooling. It will be seen that only 3 roundtables concentrated exclusively on literacy in the developing world, and very few sessions focused entirely on the nonformal skills area.

In the exhibits there were 20 which focused principally on primary schooling; 12 principally on literacy (of which 3 were in richer countries); just 2 or 3 on nonformal skills; about 20 were combinations (usually of primary education with one of the other themes); and then there was an assortment of miscellaneous items. It would be difficult not to conclude that primary education carried the day in terms of coverage and space, both in the exhibits and the roundtables.

JOIVITIEN TEXTS ON PRIMARY EDUCATION

Of course, insights about the curriculum of Jomitien cannot be derived from merely counting the number of 'periods' taken up by primary education, literacy etc. A critical issue must be whether this apparent emphasis upon primary schooling at the conference was given confirmation by any particularly influential literature associated with those sessions. And here there seems little doubt that some of the weightiest papers (both literally, and to an extent metaphorically) focused exclusively on primary education. Thus the World Bank's roundtable on 'Improving primary education' was principally dedicated to a discussion of its emerging policy paper on primary education:

Improving primary education in developing countries: a review of policy options.
(1990 draft; 160 pages text, pp.100 tables)

We expect to review this paper for NORRAG NEWS later. But another major roundtable - indeed the only one which had a double session - was that organised by UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank on 'Educating all the children: the financial challenge for the 1990s'. The principal paper made available for that session was by Chris Colclough and Keith Lewin on 'Educating all the children'. It too was a monograph rather than a paper (85 pages of text, and lengthy additional case studies). Its focus too was entirely on the challenge of financing primary education. (We carry a comment by World University Service on this monograph later in this issue.)

One further illustration of the strong emphasis on primary education in the research materials available at Jomtien was a special study produced by UNESCO for the World conference:

Dieter Berstecher and Roy Carr-Hill, 'Primary education and economic recession in the developing world since 1980' (80 pages)

A final example of this strong focus on primary education comes from the several roundtables concerned with educating girls and women. Although women's education is frequently mentioned in the materials for such roundtables as 'The education of the girl child in South Asia' or 'Girls' education: problems and solutions', the emphasis is usually on the impact upon women of their education as girls. This is certainly the perspective, for example, of Elizabeth King's paper at Jomtien (from a forthcoming Bank study) 'Educating girls and women: investing in development.'

JOMITIEN LITERATURE ON LITERACY AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION

Several regular journals and bulletins had special issues on literacy or post-literacy available at the Conference, but in all likelihood these special numbers were as much commissioned with International Literacy Year (ILY) in mind as the World Conference. Amongst the more obvious of these would be:

Education for all', Bulletin of the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (December 1989)

'Post-literacy', International Review of Education (1989)

'Adult education in Thailand' Adult Education and Development (1989)

As far as major material on literacy commissioned for the World Conference was concerned, the record seemed rather slender. There was a valuable re-issue of SIDA's 1986 study by Agneta Lind and Anton Johnston, Adult literacy in the Third World: a review of objectives and strategies (1990). A short chapter on women had been added. There were other pieces on functional literacy (an outline of projects and proposals), and on scientific and technological literacy (this latter as much concerned with schools as with out-of-school science and technology).

One of the papers that came a little nearer to providing a literacy focus at the Conference was Philip Jones's 'Literacy and basic education for adults and young people: review of experience'. As its title suggests, it did not see adult literacy and primary schooling as alternative strategies. Rather the assault on adult illiteracy has to go hand in hand with primary education. Jones had 2 principal conclusions which made this point:

The first conclusion points to the fundamental role of formal schooling -especially primary schooling - in the steady progress towards universal learning opportunities....

The second underlying point is that no society has come close to achieving universal literacy through primary education alone. (p.5) [emphasis in the original]

But Jones's work also made the point that the literacy lobby currently lacked the kind of detailed economic analysis which had been deployed to justify the benefits of primary education. The absence of this kind of data for literacy meant that the economic return on literacy was currently not proven, but it might well be parallel to the benefits from primary - if only the research were undertaken.

It may be that the absence of substantive material on the literacy case was partly due to a sense that literacy should not be separated from primary education. It may also be that some of the crucial material that was being prepared for International Literacy Year (1990) was not yet available at the time of the March conference in Jomtien. Thus the ILY thematic publication: Year of opportunity will only become available in May or June of 1990, and the very useful boxed series of 40 Literacy lessons, produced by the International Bureau of Education in Geneva, for ILY, has only just become available. It certainly did not appear to be evident in Jomtien.

In this issue of NORRAG NEWS we give some additional attention to literacy by a comment from Agneta Lind on the outcome of one of the major roundtables on literacy at Jomtien: 'The struggle for adult literacy: a review of experiences'.

As to the other essential skills required by youth and adults, there were few major papers presented as integral parts of the World Conference that spoke to these. There was for example a chapter in Jacques Hallak's

book Investina in the future.. and another in the UNDP discussion paper Education and training in the 1990s. But in general the area of other skills received little concentrated attention at Jomitien. This was perhaps understandable given the enormity of the challenge involved in primary schooling and literacy. But it did contribute perhaps to a tendency within the Conference not to pay attention to the work and employment relations of schooling or literacy for all.

THE JOMITIEN MESSAGE ON DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

The so-called third channel in the World Conference was concerned with the use of mass communication for mass education. Apart from the strong references to its potential within the Declaration and Framework, there was at first sight no obvious roundtable on this topic, apart from an occasional session such as Distance education for primary education. However, in another sense the Conference as a whole had been deliberately structured to emphasise communication via new media. Tremendous pressure was put on the organisers of all the roundtables and exhibits not to rely on traditional chalk, talk and presentation of papers. A few didn't heed the advice, but the great majority explored the use of video, computer graphics, film, as well as more regular slide and tape, and overhead material in order to try and get their messages across. The result was in fact that a great deal of the content of certain roundtables and exhibits was translated into elements that could be readily distributed without a complete reliance on the written word.

The whole world of the exhibits was also intended to function as a third channel. It was the exceptional booth where the attendant sat with a pile of books and other publications waiting for customer interest. More common was the video or computer graphic display; though whether most Jomitien 'shoppers' stopped long enough to see any programme through is open to question.

AGENCY COMMITMENT TO PRIMARY SCHOOL, LITERACY, AND MASS MEDIA

Apart from the formal texts of the Conference, and the 'curriculum' of the Exhibits and Roundtables, there was a third source of evidence for the status of these three elements, and that was the extent of public

commitment in support of them. The Conference was particularly anxious to hear what the 4 main sponsors were prepared to say about patterns of future support. A Conference on such a topic with such a Declaration, sponsored by these four agencies, could scarcely expect not to have some concrete evidence from the Big Four. Pledges by their heads of agency could well act as catalysts to start the world rethinking. So what exactly were their expressed priorities? How clearly did they commit themselves to any particular sub-sectors of education??

World Bank commitment to primary schooling at Jomtien

In the main statement by the president of the Bank, there was certainly some mention made of the over 900 million illiterate, and the problem for development of the generally low educational level of the labour force. Freire too was invoked in respect of the negative attitudes towards learning by the poor. It was acknowledged that a great deal remained to be done when the literacy rate in low income countries was only 51%, and that education was a key to the 'empowerment' of the poor. Literate people, moreover, were able to follow instructions, run machines, innovate and take risks, as in the famous green revolution. But when it came to stating the Bank's priorities, it was clear that the route to literacy was seen to be the primary school:

Our dominant goal will be to help countries put in place the educational policy framework and investment programs necessary to move toward education for all. Support for basic primary education will be the dominant priority.

Within this priority there was strong emphasis on education for girls but in addition, there was encouragement for the strengthening of secondary and higher education, especially in science and technology, and also for assistance to skilled worker training. As to literacy, it was not explicitly on the Bank's agenda at all -apart from a piece of advice to national leaders about encouraging community support to the assault on illiteracy. UNICEF also backs the primary school as top priority

It was clear from the main speech of UNICEF's executive director that it too identified universal primary education as the 'cutting edge'. Primary education should be the lead sector, and could through its success make easier some of the other education components:

A special concentrated effort in universal primary education in achieving a minimum level of learning for the great majority of children in literacy, numeracy and basic life skills by the year 2000 can and need be made Success in primary education can be the cutting edge for opening the way for success in broader and more complex education effort including other elements of basic education.

Within primary, the emphasis would be on universal access, on improved achievement, on funds for materials in low income countries, on access for girls. The adult literacy and nonformal education dimensions would seek to complement primary, but would rely more on the third channel. The impression conveyed in the speech was that through this 'third channel' of the mass media the messages to be transmitted would not be so much conventional literacy but rather packages of crucial information about health and well-being:

In respect of most of the critical problems of today's world ... an educational process reaching out to all segments of society through all channels of communication is the key to the solution.

In other words, the UNICEF position is not accurately captured by contrasting its priority for primary education over against adult literacy. Rather there will be a supreme need for adult education in the sense of social mobilisation if universal primary education is to be put on the world's agenda and kept there for 10 years and more. The enormous power of communication channels has thus two purposes: to generate advocacy and political commitment; and to act as a conduit for education and learning.

UNESCO: absolute priority for literacy & basic education, 1990-95

Unlike the Bank and UNICEF, UNESCO had made both literacy and basic education the absolute priority of its new Medium-Term Plan. Linked to International Literacy Year, it had enunciated a Ten Year Programme to Eliminate Illiteracy. The heart of this initiative would be the promotion of increased regional action and cooperation amongst the programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and the Arab States. To a greater extent, therefore, than the other heads of agencies, UNESCO's Director General could emphasise that literacy was already very

high on the agenda, both for 1990 and for the decade to follow.

UNDP: INCREASED READINESS TO RESPOND TO COUNTRY PRIORITIES

UNDP with its tradition of responsiveness to country needs and plans could not as readily underline literacy or primary education as the other donors. But its administrator made it quite clear at Jomtien that the ball was firmly back at the feet of the national governments:

Our priorities in the UNDP are determined by governments of the developing countries. I am confident that with their support they will ask us to double or triple our technical assistance to meet basic learning needs, and we will welcome it.

Summary of Agency Priorities at Jomtien

There was no agreed position taken by the four sponsors of Jomtien on sector priorities. But we have seen that UNICEF and the World Bank have given primary education pride of place. UNESCO was the only one of the four to make an explicit commitment to literacy in the traditional sense. But UNDP's stance on the necessary location of education priorities in the developing world has relevance in some measure to all the other agencies also, since they must proceed with the agreement of government, whether the process is to make a loan, a grant, or support an ongoing national project.

Although we have noted some significant differences in emphasis in the approach of the four agencies to the three channels under discussion, it is perhaps noteworthy in the closing session of the conference that the executive director of UNICEF should have made on behalf of all four sponsors an assertion about a goal for primary education:

UNICEF, the World Bank, UNESCO and the UNDP are in agreement that a special effort should be made to ensure that by the year 2000 virtually all children are achieving a common early level of achievement, in literacy, numeracy and basic life skills.

3. SOME NON-AGENCY COMMENTS AND REACTIONS TO JOMITIEN.

A. AN NGO REACTION TO JOMITIEN - WORLD UNIVERSITY SERVICEffius)

For Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), the World Conference was something of a watershed. Heads of governments had been asked by the four sponsors to consider including a non-governmental organisation in their official delegation of four people. In many cases they did. NGOs were also invited to Jomitien in their own right. The result was that there were probably near to 200 NGOs present at the meeting. In fact, the process of being included in a non-token manner in the Conference, and being identified as one of the more obvious of the new partnerships of governments produced tensions within the NGO constituency. Some were clearly glad to have been accepted on an equal basis with governments, and strongly identified with the agenda that unfolded at Jomitien. Many others were aware that NGOs have very frequently been obliged to criticise their governments, to serve communities neglected by governments, to point to human rights broken by governments. Hence, the offer of joint actions with governments may sound to some like co-option, which might make it difficult to advocate the 'independent and critical public views' which had been mentioned in the Framework for Action.

We have already noticed that the NGOs played an important role in seeking to sharpen the language in the area of debt, women, and the handicapped for the formal documentation of the Conference. However NORRAG NEWS thought it would be valuable to have an NGO reaction to the World Conference more generally. David Bull, General Secretary of WUS, UK has sent us a comment; it considers that the final roundtable in Jomitien which was concerned with the financing of education for all was the one that brought out all the key issues and contradictions of the conference more generally. We hope that it may be possible in a later number of NORRAG NEWS to present not only a summary of the key financing issues, but also David Bull's critical reactions.

B. A COMMENT ON THE STATE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL DATA BY ROY CARR-HILL

One of the crucial concerns at Jomitien was whether primary education was actually retreating in terms of achieving universality or whether it was coming nearer to fulfilment. A good deal of the most influential literature

on primary education available at Jomtien argued that primary education enrolment ratios were declining. In other words it was being argued that the primary school was losing its ability to attract and hold even that proportion of young people it had succeeded in enrolling, let alone the large number (100 million worldwide) who were still out of school. We asked Roy Carr-Hill, the co-author of one of the key documents at Jomtien, 'Primary education and economic recession in the developing world since 1980' to tell NORRAG NEWS a bit more about the state of primary school data.

He writes as follows:

'Expansion and collapse? What do we actually know about trends in primary education? by Roy Carr-Hill

There was an evident and very visible enormous expansion in primary education during the 1960s and 1970s. But many commentators point to a stagnation, some say a collapse during the 1980s. How reliable are the data to make these pronouncements of doom and gloom? What can one realistically say about trends in primary enrolment? What should we say?

The comments herein are based on a study of data from 107 developing countries for UNESCO, a mild version of which was published by them for the Jomtien Conference under the title 'Primary education and economic recession'.

1. The data in several developing countries are awful. The data on enrolment have well known problems: date of collection, reporting procedures etc. Population data - the basis for calculation of gross or net enrolment ratios - are no better. They are usually Washington guesstimates based on extrapolation from the last available Census (itself often of dubious quality) on the presumption that most numbers are getting bigger rather quickly. The rare comparisons of estimates with new data are amusing but not reassuring. Effectively, reported trends in enrolment ratios are meaningless for several countries.

About the only consistent finding supports an observation made by Blaug in 1979 that 'it is always more difficult to enrol the last 10-15% than the first 85-90% of the school age population'. Given this almost inevitable inverse relationship, the ten countries where the gross enrolment ratio is low and declining are worth particular attention. Four are in Africa - Central African Republic, Ghana, Guinea - Guinea Bissau, and Mali - three are in Asia

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal; one, E] Salvador in Latin America; and Democratic Yemen and Somalia in the Arab States.

2. Despite problems with the enrolments data, more credence can be placed on interpretations of trends, simply because the faults are likely to recur in the same way over time within any one country. Inter-country comparisons are mostly nonsense.

The two basic series are trends in overall enrolment and trends in the first grade. Our report showed that there have been decreases in about a quarter of the countries, from 1980s to the latest year of available data for overall enrolments (24 countries out of 104) and new enrolments in the first grade (19 out of 77).

At the same time it is difficult to discern any obvious patterns. In particular, there is no obvious relation between economic and enrolment growth. For example, the World Bank argues that 'in general, given a country's present enrolment, the rate of its enrolment growth is closely related to income per capita'(1988). They do not report the analysis leading to that conclusion. The partial correlation among current data is -0.017 which is in the opposite direction.

3. It seems self-evident to some that one should describe this situation in terms of doom and gloom: thus one should emphasise the 'exceptional', the 'unprecedented' drop in overall primary enrolments and in new enrolments in the first grade. Yet clearly one could also describe the situation quite optimistically: despite massive expansion during the 1960s and the 1970s, the majority of countries continue to show an increase.

There are no hard and fast rules about interpreting data: one should be aware about the impact of the results and of their presentation. One could argue equally that audiences get motivated by or tired of pronouncements of doom and gloom, and that audiences may equally be motivated or turned off by optimism.

The overall conclusion is agnostic. We know very little about the trends in macro data about primary enrolment, and the policy implications of the data available are unclear. (Roy Carr-Hill)

C. A COMMENT FROM THE MEDIA AND FROM ERROL MILLER OF JAMAICA

One of Thailand's leading papers, The Nation, ran a special supplement every day of the Conference. In making a transition now from the Conference proceedings, the documents and the process of revision, it may be useful to draw on the editorial of the daily 'Jomtien Journal' of The Nation: 'After world conference on education, what next?' This editorial raised some very critical comments about the way the conference had been organised, and its failure sufficiently to address the question of debt. In particular, the editorial reported on the intervention of Errol Miller of Jamaica (one of the founder members of the Research Review and Advisory Group, RRAG) about the tendency of the Conference to lean too much towards Northern research findings, and Northern advice about the means of reaching Education for All. This applied to issues like debt as well as to questions of school reform in the South: All delegates agreed that the debt crisis has had a major impact on the quality and quantity of education in the South.

But banks and aid agencies maintained that structural adjustment was for the large part not responsible for the general deterioration of the education sector in most of the South over the 1980s, arguing that Southern delegates were 'confused' about the cause of their problem.

Structural adjustment is the medicine not the cause of the disease, and Africa's economy will improve during this decade as a result of it they said.

African and Latin American delegates however repeatedly expressed doubts about these sorts of predictions. They complained that charging fees caused parents to pull their children out of school - bringing down the enrolment rate; that increasing class size and introducing double-shifts in rural areas affected the quality of teaching - causing the literacy rate to drop.

Consternation of participants was reflected in dozens of statements like the comments of Prof. Errol Miller of Jamaica, who complained that an 'aura' masks advice coming from the North.

He said that with no military budget, the proposal to divert defence

spending to the education sector had no relevance for Jamaica. Similarly, applications of many suggestions made by Northern experts made his country's situation worse, not better. And with 46 per cent of earnings owed to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, even debt swaps or cancellation are not an option for Jamaica.

Echoing the sentiments of many delegates, Miller said that local studies rarely have the 'weight and prestige that always accompanies advice from the North'.

Notwithstanding such basic differences, the achievement of education for all depends ultimately on how individual country governments who sent representatives to Thailand will apply what they learned at the conference. (March 10,'90)

4. REPORT ON THE RRAG ROUNDTABLE AT JOMITIEN

'FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION IN BASIC EDUCATION: THE POTENTIAL OF NETWORKING AND NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIP'

The four RRAG networks were fortunate enough to be asked to put on a roundtable at Jomitien. They also shared an exhibit, at which it was possible to pick up materials about ERNESA (for East Central and Southern Africa), about SEARRAG (for the South East Asian countries), about REDUC (the information network in Latin America), and about NORRAG (which operates across Europe and North America). Although these networks have been in existence for several years, and the idea of research review and advisory groups (RRAGs) is now some 12 years old, this was the first really public occasion when all four networks presented themselves in concert. The event was carefully planned, and took relatively seriously the instruction from the Interagency Commission to avoid the conventional academic presentation. A film was made for the occasion, also computer videos, and many overheads. The whole roundtable was moderated in a masterly fashion by Pierre Beemans, director general, social and human resources division, at Canadian CIDA.

The essential messages of the RRAG roundtable related rather directly to

the criticism of the Jomtien conference by Errol Miller which we reported earlier -that research and studies on developing countries by scholars from the South tended to be given less importance than research done by Northerners. The RRAG roundtable addressed itself to just 4 main questions, all of which were very directly relevant to Miller's criticism:

1. Is there research in the South?
2. Can it be used?
3. How can this research improve practice?
4. Is regional knowledge enough?

These basic questions were used to point to the existence of the established and emerging data bases in education in Latin America, and South East Asia, the state of the art reviews done in Eastern Africa, and the synthesis of agency and other Northern research done in the North. Jomtien was a particularly suitable environment to make the point that there was the danger of an information overload in some parts of the world, combined with an extreme shortage of written materials in others. It was also a good opportunity to distribute selectively some of the network materials. One key question from the floor was well taken. What about networks in other parts of the world? In west Africa, the Arab region, South Asia, East Asia and the Caribbean, not to mention Eastern Europe. This has been a challenge to the existing networks. In general, our position has been that we should concentrate on getting the existing networks stronger before suggesting developments elsewhere. On the other hand, there is a readiness to assist other groups or individuals should they want to explore the potential of networking, and learn from what has been learnt from the existing groups.

The RRAG groups fitted in rather well with the spirit of Jomtien; they were basically non-governmental organisations; they were essentially partnerships cutting across research, policy and practice; and they had a very strong tradition of linking South-South and North-South in ways that reinforced symmetry. They therefore were a good example of the new partnerships and alliances that were the talk of Jomtien.

One regret. The emphasis of the RRAG roundtable was really about process, how the groups dealt with information, how they influenced policy, how

they provided critical commentary on agency plans etc etc. What was missing was some very sharp illustrations of what was known or not known about literacy or basic education in some of the RRAG regions. Or alternatively what was the essence of the relationship between debt and educational expenditure. This would have been a good moment to provide an executive summary on some of the major policy documents that were circulating in Jomitién.

Jomitién did however have the effect of pushing the networks into making a major concerted presentation, which in turn made us produce for the public domain material about ourselves and our operations that has been hard to come by.

As far as the NORRAG network was concerned, the special issue of NORRAG NEWS (no. 7) on the World Conference was very timely, and has provided some of the only available information on how this whole event was developed. We produced several hundred additional copies of this issue, and all of them have already been used up.

(We carry on our inside back cover some information about NORRAG which we produced for the World Conference.)

THE FOLLOW-UP TO JOMITIEN

5. THE OFFICIAL AND MULTILATERAL FOLLOW-UP

In conjunction with the previous issue of NORRAG NEWS, we have traced the almost precipitate development of a momentum towards a unique international event. We have analysed the shaping of some 9 pages of Declaration and some 20 pages of a Framework for Action. These 30 or so pages have been produced at a very high cost, if all the regional meetings are taken into account, as well as the commissioning of papers, the exhibits, the roundtables, the international steering committee, and of course attendance at the meeting itself. Arguably, however, as we tried to show in NORRAG NEWS-7, there was little chance of this documentation being owned outside the donor agencies that gave it its initial shape, if there was no opportunity to challenge and alter its emphases and biases. The very process of ensuring that the documents gave greater attention to particular constituencies - the disabled, the teachers, refugees, working children - not to mention its major concerns with women and with the poorest countries -

meant that there was greater awareness provoked outside the agency world. At the same time, where the final documents - in searching for compromise - fell far short of what some constituencies thought appropriate, it could mean that commitment to follow through might be limited.

Before turning however to sort out the various levels of follow-up that are possible, it may be useful to examine the short official agreement on follow-up that became part of the Jomitien documentation.

THE OFFICIAL TEXT OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP

It would have been possible to have traced the changing agency ideas about a follow-up to Jomitien in rather the way that we did for the Declaration and Framework development in NORRAG NEWS 7. The difference however was that unlike the world-wide discussion of the Declaration (Charter) and Framework, there was virtually no opportunity to discuss the follow-up. It seemed a priority to ensure that there was actually something to follow up at all rather than spending much time around the world on follow-up schemes. The result was that follow-up was discussed by the international steering group of the World Conference, by the sponsoring agencies, and by the executive committee of the big four sponsors. Of these three, the steering group did have very substantial membership from around the world, as well as from all the sponsors; so it provided a good sounding board and a generator of ideas about follow-up in its two meetings prior to Jomitien (in October and December 1989).

The Steering Group and Follow-up

In general the steering group was worried about any scheme for follow-up that involved a brand new international organisation; there were enough international and regional organisations around already that could take up the challenge of whatever was decided in Jomitien. The steering group was also critical of the notion of any donor-dominated consultative group which would tend to leave the key initiatives (including the funding) for follow-up in the agency world. A final concern about follow-up at the agency level was whether any existing organisation should be encouraged to think of itself as primarily responsible for the follow-up. This was not just a worry about the follow-up being shaped by a single organisation; it was also a fear that the rather unusual partnership across the Bank, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF could rapidly fade if just one of these were allocated prime

responsibility for the shape of things to come. So the form of words in the final version of the Framework tactfully captured the obligation of all four sponsors to maintain the momentum; at the same time, UNESCO's historic mission to education was underlined without handing it the monopoly for post-Jomitien developments:

The core sponsors of the Education for All initiative (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) affirm their commitments to supporting the priority areas for international action presented below [in the Framework] and to making appropriate arrangements for meeting the objectives of Education for All, each one acting within its mandate, special responsibilities, and decisions of its governing bodies. Given that UNESCO is the UN agency with a particular responsibility for education, it will give priority to implementing the Framework for Action and to facilitating provision of services needed for reinforced international co-ordination and co-operation. (44)

As far as the Jomitien text for the follow-up was concerned, there was agreement that the principal follow-up would be in the countries themselves, at the national level. Countries should be encouraged to conduct needs assessments to ascertain what resources they would require to reach their goals. Similarly, at the country level, the donor community (including NGOs) might seek in the spirit of Jomitien more harmoniously to coordinate their initiatives and responses.

At the international level, the big four sponsors would continue to meet annually. No new structures or organisations would be launched to deal with follow-up. Rather, 'International follow-up action will rely on existing mechanisms'.

One of the outstanding problems was how to maintain something of an international movement towards Education for All, without some kind of international mobilising group. At one point in the negotiations about follow-up there had been talk of an 'Education for All consultative group' which could have exchanged information and discussed action across the world of the agencies, the countries and the NGOs. Its membership could be open and informal. This idea of a potentially very large (and therefore costly) grouping which would meet to review and monitor progress did not find favour with the agencies. In the agreed text of the follow-up, this

large idea had been reduced to the notion of a forum, for whose funding and organisation no one was responsible:

As a consequence of the momentum generated by the World Conference, it is expected that national representatives, multilateral and bilateral agencies and NGOs would wish to be part of a consultative forum which will aim at promoting the EFA [Education for All] goals. (Follow-up text)

NEW MONEYS FOR THE NEW VISION

One of the key questions raised in the months prior to Jomtien was whether there would be fresh money available for what the Declaration called 'an expanded vision and a renewed commitment to Education for All. Regional consultations especially the one held in West Africa had been worried about the possibility that the four sponsors would only be initiators and have no continuing responsibility for what they had started off. A good deal of attention at Jomtien was given to seeing what evidence there was of donor commitment, and particularly in the conference speeches of UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank. Apart from UNDP which had already underlined its readiness to respond positively with much higher levels of technical assistance to basic education, what concrete commitments were made?

UNICEF ANTICIPATES QUADRUPLING BASIC EDUCATION BUDGET

UNICEF had already increased its budget for basic education prior to Jomtien, but in the next decade it would seek approval from its board for significant increases:

UNICEF .. is proposing doubling of its support to basic education by the mid-1990s, to 15 percent of total programme support, with a further increase to 20% by 2000. Since the total UNICEF programme is expected to continue to grow in real terms over the 1990s, the proposed increase amounts to a growth from less than US 50 million currently to more than US 100 million per year by the mid-1990s and quadrupling to some US 200 million by 2000.

Coming so hard on the heels of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (November 1989), which had recognised the right of the child to education, and the obligation upon governments to make primary education compulsory

and available free to all, it was important that Jomitien should also be identified with universal access, as we have seen. A crucial 'follow-up' to both events would be the World Summit on Children in September 1990, since that event would be concerned with promoting 'commitment at the highest political level for the survival, protection and development of children'.

WORLD BANK

With the near-to-final draft of the policy options paper on primary education appearing at the same time as Jomitien, the Bank was also in a strong position to justify further lending to basic education. Its commitment was to 'double its educational lending over the next three years to an annual figure of more than US 1.5 billion'. No specific allocation to primary education was mentioned; but it will be recalled that the President had indicated that 'support for basic primary education will be the dominant priority'.

UNESCO'S BUDGETARY COMMITMENT TO LITERACY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

UNESCO did not specify at Jomitien the budgetary implications of making literacy and basic education its 'absolute priority' for its new Medium Term Plan. But within its approved programme and budget for 1990-1991 it had already anticipated that there would be an element of follow-up to the World Conference within the whole range of activities already decided upon as part of its strategy for moving 'towards basic education for all'. Some of these highly relevant initiatives, seminars, conferences, publications and training grants were not strictly speaking 'follow-up' but were activities inevitably given heightened attention and importance as a result of the Jomitien Conference.

Thus many of the items falling within the regular budget of US 3.7 million for what was termed 'the massive reduction of illiteracy' would certainly be reinforced and gain an additional salience by coming after Jomitien. An obvious example of these would be the September 1990 42nd session of the International Conference on Education which would be dedicated to the theme of literacy. Similarly, within the regular budget item of almost US 2 million for actions 'Towards universal primary education', there were several which gained new emphasis or were specifically included because of

their connection with the Jomitien agenda. The stress upon 'raising the levels of learning achievement in primary education would certainly be a theme that accorded well with the great emphasis upon achievement at Jomitien.

SUMMARY ON NEW MONEY FOR NEW VISION

We have picked out the two most obvious examples of new funds (World Bank lending, and UNICEF) that were mentioned at Jomitien. But it was certainly the hope of those involved like UNICEF in making new commitments that they would not be alone:

We expect many bilateral and multilateral assistance agencies and NGOs, 18 of which are helping sponsor this Conference, to increase significantly their allocations as well.

We shall turn to look at the bilateral response to the challenge of Jomitien in a moment. But what was already clear even during the Conference was that the World Conference agenda was being taken seriously by many of the bilateral agencies. We expect below, in the section on the NORRAG meeting in Stockholm, to lay out in some detail the responses of some of the bilateral agencies. It is not likely that we shall be able to come up with a common pattern, any more than this was evident amongst the reactions of the big four. After all, some of the bilateral agencies were actually co-sponsors or associate sponsors of the World Conference. Others engaged substantively with the implications for their own programming only once they had been in Jomitien and realised the potential of the whole initiative. But probably a not untypical reaction was that of Britain's ODA:

The World Conference challenges us to shift the balance of aid to education towards more support for basic education, including primary education, adult literacy and other forms of compensatory education.

On the other hand ODA was also one of the first to include a comment on the World Conference within one of its publicly available policy papers: [Into the nineties: an education policy for British aid](#). But in that context, the discussion about Jomitien was less about the options for the agency and more about the financial constraints faced by national governments who might be encouraged to spend more on basic education:

The call for additional expenditure within the context of tightly constrained resources inevitably means that governments will need to examine their priorities to determine where the money will come from. Given the low or negative economic growth rates in many countries in the world today any additional resources will have to come primarily from existing areas of expenditure.

JOMITIEN: CATALYST OR RESPONSE?

The example of UNESCO actions taken many months in advance of Jomitien underlines an important issue in any attempt to isolate a 'Jomitien effect'. For many agencies, Jomitien may not signal the start of a new era so much as a legitimisation and valuable source of support to what was already under way. Thus, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) had already approved in June 1989 activities that fell under the heading of improving the quality of basic education. Several other agencies might feel similarly that themes and actions decided upon many months or even more than a year before Jomitien would nevertheless acquire a new sense of urgency by failing broadly amongst the same priorities as those highlighted by the World Conference. The Commonwealth provides a good example.

COMMONWEALTH MINISTERS TO DISCUSS IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

At the Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers to be held in Barbados between 29 October and 2 November 1990, Ministers will concentrate on the theme of improving the quality of basic education. The theme was agreed in consultation with governments and reflects their concern with the need to improve schools at the same time as they undertake to expand them.

Informal discussions with ministers and officials in this area, along with a consultative expert meeting, identified six areas which are closely linked to qualitative improvement in schools: curriculum and assessment; training and professional support for teachers; learning materials; management; linking school and the community; and resources.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is commissioning working papers on some of these facets of the overall theme and is itself preparing a general background paper on the main theme. Commonwealth Ministries of Education have been asked to prepare a report (country paper) outlining their experience in maintaining and improving quality in basic education.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF JOMITIEN AS TRIGGER, MIRROR, CATALYST

When we come a little later to examine the research implications of Jomitien, we shall recognise that the monitoring of impact upon agency budgets or upon policy of national governments cannot proceed simply from an analysis of what happened after 5th-9th March 1990. In some way the metaphor of 'Follow-up' is not the right one, therefore. For some activities, such as International Literacy Year (ILY), the World Conference may well have acted as a very effective spotlight -especially on the enormity of the problem. The stark figure of 960 million adult illiterates, two thirds of them women has been communicated rather powerfully to the world by Jomitien.

In other ways, of course, the World Conference may have stolen some of the limelight from ILY, and we have suggested that the message emerging from Jomitien on adult illiteracy was somewhat ambiguous, to say the least.

6. FOLLOW-UP TO JOMITIEN - THE BILATERAL PERSPECTIVE

An early attempt to get some sense of how bilateral agencies had been reacting to Jomitien was a meeting organised by NORRAG in Stockholm on May 11-12 1990. The purpose was not only to exchange information about reactions to Jomitien but also to map out a strategy for analysing the influence of Jomitien over time. Information was available on SIDA, DSE (German Foundation for International Development), DDA (Swiss Development Assistance), Dutch Cooperation, as well as some additional material on ODA (UK), FINNIDA, NORAD, and IDRC. It will be seen in what follows that the bilateral perspective on the challenge of Jomitien was not marked by large declarations or financial commitments voted in public fora. There was nevertheless a readiness to adopt the Jomitien concepts in the framing or justification of their policies and projects. In this preliminary review of the state of a selection of bilateral thinking two months after Jomitien, it is already clear that there are some perceptible influences. In looking now at some of these it is worth bearing the following questions in mind:

Is Jomitien causing a shift within aid priorities?

Is it assisting agencies to go further the way they were already going?

Is it keeping basic education on the agenda when it might slip off?

It is yet identified with new aid moneys?

Jomitien as an additional project justification - FINNIDA

Very recent programme support work in education is being framed in ways that are explicitly linked to the Jomitien agenda of basic education. This is not to say that there has been a shift in the agency's programme but rather that the Jomitien principles accord with the existing priorities. Thus the principles for recommending priority areas for FINNIDA's future support to the education sector in Zambia are clearly 'well in accordance with the Jomitien conference on Education for All'. The first few items of the former read:

Priority is given to projects which would:

be in accordance with the educational priorities expressed by the Government of Zambia and in particular,

2. Enhance the provision of education for all.
3. Pay special attention to the educational needs of women, the handicapped, and those who have been most adversely affected by the economic crisis and the effects of economic adjustment.

FINNIDA's forthcoming extensive education sector support programme for Namibia is going along parallel lines to that of Zambia. 'So in our future bilateral assistance within education the Jomitien ideology will be implemented into practice'. Gradually, if the Jomitien agenda does get widely accepted as a reference mark, we can expect in other agencies as well a good deal of this particular accommodation of Jomitien within existing intentions.

Reconceptualising basic education - DDA (Swiss Development Cooperation)

A rather different indication of Jomitien impact comes from DDA. There the exposure to Jomitien has arguably helped to encourage a debate about the form of a Human Resources Development Unit within the agency. This is actively under discussion at the moment but one of the emerging issues is whether basic education within such a unit would include a wider interpretation of education and training than has been traditional in the agency. The DDA has seen its comparative advantage in the area of skills and training, both formal and nonformal. Thus if basic education post-Jomitien were to imply a focus principally on literacy and primary education, these are not areas that have been concentrations for DDA policy over the years. But if basic education can be conceptualised to include skill development, then it can be anticipated that not only will this element be strengthened, but some additional support to literacy and primary education might be possible. Indeed, Switzerland could play a role in putting more into the post-Jomitien debate the view that basic education should imply concerns with work and employment skills. This was a focus that was rather lacking in Jomitien itself.

Strengthening the deteriorating environment of education for all -Swedish SIDA

SIDA has been concerned for some years with the fact that the infrastructure for education has continued to be eroded in several of their programme countries'. This concern about the deterioration in the institutional framework for the delivery of education has been sharpened by the Jomitien discussion about the new modalities for providing education for all. These include the acknowledgement of the role of NGOs, other ministries, and the private sector as actors in education. But what do these new partnership possibilities actually imply in a situation where the state's own role and capacity are being so eroded?

Second, Jomitien had put explicitly on the agenda of the poorest nations the suggestion that there will need to be 'the adoption of measures that augment the national budgets of the poorest countries' (Article x). This raises directly the issue of external agencies actually contributing to recurrent costs as opposed to continuing with their own programmes and projects. Agencies such as SIDA who are actively facing this challenge of recurrent costs are acutely aware that a move towards some element of recurrent

cost support would take them much closer to the heartland of the ministries of education. If an agency begins to pay part of teachers' salaries, what are the conditionalities that are likely to accompany this move?

An international focus for literacy? - a Nordic exploration

Of relevance both to the International Literacy Year (ILY) and the World Conference on Education for All has been an activity supported by the Nordic agencies. The question had been whether this might be the moment to examine replacing in some way the very valuable International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods (IIALM) which had closed with the removal of the Shah from Iran. A major review of options was carried out by Nicholas Kuhanga, ex vice-chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, and Nelly Stromquis, ex-IDRC. It would appear that the review had argued for the setting up of a new International Centre at relatively high cost. In the early 1990s, however, the planning of new international centres is not something that aid agencies are encouraging. The same agency reaction had been obvious in the planning of the follow-up of Jomtien itself. There was very little agency interest in supporting a high visibility Follow-up Secretariat with impressive premises. The message both for any continuation of IIALM and for the follow-up to Jomtien has been 'Do it somehow within existing structures'. So the literacy initiative has gone back to the drawing board.

New aid policies - a new opportunity for basic education -Holland

The tradition of Dutch Development Cooperation has emphasised higher education. What support there had been for basic education had tended to be channelled through the NGOs, and it was unclear sometimes what exactly was being done as literacy, social action, or skills development within the latter's programmes. The recent appointment of a new minister for Development Cooperation - Jan Pronk -earlier associated with policies for basic needs (1972-76) has made possible the suggestion that basic education could acquire fresh attention. Indeed even prior to the change of minister, there was the beginning of official interest in the World Conference. Already, however, a new policy paper on aid in general is being prepared, and should be public in September 1990. But it will be interesting to see whether in its education chapter there will be any attempt to shift emphasis more towards elements in the Jomtien platform.

Bilateral higher education organisations and Jomitien

Europe has a series of institutions dedicated to higher education cooperation: Higher Education for Development Cooperation (HEDCO) in Ireland; German Academic Exchange (DAAD) in Germany; Higher Education Group in the British Council; Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC). One question raised by Jomitien for these higher education mechanisms is whether there will be any diminution of funding for higher education if the international consensus continues to build for basic education. One or two bilaterals dedicate over 90% of their education budget to higher education (Italy is an example according to recent figures). Others only devote about 2.5% of their education budgets to basic primary education.

There is already some evidence that higher education is being examined rather critically in some ministries of education in the developing world. And in agencies where there is no new money available for Jomitien priorities, it is already clear that allocations to higher education programmes are being trimmed to make possible some new action in basic education. This should not be construed as the beginnings of a stampede from higher education. There are very powerful counters to any such move. Not least there has been the emergence in 1989-90 of politically important higher education constituencies in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union which are looking to Western university linkages and interchange. It may be that the Western support to developing country university education falls, not so much because of a switch to primary and basic but more through a switch of aid moneys within that allocated to higher education.

West Germany: advocacy in support of Basic Education

The German Foundation for International Development (DSE) and the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) have been well known for their sustained work in literacy, primary school improvement, and materials development. For a summary of DSE's contribution in these areas see 'Formal basic education 1990' and 'Nonformal basic education programme 1990' (DSE Bonn). Despite the relative visibility of such initiatives, German aid to these subsectors has remained a very small proportion of total educational aid. Indeed there were indications early in 1990 that it might be difficult even maintaining this level of 2.5%. In a small way it would seem

that the publicity for Jomitien did eventually contribute to a process of advocacy for basic education that had started some time earlier than the World Conference. This advocacy movement was able to reach the media, a political hearing, and attract support from the German Society for Educational Research. The result is that basic education is apparently safe, but it is not yet known if there is any likelihood of increased funding for this field.

Norway and national dissemination on ILY and Jomitien

Basic education, with a strong emphasis upon girls and women, was already a priority with NORAD, the agency for development cooperation. Also there was already in place a national committee for Literacy Year. However, on June 14-15 1990, a seminar will be organised in association with NORAD that will encourage publicity both for developments in ILY and about the outcomes of the Jomitien Conference. This drawing together of these two streams of international initiative is important because it has proved difficult in Norway as in many other countries for those who not actually present in Thailand for the World Conference or for ILY to have any sense of their potential significance.

Translating the 'expanded vision' of Jomitien into ideas that cut across the many new partnerships concerned with education that were outlined in the Declaration and Framework is something that will become easier once documentation is easily available on the World Conference. But there is clearly a difference between the various concerned constituencies discussing such material independently and a gathering that acts nationally as a type of mini-Jomitien (with NGOs, aid personnel, researchers, and politicians involved in the same discussion). NORAD seems to be organising an early version of this type of gathering.

British developments post-Jomitien

(see also later article on 'Into the nineties: an education policy for British Aid' by Roger Iredale)

We have already referred to the mention of Jomitien in ODA's new guidelines on educational aid [Into the nineties: an education policy for British aid](#), as well as the ODA acknowledgement of the challenge thrown down by Jomitien on shifting the balance of support towards primary. ODA also expects to be

able to organise a meeting in the autumn of 1990 that will examine some of the implications of Jomitien for the aid programme in education. In addition the British Council's Education Department along with the Central Information Service had issued after the World Conference a special number of its 'Education Broadsheet' which goes out worldwide to its representatives in Council offices. Although the British Council is not really a funding agency in its own right, it can play a crucially important catalytic role once ODA had identified, as it did in this Broadsheet, the appropriateness of 'shifting our main thrust towards Education for All'.

Additionally in a meeting scheduled for 25th June on Britain's capacity and networking in international education, one of the main items on the agenda was:

Implications of the March 1990 World Conference on Education for All ... for the many different individuals and institutions concerned with primary and basic education.

The meeting, convened by the British Council, brings together representatives of academic associations, researchers, NGOs, aid personnel, as well as individuals from publishing, the exam boards, the local authorities and others. It will probably not be the only occasion where Jomitien acts as a useful organising mechanism for wider networking about development.

Within the UK also, RESULTS, an international grass roots lobby, had selected the World Conference agenda as an item on its 1990 action programme, had already held a national conference call on the issue, and had orchestrated pressure on members of parliament. The process had succeeded in getting a response from the Minister of Overseas Development but more importantly had brought into the consciousness of those involved the key questions about proportions of capital and recurrent aid dedicated to primary education or literacy within the larger pattern of British aid. However, like the response of the UNDP reported on earlier, the Minister felt it necessary to emphasise that one of the limits on ODA reaction to Jomitien was certain to be education priorities of individual developing country governments:

Responsibility for fulfilment of the high expectations raised at the Conference now rests with individual governments, and, in respect of assistance from the bilateral Aid Programme, the priority which developing country governments are prepared to give to basic

education in relation to the many other priorities they have. We are not able to order the priorities of governments but I believe that the consequences of the Conference for the ODA will be beneficial in that we shall be able, more easily, to expand our support for primary education and adult literacy programmes, the latter with a particular emphasis on education for women.

France launches basic education study in French-speaking Africa

Linked to the questions raised by Jomtien, the French Ministry for Cooperation is launching by the end of 1990 a strategy study of basic formal and informal rural education in French-speaking Africa. In the spirit of the World Conference this study will draw on expertise from both North and South, both independent researchers and NGOs.

IDIRC expects to increase support to basic education research

IDIRC is also distinguished by a tradition of responding to the research priorities of institutes and individuals. However, it too expects to be able to emphasise basic education somewhat more within an existing range of support to adult, basic, and community education.

Summary on the bilateral perspective on Jomtien

Thus far there is nothing sensational to report on the bilateral reaction to Jomtien. The process of absorbing the implications is going ahead; in some cases new guidelines are reflecting greater support to the basic education areas; in most cases there are various fora being organised to promote and make more widely available the findings from Jomtien. In most cases, bilaterals can point to important evidence of existing support to some aspect of primary or basic education. But if there is one element that would be important, it would be a way of more effectively indicating what proportions of agency budgets are currently dedicated to the different sub-sectors of education. Without such evidence it will be very difficult to analyse the extent of change over the next several years. We return to this issue a little later in examining a research agenda for Jomtien follow up.

The International Working Group on Education (IWGE) had one session on Jomtien. We report on this at the end of this issue. But the indications are that the multilaterals are moving much faster than the bilaterals on this question of follow-up to Jomtien.

RESEARCHING EDUCATION AND TRAINING POST-JOIVITIEN

Researchers are clearly not going suddenly to address different topics in a different way post-Jomitien any more than agencies and national governments will suddenly change direction. However, with all three constituencies there is likely to be some evidence of what may be termed a 'Jomitien effect'. Here we look at some of the possible opportunities for the research community, both North and South in the months and years after Jomitien.

Research on the Jomitien materials, studies & documents

An obvious task for research is a critical look at what was actually produced for Jomitien, both the mainline documents for official agreement and the supplementary material. Some of this material will shortly be readily available, and other elements will appear in reports of highlights, edited commentaries etc.

In NORRAG NEWS (7 and 8) we have done some work on the analysis of the central documentation (the Declaration and the Framework). More detailed analysis of the main Jomitien materials on financing, on primary education, and on adult literacy is available in Kenneth King's [Aid and education in the developing world](#).

At the country level, there is a very important task for researchers to translate the discussions of Jomitien into analyses that can be readily absorbed by policy, by the academic community, and even by the media. This might be termed 'critical advocacy'- not suggesting an unthinking 'translation' but rather an analysis, for example, of what the national estimates of literacy really amount to, or what are the country-specific reasons for school dropouts at the end of classes one and two.

To an extent, the International Congress on Planning and Management of Educational Development, which took place in Mexico during 26-30 March, just 3 weeks after the World Conference, already gave some suggestions to the research community on relevant studies. The Congress suggested that in the conduct of national planning processes, it might be appropriate:

to strengthen information systems, including the creation of new indicators, a more systematic use of data, and expanded use of qualitative analysis;

to develop research avenues and consolidate ongoing studies aimed at the improvement of the quality of the learning process, better knowledge of learning outcomes, the introduction of incentive systems which motivate learners, teachers, facilitators and administrators to higher levels of performance in both formal and non-formal education, and testing new paradigms involving new actors and systems.

More research in the spirit of Jomtien Some of the crucial matters raised by the World Conference might well influence both the process and the content of educational research. Thus, educational researchers have traditionally paid very little attention to studying the work of the 'new partners' the NGOs. And yet these organisations are playing a very important part in the delivery of adult basic education, and they are being increasingly challenged to consider working within formal education structures, as the state, in some countries, finds it difficult to fulfil its traditional commitments. Joint studies with NGOs to illuminate good practice in basic education would be one promising area for research. NGOs typically have no time to reflect on their actions, and would be doubtful about justifying anything that looked like formal research to their funding constituencies.

But there are many more research approaches which could flow from Jomtien, and NORRAG NEWS asked Mike Lakin, member of the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-Agency Commission, now back in UNESCO, to lay out a few lines of work that seemed to derive from the World Conference ideas:

'The research community and WCEFA follow-up' by Michael Lakin

The World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) drew together an uncommon mix of professionals and institutions to lay the groundwork for a renewed, worldwide effort to provide meaningful basic education for all children, youth and adults. Researchers and their institutions have, or should have, a particularly influential and catalytic role to play in this enterprise: influential, insofar as their work actually informs policy decisions and helps practitioners; catalytic, insofar as researchers facilitate communication between the end-users and beneficiaries of basic education services and those who provide the services. This role entails considerable responsibility and, probably in most situations, some changes in the modus operandi of researchers. At the risk of repeating ideas that have been voiced before, I would suggest four aspects that merit attention

by researchers interested in contributing to WCEFA follow-up.

1. First, and most obviously, research activity will need to be -and be seen to be - relevant to the concerns of policy makers, practitioners and end-users. Relevance can be better assured when all major partners have a voice in determining the research agenda and participate, where possible, in the research itself. Such research can also serve as a medium of catalytic communication between the several actors concerned.

2. A related aspect is the need to develop simple research tools and methods that can be applied by various practitioners involved in basic education, many of whom do not have any specialised training in research nor the time to undertake 'serious' research. Yet, their need and desire to obtain information and insights to carry out their work more effectively can make them motivated partners in research activity.

3. In the same vein, research results need to be made more accessible to potential users. Research journals and papers intended essentially for other researchers have their place but are unlikely to reach, or be understood by, many of the actors who could apply new knowledge and techniques to improve basic education. More time and effort will need to be given to translating useful findings into everyday language and operational terms, such as guidelines, prototypes, and specific step by step examples.

4. Finally, more attention will have to be given to the cost effectiveness of research in basic education, particularly in low income countries. Research is more likely to attract human and financial resources if it is designed and seen as an important management tool and an investment that can bring tangible returns, such as reduced costs or improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of basic education activities.

UNESCO, which is serving as a focal point for WCEFA follow-up, would like to include information on significant initiatives of this nature in the WCEFA Bulletin. Information and requests to be included on the mailing list may be addressed to:

WCEFA Liaison Unit
UNESCO ADG/ED
7, place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris France
fax:33 140659406

Deriving a relevant research agenda from the Declaration and the Framework for action to meet basic learning needs

It could be argued that an urgent research agenda is implied in several of the main Articles of the Declaration. Here we shall just give an indication of the fields of research related to the following:

What is being learned and at what standard?

How many are getting access to this, and for how long?

How much is it likely to cost national governments and aid agencies? By how much are aid commitments to the Jomtien agenda going to rise?

a) Article IV - Focusing on Learning

(We carry at the end of this section a short analysis of the nature of the version of learning achievement promoted by the World Conference. See 'World Declaration on Education for All: a blurred vision of learning achievement?' by Janice Grimes.)

In terms of research this Article may well be the one that sparks the greatest amount of work. Arguably, at the very heart of the expanded vision of Education for All is the notion of educational achievement. Unlike some of the earlier declarations in favour of education for all (e.g. Addis Ababa, Karachi, and Santiago in the 1960s), the Jomtien agenda is concerned not with numbers of children sitting in classrooms but with

whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities - whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and values. The focus of basic education must, therefore, be on

actual learning acquisition and outcomeIt is therefore necessary

to define acceptable levels of learning acquisition for educational programmes and to improve and apply systems of assessing learning achievement. (iv)

This Article is then translated into a suggested Target so that at a particular level of basic education it is known at what standard children are achieving. Great care is taken in the documentation not to imply that there is some international gold standard against which all nations may be judged.

Rather, countries are encouraged to set their own targets. But it is worth noting that attainment targets are emphasised very differently for different elements within basic education.

Thus in the area of early childhood care, the emphasis is not really on attainment targets at all, but just on expansion of provision. In adult literacy, too, the preoccupation is not so much with measuring what new skills adults learn, but principally with the 'reduction of adult illiteracy'. In other words, the emphasis for these two fields is really more with quantitative expansion than with the quality or nature of what is learned.

However, in the area of 'basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults', there is a much greater emphasis on assessing what is learned. It is quite specifically stated that in these fields 'programme effectiveness' should be 'assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity'. (8) This is a good deal easier to write than to enact, especially when it is recalled that this area of skills training covers an enormous range from the indigenous system of the so-called informal sector to the myriad of NGO initiatives, to the sphere of government and the private sector. This is such a diverse constituency, it is hard to envisage the vast range of employable skills being assessed in the terms indicated. In a number of countries there is a relatively widespread national system of trade testing which has a currency regardless of the kind of institution that was attended. There would certainly be value in ascertaining how widely such systems do provide benchmarks, but certification on its own is far from the rather ambitious discussion of behavioural change or of impact on productivity. Possibly the kind of research and evaluation relevant to this target would be the kind currently being carried on by the World Bank and the ILO in respect of the impact of training in the informal sector in Africa.

Another channel of basic education is the rather vague-sounding one of 'increased acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living'. In translation, this refers not so much to the longer term skill training for trades that we have just touched upon, but to the notion of short sharp messages about health, survival and basic well-being. In the texts of the Declaration and the Framework such messages are very closely identified with the mass media, and can perhaps be typified in the campaigns for oral rehydration, or expanded immunisation, or in the Facts for Life literature that has been so widely disseminated in the last two or three years. These it is easier to conceive of in terms of target groups, very simple messages, and basic changes in behaviour. Unlike

complex skill profiles, it is somewhat easier to check on whether children are being vaccinated, always provided there is a healthcare network that actually exists at the village level.

But there is little doubt that the greatest attraction for target setting will be in the sphere of **primary education**. We have already argued that primary education emerged rather clearly as the element of basic education that several sponsors desired to concentrate upon. It will accordingly be in this realm (apart from the short bullets of survival knowledge just mentioned) that we can anticipate the greatest interest in measuring educational achievement. For this to happen, several of the actions in the Framework will need to be implemented at the country level. The guidance given in the Framework suggested that some of the following would be necessary:

the basic learning needs to be met, including cognitive skills, values, attitudes, as well as subject knowledge;

indicators and procedures to be used to monitor progress in reaching the targets (17)

National authorities and national assessments

The key question in this whole emphasis upon national assessment of educational achievement is what the attitude of national authorities and of teachers is likely to be. It is already evident in the World Bank's draft document at Jomtien, Improving primary education in developing countries that data on the achievement and performance of schooling can sound very controversial. And even where there is no direct comparison between developing and developed countries, the impression can readily be given that there is the most dramatic gap. For example:

For virtually all countries these curriculum objectives include developing the cognitive competencies of students, including both basic literacy and numeracy skills and the ability to apply basic skills to new problems. Yet few schools in developing countries achieve this goal. (p.4)

If research is to be applied to the analysis of educational achievement in say grade four and grade seven, this will be an immense undertaking for some countries. The problem will not be so much the construction of a bank

of standardised attainment tasks closely related to the national curricular objectives. Rather it will be the services to support the teachers, the inspectors, the examination boards. If of course the intention is simply to sample a few schools from time to time, this is relatively easy but has little impact nationally. But if the intention is to make teachers, pupils and parents aware of what has to be achieved by the majority of children at different critical stages of primary education, then this is an enormous task. Some insight into the controversies likely to be experienced is available from countries such as England & Wales, and Scotland, currently -undergoing a national initiative in basic education assessment.

If national testing of achievement is introduced, a great deal of thought will need to be given to the purpose. Where there are national examinations at the end of primary schooling (e.g. in many countries of Anglophone Africa), it has always proved difficult, in selective secondary school regimes, to get teachers or pupils to regard the results in terms of satisfactory primary school achievement; the only achievement commonly acknowledged is that level necessary to reach government secondary schools.

NORRAG NEWS will report on developments in this sphere. One which will have taken place during June is a meeting on target setting, monitoring and assessment, held under UNESCO auspices, and very specifically identified as a key step in following up Article IV of the World Conference. We shall carry a report in a future issue. We turn now to an individual analysis of the notion of learning achievement contained in the WCEFA documents.

'World Declaration on Education for All. A blurred vision of learning achievement?' by Janice Grimes.

Extensive references are made throughout the Conference documents to Learning Achievement. This emphasis upon learning outcomes will have significant implications for the type of educational provision it generates, as the assessment programmes of any educational system will inevitably have considerable influence upon the content and delivery of its curricula. It is therefore strange that the Declaration neglects to present an operational definition of the term 'necessary learning achievement'. Presumably, by implication, it refers to the 'knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development'(8). this will evidently vary across countries and cultures, and a definitive statement of its components would be inadequate; either due to its exclusivity or over-generalisation. Moreover the absence of any specific

criteria for achievement (adaptable to particular needs or circumstances where necessary) presents a number of problems for educationalists attempting to implement the Declaration's vision.

Each country is to be responsible for determining how its understanding of learning achievement is to be defined. Obviously this is essential for ensuring the autonomy of individual nations when evaluating their development plans, existing educational provision and future educational aims. However, it also allows for considerable subjectivity, which raises the possibility of misinterpretation or manipulation in the interpretation of necessary learning achievement, and may serve to distort the nature of the educational provision developed. This danger arises from the fact that once the criteria for learning achievement have been established within an educational system, they become synonymous with 'good education' (regardless of their actual worth) and, by implication, any aspect of education missing from the attainment criteria is automatically devalued in the perception of both teachers and learners. Yet, as some aspects of education are evidently more amenable to tests of attainment than others there is the possibility that they could be included in a country's implicit definition of good education for this reason, and not for any demonstrable capacity to contribute to the qualitative improvement of educational provision and effectiveness.

For example the Declaration asserts that the particular attitudes conducive to personal and social development should be encouraged and promoted in basic education along with the more formally defined skills of literacy and numeracy.(1) But it is unclear how successful attainment in the development of affective qualities can be evaluated adequately or accurately when it is inappropriate to subject them to the same objective, standardised testing procedures that are applied to formal skills. They will either be included in tests of achievement anyway (with the possibility of the distorted results they produce being open to misinterpretation) or removed from the testing agenda altogether, and acquire all the negative implications that such omissions generate. Given the repeated emphasis upon efficient use of resources throughout the documents this will probably lead to a reduction in teaching time and resources allocated to the development of affective qualities. If this interpretation of educational success becomes established it is difficult to conceive how the documents could achieve their stated aims of producing an 'expanded vision' that surpasses present institutional structures and curricula.(II)

This potential problem arises from the Declaration's failure to specify the

types of assessment to be used when evaluating a programme's effectiveness or a student's learning achievement. Its stated intentions are to universalise access to basic education, promote equity, and enable all students to reach acceptable levels of learning. (111,1V) These goals will inevitably place considerable strain on a country's human and material resources. Therefore it is reasonable to presume that, in order to ensure financial efficiency and ease of administration, the probability of countries developing assessment programmes based on the perception of desirable national standards, and relying heavily on the objective testing of formal skills is extremely high. But the levels and types of achievement which are specified in accordance with an abstract notion of national standards may not necessarily correspond with individual or regional needs, experience and interests. Consequently they could present a model of education that is highly inefficient as it is irrelevant or inappropriate to the individual learner. If this were to occur it would undermine the documents' references to the variation in status and scope of basic educational needs according to region, culture and the passage of time, throwing doubt on its effectiveness in developing the educational provision necessary to facilitate personal and social improvement.

Another approach to 'necessary learning achievement'

A more constructive interpretation of the term 'necessary learning achievement' could be produced by extending the criteria proposed in paragraph 8 of the Framework. These are currently meant to assess adult education programme effectiveness in terms of 'behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity', but they could be extended to include the value of individual learning. The Declaration's purpose is to enable individuals 'to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed choices, and to continue learning. (1) Surely then, the best means of assessing programme effectiveness and individual benefit is by determining the degree to which these goals are being realised. The critical factor when judging the success of any basic education programme should be the change that is apparent in the participant's life. Consequently learning achievement should not be evaluated within the artificial environment of the school, using standardised and highly arbitrary criteria, but in the every day experiences, problems and concerns of the student; assessing the improvements basic education has made to the individual's knowledge, expertise and attitudes as demonstrated in his or her daily life. If this were to be established it would be reasonable to argue that the curriculum would remain relevant and

appropriate to the learner, and present a greater likelihood of being translated into self-empowerment and meaningful development.

Evidently this model of learning achievement produces a much 'messier' form of assessment than those determined by administrative requirements. Also the design of the curriculum and assessment procedures to cater for actual individual learning needs in order to maximise effectiveness requires teachers to have extensive knowledge and practical skills, strong communications skills and command of a variety of teaching methods. They will also have to be proficient in testing the learning achievements of their students in the less formal aspects of the curriculum. It is therefore disappointing that so little reference is made to teaching skills in the Declaration and Framework. If the aims stated above are to be achieved it is essential that the resources and finances are provided to train teachers effectively for their responsibilities, and that they are perceived as highly skilled professionals rather than mere components in the educational process. They need to be provided with the necessary skills and attitudes and granted the status and autonomy appropriate to their role in order to demonstrate the motivation and ability to ensure that education is accessible, relevant and effective for all. Furthermore, if teachers received this level of training and support it is reasonable to suggest that they could be individually responsible for evaluating the learning achievements of students in basic education programmes, thus alleviating the tensions and distortions of the curriculum caused by externally imposed levels of attainment as outlined earlier, and thus ensuring that all students receive a constructive education that will improve their quality of life.

Janice Grimes, Edinburgh.

b) Article III - Research on Universallising Access

As should be clear from our short article by Roy Carr-Hill earlier in this issue, the whole question of access, not to mention continuation and completion, is based at the moment on very flimsy statistics. There is a great need for better national data on the profile of primary school populations. Some of the allegations about the lack of textbooks, furniture and equipment in schools make it surprising that pupils attend school at all. Things are changing so fast in areas like community financing, and new charges for schooling that a good deal of work needs to be done on parental expectations of schools, on the extent of drop out in early grades, on the aspirations to continue beyond primary. It is likely that one

considerable benefit of the World Conference will be to increase the current wisdom on who goes to school, who stays, and for how long. But this too, while it may be relatively easily checked out for single schools in small communities, will be an enormous task at the national level. The whole process of encouraging accurate records from schools is a management task, which in a number of countries is inseparable from the payment of responsibility allowances for head-teachers, calculated on constant pupil enrolments.

. c) Article IX - Research on Mobilising resources

It is also already clear that there will be a good deal of research generated by the need to develop new financial resources for educating all the children. What are the implications for national governments and what for donor agencies? The calculations will not be easy if genuine new partnerships and alliances develop, cutting across government ministries, involving NGOs, and local communities, reallocating moneys from within education ministries. A good start has already been made with the document on 'Educating all the children: the economic challenge for the 1990s' by Colclough and Lewin, which broadly examines the tradeoffs between the savings from education reform, the costs of improving quality, and the implications for national and external resources. But there are many more needs for research within this field. Of these perhaps one of the most crucial is to monitor what is happening to the cost of primary school attendance. It is already obvious that at the very time that the world agenda is swinging towards education for all, the costs of attending even basic primary schooling are rising, and especially in countries affected by structural adjustment.

In some situations, fee-free primary education is retreating, as parents contribute towards everything in school, from teachers' salaries, to buildings, textbooks and furniture. In other countries, doubtless the word is getting around that secondary and higher education are becoming much more expensive. Even if primary education remains comparatively cheap, the chances of poor families reaching the national universities may be lengthening as subsidies are progressively removed from secondary and higher education.

More research on financing, but who finances local researchers?

One important element in all this examination of possible research needs is

the need for local researchers to find funding to participate in analytical work related to the World Conference follow-up. In many countries, research activity generally has dwindled with the drop in the value of university salaries. What research does go on is highly dependent on the consultancy route. This may be true also of research related to the follow-up: that there are no 'local funds available for research, only those derived from external agencies. Which may mean that what is researched is only those elements considered important by external funding bodies. Whereas if one thing is obvious, it is that long term commitments to the analysis of particular areas are needed, not short term consultancies on test development, access, and community financing.

NORRAG's research proposals on the bilateral impact of Jomtien

Arising from the May 11 Stockholm meeting is the notion that NORRAG, with its close connections to bilateral donors, and researchers in both North and South could make a contribution in analysing selectively what happens to patterns of bilateral educational aid to the fields associated with Jomtien. Several dimensions in this. First, what switches if any are discernible in the stated policy of donors towards the Jomtien agenda? We have indicated in our section on the bilateral response above some of the apparent beginnings of movements towards aspects of this World Conference agenda. But NORRAG will need to look at bilateral education projects and education sector reports not just the evolution of policies if we are to understand the processes of change in the aid constituency. In order to move forward to a detailed project, a meeting has been scheduled for early July; this will finalise the methods of work, the funding, and the people to be involved. Tentatively July 9th and 10th.

SEARRAG's Follow-up activities of the WCEFA

At a recent meeting of SEARRAG, it was recommended that in conjunction with other RRAG networks, SEARRAG could develop global state of the art and state of practice reviews which would address some of the needs of countries in the fields identified by WCEFA. It seems possible that two of the state of the art reviews identified by SEARRAG for research by its members during 1990-91 could also be relevant to WCEFA follow-up. They are on Learning Outcomes, and on Mathematics Education.

8. LITERATURE REFERRED TO IN NORRAG NEWS 8, OR RELATED TO WCEFA

There was no shortage of research and advocacy material available at Jomitien. Probably upwards of 1000 different items could have been picked up from the roundtables and the exhibits. What follows is a listing of what has been mentioned in this issue of NORRAG NEWS, as well as other items relevant to the follow-up. Some of these items are publicly available; others are being planned; others again are en route to publication.

The Basic Documents The basic documents produced for Jomitien, the Declaration and the Framework are very shortly to be made available. So also will a new version of the background document, earlier entitled: Meeting basic learning needs: a new vision for the 1990s. The new version will incorporate materials from Jomitien, and thus be more closely integrated into the illustrations that were available there.

Commentaries on the process of Jomitien

Thus far Norraa News 7 contains one of the fullest accounts of the build-up to Jomitien, and particularly the history of development in the key documentation. In due course there will be an official conference report, which will presumably highlight key sessions, roundtables etc. Selective commentary on the materials available at Jomitien is also contained in K. King's Aid and Education in the Developing World (forthcoming Longman). In particular attention is given to the materials at Jomitien that related to primary education and to literacy/nonformal education.

Materials referred to in NORRAG NEWS 8 'A brief overview of literacy and of primary education: current status, issues, and broadening the approach', UNICEF Consultation Meeting, February 1988.

Documents submitted to the Drafting Committee of the final version of the Declaration and Framework, March 1990. Some 67 in total submitted.

'Programme of exhibits', WCEFA, New York, February 1990

'Programme of roundtables', WCEFA, New York, February 1990

Marlaine Lockheed and Adriaan Verspoor, Improving primary education in developing countries: a review of policy options (Washington, 1990)

Chris Colclough and Keith Lewin, 'Educating all the children: the economic challenge for the 1990s' (Jomtien, March 1990).

Dieter Berstecher and Roy Carr-Hill, 'Primary education and economic recession in the developing world' (UNESCO, Paris, 1990).

'Education for all', Bulletin of the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (December 1989).

'Post-literacy' International Review of Education (1989).

'Adult education in Thailand' Adult Education and Development

(Possible September issue of Adult Education and Development will be on the theme Education for All')

Agneta Lind and Anton Johnston, Adult literacy in the Third World: a review of objectives and strategies (SIDA, Stockholm, 1990)

Jane Bowyer, 'Scientific and technological literacy: education for change' (UNESCO, Jan. 1990)

Phillip Jones, 'Literacy and basic education for adults and young people: review of experience' (UNESCO, January 1990)

UNESCO, Year of opportunity (a volume in support of International Literacy Year, forthcoming)

International Bureau of Education, Literacy lessons (40 pamphlets on aspects of literacy, for ILY, 1990)

Jacques Hallak, Invest in the future: setting educational priorities in the developing world (UNDP; UNESCO, 1990)

Education Development Centre, Education and training in the 1990s: developing countries needs and strategies (UNDP, New York, 1989).

Barber Conable, 'Address to the World Conference on Education for All' March 6th 1990

James ' Grant, 'Education as if the child mattered', address to the World Conference, March 7 1990.

William Draper, 'Address to the World Conference' 7 March 1990

Federico Mayor, 'Opening address to the World Conference', 5th March 1990

'Convention on the rights of the child', adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, 20th November 1989.

James Grant, 'Address at closing session of World Conference', 9 March 1990.

UNESCO, Approved Programme and Budget, 1990-1995.

HEP proposed programme for 1990.

Report of the Director General on the preparation of the plan of action for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000 (UNESCO General Conference, 24th Session 1987).

Plan of Action to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000 (UNESCO General Conference 25th Session 1989)

Roger Iredale quoted in British Council, 'Broadsheet' special issue April 1990 on World Conference on Education for All.

ODA, Into the nineties: an education policy for British aid (London 1990)

'Follow-up to the World Conference on Education for All' (1 page, 9th March 1990)

NGO Committee on UNICEF, 'Education for all: making it happen', (Report of an NGO consultation, 30-31 January 1990).

Sarah Graham-Brown, 'Education in crisis' (first draft of book on the education crisis sponsored by World University Service, London, to

be published by Longman).

Jomtien Journal, daily edition on the World Conference by The Nation, Bangkok.

DSE, 'Nonformal basic education programme 1990' (Bonn)

DSE, 'Formal basic education 1990' (Bonn)

International Congress: Planning and Management of Educational Development: draft final report (Mexico, 26-30 March 1990); also recommendations of the Congress in Mexico.

IDRC-supported conference documents

IDRC supported a number of papers which were presented in different round tables. These were:

Anne Bernard, 'Learning and intervention: the informal transmission of the knowledge and skills of development'.

Dean Nielsen, 'Using distance education to extend and improve teaching in developing countries'.

Pilar Riano, 'Empowering through communication: the role of participatory communication in development programmes with women'.

Zainal Ghani, 'The use of participatory, school-based, and community-supported innovations in basic formal education'.

ERNESA, 'Basic education for all', paper for review of the situation in Eastern Africa, funded by IDIRC, SAREC and SIDA. Amrung Chantavanich and Supang Chantavanich, and Gerry Fry, Evaluating primary education: qualitative and quantitative policy studies in Thailand. (IDRC, Ottawa, 1990). This was not commissioned for the World Conference, but was the outcome of research funded by IDIRC, almost 10 years earlier.

Other agency materials available at, or related to Jomitien

There was a great deal of agency material available at Jomitien, much of it directly relevant to literacy, basic education, or primary education. A selection of this will be mentioned here. First however it is worth noting that one regional consultation did not take place in late 1989 as planned. The East Asia and Pacific regional consultation took place finally in January, and produced a final report. -Other agency reports that appeared relevant:

Inter-American Foundation, 'Who learns what, when, how? Lessons from grassroots development for educators'(March 1990)

Jean-Pierre Velis, Through a glass darkly: functional illiteracy industrialised countries (UNESCO, 1990).

UNESCO, Worldwide action in education (1990).

UNESCO, Basic education and literacy: world statistical indicators (1990).

UNESCO, Prospects: 'Open file: from literacy to education for all: the critical decade, 1990-1999', vol xix, no. 4.1989.

National Federation of UNESCO associations in Japan, "Literacy for all" campaign in Japan'(1990)

UNESCO-UNICEF, Breda-stat special. 'Towards education for all in Africa: Startina Doint'.

UNICEF, Assignment children: the BRAC nonformal primary education programme in Bangladesh (New York 1989)

UNICEF, Early childhood development: summary report. Innocenti global seminar (New York, 1990).

UNICEF, The state of the world's children. 1990 (New York, 1990)

OECD Development Assistance Committee, Development co-operation: 1989 Report

World Bank, Finance and Development, vol 27, March 1990, special section on Education for all.

World Bank, 'Educating girls and women: investing in development' (summary report by Elizabeth King).

World Bank, The dividends of learning: World Bank support for education (Washington, 1990).

Commonwealth Secretariat, Mark Bray, Multiple shift schooling: design and operation for cost-effectiveness (London 1989).

DSE, Udo Bude (Ed.), 'Developing instructional materials for African primary schools', occasional paper no. 3. (Bonn, 1989).

DSE, Udo Bude(Ed.), 'The challenge of quality in primary education in Africa: from reform to crisis' (Bonn, June 1989)

This is only an indicative listing. There was a great deal more material available.

Material at Jomtien from national governments

Particularly for the illustrative roundtables, where good practice at the national level was on display, it was possible to pick up a wide variety of material. Sometimes there was just enough for those participating; hence this section is very unrepresentative of the range that was selectively available.

Thailand: Basic education for all: a mission possible. Thailand's illustrative case and EFA action plan

People's Republic of China, Country Documents (State Education Commission, 1990).

Republic of Zimbabwe, 'Political mobilisation in enhancing education for all in a newly independent Zimbabwe' (Ministry of Education and Culture).

The Gambia: a plan of action (summary of The Gambia's country paper)

Sri Lanka, Education in Sri Lanka: the past, the present, the future (national task force on education, Feb., 1990)

India, Education for all by the year 2000 (NIEPA, 1990).

India, K. P. Datta, 'Health education for school-age population in India'.

Tanzania, Implementation of universal primary education, 1974-1986 (Dar es salaam, 1989)

Kenya, President Daniel arap Moi, 'Speech to the World Conference'.

.Hopefully, some examination of the country documents provided to Jomtien will be undertaken, perhaps in the context of an official report. They do provide a very valuable indication of country presentations of their status in respect of education for all.

A further valuable document offering insight into the World Conference is the 'Provisional list of participants' (100 pages). It offers a rather clear indication of the level of delegate typically coming from the industrialised world and those coming from the developing world.

The information kit on the World Conference developed by UNICEF's Division of Information on behalf of the Inter-agency Commission is also very revealing. It illustrates the scope for packaging some of the messages from the World Conference, so as to make them more accessible for development education, schools, the media etc.

9. AGENCY EDUCATION PROFILE; BRITAIN'S OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (ODA)

(in this issue we are continuing with our series of agency portraits of education. In the case of ODA, a new policy paper had been specifically developed for distribution at Jomtien. To an extent, therefore, this summary specially done for NORRAG NEWS by Roger Iredale, Chief Education Adviser, seeks to relate the policy paper to the Jomtien meeting and is a natural follow-on from our previous discussions.)

INTO THE NINETIES: AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR BRITISH AID
OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION, LONDON, 1990 (PP. 1-39)

With the Jomtien Conference on Education for All rushing up to meet us, ODA's Education Advisers were faced last Autumn with the attractive challenge of producing a short paper which would define ODA's position on educational aid, illustrate the variety of work in the field, and highlight how some current global issues in British aid policy affected our education work.

We began from a consensus: that it is *people* who matter in the process of development, rather than economic indicators. True, GNP will ultimately produce the goods, but we found figures that show very clearly that high GNP and social welfare do not necessarily correlate. The real underlying question is that of distribution: ensuring equity in providing people with access to the education that will empower them to provide for their families' health and welfare, to have some selection in their level and mode of employment, to innovate, produce their own wealth if they choose, and to participate in the essential processes of society.

We started with water. A finding from a World Bank study of piped water in Brazil showed that the educational level of parents is far more important than access to clean water as a factor in maintaining family health levels. We took the economic 'social rate of return' concept apart by pointing out that an educated woman giving her children healthier, better educated lives gets zero on the rate of return scale. We questioned the well worn theory that investment in primary education necessarily represents a better investment than in secondary.

But then we faced a problem: what **1** our policy? Given that British aid, as much as that of any donor, is country specific, responding to the expressed needs of recipients rather than to some dogma or globally applicable theory, what conclusions could we draw?

We concentrated on three things: the emphasis on quality over quantity; the enhancement of women's access to education; and the close relationship between the British resource and what is done in the field.

The British resource is a range of educational institutions, local authorities, individuals, and non-governmental organisations from the British Council, to Feed the Minds, from City and Guilds to Voluntary Service Overseas. We developed a section that showed how the existence of these

institutions caters to the kind of effort we are able to mount. Our inset 'boxes' in the policy paper show how, for example, our long experience of in-service teacher training enabled us to transfer the skills of the University of London Institute of Education and many other bodies to the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project, and how the combined strength of the UK applied linguistics departments enables us to provide a very high level of English language training as a means of accessing critical scientific and technical knowledge in many countries.

We showed how a research project at Hull University is leading us towards an understanding of why young girls have a less privileged access to education than boys in many countries. We hope to feed our findings into later educational projects.

We showed how the Joint Funding Scheme, operated through British NGOs, leads us into grassroots literacy and community development projects that are more difficult to support via government-to-government approaches.

We topped all this off with a short section on ODA's various training schemes, again with an emphasis on increasing the present poor participation rate for female trainees.

In the aftermath of Jomtien it remains to be seen how successfully we shall manage to shift the emphasis of our programme towards the first and second cycles of education, to concentrate more sharply on improving the efficiency of those tertiary institutions we decide to continue to support, to increase the amount of adult literacy work we do, and to find ways of improving girls' prospects of a better education. Certainly the will and determination are there; much will depend on how far we are able to convince our partners in Ministries of Education in developing countries that we are best placed to involve ourselves in these crucial developments. We can explain our enthusiasm, but they must make the choice.

Dr. Roger Iredale, ODA.

10. OTHER AGENCY ACTIVITIES: IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING, IN SCIENCE, IN TECHNOLOGY

We expect to dedicate a good deal of next NORRAG NEWS to an analysis of initiatives in Vocational Education and Training (VET), including the major

policy paper of the World Bank, which has been in preparation over the past three years, and the work on training in the informal sector which has been undertaken jointly between the Bank and the ILO. However, it is worth recording a meeting at Turin, 14-17 May 1990, where it is possible to deduce a good deal of the major issues that have been exercising the Bank in its policy paper from the listing of major points for discussion. Another Bank paper which probably contains the essential ideas of the eventual policy paper is John Middleton, Adrian Ziderman, and Arvil Van Adams, 'Skills training for productivity: strategies for improved efficiency in developing countries' presented to Regional Seminar on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Asian Development Bank, Manila, January 1990. Here we present the points for discussion from Turin:

Policy seminar on vocational education and training strategies and systems for Sub-Saharan Africa, Turin, May 14-17, 1990

Points for Discussion

- 1. System description:** What are the elements of the vocational education and training system? Examples may include vocational schools, vocational training centres, diversified secondary schools, post-secondary technical institutions, enterprise training, private schools and centres, traditional apprenticeship.
- 2. Goals:** What is the government seeking to accomplish with different elements of the VET system? Raise the productivity of the workforce? Reduce youth unemployment? Change attitudes toward blue collar work? Divert youth from higher education? Enable individuals to enter self-employment? Provide an 'appropriate' education for students of low academic ability? Improve earnings for women and the poor?
- 3. Economic policies and incentives:** What are the current labour market policies, for example: minimum wages, compressed wages, job security regulations? What is the impact of these policies on total modern sector employment? On the informal sector? On incentives to individuals and enterprises to invest in training?
- 4. Economic trends:** What sectors of the economy are growing most quickly? What industries? Is economic policy outwardly or inwardly-oriented? What skills are likely to be strategically important to growth strategies? Why?

5. Structure of employment: What is the distribution of workers between modern sector wage employment, rural own-account employment, and urban informal sector employment? Is wage employment growing? At what rate? What are the unemployment levels for youth and adults? For individuals with different levels and types of education and training?

6. Private training: Do private enterprises provide or finance training? How much, and what kind? What are the constraints on quantity and quality? What is the extent and quality of training provided by for-profit, non-profit, and NGO operated training institutions? What clients do they serve? How are they regulated and supervised? How extensive is the traditional apprenticeship? Does the government have policies and programmes intended to mobilise private training? Are they effective? Is there an effective trades testing system?

7. Public training: How effective are public pre-employment training institutions (vocational and diversified schools, labour training centres, etc) in placing students in training-related employment? How long does it take to close down a given course and start up a new one? Are the salaries and qualifications of instructors and managers adequate? Is there a curriculum research and development capacity? What are the annual per student costs of different kinds of VET? How do they compare with academic secondary education? Are recurrent budgets for materials, maintenance and supplies adequate? What kinds of linkages have been established between VET institutions and employers? Are they effective?

How much training, of what kind, is provided by government ministries and state-owned enterprises?

Are there special job training programmes intended to help the unemployed find a job? How are they operated? Financed? Have they been effective?

Are there small business and entrepreneurial development programmes? How effective are they?

8. Planning: How is the size and skill profile of public training determined? What kinds of labour market information is available? Is it used in planning? Are employers (public and private) consulted in the planning process? Are the outcomes of public training monitored and evaluated?

9. **Financing:** How is public training financed? Is there cost-recovery from students? From employers? Are training institutions allowed to generate revenues from sale of training or production services?

10. **Equity:** Do the economically and socially disadvantaged have a fair chance of entering and completing training? Of getting training-related employment? Are there social or legal barriers that constrain access to employment for disadvantaged groups? Are there positive public programmes, such as scholarships, intended to increase access to training? Are they effective?

SIDA EVALUATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN TANZANIA

SIDA has been one of the most consistent supporters of vocational training in Tanzania. A first draft is available for comment on this process:

Vocational training in Tanzania and the role of Swedish support. 10th March 1990. The evaluation is authored by Jon Lauglo who has recently moved from the London Institute to the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities.

CURRENT STATE OF NETWORK ON EDUCATION WITH PRODUCTION

Wim Hoppers has recently returned from Zambia (where he has been involved with the SHAPE project) to CESO. He continues his active involvement with the network on Education with Production in Theory and Action (EPTA). This network is at a point of transition towards perhaps a more programmatic approach at the national and regional levels. Hoppers has produced a paper laying out the options:

'EPTA: where are we and what next? A discussion paper' (May 1990)

One item for discussion that is noted is the possible connection of EPTA with RRAG groups - which has been very close already in the East African region.

WORLD BANK COLLOQUIUM ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION (5-6 April 1990)

The following is a brief and personal account of some of the issues raised at the April colloquium. It is written by Beverley Young, and represents an interesting insight into some of the questions that may be pursued further:

During 1989, the British Council cooperated with the World Bank in drawing together what may loosely be described as a think-piece on current developments in science and technology education. The study entitled 'Educating for capability: the role of science and technology education' was presented in two volumes: the first volume, setting out the main argument, was mainly written, by David Layton of Leeds University and Kenneth King of Edinburgh University with some input also from Beverley Young; and the second volume consisted of four case studies on England and Wales (Peter Fensham); Hong Kong (Mark Bray); Zimbabwe (Mike Robson); aid donors (Beverley Young). Subsequently, it was discussed at an internal meeting in the Bank, and it was decided that a colloquium involving interested science educators should be convened in Washington.

Issues raised and discussed

To paraphrase the discussion succinctly, it may be helpful to identify the key issues which arose and present them as antagonistic arguments. This is not to say that the discussions were necessarily as polarised as this may indicate, but it will serve to highlight the points of the debate.

i. **Technology versus Science** What are the boundaries between these subjects? How does technology fit into subjects other than science? Technology has emerged as a distinctive component in the, UK curriculum but not in other countries such as Canada where it is enfolded in STS (science-technology-society). Is this linked to the economic scene in the UK where engineering has had little status?

2. **Heurism versus 'Something Else'** There was the suggestion that the heuristic approach which dominated the curriculum projects of the 60s and 70s was a wrong road. As Layton pointed out, this suggests that there must be a right road, and lays us open to the charge of replacing one liturgy with another. In fact, these shifts of emphasis indicate learning from experience and the exploration of new pathways....

3. Laboratories versus Demonstration/Theory Both in the developed and developing countries, science educators are looking hard at the place of laboratory work. It is no longer assumed as axiomatic that laboratory work is an essential cornerstone of the scientific experience. Good teacher demonstrations, audio-visual materials and better books may be more cost-effective ways to help develop a people's scientific knowledge and understanding....

4. The state of technology and science in Africa versus the OECD countries The research presented by Zymelman (of the World Bank) was striking. At the moment, Africa is barely participating in the process of generating and using new scientific/technological knowledge. To quote one example, per 100,000 population, Africa produces one engineering graduate, Latin America 74, and OECD countries 166. The gap is enormous.

5. Elite versus Democratic Science and Technology There was a sharp debate at the meeting about the extent to which resources for science and technology education should be concentrated. The essence of the argument is really about timing. At which point in the education process does a country choose to identify its talented students in these areas and foster their development? Resolving the science-for-all versus science-for-continuation issue is perhaps the crucial political decision in this field.

6. Materials Support versus Teacher Support Current conventional wisdom suggests that most effort should go into development and dissemination of good teaching materials: textbooks, supplementary materials, readers, teachers' guides etc. Developing and supporting teachers' skills is a much more complex long term process. In fact both are needed and especially the low cost, self sustaining strategies which encourage mutual support between teachers and those closest to children in schools.

7. Informal Out-of-School versus Formal In-school Particularly amongst donor agencies, there was a certain sense of disenchantment with schools. Several are supporting more informal approaches to the development of scientific literacy including comic magazines, science camps and the use of the media. However, there is no doubt that in most of the developing countries where schools will continue

to be an important route for educating children agencies will need to pay attention to the formal system. It cannot be ignored.

Beverley Young, May 1990.

ROCKEFELLERS'S AFRICAN FORUM FOR CHILDREN'S LITERACY IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GEARS UP

We have reported the development of this initiative since its earliest days. It has already made a number of grants, and in its preliminary conceptualisation it illustrates some of the more informal approaches mentioned by Bev Young above (para 7). However, in its newsletter 'Forum News' (1st issue April 1990) it is clear that the network will also be looking to work with teachers, curriculum personnel, and ministry support staff.

The small grants programme is open to non-government agencies, technologists, and educators, living and working within the Sub-Saharan region. Further information about it is available from the African Forum Coordinator, Box 47543, Nairobi, Kenya.

As a West African launch for the African Forum ideas, there was held in Freetown during May 17-18 1990 a West African regional workshop on popularising science and technology. Like East Africa, the workshop is hoping to develop a pragmatic discussion on the main thrust of the Rockefeller initiative:

to seek out and support ideas, activities, and practices through which science and technology can be made to 'come alive' in the everyday lives of ordinary Africans, especially children and young adults.

Cream Wright has been the organiser of the West African seminar.

DSE holds seminar on 'Agriculture in the primary school' Udo Bude of DSE will be organising a workshop on this theme in Zimbabwe during October or November. The meeting will be by invitation, but will aim to carry forward DSE's longstanding interest in this form of primary science, relevant to the community. Contact: Dr. Bude, DSE, Hans Bockler Strasse, 5, 5300 Bonn 3.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT, JOURNAL OF THE THIRD WORLD SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM This journal is now produced by Frank Cass in an attractive format. Inquiries about possible submission of articles e.g. in the area of science and technology education, should go to Ahmed Shibli, exec. editor, 9, Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G1 2 OHE.

11. NEW DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE NORTHERN RESEARCH REVIEW AND ADVISORY GROUP (NORRAG).

A full report of developments in the organisation of NORRAG will be carried in the next issue. But for the moment, it looks as if there may well be a development whereby CESO (The Centre for the Study of Education in Developing Societies) in the Hague joins with Edinburgh and Stockholm in responsibility for co-ordination. SIDA will continue its support to the network, but will be joined by funding coming from Holland, and possibly a number of other countries in promoting various NORRAG activities. Thus, NORRAG NEWS will continue to be edited by Kenneth King, but it is possible that in Christine McNab's place there will be a joint editor identified in CESO. Similarly with other activities, as they develop (e.g. the Jomtien follow-up), CESO and other centres will play key roles depending on the particular topic.

Other developments in NORRAG

* **Sheldon Shaeffer: from IDRC to IIEP** Sheldon, who has played a key role with his colleagues in the support of RRAG groups for much of the 10 years he has been in IDRC, is going in early July 1990 to IIEP as a senior research officer in the areas of basic education and literacy. He will be involved in IIEP training courses both in Paris and in the developing world, and will also carry out research activities, primarily in Southeast Asia and Africa, on these areas of work.

Daniel Morales-Gomez, a senior programme officer in the Population, Education, and Society Programme at IDRC, will replace him as Associate Director of the Social Sciences Division responsible for the PES Programme. It is expected that the Programme will begin to focus even further on issues

related to basic education.

Sissel Volan is going from Oslo to East Africa for a spell of work in the field. We shall report on her replacement in NORAD in a later issue.

Tuija Stenback, education adviser in FINNIDA, is now the contact person for the network in Finland: address: Mannerheimintie 15c, 00260 Helsinki.

François Orivel in IREDU, Dijon expects to be able to work more closely with NORRAG. We hope that this will involve closer contacts with the French resource on overseas education. In particular with Francois's work at the Institute on patterns of educational aid.

New distribution system for NORRAG NEWS

Demand for NORRAG NEWS has risen rapidly in recent issues. Decisions will need to be taken between now and the next issue -NN9 - on how NORRAG contact points in different countries distribute the bulletin. It is increasingly felt that this process should be decentralised to the country level, and that it should go out to a grouping of people that does have some specific obligations towards the network, and not just to receive potentially useful comment and information. This process of thinking through the country clusters is going on in Sweden, Germany, Holland, UK, and Switzerland.

There will shortly be published the results of the first phase of the Dutch analysis of international education capacity in Holland. This was done through CESO with primary responsibility attached to Wim Bierviët.

12. MEETINGS, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS

This issue is coming hard on the heels of NORRAG NEWS 7. Hence we shall not issue a separate meetings list on this occasion.

There are a handful of meetings specifically related to literacy that will be mentioned here. But it is worth noting that Mike Lakin in UNESCO will be bringing out a master listing of meetings that in some way relate to the follow-up of Jomitien. It may be possible to carry a selective copy of that in a future edition.

1. The Literacy Research Centre of the Univ. of Pennsylvania is organising on

October 4-7 1990 a post-WCEFA event - an invitational conference on 'World literacy in the year 2000: research and policy dimensions'. Readers are probably already aware of the Literacy Research Newsletter' which is now in vol.6 no.1.

Contact point: Dan Wagner, director of the Centre, (3700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104- 6216)

2.DSE is organising a workshop with invited participants on the 1EA-Reading Literacy Study, specifically on techniques of data collection, data processing and data analysis, for national case studies in selected African countries. Date: 17-28 Sept/Oct. & Nov. The sites of the meetings will include Hamburg and selected African countries.

Contact point: Udo Bude, DSE, Bonn.

3. DSE is also organising a meeting on 'Basic learning needs of young mothers: the impact of cultural factors on basic- needs-oriented non-formal learning programmes'. In Florence, Italy, by invitation. 5-10 November, 1990.

Contact point: Josef Muller, DSE, Bonn.

4. UNESCO Institute in Hamburg has a series of meetings related to nonformal basic education, post literacy, and illiteracy towards the end of this year. Notably:

1-5 October: round table on nonformal primary level education.

5-16 Nov.: Orientation seminar on post-literacy

19-23 Nov.: Seminar on illiteracy in Eastern and Western Europe.

Contact person for these (and several other meetings on related themes) is Paul Belanger, the new director of the Unesco Institute. Address: Feldbrunnenstrasse 58, 2000 Hamburg 13

5. BCIES is holding its annual conference this year on Education and the Law, 14-16 September 1990 in Cambridge. Key themes are a) legislation, education and economic performance b) the governance of educational institutions and c) the teacher and the law. There will be particular interest in the European dimension of these issues, but attention will also be given to the developing world context.

Contact: Witold Tulasiewicz, Dept. of Education, Univ. of Cambridge, Trumpington St., Cambridge.

THE STRUGGLE FOR ADULT LITERACY: THE CHALLENGE FOR THE 1990S**Round Table organised by SIDA, UNESCO AND ILEPY
at World Conference on Education for All,**

This Round Table was the only one to focus on adult literacy at the WCEFA. The meeting room was crowded with participants who had probably expected more attention to adult literacy by the conference as a whole. The debate following the introductions was lively but limited by time.

Unesco's Director General Federico Mayor opened the session by underlining the importance of adult literacy particularly for women. He pointed out that literacy efforts must focus on women for many reasons, such as the crucial role they play in the welfare of families. Mayor concluded that more resources should be allocated to adult literacy in consideration of human rights, social justice and economic needs.

Four panel members introduced the discussion which was chaired by Dr. Ingemar Gustafsson from SIDA.

Dr. Rosa Maria Torres from Ecuador summarized lessons from the recently concluded literacy campaign in Ecuador. The experiences showed that e.g. social mobilization is possible in a nonrevolutionary context; it is possible to involve youth in social work; the contents of literacy can be a universal theme -human rights - with local adaptation; and it is most critical to provide post-literacy immediately after the initial phase of literacy.

Dr. David Macharia from Kenya stressed the importance of political will and commitment and gave examples from the case of Kenya. He further pointed out that the debt crisis in Africa makes it difficult for any African government to have the political will for literacy.

Dr. Anita Dighe from India focussed on factors preventing women from learning literacy. Not only do women lack time due to the sexual division of labour, but there is a resistance from men. Dighe related this to the patriarchal system which men benefit from. The problem of literacy for women is not a technical one, she stressed, but the need for a more egalitarian society.

Dr. Kassama Varavorn from Thailand pointed out the importance of a literate environment, continuous education through various means including radio, as well as the involvement of sectors other than education and above all the involvement of local communities and the learners themselves.

Agneta Lind,
SIDA Education Division

THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION
(I W G E)
FOLLOW-UP TO JOMITIEN

Follow-up to the Jomitien Conference was discussed at the recent (June 1990) meeting of the International Working Group on Education. There was consensus that coordination at the country level is the key to effective follow-up. It was reported that some forty countries have started to take action.

Unesco, Unicef and *the* World Bank among others reported their planned actions. A Unesco discussion paper was introduced by Colin Power and comments on *the* paper are welcome. The paper is reprinted on the following pages of Norrag News, as is a calendar of meetings concerned with Basic Education and /or Human Resources Development.

Ingemar Gustafsson
SIDA Education Division

Inter-Agency Co-operation in following up the WCEFA
(discussion paper prepared by Unesco)

International agencies and institutions many of which are sponsors, co-sponsors, and associate sponsors of the *World Conference on Education for All*, should actively seek to plan

together and sustain their long-term support for the kinds of national and regional actions outlined in the preceding section. In particular, the core sponsors of the Education for All initiative (UNOP, UWESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) affirm their commitments to supporting the priority areas for international action presented below and to making appropriate arrangements for meeting the objectives of Education for All, each acting within its mandate, special responsibilities, and decisions of its governing bodies. Given that UNESCO is the UN agency with a particular responsibility for education, it will give priority to implementing the Framework for Action and to facilitating provision of services needed for reinforced

International co-ordination and co-operation. (Framework, para. 44)

To give meaning to the above statement of intention, the four core sponsors could undertake to focus their co-operation along the following lines during the initial follow-up period, it being understood that other development agencies would be invited to join in specific activities.

A. Co-operation at national level

Aim: to assist developing Member States to design their own EFA strategy or plan of action and to obtain and coordinate needed external assistance

Approach: (1) encourage Member States to establish or reinforce a national, inter-sectoral executive or advisory body (Presidential commission, EFA task force, . . .) bringing together the major actors in basic education; (2) assist this body to define "basic learning needs" in the national context (s) 0 to undertake education sector analyses and to devise an EFA strategy/plan; (3) assist the EFA body to organize meetings and other activities to mobilize domestic partners and an "EFA roundtable" with external partners; (4) assist the competent authorities to design reforms, prepare projects, and negotiate external funding; and (5) provide direct assistance, if required, in the implementation of reforms and projects. Insofar as possible, each step should be designed to develop or update the knowledge and skills of the participants.

Observations: This general approach will have to be tailored to the actual situation of each country; some steps might be concurrent or unnecessary. The country offices of the four agencies should make the preliminary arrangements with the appropriate government authorities. Unesco will provide a central information clearinghouse service, "mapping" the progress of EFA activity country by country. While the overall aim is to help all developing Member States, action concerning steps 1 through 3 will probably need to be scheduled over at least a 3-year period. Priorities in scheduling could be accorded, for example, to the LDCs in general, to countries that have already moved ahead on EFA but need to organize external support, to countries that have education loans in the pipeline, and to countries that will have their UNDP country programmes approved early in the fifth cycle.

B. Co-operation level'

Aim: (i) To ensure at least one forum per year in each major region for policy and technical discussion on EFA among Member States and their multilateral, bilateral and 'NGO partners, (A) to organize specific co-operative activities that benefit several countries in carrying out their EFA strategies/plans; and (iii) in so doing, to strengthen existing regional mechanisms/networks for co-operation in basic education.

Approach: (1) identify one or more suitable meetings scheduled in each region and arrange with the organizer(s) to include EFA (or some aspect thereof) on the agenda, or to enable a piggy-back EFA meeting, with appropriate participation in either case; (2) organize, at the request of Member States, regional and sub-regional activities that have a multiplier effect and/or exploit an economy of scale (e.g. training of trainers); (3) utilize and consult, insofar as possible, existing regional mechanisms/networks in undertaking (1) and (2).

Observations: This approach presupposes a regular flow of information between the four agencies regarding relevant meetings and other activities in each major region; some may in fact be organized by other agencies, e.g. ESCAP's meeting on EFA (Bangkok, November 1990). Also, each agency should, as a standard operating procedure, invite the other agencies to participate in (or at least observe) its relevant meetings.

c. co-operation at World Level

Aims: (i) To sustain the momentum of Jomtien, (ii) to monitor progress in achieving EFA., and (iii) to facilitate interregional consultations and exchange of information.

Approach: (1) convene a meeting of the heads of the four core agencies once or twice a year, as needed; (2) convene (or piggy-back) one meeting every 12-15 months of an EPA "consultative group" comprising representatives from the several regions (e.g. the chairs and rapporteurs of the regional meetings in B above) and from interested multi- and bi-lateral development agencies and major NGO groups; (3) establish a reporting/monitoring system on EFA activities and events, and publish a periodical newsletter (WCEFA Bulletin); (4) organize occasional interregional technical meetings to exchange information on policy issues, experiences and research findings of concern to more than one region.,

Observations: Certain activities, such as (3), will necessarily be linked to activities at regional level. Again, this approach presupposes a regular flow of information among the four agencies, in the first instance, and among a wider group of interested partners.

In order to plan and undertake its responsibilities in facilitating WCEFA follow-up, UNESCO would like to have a general endorsement of the scheme of co-operation outlined above, as well as suggestions regarding specific activities.

Furthermore, Unesco will need the following kinds of information from its partners:

- a) titles, dates and venue of meetings and events that should be included on the "master calendar" (see attachment);
- b) significant publications, events, achievements and news items that could be included in the WCEFA Bulletin;
- c) lists of countries scheduled for loans/credits, donor roundtables, NatCaps, country programming missions, sector studies, etc., that could be used to examine or improve the situation of basic education*