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SPECIAL THEME ON  
THE WORLD EDUCATION FORUM IN DAKAR

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## EDITORIAL

1. DEADLINES ARE USEFUL! Though we are all critical of large international events like Dakar, there is no denying that they do act as a terminus to get things done. Without this end of decade deadline, a great deal of the valuable work of national assessments might not have been concluded. Many other agencies and NGOs have used this week as a fixed point by which drafts, consultative papers etc etc would be ready. Even we in NORRAG have used this as a point of reference.

2. THE DEADLINES AND THE JUST-IN-TIME APPROACH CAN WEAKEN OWNERSHIP

Look at the pressure that many bodies have been under to prepare themselves for Dakar. The Easter break has been shortened artificially. The casualty of this JIT approach which we are all increasingly prone to is that there is just not enough time for consultation, and ownership. Several of the key elements in the Dakar Framework may well seem to be not grounded in a national priority for different countries.

3. A CRITICAL GLANCE -BOTH QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE

NORRAG NEWS felt that its comparative advantage, given that it had been present in Jomtien and Amman, was a) to underline the change over time. Several key pieces do this. And new members who want to see what we said about Jomtien or Amman, these are readily available in the edited volumes. b) We felt that the Numbers Game needed looking at very carefully, and here no word is more important than DISAGGREGATION. c) We wanted to emphasise the critical importance of what is going on in specific country settings, in rural areas, in literacy centres, in particular districts. In other words, what did EFA look like in a class or a village?

4. THE DANGER OF THE SIGH OF RELIEF - SEE YOU AGAIN IN 2015

The real challenge of Dakar must be to avoid any sense that the spotlight is off for a whole 15 years. Instead, some way of linking the new thinking about targets and commitments to the regular cycle of UNESCO annual conferences, or the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Conferences, or their francophone equivalents will be necessary to maintain the momentum. In this sense, one of the most important parts of the current draft of the Dakar Framework is going to be the last page, where it says: 'A 12th strategy item will then be added to this Framework which will spell out in detail the future mandate and functioning of what may replace the EFA Forum and its governing and executive bodies.' Not just that, it should spell out what are some of the milestones and checkpoints, this year and next year - but not in 2015!

Kenneth King  
Easter Monday

## THE DAKAR FRAMEWORK –A ROUGH GUIDE, TOOLKIT AND A CHECKLIST

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What's new this time round?

Perhaps this is the wrong question. Dakar (2000) and the EFA Mid-term Review in Amman (1996) were never going to be as new and as fresh as Jomtien's World Declaration on Education for All which laid out the six different elements of Basic Education, and then suggested national targets for each of them. Arguably, the particular challenge of these later Fora must be to reflect on what has and has not been achieved, and why. Project completion reports are never as high profile activities as the excitement of project launches; audits can, nevertheless, be very powerful, and they can lead to new directions and commitments. It is in this spirit that we shall look at the Dakar Framework (hereafter DF).

If it is to function in this manner, it must not only very clearly and succinctly say what has been achieved, but it needs to make an argument for a new perspective. So we start with the achievements of ten years – according to the text of the DF.

The numerical balance sheet:

What was memorable about the Jomtien Declaration was that it presented some telling figures, as a lever for action. They were on the first page of the Declaration and they are still in my memory – almost without checking back on the text:

100 million children with no access to primary school (at least 60 million of them = girls)

960 million or more illiterate adults (again two thirds of them female)

100 million kids and many, many adults who fail to complete or learn enough in schools and classes

A third of the world's adults who have no access to new skills or knowledge opportunities.

Now it would have been persuasive to present this Year's 2000 Audit in a way that could immediately make sense of this particular past. Even if there should be health warnings both on the 1990 and the 2000 figures, why not present the data that has been laboriously acquired - according to those specific figures of 1990? Here's what it would look like:

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Out of School Children	100 million	113 m
Adult illiterates	960 million	880 m
Noncompleters/Non-achievers	100 million	???

But what is intriguing in the 2000 document is that the opportunity to 'compare and contrast' is not taken more sharply (and in the case of noncompleters not taken at all). For instance, the fact that there are 82 million more pupils in school over the decade is a cause of celebration in the DF, but the evidence from our mini-table above is that you need to run, in order to stay still, since there are now 113 m children with no access to school as compared to 100 m in 1990. It would perhaps have been helpful for the many who will acquire the Dakar Framework over the next several months to have a view from the organisers on why – when we know very much

more has been done over the decade for children than adults – the numbers of illiterates have fallen but the number of out of school children has increased.

What do we learn from the Jomtien Declaration on this issue of having to run quite fast in order to stay on the same spot? There (in the *Framework for Action* p. 1) we learn that if enrolment rates for primary schooling had remained at the same levels from 1990 till 2000, there would be some 160 million children without access to schools, just because of population growth. So there has been significant progress in one sense, even though the total number of out of school-age children is rather larger than in 1990.

#### **The need for DISAGGREGATED statistics**

We also learn - this time in the Dakar Framework (p vii) - that developing countries as a whole have achieved net enrolment rates in excess of 80%. This is of course good news, but one of the messages that emerged so very strongly from Amman was that aggregation of figures - whether for a single country or all countries can be very misleading. What lies, therefore, behind a figure like 80%?? We have looked for help at the rather useful DFID consultation document called *Education for All - the challenge of Universal Primary Education* which is also going to Dakar this week. And there it tells us, in the statistical annexe, that of the 9 high population countries (which together account for more than 50% of the world's population) no less than 5 do not even have net enrolment rates to report, and that includes one or two of the world's largest countries. [See for example Tilak on India (in this issue) and what has happened to the gross enrolment rate for India over the decade.] So what real political use can we make of the apparently robust figure of 80% net enrolment rates?

#### **Overall literacy figures**

The same point about the limited value - especially for policy - of aggregated figures - could be made about the two basic figures related to literacy in the DF. Is it really helpful to know just about 'the overall adult literacy rate' which is said to be 85% for men and 74% for women? Would it not be more telling to point to the sheer range of what lies behind these aggregate figures? For instance that India has pushed its literacy rate up from 52% in 1991 to 62% in 1997.

Of course a World Education Forum has to deal with worldwide figures. But it should be recalled that precisely because of the concerns about aggregated data in Amman, it was decided in the *EFA 2000 Assessment: Technical Guidelines* that countries should be asked to compile data from sub-national administrative units, such as states, provinces or districts. It would be very valuable to know what came of that strong steer for countries to provide disaggregated data. Did most of the country reports manage to provide a degree of disaggregation? We cannot tell from the DF synthesis report whether they did or didnt.

#### **The Luxury - and the Challenge - of Abundant Data**

The single largest difference between 1990 in Jomtien and 2000 in Dakar is the quantity of the data that is so richly available now as compared to then. When members of the International Steering Committee arrived in Jomtien, they had already had access to the 9 Regional Reports, and then they were each given a folder which had about a 100 additional short comments from various interest groups. This time, for those who have to consult on and finalise the Dakar Framework draft, there are no less than 183 national country assessments of progress since Jomtien, synthesis reports from the Regional Meetings, and 14 special thematic studies, as well as surveys of learning achievement in 30 countries. But the largest change is not this - it is the availability of a website for a great deal of this data.

A check on the website just the weekend before the Forum commenced indicated that there were over a hundred countries whose reports were actually on the web. Interestingly, of these no less than a dozen were OECD countries. So the data for Dakar is by no means just from the so-called South.

But what may be the research student's dream can also be the policy maker's nightmare. What is the relationship between the very large number of quite lengthy national assessments, done according to a similar format, the Regional Reports and the overall synthesis which is termed the Dakar Framework? Arguably, there is the need for an additional, overall analytical, statistical report to illustrate and balance the inevitable degree of generality in the existing Dakar Framework. Now, of course, it was precisely the Statistical Report in Amman that got that conference into trouble. But that should not have prevented something of the richness of the national and regional data being made available. At the moment there is just too large a gap between the tiny number of figures mentioned in the Dakar Framework and richness of the unsynthesised data in the country assessments.

#### **Additional Dakar data - from countries, NGOs, and agencies**

Beyond the wealth of material that is surely available and waiting to be tapped in these national assessments, there is evidence that several countries have gone far beyond the framework of the national EFA Assessment and have commissioned a great deal of further material directly relevant to the Dakar Forum. One example would be India which has commissioned no less than 20 additional studies for Dakar. These cover reviews of learning achievement, learning conditions, literacy, girls' education, textbooks, early childhood, primary teacher training, women's status, media in EFA, tribals and disadvantaged girls, special needs and out of school - to mention just a few. Certainly other countries may also go beyond their single EFA report.

But the other category of data which is going to be much more in evidence in Dakar than in either Jomtien or Amman will be NGO data. This will not only be powerful advocacy material such as *Education Now* which has appeared over the past year, but as a result of the preliminary consultation of NGOs in Dakar on the 24th and 25th, on 'NGOs and the unfinished agenda of EFA', there will almost certainly be a stronger advocacy position taken up by the NGO constituency in the formal Dakar Forum. (See for instance the articles by Mundy/Murphy and by Watkins in NN26).

The third source of new data relevant to Dakar will be agency data. We have already referred to the very useful DFID paper on *Education for All* (See the DFID website: [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)). There are others e.g. from The Netherlands, as well as the 14 thematic papers, which have mostly been agency-sponsored. One obvious difference between now and 1990 is that the World Bank had available in near to final draft in Jomtien its Primary Education Policy paper, whereas this time it would appear there is no World Bank paper of parallel weight (though see the reference in Lauglo's article about the rise of Adult Basic Education).

#### **The absence of dramatic success**

It would have been compelling to have had highlighted a few cases that could be called SUCCESSFUL. Surely, one of these could be Chile (see Avalos in this issue), and it would surely have been appropriate to hear a little about China. It may be invidious to hear of particular contexts, but arguably it is precisely in the country contexts of India, Morocco, Peru, Burkina Faso, Malawi and Mexico - to mention just a few of those highlighted in this issue of NN - that we meet the real challenge of EFA.

### Foregrounding AIDS & DEBT

'Mounting debt burdens' was in the second paragraph of the Jomtien Declaration, and it appears with some considerable emphasis throughout (the Latin Americans and several African delegations would have wanted debt reduction to be much more a precondition of action on basic education). By contrast, the Dakar document is, arguably, much too mild on debt when it says, optimistically, 'Debt reduction programmes should offer governments an opportunity to give priority to education...' Fine, but if we were at the Jubilee 2000's Celebration of Nyerere's life on the 19th April, we would have gathered that there are scarcely any debt reduction programmes on any scale, and those that do exist are hedged about with huge numbers of conditionalities.

### AIDS and education - especially teachers

The Dakar Framework does stress that 'education programmes and actions to address HIV/AIDS must be implemented, but as the articles by Bude and Coombe in this issue underline, we need perhaps to be more sharply focused on what should now be done. Teachers are often mentioned as one of the main casualties of the epidemic. But in some settings, current qualitative research is pointing to the need for absolute probity in teacher relations with school children if the virus is to be contained in the educational sphere.

### AID and Basic Education

Jomtien, it was hoped, would usher in a peace dividend as the cold war tensions abated. Quite the opposite. Instead Jomtien was succeeded by the enormous military expenditures of the Gulf War. As to the patterns of aid for education, the articles by Kuroda and Carr-Hill make clear that the record of the international community and of Japan (the largest bilateral donor for several years) has been very mixed in support of basic education. For one thing, it is apparently as difficult in 1999-2000 as in 1990-91 to find out what the development assistance community has actually spent on different categories of basic education. And the evidence would suggest that it is going to become harder as sector wide approaches continue to be popular. So when the DF urges that 'Funding agencies should allocate a larger share of their resources than in the past to support for primary and other forms of basic education' we need to be aware that we don't, after 10 years, even know what many of them currently allocate to basic education.

### The re-discovery of the rest of education & training

It was perhaps inevitable that the way the donor pendulum swung towards basic education should produce a realisation, very late in the day, that there may be the need for post-primary schools, and post primary skills. The early months of 2000 have even witnessed the rediscovery (once again) of the importance of higher education. This is a natural accompaniment of the campaign mode of dealing with educational priorities. But it may well be that the rather moderate (too moderate?) tone of the Dakar Framework is positive in the sense that it doesn't extol a partial vision. Its danger is probably the opposite. It lists too many good things for the nations of the world to support.

### The absence of a time-line

The most common date mentioned in the Dakar Framework is a full 15 years away. The danger of this is that it is just so far away that it cannot act as a lever for present action. Nor is there any satisfactory explanation of why 2000 was shifted to 2015. Ideally, what Dakar needs to do is retreat from the notion that there is now a huge gap before a further grand conference is pulled together. Rather, it needs to encourage much more country and region specific events - starting this year. Their role could be simple - Digesting the Dakar Data - and determining so what for our country.

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**TEN YEARS: FROM JOMTIEN TO DAKAR**  
**IS THE EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) GLASS HALF EMPTY OR HALF FULL?**

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Is the EFA glass half empty or half full? Should we be celebrating its achievements or its failures? There has been some dispute about this over the last year or more, with some proclaiming a "crisis" in education and others denying such a crisis exists. The answer, as usual, is probably somewhere between the extremes. Finding the right answer calls for analysis of what is different at Dakar than at Jomtien. If we were to compare, therefore -- very impressionistically -- the "situation" of the world from 1990 to 2000 as it relates to education, what would we find?

**The situation of children** -- Children now face risks and dangers only remotely considered at Jomtien -- or at least not highly visible then. Poverty persists, in many places with a vengeance; violence -- domestic, ethnic, and state-inspired -- is ever-present, with children as both perpetrators and victims; exploitation and abuse, especially in hazardous and unhealthy labour, place the lives, let alone the education, of tens of millions of children at stake; and HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and drug abuse are direct threats to children's survival and further well-being. Girls, identified at Jomtien as the largest group of children denied access to education, continue to constitute two thirds of the excluded. Education systems in many parts of the world -- developed as well as developing -- have clearly neither anticipated these risks nor adapted themselves to try to prevent and deal effectively with them.

A major positive difference in this regard is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CRC, barely discussed at Jomtien, was approved only in 1989 and has now been ratified by all but two nations of the world. It offers a channel by which new energy, commitment, and the force of both national law and international convention can be brought behind the right of children to education and to protection from those who would deny them this right and many others.

**The situation of states** -- Although common wisdom points to a trend of increasing democratisation around the world, many states remain, or are becoming increasingly undemocratic with education systems that run counter to accepted norms. Other states have given up the pretence of providing services to large numbers of their citizens, and a few, it seems, are virtually non-existent -- with almost no education system or one which runs only with the support of local endeavour. The obligation of the state to ensure the provision of universal primary education of good quality for all appears ever harder to fulfil.

**The situation of civil society** -- In contrast, civil society organisations, including but not limited to non-government organisations, are both mushrooming in number and expanding in scope and strength. Increasingly, they can and do demand, and deserve to have, a more important role in education -- sometimes in actually providing it, although this is ultimately the responsibility of the state. They have been particularly effective in ensuring education reaches the children of the most unreached communities and is of adequate quality,

**The situation of donor agencies** -- Although funding for education from the donor community has, generally, been disappointing with very mixed results, there does seem to be renewed interest in supporting basic education. At least some of the major multi-lateral and bi-

lateral agencies are willing to expand their support in education, and commitments in this regard will likely be made at Dakar.

**The situation of education** – At least according to the EFA 2000 Assessment, there are fewer children out of school now than a decade ago, with some regions and countries making sizeable progress towards the goal of UPE – but others showing a considerable deterioration in relation to the goal. Whatever the trends in enrolment, it seems clear that children are generally not learning what they are meant to learn, with increasing evidence of remarkably low achievement scores. And the broader vision of education – with concern for learning from birth, and through adolescence into adulthood – still seems to receive only lip-service in many ministries and donor agencies.

The challenges to making greater progress in education remain enormous and, in some regions, are increasing. But there are reasons for some optimism:

- Data are probably better now than five or ten years ago, with many governments taking the EFA assessment exercise seriously for the first time. This means, however, that there is probably less inflation of data now than in previous assessments – and therefore more realistic figures which, in comparison to earlier data, do not show impressive gains. But the baseline is more solid than in the past. There is greater agreement on what needs to be measured and how to measure it; and the work that many countries did on disaggregating data by gender and to the level of province or district is helping to identify remaining problems and specific areas of exclusion.
- We know more now than we did 10 years ago – about many things. The multitude of experience in both failed and successful programmes – pilot projects and those taken to scale – have left us with greater awareness of what works and what does not. We know more about essential components of quality and about how to measure successful learning. And more evidence is available about the absolutely essential needs of very young children, in terms of health, nutrition, and early learning, and about the interactions between the physical and emotional health status of children and their learning. Acting on this knowledge, however, in ministries and in schools, remains a challenge.
- Both nations and funding agencies show greater willingness to develop more systematic and systemic approaches to the development of education. This has led to the commitment in the draft Dakar Framework for Action which guarantees that nations having reasonable EFA plans within a sustainable development framework will not be thwarted in the achievement of these plans by a lack of resources,

**The situation of Education For All** – The EFA partnership is alive but not terribly well. Some of the major convenors have not been active in the process – much less active than some of the bilateral sponsors. The follow-up mechanism – the Forum and its Secretariat – has not been as dynamic, rigorous, nor systematic as it might have been nor as inclusive as needed of national governments and civil society. The lack of support provided it by the international community and its unclear terms of reference did not help in this regard. Decisions concerning the future follow-up of EFA into the new century – at national, regional, and global level – and the commitments made by the major actors at Dakar – will greatly influence whether, over the next decade, the EFA glass is further emptied or further filled.

## DAKAR - A VISION FOR ALL?

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As the world education community is heading to Dakar to set a vision for the coming fifteen years, one cannot refrain from thinking about the challenges lying ahead. A comprehensive assessment exercise, comprising 183 national assessments, surveys on monitoring learning achievements in 50 countries, 14 thematic studies in 30 countries and 6 regional conferences have come to disturbing findings. On the one hand primary school enrolment has increased by over 80 million pupils, 44 million of which are girls. Net enrolment rates are in excess of 80% in the developing world compared to what they were in early 1990's.

On the other hand, ten years after Jomtien, *'millions of people are still denied their right to education and the opportunities it could bring to live safer, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives'*. Over 110 million children have no access to education, and for those who have been fortunate to attend school, neither the curriculum content, nor the teaching delivery have been conducive to appropriate and relevant learning. In most cases, the means of instruction is a foreign language. Entire cohorts of school graduates are having problems entering the job market, and have become a major burden to their parents and to local communities. Over 880 million adults are still illiterate.

Poverty, corruption and lack of political will are mostly held responsible for this situation, which definitely calls upon education policy makers at all levels. The state of education raises several questions: What went eventually wrong during the last decade? Will Dakar bear promises and make available education for all? What do we need to do differently in Dakar so that the world can achieve EFA goal?

It would certainly take time to answer these questions. Maybe, given the complexity of the issues at stake in education and, as with Jomtien, only the future can actually tell how enlightened and appropriate the vision proposed by Dakar will be. One can only speculate based on the experience made after Jomtien and pinpoint a few areas where there is room for improvement. This would help to better understand what direction to take after Dakar so that the vision of Education for All in the year 2015 will be a reality for everybody.

Jomtien, in a way, can be understood as a direct product of the vision spelled out in the well known World Bank major policy paper, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy for Adjustment, Revitalisation and Expansion*, published in 1988, just before the Conference. The paper provided a clear mandate to education to support economic revitalisation and expansion. It also advised countries to focus on primary education because this sub-sector has most potential for socio-economic return.

A decade after Jomtien, this view still stands. However, its side effects may be partially responsible for some of the problems education is facing today. Due to a limited interpretation of the Jomtien Declaration, there was too much focus on primary education at the expense of other basic education sectors such as early childhood education and adult literacy. Also due to that misinterpretation, the development of open competitive pathways to post-basic education was not encouraged and a cohesive international policy for post-primary education skill development did not receive much support. Also, too little attention was devoted to the functional relationship between basic and higher education, not bearing in mind that research on primary education issues, and human as well as institutional capacity building in the sub-sector needed the full participation of higher education.

As the Developing World is attempting to integrate today's economy and culture in a global dynamics, another reproach made is that deliberate emphasis on primary education may have reinforced, especially in Asia and Africa, economic systems based on the exploitation of abundant raw materials, which just need a low qualified workforce, low investment and low technology. Such

economic policies contradict current world economic trends and practices which are based on highly sophisticated technologies. As a consequence, this may have contributed to further isolate entire sub-regions of the Developing World from the New World economy and cultures.

The way the Jomtien Declaration was implemented during the decade 1990-2000 constituted another major area of concern. Debates on the issue seem to lead to the conclusion that the quantitative targets set in Jomtien were fine. However, funding, institutional and political support from the international donor community failed effectively to follow the lead. Despite appearances to the contrary, not only did aggregated spending in fact decrease in terms of both actual and relative values but, when funding existed, very little effort was made to increase the absorptive capacity of developing countries. In many countries also, co-ordination mechanisms among partners were weak, particularly during the first period of implementation. Also, the debt burden increased rapidly. The side effects of structural adjustment policies on the social sector added to the complexity of the situation and made it almost unbearable for some countries.

Some governments from developing as well as developed countries, on their side, did not demonstrate, beyond rhetoric, the type of strong political will necessary to undertake major changes. In some cases there was a tendency to resist reform initiatives such as decentralisation and community empowerment, which were perceived as weakening the control on the system. Beyond formal declarations, some of public administrators paid little attention to targets set in Jomtien.

Added to the above shortcomings from both the international donor community and Governments, there were unfavourable demographic trends, which practically annulled most significant progress, made in access to basic education. Unforeseen challenges also complicated further the problem. In Jomtien, problems such as, for example, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (especially HIV/AIDS), civil wars, natural disasters and economic crisis in Africa, South Asia, Latin America and Central Europe were not as critical as they are today. Therefore, policy makers didn't assign them any importance in reform design and no provision was made to address them during the implementation stage.

Last, but not least, attention to quality of education came late. The building of effective education management systems and the development of assessment tools to carefully monitor learning and pedagogical outcomes was not of priority before Amman. Access to basic education was so low in the early 1990's that interrelated issues of quality and relevance were not a priority. Policy makers didn't give enough attention to the fact that parents tend to take children away from school when they perceive that the quality of education is low and that investing in schooling is not professionally profitable to the future of their offspring.

Despite the shortfall above, the decade was also marked by significant positive developments, which had a favourable impact on education. Among others, democracy improved throughout the world, which, in return, broadened the dialogue amongst education stakeholders.

Another positive development is that donors have learned to work better and to work together although there is still room for improvement in such areas as portfolio performance, the building of genuine partnership in decision making, applying flexible policies approaches to adjust to country's conditions, applying state of the art knowledge, and enhancing staff skills.

Some countries have made tremendous progress in schools despite the fact that more needs to be done to effectively tackle the difficult issues of school retention, quality of education, equity and adjustment to the requirements imposed on the sector by new information technologies and communication. Promising and innovative pilot projects have been conducted. For example, several

African pilot projects mentioned under the ADEA stocktaking exercise, to name a few, are promising. However, for most of them, taking up to scale still remains a major challenge.

Hopefully, Dakar takes most of these burning issues into consideration. By recommending the expansion of education at all levels, especially for the most vulnerable and the disadvantaged, by prescribing the improvement of its quality and making it more relevant to the real needs, as well as calling for more equity and justice, Dakar is certainly heading in the right direction. It accomplishes a major step by striving for a better environment for education and pledging to mobilise national and international policy makers to significantly invest in basic education, further linking strategies to alleviate poverty and strategies aiming at developing education at all levels. By advocating full participation of civil society, including NGOs and by supporting the position that all learning needs of children adolescents and adults be met, Dakar is making sure that necessary strategies are put in place to allow everybody to learn to know, to do, to live together, and to be. Thus, Dakar fully integrates most lessons learned from the last decade. It undoubtedly has a vision for all, and holds high hope that educational systems will overcome the shortcomings mentioned above.

However, while still drawing lessons from Jomtien, one must admit that the most difficult challenges are yet to come, during the implementation period, which will follow Dakar. For education to meet the challenges, a few things need improvement. It is necessary for example that decisions made in Dakar be fully owned locally, at school unit, parent and community levels. For the new vision to take place, its foundation must be embedded in local interests, values and indigenous knowledge. It is crucial that the evaluation process used to move up issues of concern, from local to national and international be effectively accompanied with reverse sensitisation campaigns from the Dakar Forum to smallest communities, before implementation takes place.

It is also a necessity to develop a new understanding of the relationship between education and political processes. Following the path set by Jomtien, Dakar recommends to "mobilise strong political commitment" for education for all. Actually, Jomtien asked the same commitment. However, things didn't happen the way expected because of the complexity of the relationship between education and its socio-political environment. Education is not as altruistic as it appears and does not evolve in a vacuum. Its often reflects deeper social economic and political cleavages that cross the boundary of schools and the sector in general, to involve interests in wider society. Decisions made in education (including the decision to implement or not a given recommendation from Jomtien or Dakar) have their roots and their implications in sectors other than education. In many instances, education change initiatives reflect the dynamic of political and social dynamics. Beyond the symbolic and ritual aspects of educational reforms, individuals and groups develop an extraordinary ability to resist or promote particular aspects according to given interests. For many, education is often another field where the rule of compromise and deliberate political trade-off actually applies. One needs to fully understand, appreciate and participate in this process in order to bring about innovations.

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

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Incorporation into the Jomtien Declaration and Framework of "initial education," as part of basic education, represented a triumph for early childhood advocates, creating expectations that learning and care and development during the early years would receive increased attention.<sup>1</sup> A review of what has happened in the 10 years since Jomtien suggests that, despite modest and uneven advances, expectations have not been met.<sup>2</sup> A review of national reports prepared as part of the EFA Year 2000 Evaluation suggests that:

- Although the general tendency during the period has been for enrolments to increase and a few cases of large and even dramatic jumps in enrolment, the increases have, for the most part, been small and marginal. There are, as well, cases in which enrolments have decreased, particularly (and dramatically) in countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union and in Eastern European countries previously under Soviet influence. Moreover, gross enrolment levels vary from virtually 0 to almost 100%.
- Attention continues to be concentrated on "pre-schooling" and on children ages 4 to 6, particularly on the year just prior to primary school.
- Children are more likely to be enrolled in programmes if they are urban, financially better off, and from dominant cultural groups. For most countries there is relative gender parity in enrolments, but exceptions appear, especially among Middle Eastern countries.

A survey of knowledgeable people in 23 countries and in a variety of organizations, national and international, done as part of the 10-year evaluation pointed to changes in conditions affecting early childhood programming since 1990, including:

- conceptual shifts and changes in the knowledge base and its dissemination,
- changes in attitudes and awareness about the importance of early childhood development and how to go about fostering it in diversified, integral, collaborative ways.
- Changes in policies and legal and legislative frameworks for programming, internationally and nationally.
- Increased availability of international resources, with, however, little commitment of public resources; major responsibility for ECCD is still left to families, communities and non-governmental institutions.
- Improvements in some organizational and human resource bases.

Despite these apparent advances, the degree of change varies considerably from place to place and, interestingly, the same conditions were often cited as needing additional work if

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<sup>1</sup> The Declaration stated that, "Learning begins at birth. This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities or institutional programmes, as appropriate." The Framework for Action placed as a priority, "Expansion of early childhood care and development activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children."

<sup>2</sup> See R. Myers, "Early Childhood Care and Development: A Global Review, 1990-1999." A paper prepared for UNICEF and the EFA Forum. Paris: The EFA Forum, February 2000.

major advances are to be made in the field. There was, for instance, a strong feeling that human resources are weak and that training is needed at all levels.

Much less information is available about changes in practices and very little information is available to tell us whether changes have occurred in the developmental status of children.

In brief, despite minor advances, early childhood education has yet to find its way into the mainstream of basic education. It lacks major public support in most Third World countries, neglects attention to the earliest ages and to parents as first teachers, needs to improve the preparation of the people providing care and education, and requires greater attention to programme monitoring and evaluation. These major challenges will require much more intense attention than has been given to them during the 1990s. Without that attention, the right of children to develop to their fullest potential will continue to be violated and societies as well as individuals will fail to realize the benefits that could accrue.

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#### EFA 1990-2000: A PERSONAL JOURNEY

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In April 2000 the World Education Forum will meet in Dakar, Senegal to review progress towards the vision for Education for All (EFA) presented at the Jomtien conference in Thailand in 1990. Most of us who contribute to and read NORRAG NEWS will have participated in the realisation of that vision in a myriad of ways. My involvement in the EFA process over the past decade has taken several forms – as researcher, analyst, evaluator, teacher, conference convenor, practitioner, planner. This article presents a set of personal reflections on EFA.

My first lesson in what came to be known as EFA was learned some time before the Jomtien conference itself. It was a lesson about the role of advocacy in making education happen. At a meeting convened by UNICEF in New York, James Grant convinced UNESCO, the World Bank and UNDP that they should jointly mount a fresh commitment to the achievement of education for all. In contrast to the previous commitments to Universal Primary Education made regionally and under UNESCO's mandate, in Addis Ababa, Santiago and Karachi some thirty years earlier, this commitment would be global. Significantly it would involve political and financial commitment from four powerful UN agencies.

The tone of the meeting was upbeat. Buoyed up by UNICEF's successful *immunisation* programme of the previous decade, Grant was particularly optimistic about the prospects for EFA. I was surprised by his confidence. The discourse of global advocacy, finance and policy, of global targets and of dialogue with Kings and Presidents was unfamiliar. And education for all seemed to me to be a very different proposition from immunisation for all. Far removed from the day to day realities of education in poor countries, ambitious targets of EFA by the Year 2000 were being discussed in New York. I felt a little uncomfortable. No one could doubt the ethical nature of the target. But how realistic were the vision and the targets for all countries? Where was the analysis of the conditions that might lead, in different contexts, to the achievement of EFA? Was the problem merely a question of finance? What conditions needed to be or be put in place to translate the vision of EFA into reality? What kinds of stake-holders were most effective in making EFA happen on the ground? And what kind of education, and

more especially what kind of learning, based on whose values and for whose ends was to be advocated?

### *Thinking about implementing EFA*

These questions were to remain with me throughout the decade as I worked in one way or another for EFA. The goals of UN agencies and Banks seemed to be remote from the day to day realities of making EFA happen on the ground. Convinced that many potentially fruitful discussions between different stakeholders were being frustrated by an absence of shared language I set about some modest building of bridges of understanding. My particular concern was to open the black box of learning and educational change for those more comfortable with questions of the external efficiency and effectiveness of education. Questions of the contribution of EFA to societal and economic change and development were related but separable from questions about the conditions that lead to EFA. And while acknowledging the indispensable role of educational finance as one such condition, there seemed to be me to be very many more of equal if not greater importance. At Jomtien<sup>1</sup> I proposed a simple scheme to aid non-educationalists to think about education and learning. *Learning for all, on the ground*, could happen only when students had reasons to learn, when they and their parents valued the content and outcomes of learning, and when teachers learned to effectively build bridges between culturally unfamiliar and familiar knowledge.

Developing the theme at a conference at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex I suggested that international goals and targets might satisfy international financiers remote from the day to day implementation of EFA, yet needing some sense of control over an incomprehensible reality<sup>2</sup>. I suggested further that World Declarations can often succeed in mobilising international financial resources for national system-level reform. But whether that reform is matched by changes in the organisation of relationships on the ground, in the classroom, requires an understanding of local culture by international and national planners and policymakers, and access to resources and professional support by teachers. These twin conditions are observed all too seldom. I became even more convinced of the need to build bridges between the different discourses of the social sciences, and especially between economists on the one hand and anthropologists and cultural psychologists on the other. *Culture and Learning*<sup>3</sup>, edited with Bob Teasedale (University of Flinders) and based on the work of our Phd students, and *Education, cultures and economics: dilemmas for development*<sup>4</sup>, edited with Fiona Leach (formerly with the Institute and now at the University of Sussex) and based on contributions to an Institute of Education conference in 1995 contribute to this end.

### *Doing EFA*

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Culture: a precondition for effective learning. Roundtable paper presented at the EFA Conference, Jomtien, 1990, Paris, UNESCO, pp 73

<sup>2</sup> Education and Development: Macro Relationships and Microcultures, Institute of Development Studies Silver Jubilee Papers, no 4, Sussex, 1992, pp 24 (ISBN 0 903715 74 0)

<sup>3</sup> Culture and Learning (ed. with G.R.Teasedale), Prospects, Vol XXV, no 4, UNESCO (ISSN 0033 1538)

<sup>4</sup> Education, Cultures and Economics: Dilemmas for Development (ed. with F.E.Leach), New York, Garland Books, 1999, pp 403 (ISBN 0-8153-2783-8)

Meanwhile I was determined to bring together practitioners who for many years prior to Jomtien had been striving to achieve many of the goals embedded in the EFA declaration, especially those of access to and quality in primary education. Listening to some officials in development agencies in the early 1990s, one might have imagined that EFA was a new concept, a new goal of society, a new objective for development projects. Yet for years many policymakers and practitioners in different parts of the globe had been working for this concept within national policy and programmes and within international projects.

The potential to learn from the experience of implementing EFA was immense, a fact which led to our Institute of Education conference in 1991 at which the implementors of six primary education programmes in five countries reflected on their experiences of conditions for success and failure. Financial security was indeed a condition of success but so too were strong educational leaders at the school and system level. Teachers who understood the home cultures of their students, teachers who engaged in low-cost materials production were important<sup>5</sup>. Micro-systems for planning and monitoring the implementation of activities also appeared to be critical for the empowerment of implementors on the ground. I emphasise the term *micro*-systems for monitoring, as these were systems developed near the ground *by* implementors *for* implementors<sup>6</sup>.

Lying somewhere between implementation near the ground and EFA targets set by international agencies are national policy, national plans and national budgets for EFA. As we approach the end of the Jomtien decade there are some who feel that the commitments made by some national leaders to the World Declaration on EFA were mere lip service. Even policies for EFA are empty political gestures if not matched by detailed and implementable plans and budgets for educational access, quality, relevance and efficiency. Yet planning for EFA requires changes in internal practices and budgetary procedures that are by no means automatic. To bring about change in systems to support EFA, a critical mass of Ministers, permanent secretaries, planners, managers and accountants need vision, dedication, commitment and hard work. And in decentralised systems of educational planning and management these needs are magnified several times over<sup>7,8</sup>.

### *Analysing EFA*

As a researcher perhaps the most satisfying reflection over the past decade has been the systematic analysis of a particular case of achievement of EFA.

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<sup>5</sup> Beyond Jomtien: Implementing Primary Education for All (ed. with W. Hoppers and R. Gardner) Macmillan, pp 262 (ISBN 0 333 59441 X)

<sup>6</sup> Insider Accounts: the monitoring and evaluation of primary education projects in Sri Lanka, Education Division Monograph No 65, SIDA, Stockholm (ISSN 0283 0566)

<sup>7</sup> P Planning Guidelines for the development of medium and long term provincial education plans, Ministry of Education and Higher Education/Primary Education Planning Project, Isurupaya, Sri Lanka, 1999, pp 92 (ISBN 955-8264-00-8)

<sup>8</sup> Primary Education Reform in Sri Lanka, Educational Publications Department, Sri Lanka, forthcoming 2000, pp224 (ISBN 955-28-0013-7)

Sri Lanka is hailed for high standards of education and other aspects of human and social development, despite rather modest levels of economic growth. At Jomtien, Sri Lanka's success in achieving near universal access to free primary education was noted. Less well known is the part played in this success by the plantation community. Historically, much of the achievement in EFA in the country as a whole was underpinned by economic revenues generated by the labours of the plantation community, a community which itself benefited little. Yet, even among this community, the picture has been changing over the past twenty years. Over the period 1981/2 to 1996/7 the national literacy rate as a percentage of the 5+ population has increased from 85.4% to 91.8%. Among the plantation community the increase was from 64.8% to 76.9%; and among plantation females from 52.6% to 67.3%.

*Labouring to Learn: towards a political economy of plantations, people and education in Sri*

<sup>9</sup>*Lanka* analyses the achievement of EFA among the Sri Lankan population as a whole and among the plantation community in particular. The impact of Jomtien on progress in the plantation schools in Sri Lanka in recent years has been slight. Of much greater importance has been the specific nature of national and local politics over the past two decades. The broader ethnic crisis and charismatic leadership of the plantation trade union cum political party have played an important part in the story of educational progress and the achievement of EFA. Stable financing of plantation schools using external funds has also played its part. This is not to say that Jomtien and EFA have played no part. They have provided an enabling framework for those external agencies that continued to support the development of schools in the plantations through the Ministry of Education. Without the finance the Ministry would have been unable to support development. Without Jomtien and EFA external agencies may have been unable to convince domestic constituencies to support the Ministry over such a long period of time.

Which brings us back to New York, Jomtien, advocacy and analysis. *Labouring to Learn* demonstrated that in the case of one marginalised community at least sustained educational progress has depended on a complex interplay of forces for change - economic, political, social and cultural - originating at the local, national, regional and global level. It suggested that the EFA Declaration may have contributed to progress. Advocacy *for* progress is one of the factors in the analysis *of* progress at the national and sub-national level. At the same time, it would be an error, in this case, to overplay its influence. World Declarations and Frameworks for Action may be *necessary* tools in the struggle for human progress and in the mobilisation of international finance. But they are certainly not sufficient in determining what happens nationally and locally on the ground <sup>10</sup>.

And so to Dakar, where a global assessment of progress towards EFA and a further commitment to EFA will be made. Let those who participate in this arena review, reflect and commit to a global ideal. Let them analyse the diversity of conditions that have made EFA possible in different contexts. And let them also encourage a diversity of regional, national and local

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<sup>9</sup> *Labouring to Learn: towards a political economy of plantations, people and education in Sri Lanka*, Macmillan Press, 1999, pp 324 (ISBN 0-333-67429-4)

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Post-Jomtien Models of Educational Development: Analysis vs Advocacy, Key note address at the Nordic Association of Educational Researchers in Developing Countries, Vasa, May 1999, to appear in 2000 in Malmberg, L-E, Hansen, S-E and Heino, K. (eds) *Basic education for all: a global concern for quality*, Vasa, Abo Akademi University, Finland

commitments, targets, plans, strategies and actions. The realisation of global ideals, and, more especially, the realisation of national and local ideals require the design and implementation of local plans.

And let Dakar encourage a discussion of who 'says' as well who 'pays' for EFA. In the past, who pays for EFA – as between parents, communities, organisations, national governments and international agencies – has tended to exercise many more minds than who 'says' for EFA. Naturally money becomes the 'bottom-line' question for those whose job it is to hatch, match and despatch financial resources for education. But finance is a means to the end of EFA. Other, and possibly more fundamental, questions are: Who wants EFA and why? What will be its content and method? How will it be assessed? Who is planning it? Who is managing it?

*This article is an adaptation for NN26 of one of the same title appearing in the Education and International Development (EID) Review, March 2000 (<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/eid>). It is also on the Unesco website.*

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### INGO EFFORTS PLANNED FOR DAKAR

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In the last NORRAG news, we described a burgeoning trend towards the development of transnational NGO advocacy around the idea of basic education for all. An important part of this advocacy has been focused on the World Education Forum meetings planned to mark the 10 year review of the Jomtien-initiated Education for All efforts. In this short report we begin to describe the international nongovernmental organisation (INGO) and nongovernmental (NGO) efforts which we might expect to see at the Dakar World Education Forum.

INGOs have been actively engaged in the Education For All review in several ways. Some INGOs, such as those which belong to Unesco's NGO Collective Consultation (CC), continue to work with the EFA convening agencies and in the EFA Forum to leverage change and push for an agenda which includes a greater role for civil society actors in EFA decision making and a more concrete commitments by world governments and intergovernmental organisations to the EFA movement. Through the sponsorship of Unesco, INGOs have been able to organise parallel regional conferences at each stage of the EFA review process, collecting feedback and sending the overall message that civil society must participate in all levels of policy planning and evaluation in future EFA activities. The Unesco NGO Collective Consultation has been instrumental in pointing out that much of the 'expanded vision' for basic education (i.e. to include adult and nonformal education) has been ignored over the EFA decade, through the preparation of independent NGO assessments. ActionAid and Oxfam, which sponsored an NGO regional conference in South Africa with Unesco, also made a mark by introducing there a Compact for Africa, a proposal that calls for a special financial plan for achieving EFA in Sub-Sahara Africa.

Since January, a group of INGOs, including Education International, ActionAid, and in particular Oxfam UK and Oxfam International, have begun to take a more contentious approach to the EFA Forum and the Dakar meeting. Together with many southern INGOs, these organisations launched a "Global Campaign for Education" in late 1999. Initially, Oxfam represented Campaign participants on the interagency working group which coordinates the EFA review. However, in February 2000, Oxfam withdrew from the committee. Along with other Global Campaign members, Oxfam has openly accused the World Forum organisers of lacking any real

commitment to meeting the goal of education for all by the year 2015. They argue that there must be more concrete targets and commitments, a new kind of international financial mechanism for delivering educational assistance, and a better organised and more democratic EFA secretariat. Otherwise, they suggest that the EFA World Forum and future EFA efforts will be little more than a "talking-shop."

What is likely to happen in Dakar? The EFA secretariat has planned for an NGO pre-conference on Monday and Tuesday April 24 and 25 in Dakar. About 300 NGOs are likely to participate – though as has been the case at previous Unesco/EFA sponsored NGO meetings over the year, NGOs are complaining that the Unesco secretariat has played a somewhat heavy handed role in limiting participation. At this meeting NGOs hope to develop a joint statement, in which they will synthesise their feedback on the Framework for Action and the Dakar declaration. They will also strategise ways of gaining leverage in the EFA Forum proper, where NGO participation is much more restricted. Only 60 NGOs were formally invited (out of a total of about 1,000 invited delegates).

The NGOs involved in the Global Campaign are actively trying to build opportunities for leverage within national delegations. Earlier in April, Oxfam UK, ActionAid and a host of other British NGOs including Save the Children made a (failed) bid to get Tony Blair to come to Dakar and take a stand on EFA, similar to that taken by the UK in the HIPC initiative. Campaign participants have held meetings with the European Union and the Dutch governments in efforts to get their support on a Global Action Plan and larger EFA commitments. E-mail messages were exchanged among Global Campaign participants throughout the week of April 17-23 as they tried to identify which high level leaders would be attending Dakar and which delegations would meet them. For example, daily meetings with the UK delegation have been arranged throughout the conference, one way the campaigners think they can influence the World Forum drafting committee. NGOs will face an uphill task, however, since organisers of the World Forum have yet to establish explicit procedures or mechanisms for how amendments to the Dakar declaration will be proposed or considered.

Global Campaign for Education members have identified several issues which they will target at the Dakar Forum declaration. These include:

1. Clear commitment by governments and INGOs to providing free and compulsory basic education.
2. Clear and time-bound process for countries to agree their own plans of action for achieving EFA, with binding mechanisms for civil society participation.
3. Clearer commitment to an expanded vision of basic education – especially literacy and nonformal adult education.
4. A clear international financial commitment to EFA, through a financial Global Action Plan with a special provision for Sub-Saharan Africa (which they have described in their Compact for Africa). The suggested target is 8% of all bilateral aid earmarked for basic education.
5. A new code of conduct to improve aid itself.
6. "Democratisation, decentralisation, and empowerment of the present Education for All structures and mechanisms." Campaigners seek to "empower" future EFA mechanisms with civil society participation, which they believe will better be able to call governments to account in meeting the goal of education for all.
7. A commitment to a mid-term global review of EFA in 2006.

Global Campaign members will begin their strategic meetings on Saturday April 22. They have also planned various activities in Dakar to build support for these demands. They have

scheduled, for example, various strategy meetings for campaign "allies" and will hold a children's rally and special cultural events.

These NGO and INGO preparations mark a new era of activism in the field of international educational cooperation. They suggest a far greater focus and coordination among nongovernmental actors than was seen at the Jomtien meetings. INGO activism at Dakar is set to mirror the kinds of INGO efforts that have become common place at major UN conferences during the 1990s. It appears, however, that the EFA secretariat continues to view these efforts as in need of being controlled and contained. This sets the stage for what we expect will be some heated interactions between Unesco staff, EFA forum members and the INGOs. It will be worth watching to see whether INGOs are able to have their agenda introduced into the final Dakar declaration, and to see which governments and intergovernmental organisations support them. The situation may defy our expectations – for example, there are already hints that the World Bank will back some of the demands made by the INGOs, especially as related to Africa. A complicated politics is likely to emerge from the experience, with long term implications for the operation of international cooperation in education.

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#### DAKAR FROM JAPAN

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The Jomtien Conference and its following international conferences and agreements on educational development had a great impact on Japanese educational aid both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantity of its educational aid has risen steadily since the Jomtien in spite of the stagnating total budget for development assistance. Its priority has been clearly set in basic education rather than vocational and higher education, which received most of Japanese educational aid before the Jomtien. Japan expanded its educational aid to Africa, the most needy region in respect of EFA, putting relatively less emphasis in Southeast Asia, where most of Japanese aid went to earlier. So far, at least in terms of the magnitude of what we may call 'the Jomtien effect', Japan may be called one of the most achieving cases among donor countries. However, during the process of the rapid policy change, we had to face many problems and some of them still remain with us as the obstacles for the future operation of Japanese educational aid.

First, when the Japanese government started to expand its operation in basic education in developing countries, it had to encounter the domestic criticism toward the policy change. Because of very negative experience before and during WWII, when Imperial Japan imposed the Japanese educational system on its colonies and occupied territories in Asia, many Japanese in the aid community still believe that Japan should not intervene in education in other countries, specially in basic education, which should be the very core of the culture and dignity of a country.

For (possibly naive) Japanese, it was beyond imagination to expand Japanese educational aid as the French have done (aiming to maintain French cultural influence in its former colonies). This firm belief amongst Japanese helped a lot to justify the dominance of school construction and of science and math's education in the expansion of Japanese educational aid because these two

areas are somehow considered to be relatively "culture free". This conviction was repeatedly presented in the official and unofficial discussion of the policy making process for the first five years after the Jomtien, but now it seems less visible.

Second, one of the most significant problems that we faced in the process of rapid expansion of educational aid was the shortage of the expertise and experts in this field. Although Japanese education has been perceived as one of the driving factors of its own modern development and of the post-war reconstruction of this country, the knowledge from these experiences has not been put in a form that is transferable to other countries.

Most seriously, we had very few Japanese educationists who have professional expertise and experience in this field. Even educationists who have foreign language competency were not many. Therefore, decision making process to formulate educational aid projects came to depend on available human resources and limited existing expertise in Japan, but did not reflect the real needs of recipients. This situation still appertains, but it is also true that the number of young Japanese who are studying to be educational development experts is rapidly growing (both inside and outside of this country) since some graduate level programmes in education and development were established in last ten years in Japan. The number of educational researchers who are interested in this field is also growing.

Third, the most radical criticism that Japanese educational aid should receive is about its low efficiency and low flexibility, which are caused by the rigid bureaucratic system of development assistance operation in Japan. The problems are evident particularly in Japanese school construction work, that accounts for almost half of the amount of its educational aid. Some say it costs five to ten times more than other donors' construction. And others say it discourages community participation. Fully acknowledging the massive counter arguments from Japanese individuals and organizations that are involved, we still had to and have to continue this critical stance. Fortunately, we hear much more positive reactions toward our criticism from practitioners recently rather than the endless justification of the cost or the simple blame on the existing bureaucratic regulations. The government is now trying not only to make the operation more efficient but also to diversify the types of educational aid.

To Dakar, Japan can bring some proud evidence of its expanded educational aid for EFA at least in terms of its amount. However, the amount of input is far less important than its impact - the real output for EFA in developing world. Unfortunately, it is too early for Japan to assert its significant contribution for EFA, while its domestic system has become better prepared during last ten years for its future operation. If there is another place ten years later after Jomtien and Dakar, I strongly hope that it will be the time for Japan to proudly present its real contribution for EFA.

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#### THE DAKAR CHALLENGE: DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE OF EFA

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#### Background

The World Forum for Education, to be held this week in Dakar, Senegal, provides an opportunity to tackle one of the most profound development challenges facing the international community. Convened by the UN and the World Bank, the Forum will be attended by representatives from

over 180 governments. The importance of the event can hardly be over-stated. Educational deprivation is consigning millions of the world's poorest households to poverty. It is also widening the already obscene income gaps between rich and poor countries. In an increasingly knowledge-based global economy the costs of educational deprivation to poor households and poor countries are rising by the day. Failure to resolve the crisis in world education will leave large swathes of the developing world as enclaves of despair in an increasingly prosperous global economy, with attendant implications for instability.

Will the World Forum make a difference? Not without a radical change of direction. The governments, UN agencies and World Bank officials attending the Forum have all identified education as the key to human development. All of them have made high-sounding pronouncements on the need for a renewed effort to achieve education for all. Yet they have collectively failed to display the vision and commitment needed to translate good principles into practice.

Preparations for the Dakar conference have suffered from four related problems:

**The ostrich factor.** Governments have failed to acknowledge either the scale of the crisis in education, or their own failure to deliver on the promises made at a similar conference ten years ago. The promises included a commitment to achieve universal primary education and halve illiteracy by 2000. In the event, there are 125 million children out of school - and the number of illiterates has increased.

**Inept political leadership.** The UN agencies, the World Bank and bilateral donors responsible for convening the Dakar conference have failed to prepare the event. The Education for All Forum set up ten years ago to coordinate international efforts has been little more than a talking shop.

**Rich country indifference.** Translating commitments on education into real policies requires additional resources, especially in the world's poorest countries. Rich countries talk a good education story, but they refuse to make the commitments of increased aid and additional debt relief needed to extend educational opportunity.

**Poor country indifference.** Ten years ago, the world's poorest countries joined the richest in proclaiming a commitment to education for all. Yet most of them continue to prioritise military spending and other wasteful forms of spending over education. Many also prioritise subsidies on education for a rich minority over public spending for the poor.

#### **From Jomtien to Dakar a decade of empty promises**

Ten years ago, at the World Conference on Education for All, 155 governments, solemnly resolved to deliver on the right to education - a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Detailed targets were set. As the 100 Framework for Action put it: 'Time-bound targets convey a sense of urgency' /and/'observable and measurable targets assist in the objective evaluation of progress'.

The record of the past ten years needs to be assessed against these targets. At risk of understatement, it is a record of disgraceful under-performance.

**Universal access to primary school.** The Jomtien conference pledged that all children would have access to primary education by 2000. In the event, there are 125 million children not in school, two-thirds of them girls. The target date has now been shifted to 2015. But if current trends continue there will still be 55 million out of school by that date. Numbers out of

school are increasing in Africa, which will account for three-quarters of the out-of-school population by 2015. In South Asia, numbers out of school are declining slowly, but one third of children starting school drop out before finishing.

**Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to one-half its 1990 level**, with a significant reduction in the male-female literacy gap. In fact, the adult literacy rate has fallen by about 14 per cent, rather than 50 per cent. One-in-four adults in the developing world is illiterate. There are today 4 million more illiterate adults in the developing world than there were in 1990.

**Improvements in education quality and learning achievement**. This is more difficult to assess in the absence of agreed international indicators. However, there is no evidence of a sustained improvement in the quality or relevance of education. Research in countries as diverse as India and Zambia has shown that many children leave primary school without having gained basic literacy skills. In Latin America, over one-quarter of children drop out before completing primary school.

These disappointing outcomes can be traced to the failure of government to deliver on the promise of decisive action at both the national and international levels.

#### **International level**

**Increased aid.** Jomtien promised 'increased international funding 'to help the less developed countries implement their own autonomous plans of action'. Having promised increased aid, donors went home from Jomtien to slash their aid budgets to the lowest ever level in real terms. By the end of the 1990s, net concessional flows were one-third below their 1990 level. This represented \$12bn in real terms - or more than the estimated annual costs of achieving universal primary education. Sub-Saharan Africa, the world's most educationally deprived region, lost \$3bn. It is not just that overall aid has been cut. Collectively, aid donors allocate only around 2 per cent of their aid budgets to primary education - a pitifully low amount in view of the potential human development benefits. Many donors - including the US and Australia - allocate far more to higher education than primary education. The aid pledge has been broken.

**Debt relief.** The Jomtien promise: 'The adoption of measures to relieve heavy debt 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". In fact, the debt crisis has been allowed to continue uninterrupted. Sub-Saharan Africa has spent the 1990s paying on average twice as much in debt servicing as it invests in primary education. In countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and Nicaragua, debt repayments have exceeded education spending by a factor of five or more. While the reformed HIPC framework holds out the promise of more decisive action, it has been dogged by slow implementation. So far, only four countries have benefited. The debt pledge has been broken.

**IMF/World Bank programmes.** The Jomtien promise: 'Structural adjustment policies should protect appropriate funding levels for education'. In fact, IMF programmes have frequently produced deep cuts in education spending. One recent IMF review of spending in sixteen African countries found that twelve had cut their education budgets under stabilisation programmes, in some cases - as in Mali and Zambia - by large amounts. While the World Bank has made efforts to prioritise basic education, both in its loan conditions and in its lending, it has acted as a powerful advocate of cost-recovery - the practice of charging households for education. This is damaging because high cost is now one of the main barriers to the education system for children from poor households. In Senegal, where the World Forum will be held, enrolment rates for children from the poorest 10 per cent of households are one-sixth of those for children from the wealthiest 10 per cent. The structural adjustment pledge has been broken.

### **National Governments**

It is not just the industrialised countries that have reneged on their commitments. Ultimately, it is up to developing countries to take the lead in protecting the right of their citizens to a decent quality education - and the vast majority have failed.

**Developing a supportive policy environment and increased participation.** The Jomtien promise: 'Each country is encouraged to develop or update comprehensive and long-term plans'. In reality, education policy is a first division problem that receives third division leadership in most developing countries. Education ministries are governed by a top-down ethos, and they are often seen as a 'dumping ground' for poorly qualified civil servants. Education strategies have not, with some exceptions, been effectively integrated into national budget processes, leading to consistent under-financing.

**Mobilising resources.** The Jomtien promise: Governments to mobilise additional funding and improve the efficiency of resource allocation. In fact, many of the countries with the largest education deficits have failed to prioritise education. India, the country with the largest out-of-school population, spends twice as much on defence as on primary education; Pakistan spends six times as much, despite having 11 million children not in school. Even sub-Saharan Africa spends more on military budgets than basic education budgets. While poverty is a barrier to increased public spending, it is no justification for countries such as Zambia, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, India and Pakistan to spend only 1 per cent of GDP on education. Other poor countries - such as Uganda and Ethiopia - spend far more. One reason for low spending on basic education is the inbuilt preference of many governments for heavily subsidising the education of elites. Subsidies for the rich and cost-recovery for the poor has become a central rule of education financing.

### **The challenge at Dakar: a Global Action Plan**

There is no single blueprint for resolving the crisis in world education. Each region faces its own problems - and every government has to develop appropriate and relevant solutions. Financing is just one part of a bigger picture. But unless the financing gap is closed, the education crisis will continue unabated. This does not mean throwing good aid money in the general direction of bad policy environments. The challenge is to mobilise additional resources and link these resources to good policies.

It is argued by some that the costs of rapid progress towards education for all are unaffordable. In fact, they amount to about \$8bn per annum - roughly four days worth of global military spending. What is needed is a Global Action Plan that brings together governments, donors and other actors around a framework capable of achieving education for all.

The starting point should be a simple principle: namely, no government that is serious about achieving education for all should be thwarted in its efforts by a lack of resources. But principles without practical mechanisms for implementation are an irrelevance. That is why the Dakar conference needs to agree concrete strategies for raising additional resources at the international level through aid and debt relief, and at the national level through increased revenue mobilisation and resource allocation.

The Global Action Plan would provide the mechanism for linking good policies to additional finance. Under it, developed countries would mobilise around \$4bn through increased aid and debt relief, with about half of this sum earmarked for Africa. Developing countries themselves would mobilise another \$4bn.

Resources from international assistance would be automatically available to poor countries that committed themselves to drawing up national action plans for improving access to good quality education and closing the gender gap. The national action plans would include budget provisions for mobilising additional finance, including the transfer of spending from military budgets and other non-productive areas to education.

The Dakar conference should agree to pilot this type of approach through a mini-global action plan. Oxfam has proposed fourteen countries as a starting point from which to develop good practice.

The Dakar conference is the latest in a long-line of UN conferences. Most have done little more than produce vacuous wish lists, targets divorced from strategies for their achievement, and, of course, photo-opportunities for governments seeking to enhance their image. If the World Forum continues in this tradition, as it threatens to do, it will not just undermine the cause of education for all, but also damage the standing and credibility of the international community and UN system.

The current draft document prepared for adoption at Dakar is scandalously inadequate. Among the problems:

'There has been significant progress, but it needs to be frankly acknowledged that progress has been uneven and far too slow'. What needs to be frankly acknowledged is the scale of failure over the past decade - including the failure of governments to live up to their commitments. Starting the new millennium with 125 million children out of school is not 'uneven progress'. It is a disgrace.

The current draft includes a lengthy section on 'achievements and challenges'. There is no reference to cuts in aid, failure to tackle the debt crisis, the role of IMF programmes in cutting education budgets, or the failure of governments in poor countries to increase spending for education. If the next ten years are to produce something better, we need a frank acknowledgement of what has gone wrong.

The current draft says that 'lack of resources should not stand in the way of any government seriously committed to basic education'. It does not say how additional resources are to be generated, and there are no new commitments on aid or debt relief.

**National action plans.** The current draft fails to establish a clear mechanism for linking international aid to good policies. Developing countries at Dakar should agree to the development of national action plans that, building on existing policies, provide a clear road map towards education for all.

## THE ISSUE OF EQUITY IN MEXICAN EFA: AN END OF DECADE BALANCE SHEET

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After a decade of sustained efforts concentrated on basic schooling (K-9) for children, inequality is still the central issue facing the Mexican education system. During the past century, basic education opportunities reached the poorer, indigenous, and more rural and isolated population when its benefits had already favoured the urban middle class. Current national statistics that indicate general increases hide a deep and perhaps growing socio-economic polarisation in educational coverage, efficiency, and quality.

At the national level, efficiency improved primarily through significant increases in number of schools and teachers. The average schooling of the population rose from 6.5 to 7.7 years. At the primary level (1-6), repetition rates dropped from 18 to 10%, and terminal efficiency rates increased from 67 to 84%. Pre-school enrolment (non-compulsory) showed the greatest increase, reaching 82% of five-year-olds. Nationally, 93% of primary graduates now enrol in the secondary level (7-9), just made compulsory in 1993. However, drop-out and repetition rates have not decreased at this level.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these advances, the system is still highly selective. There are very severe differences in most recent indicators between rural and urban regions, between rich and poor states. For example, in Chiapas, the poorest state, with a large rural and indigenous population, only 59% of five-year olds, are enrolled in pre-school. In 1999, only 64 % of the children who enrolled six years earlier finished their primary education. In Chiapas, in spite of the greater selectivity at the primary level, only 78% of primary school graduates enrol in secondary schools.

There are also severe differences in the actual learning taking place within the schools. The decade witnessed a major curricular reform, through the national textbook programme, and a number of diversified curricular programmes were designed to meet the needs of rural and indigenous children. However, these have not solved the problems of unequal achievement. A recent assessment based on reading and mathematics standards for the primary schools indicates significant differences between types of schools. Unsurprisingly, private schools are at the top, followed by public urban schools, then rural schools and, and, last of all, schools for Indian children. When the same types of schools are compared, there are no significant differences between the states; so clearly children in poorer areas are learning much less than those in more developed regions. One study suggests that what children of rural areas learn by the sixth grade, urban children know by the fourth grade. These results reflect the influence of socio-economic and cultural differences on school achievement. However, studies show that the *good rural schools* can make a significant difference in achievement, when they meet certain conditions that guarantee quality education.

Early in the decade Mexico obtained loans from the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions to fund programmes to improve the quality of rural schools in the poorest municipalities, as well as to increase their efficiency. These programmes invested in infrastructure, supervision, educational materials, teacher training, and textbooks in Indian

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<sup>3</sup> Most quantitative data included in this article are taken from Secretaría de Educación Pública. 1999. *Informe de Labores 1998-1999*. México: Secretaría de Educación Pública.

languages. Though criticised on various grounds, and probably very uneven in quality, it is perhaps too soon to expect the results of these programmes to be reflected in global indicators.

Despite the efforts, equity certainly did not improve over the decade. A large number of rural schools still do not offer six grades, and many children must travel to attend a secondary school. More than one million school age children (6 to 14 years of age) (6%) are not attending school, including those who live the smallest communities, the children of migrant workers (estimated in half a million) and children with special educational needs. The operation, coverage and quality of the system differ according to the socio-economic level of the population, with a trend toward greater differentiation of educational indicators that correlates with the official index of degree of marginality of the municipalities. The problem is partly due to endogenous factors, such as the lack of an equitable policy for distributing the national educational budget among states and regions.

Mexico is still far from achieving the equal, universalised basic education that was the goal of EFA. The issue of equity, and particularly of quality education for all, remains the greatest challenge for education in the years to come.

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#### QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS ON SCHOOLING THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR IN CHILE – A DECADE ON

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Chile's report to the coming meeting on Education for All to be held in Dakar will encompass the presentation of a healthy situation in terms of educational indicators if compared to other developing country situations. Gross enrolment rates in primary education are 103.1% and net enrolment is 88.2%. The net intake rate (age group) is 97.0 %. There is only a 5% absolute illiteracy rate, and 96.4% of teachers in primary schools have appropriate academic and professional qualifications.

However, the main focus of Chilean policy in the decade of the nineties was not on raising access but on providing schooling opportunities of better quality especially for the poorer sectors of the population. Therefore, achievements in Chile need to be assessed in terms of what were results in this respect.

At the start of the decade of the nineties, there were substantial differences in school results according to school location and socio-economic status. Thus in 1992, using results from national attainment examinations in fourth grade for language and maths, children attending schools in rural locations could only respond correctly to 34% of items while those in urban locations were successful in 70% of the same items. The difference in attainment between schools with the best results and those with the worst results was of 44.3 percentage points. There were similar differences according to school ownership (which equates roughly to socio-economic status) making publicly owned schools those with the lowest attainment compared to subsidised and non-subsidised private schools.

Given the above situation, it is clear why two of the reform programmes of the nineties in Chile were aimed at the poorest groups in an effort to improve the quality of their educational experiences and increase their chances of success in the system. These two programmes are

known as the 900-Schools and the Programme for Improvement of Equity and Quality in Rural Education, the MECE Rural.

The 900-Schools Programme that began in 1990 initially was targeted and has continued to be so on the 10% of schools with poorest results as measured by the fourth and eighth grade national test of language and mathematics' attainment (SIMCE). It was considered that these schools which are attended by children from urban and rural locations who come from poor backgrounds would need special attention. To this end there were higher levels of funding for these schools - to improve physical facilities, provide teaching materials and other resources. More importantly, however, the programme involved two types of special activities. The first one, centred on teachers, has been the institutionalisation of periodical workshops in each school facilitated by supervisors who assist teachers in the use of new materials and curricula and in the improvement of their teaching strategies especially in language and maths. The second activity has addressed students having difficulties to cope with school demands. It consists of workshops developed by monitors (community youth generally) that operate in out-of-school hours with the purpose of helping children with their learning difficulties. But also these workshops provide opportunities for children to enjoy themselves, play, sing, and engage in creative activities -something many of them rarely experience in their daily lives. Over time these workshops not only have provided experiences that help children to raise their self-esteem but they also have helped them improve learning as various studies of the experience have shown.

The programme for improvement of quality and equity in rural education that began in 1992 was addressed primarily to multigrade schools located in isolated, rural areas in Chile. Like the 900 schools, these schools are attended by children who come from very poor and vulnerable environments. Like all the other improvement programmes affecting schools during the nineties, the rural programme has provided schools with improvement of infrastructure, teaching materials and other resources, including textbooks for children and class libraries. The most important component of the programme has been its focus on teacher improvement through collaboration. Given the isolated status of schools the programme institutionalised a monthly meeting of teachers in relatively nearby schools which is known as the Rural Microcentre. Here teachers, assisted by a supervisor, meet and review materials as well as teaching strategies, with the purpose of improving their teaching and their pupils' learning.

As well as being the subject of these specific programmes, all of these schools have been part of other reform initiatives. Among these are the Educational Improvement Projects. These are projects that schools prepare in order to improve in some particular curricular area and they are presented to a national competition for funding. Most projects tend to be focused on improving language skills such as establishing a school periodical or a school radio or TV transmission. Other projects relate to the creative arts such as a theatre or folk-music activity, or to the sciences and agriculture. A certain proportion of the schools, where location makes it possible, are also part of the ENLACES computer network, meaning that schools get computers, teachers are prepared to use them and children have the opportunity to communicate with other children and schools via e-mail. The ENLACES programme that began its operation in 1994 was addressed initially to primary schools with a strong focus on the poorest schools.

How successful have these programmes been? From a macro perspective and judging by test results the projects have in fact served to raise attainment dramatically over the years of their operation.

While these results speak to the importance of focused intervention programmes for the poorest populations, they do not allow us to see in what ways the situation of individual schools

are different and why perhaps some do not reach what may be judged to be fully satisfactory results. Such is the case of a number of schools in the 900 Schools programme that do not reach the attainment levels that would allow them to qualify for "graduation" or exit from the programme as others have been able to do. A recent qualitative study of eight of these cases provides light on how reforms reach schools and how the different factors known to interact on learning levels of children operate in these contexts (Carlson, 2000). Through a careful selection of schools that represent urban and rural contexts and varying levels of vulnerability of their school populations, Carlson's study was able to learn about the children and their contexts. She was able to document characteristics of teachers and their struggles, and the way in which reforms reached and operated within the schools. The study makes it painfully clear that while test scores provide a general indication of degrees of attainment and improvement, they do not tell the story of what goes on in a school nor of its real successes or the real causes of failures.

While all these schools might be considered unsuccessful examples of the effects of the 900 Schools interventions because they did not reach the results needed to exit the programme, to a greater or lesser degree all the schools, except one, in fact improved from 1990 to 1996 (last year of comparable measurements). Each school was different in many respects and in the degree of vulnerability of its children. For example, the school with the highest level of poverty index had a mainly *Mapuche* or indigenous population. Yet, Carlson indicates that a visit to the school which on paper seemed terrible, revealed a "different reality: enthusiastic students, hardworking teacher and ambitious projects that spark the children's imagination". In her view what appeared to be a contradiction between what the children achieved and the enthusiasm with which the school community worked on educational projects had much to do with the children's background: little support at home from semi-illiterate parents, entering school speaking only *Mapuche* and then having to learn in Spanish. On the other hand these children came to a school with a sensitive, dynamic headteacher who had spent 22 years in the school; understood the children, encouraged them to value their roots and allowed sufficient flexibility in the schools structures to meet situations such as that of Juan Plácido:

He must wake at 6:30 a.m. when it is still dark to take two cows, a calf and four horses out to pasture in fields an hour away from his home. Then after the two-hour walk, he must set out on the dirt road to Trangol [the school], another hour's trek. "They can't say all schools are similar because they don't know our reality here", says the headteacher.

The study of these eight schools provided evidence of how, for example, central policies get implemented at the decentralised level of a municipality. In the case of one school, the subsidy intended for this school and another primary one according to their student population was placed in a common bag and redistributed by the municipality to the secondary school of the locality. As a result, the P900 school was operating with a reduced budget, in cramped physical conditions and under excessive bureaucratic control from the municipality that stifled many of the school's initiatives.

There is evidence also of the key role of supervisors. If they understand the programmes which they are supposed to communicate to schools and work closely with teachers, results are better. But there were cases of unexplained absences of supervisors or changes or simply lack of knowledge of what they were supposed to do. These affect the school atmosphere and teacher commitment. There is also the effect of good headteachers and committed teachers who manage to create cheerful and welcoming environments for children who come from very harsh situations, that include drug addiction and alcoholism. Conversely, in the case of the school with stagnant results, teacher turnover was an important factor.

While most schools appreciated the inputs coming from the 900 Schools programme, at times they experienced the pressure from other interventions such as the Educational Improvement Projects. Preparing a project and winning it makes heavy demands on the time of teachers and this time is taken away from the other activities directly aimed at improving teaching and learning, such as the weekly teacher workshops.

In synthesis, the experience of Chile shows that focusing on the more vulnerable school populations in a reform process which aimed at quality is an appropriate procedure and one that, if given sufficient time, yields good results. It is also the only one that will make it possible to begin to close the gap between the social groups in the country. However, it means that the surrounding conditions in which these actions take place must be carefully monitored. Carlson notes: "In each and every school visited, even in the poorest and most backward, some children stood out: they hungered for knowledge and were getting as much as they could from what the school offered", even though the school did not appear to be performing well. There are measures that can be taken to correct some of the factors that slow down progress: improving the situation of classes with more than 40 children in rooms that hold only 30 is an obvious example. The concept of accountability can be broadened - not only the school should be made accountable for results as is the tendency in Chile, but also all those other people and institutions that affect what goes on in schools: school owners (private or municipal), programme designers who do not always think how their actions and materials will reach a concrete school, and all other authorities who intervene and have to do with teacher changes, supervisors changes etc.

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WHOSE EDUCATION FOR ALL?  
SOME GLIMPSES FROM UNICEF-SUPPORTED PROJECTS IN AFRICA.

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From 1996 through 1998 Norway has given 200 Million NOK (25 Million US\$), 50 million bilaterally through NORAD, 150 Million multilaterally through UNICEF via our Foreign Ministry to support the Education for All (EFA) drive in Africa, especially targeting the girl child. The programme has been called AGEI (African Girls Education Initiative). Through my connection for two years (1996-1998) as a consultant to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry I have had the opportunity of following and partly assessing some of the projects under the EFA umbrella. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry/UNICEF support has concentrated on 18 different countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, ten in the so-called francophone Africa and eight in the so-called anglophone Africa. I have been on field-trips to Guinea, to Swaziland, to Uganda, to Botswana and to Niger. All of my field-trips have been short but have at least given me some idea of the problems involved in implementing EFA and of where it would be interesting to make further studies. I have had six Norwegian graduate students connected to my assignment for the Foreign Ministry (two in Swaziland, two in Uganda, one in Botswana, one in Namibia) and later on two more graduate students have been doing their field work connected to EFA in Africa (one in Senegal and one in Zimbabwe). The students got the opportunity to spend a seven or eight week period in one of the eighteen countries receiving Norwegian support and to write their thesis dealing with the project they had studied.

Analysing the impressions from my own field-trips as well as the students' theses built on longer periods of field-work, I can see two great areas of concern. The one deals with the *content of schooling*, the relevance of the schooling given for the situation children are in. The pupils and often also their parents find the schooling more worth while if the pupils are taught some vocational skills. The other area deals with *the language in which the content is transmitted*. All of my students have been struck by the scant knowledge of the language of instruction the pupils in the schools where they have observed have had. They have concluded that the language has functioned as a barrier to learning and that it would have been much better for the pupils had instruction been given in their mother tongue or at least in a language with which they were more familiar than the ex-colonial language that usually functions as the language of instruction. These two concerns do not seem to bother the donors to education in Africa much.

**Whose education for all? The relevance of vocational skills.**

On my visit to Guinea one of the teachers had written a story in French on the blackboard and asked one of the girls to read out the first sentences, wanting obviously to impress the Norwegian visitor. The girl "read" quickly and fluently with a good pronunciation and in a loud voice but I discovered that she did not really read. She had learnt the text by heart. When I in the break pointed at one of the words in one of the sentences she had read, she could not figure that word out before she had started all over again on the text and counted the words she "read" out. She was supposed to be one of the most clever students in the class.

I asked her why she went to the NAFA center, a type of non-formal schooling in Guinea, meant to cater for those children who either never received a basic education or dropped out of school at some point.. She answered that she was there to learn "savonification"- soap-making. Once a week those who had chosen "savonification" were working together with professional soap-makers and she hoped that she would do so well where she now was that she would be able to get a job in that small soap-making enterprise or maybe build up her own.

The non-formal schools built up in Uganda, the so-called COPE-schools, have, however, not included vocational training as part of the curriculum. One of my students notes:

UNICEF in Uganda is not in favour of supporting vocational education in COPE. The reason for this, I was told, is the high cost of vocational education.... The MoE seems to be somewhat restricted by the UNICEF policy, as they rely on economic support for the COPE programme. Still, several of the MoE representatives I discussed COPE with told me that they personally would prefer to add some degree of vocational skills to the COPE curriculum .

She cites from a paper presented at the AGEI workshop in Mbarara in 1998: "The community insistence on the need for vocational training for older COPE children deserves serious consideration" . In the Instructor's Guide to COPE, prepared by the US-based firm Creative Associates for MoE/UNICEF the following is written about vocational skills in COPE:

Vocational skills are specialised skills used in different occupations like carpentry or accounting. Although some attempts had been made to include these skills, at present we cannot deal with them fully. In order to meet the need, you should try to persuade local professionals and craftsmen to help the pupils to learn the skills

According to this citation it seems to be the responsibility of the individual instructor with little training, a heavy work-load and low pay to decide on and implement vocational training in COPE. One cannot expect these instructors to engage in time-consuming vocational activities without any financial and moral support. Neither can one expect them to be successful in persuading local craftsmen to do the training when there are no funds set aside for such an activity. Our studies show that vocational training would have added relevance and quality to the COPE programme in Uganda, but that the individual instructor must receive support and encouragement from both district and national level for such an improvement to fully succeed

#### **Education for All - in whose language?**

Whatever aspect of the educational system in an African country (in Uganda, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Senegal) my Norwegian students have gone to study over the past years they have all come back full of stories of the difficulties both children and teachers had in mastering the school subjects because of the language of instruction that they did not master well. The students who went to Uganda were also struck by the fact that the language policy of Uganda, which they had studied before they left for the country, was not practised in the schools in which they made their observations. In the Government White Paper of Uganda one finds this point as point one of the language policy:

a) In rural areas the medium of instruction from P1 to P.4 will be the relevant local languages; and from P.5 to P.8 English will be the medium of instruction.

The district Bushenyi that I visited and where my graduate students did their field work is a rural district where one would have expected the language of instruction to be the local language. One would especially have expected this because the instructors in the non-formal COPE schools have few years of schooling, little teacher training, inadequate command of English, and the pupils are often drop-outs from the regular school or come from very poor homes with no exposure to English. Yet the Instructor's Guide to COPE instructors (written by the US-based firm "Creative Associates") states:

The COPE curriculum follows the official government language policy. In the first year, use the local language for all subjects except English. In English lessons use English only. In the second and third years, use English for all subjects except mother tongue. Obviously there must be some overlap, but you **must** be using **English only** by term two year two (emphasis in original).

As we see the Instructor's Guide does **not** follow the official government language policy since that policy advocates use of the local language as medium of instruction up to P4 in rural areas which are the areas where the COPE schools are mostly located. The same Instructor's Guide further argues that "since there is extremely limited exposure to English in the environment of the average COPE child, it is absolutely essential that, when the time comes for using English as the medium of instruction, English should be used for all subjects." One recognises that pupils often can have problems understanding various subjects when the medium of instruction is English. One recommendation for solving this problem is by:

teaching in English and forcing pupils into a situation where they cannot survive without learning it ...after learning has been introduced in the local language, the teacher **must** teach in English, and preferably use English for all activities within the learning centre (ibid:17, emphasis in original).

My graduate students, Hege Grov and Annette Nyquist, found that in all the primary schools and COPE classes they visited in Bushenyi all instruction was in English from P.1. and onwards in spite of the government policy. Grov remarks: "This is strange, since all the teachers I talked to wished to use mother tongue as the medium of instruction". The curriculum for COPE is written in English, from year one and onwards. Even the Instructor's Guides for the subject "mother tongue" are all written in English.

Grov and Nyquist give detailed descriptions from the COPE classrooms built on their own observations through many lessons. Their descriptions show the limited command the instructors have of English and the difficulties the pupils have in answering questions within any subject as long as the medium of instruction is English. Hege Grov writes:

In a math session I observed in one COPE centre, the difference in participation was very clear, depending on what language the instructor spoke. The topic for this lesson was: "solving word problem involving division". The instructor read the title out loud and asked the learners to explain what it meant. There were no volunteers. When the question was repeated in mother tongue, several hands were raised. The pupils gave correct answers and willingly answered any additional questions from the instructor. When the questions again were asked in English, the amount of hands dropped to only a couple. The lack of participation was particularly striking when it came to the girls. The girls were more reluctant answering questions when they were uncertain of the answer. The difficulties were intensified by language problems, and made the girls even more passive. The instructor noted that the girls did not participate and frequently encouraged them to answer. They did not respond before he started explaining and asking questions in mother tongue .

When Hege Grov afterwards talked with the instructor, he said that he found the whole teaching situation very frustrating because there was no doubt that children learnt much better through their mother tongue. He also preferred to teach in mother tongue since he felt that his English skills were not too good. But because of the COPE policy outlined in the Instructor's Guide he felt that he should teach as much as possible in English. After this math lesson had finished another instructor came to teach "mother tongue" which was taught as a subject. Grov cites from her observation notes:

The change in the classroom was unbelievable. The topic was: "Traditions in Africa," and the instructor was telling stories and frequently asking questions. The class-room seemed like an explosion of hands. The learners competed in answering and provided lengthy answers when given the chance .

Similar stories can be related from our field-work in Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Guinea, Namibia and from the situation of the Basarwa children in Botswana.

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### QUALITY SCHOOLING: SOUTH AFRICA AND SCOTLAND

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In societies where schooling and education have become synonymous with qualifications frameworks, standards-based curriculum and learning outcomes, the efficient implementation of these come to be seen as the political criteria of educational success. However, one would do well to remember Robert Lynd's question: 'knowledge for what?' and Basil Bernstein's remonstrance that 'one of the tests of an education system is that its outcomes are relatively unpredictable'.

Yet many countries are being encouraged to view quality and success of basic and further and higher education in just these terms with structured knowledge for pre-defined outcomes taking precedence over reflective, critical and self-generated knowledge. Both South Africa and Scotland have recently introduced outcomes-based curricula and qualification frameworks with complex accreditation systems. These use the principles of credit accumulation and accreditation for prior learning. In both societies the interweaving of professionally and vocationally-oriented learning with academically-directed and historically privileged subject matter has not been without problems.

However through a British Council-supported Higher Education Link between the Universities of Edinburgh and Western Cape, a research project has been conducted on approaches towards achieving 'quality in schooling'. Even in areas of immense socio-economic disadvantage, in Cape Town - in Khyletisha and Guguletu (black African and Xhosa-speaking townships) and Manenberg (an established township of 'sub-economic housing' with a predominantly 'Coloured' and Afrikaans-speaking population) and in Edinburgh - in Liberton and Craigmillar (densely populated 1960s housing schemes situated outside the city centre) there are outstanding examples of 'quality in schooling'. In these areas attention has been drawn to students exiting with excellent matriculation results at Grade 12 and with university entrance grades in Scottish Highers at S6 (aged 17). Not all of these successes are the result of a focus on pre-structured knowledge or on learning outcomes. Indeed, the research has found a variety of factors that impact on and help to create excellence in the quality of schooling.

Researchers from the North (visiting schools in Khyletisha and Guguletu) and from the South (visiting schools in Craigmillar and Liberton) recognise that there are disparities in 'disadvantage'; there are differences in what constitutes 'a lack of resources'. South Africa's Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal, noted that in South Africa, there are many decrepit schools,

most frequently in rural, historically black, areas, where there is no water, electricity, telephone, library, laboratory or workshop. Where there are no textbooks, no photocopiers, no paper, no toilets. In addition, there is a lack of purpose and discipline by pupils and under-prepared teaching staff, most of whom never see their supervisors or the parents of their pupils. Parents, he noted, remain illiterate, poor and powerless. In this environment, school leadership is a dream.

In Scotland's capital city of Edinburgh, there are also areas of intense socio-economic disadvantage. Whilst there may be lavatories and running water, electricity and telephone lines, there are also indicators of deprivation. In the schools of our study, the number of children receiving free school meals was taken as an indication of the relative poverty of parents. It was found that 83% of households (72% being single-parent homes) were living on benefits (ie unemployed) thereby entitling their children to free school meals. Much has been written about the need for other forms of support for children whose home background is financially and domestically insecure.

However, researchers from the South and the North found a number of similarities in what they consider 'makes the difference': In particular, they recognise the central role played by the Principals or Headteachers. In a climate of low teacher morale, intense political pressure on schools and high public/parental expectations of education, it is perhaps a truism to state that strong school leadership is essential. What our researchers have noted is the irrelevance to the real demands now being made upon such schools, of the conventional wisdom of the standard school management and leadership literature of the rich North. The essence of leadership resides essentially in the commitment, charisma and personal/political credibility of particular individuals.

Frequently, the current leader of the school was him/herself a teacher at the same school. These people have worked at the school for many years (over 30 years in two cases, one North and one South) and have the respect of the staff in developing a collegial style of administration. Most leaders referred to the importance of collegiality and staff ownership of the implementation of innovations (through INSET programmes particularly) as well as providing opportunities for collective commiserations when things 'are just getting too too much for us all'. Notably, the wider, social, communities were seen to express support, even enthusiasm, for the Principals/Headteachers as people with genuine and popular authority. They were seen as almost unique public servants in their local areas. They were not leaders through their professional competence (although they may have that as well) but rather through their cultural and political 'rootedness'.

There were almost identical stories of how they, the Principals/Headteachers, and the school communities are all trying to generate a culture of teaching and learning. At a school on the crime-ridden Cape Flats, the researcher learnt of the 'telephone tree': as soon as anyone - parent, neighbour, teacher - sees or hears of possible violence or criminal activity, a call is put through to the police and to others and from them to yet more people. Within minutes of police presence, a large number of concerned local citizens will have arrived.

At all schools, Principals worked to involve parents with classes and with after-school activities. From the formal, eg membership of School Boards, to the informal, parents are encouraged to see the school as a 'beacon of light in an otherwise depressing area'. In another Cape Flats school, parents had kitted out the 'life skills' classroom which now boasts sinks, utensils and curtains at all windows. The researcher saw mothers listening to children reading, mothers speaking in Xhosa which was then translated into English between the children themselves, mothers helping with the distribution of bread and soup (part of the feeding programme) as well

as cleaning the school grounds and the windows. It is important that teachers, children and parents are encouraged to see their own culture and customs as an integral and essential part of the 'community' dimension of schooling. In many ways, this appeared to be the basis of parental involvement in schools in Khyletisha Cape Flats, Manenberg and Guguletu. It is perhaps less so in Liberton and Craigmillar areas of Edinburgh.

In Edinburgh, the researcher from Western Cape, was particularly interested in the way a Principal used the first 'Five Year Development Plan' (1992) to turn the school around. This had been a 'failing school' with numbers in steep decline: in 1985 there had been 1,200 pupils. By 1992 there were just 510. However, through a mixture of collegial support, determination and insight, the newly appointed Head (one of those previously a teacher at the same school) managed to implement a structured Plan of Action - a prototype 'How Good is our School' criterion index - thereby showing the Local Authority (soon to have its own criteria index, 'How Good is Our Local Authority') that the community wished the school to survive. Parents began to support the school by sending younger siblings there, by coming to Open Days and by attending parents' evenings. Through a focus on timetables being kept, classes continuing to run, through the development of a culture of learning and teaching, and the forceful installation of staff and pupil discipline, benefits were seen in examination results. The first pupils to gain university entrance left the school two years ago; now, each year, a small, but growing number reach university and a higher percentage attain jobs on leaving at all stages after 16 years of age.

Although there are many factors impacting upon and helping to generate 'quality in schooling', the research in these areas of socio-economic disadvantage has shown that leadership plays a vital role. Whilst material resources undoubtedly help, human resources must also be counted: when parents, communities, teaching staff, support staff and pupils feel ownership of their physical buildings as well as the processes of teaching and learning, excellence can be achieved. With collegial leadership, vision, insight and determination, the absence of economic capital can be mediated by other forms of cultural capital.

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## EFA IN A NEW REGIME - MALAWI

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Ten years ago the world committed itself to a broad and forward-looking vision of education at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. The world's governments promised "education for all" by the year 2000. One of the three major parts, which were presented by UNESCO's education programmes, was Towards Basic Education for All. The goal of this programme was geared towards the provision of education of adequate quality that could form the foundation of lifelong learning for everyone young and old alike (UNESCO, 1990:3).

It is against such background that the participants of the World Education Forum will be meeting in Dakar, Senegal in April this month, to intensify, and accelerate the efforts towards the Education for All goals. In assessing the achievements of EFA, the framework for action for the Forum states that progress has been made towards Jomtien's vision for education at national, regional and global levels. It has been indicated that, particularly, developing countries have achieved net enrolment rates of 80 per cent or more by the end of the decade. Identification of the countries which have achieved such increase in enrolment rates has not been clearly stated in the document.

The question is whether enrolled children have been kept in schools considering that numerous challenges in fulfilling Jomtien's commitment remain and new obstacles have arisen as indicated in the document. For instance, there are too many children who are still excluded from education or are failing to learn through unhealthy, unsafe, ineffective environments. Moreover, countries where primary school systems have expanded rapidly during the 1990s are concerned that quality has not kept pace with quantity, that resources have been stretched too thinly to ensure effective learning for all.

More importantly, the achievements of EFA are very difficult to measure at the local level because the reality of remote village schools can be worlds away from aggregate national statistics, and the growth of student numbers may have little to do with the actual learning gains. This scenario is typical of some village schools that have been recently researched in Malawi.

Malawi committed itself to the provision of Education for All as a strategy towards poverty alleviation policy. Phasing out of fees was initiated by the government of the former president, Hastings Banda, which introduced a school fees waiver scheme for the academic year 1991-92. It began with elimination of tuition fees for girls for Std 1 and had reached Std 4 by 1994. In 1994, upon winning the presidential and parliamentary elections, the United Democratic Front (UDF) government immediately acted on its political promise to advance education for all Malawians (Malawi Government, 1998).

The impact of Free Primary Education (FPE) policy on national level as documented by the government has been an increase in gross enrolment rates (GER) by 40 percent and net enrolment rates (NER) by 25 percent. Upon the introduction of FPE in 1994 enrolment figures increased from 1.9 million to 3.2 million students. However, the education system, which was already under-resourced, failed to provide quality education for pupils who enrolled. As a result, among other factors, 300,000 pupils dropped out of primary schools after six months of the implementation of FPE. Moreover, the recent years show that enrolment figures have not significantly increased as compared to dramatic increase in 1994. The Ministry of Education (1996) mentioned that the enrolment continued to decrease in 1995/96 and is expected to

decrease in 1996/97. The reason for the decrease in enrolment as argued by the MOE is that in the initial year of the policy almost all the pupils who were out of school enrolled. Examination of statistics for the year 1995 at the national level reveals that the average enrolment rate for the whole country was 81.4 per cent (UNICEF, 1996). However, there are variations of net enrolment rates at district level in the three regions. For instance, Dedza District had a NER of 66.1 per cent. This means that 33.9 per cent of school going age group were not in school in this district.

Despite the initial impact of the FPE policy, lack of retention in schools remains a challenge to maintaining the enrolment levels. Before the formulation of the FPE policy, schools were already under-resourced. There were inadequate educational materials, school facilities and teachers. These problems were aggravated upon the FPE policy because of the influx of additional pupils. The government of Malawi (1998) admitted that the education system was not prepared to sustain a large influx of pupils. Moreover, the quality of the education system has been affected. For instance, classrooms are extremely overcrowded; there are inadequate learning and teaching materials, and many teachers are untrained.

The implementation and achievements of FPE policy at the local level have not been impressive either. For instance, schools which were surveyed in the district in 1999 showed an increase in enrolment rates in the early years of FPE. However, the decline of figures in successive years is evident and figures collected for 1999 at school level are much lower than the initial intake in 1994! It should be noted that figures, which are passed on to the District Education Offices in the districts, are misleading and not accurate. For instance, in one school in Mangochi District in the South, it was seen that the head teacher presented much higher enrolment figures for the DEOs office than the actual number of pupils in classrooms because he needed more educational materials. This supports what Kuper (in NORRAG NEWS1996) explained - that when it comes to the real base of collecting enrolment data, many different interests are involved which make the enrolment data higher than it really is.

The decrease in enrolment rates in some schools in Malawi is due to several factors. Schools lack adequate classrooms, educational materials for pupils and teaching materials for teachers. There is a shortage of both trained and untrained teachers. AIDS has also affected teacher's performance in classrooms. The Malawi government (1998) stated that HIV/AIDS rates are extremely high among schoolteachers. The poverty crisis and poor health in rural areas have also impacted upon children's enrolment and attainment in education. In addition to childhood diseases, AIDS has had a devastating effect on children's participation in schooling. Children lose their parents, constantly attend funerals, and they may be infected as well. (Malawi Government, 1998). Other factors such as socio-cultural, socio-political forces and schools practices continue to profoundly affect the rates of participation and retention of pupils, particularly girls in schools. The government and the aid agencies continue to support educational developments in various ways. However, the government needs continuation of sustainable support in order to improve the quality of education. What is important is not only the presentation of accurate data showing real increases in enrolment rates but it is also critical to keep those enrolled in schools by provision of quality education and to identify other factors which impinge upon the achievement of Education for All.

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STRENGTHENING BASIC NUMBER SKILLS: CASE STUDIES FROM INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

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[This vignette is included because it illustrates the huge challenge of quality improvement, and the routinisation of good practice that need to follow hard on any access strategy. We apologise for shortening the test data.]

'Over the past decade . . . many EFA partners focused more on the expansion of enrolment in school than on the enhancement of the education provided and the improvement of learning outcomes. As a result, many recent assessments of learning achievement have shown that children are attaining only a small percentage of the knowledge and skills they are expected to master.'

[Draft Framework for Action, World Education Forum, Dakar 2000]

The Republics of Indonesia and the Philippines are just two among many developing countries in which concerns as to the effectiveness of formal education in providing young school leavers with a sufficient grasp of essential numeracy skills have been of long standing. In Indonesia, mean mathematics scores in the end-of-cycle examinations at Grades 6, 9 and 12 are usually lower - often by a substantial margin - than scores in any other subject, including science. There are no comparable examinations in the Philippines, but in the 1996 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Philippines 13-year old students (in Grades 6 and 7) ranked 39th among 41 participating countries in mathematics, with a mean score more than one standard deviation below the international average.

In 1994, we carried out an exploratory study of the numeracy skills of 550 Grade 5 and 6 students in twelve primary schools in Indonesia. For this study we devised a diagnostic test made up of three main parts, testing competencies forming a cognitive sequence:

Number values. Questions in this section tested understanding of the symbols used to represent number values in elementary mathematics: the basic building blocks of numeracy. Test-takers were asked to arrange sets of three numbers in order, from smallest to largest, and to convert fractional numbers into their decimal equivalents.

Number operations. These questions tested students competence in employing the number symbols to carry out routine arithmetical operations.

Number application. In the final set of questions, students were asked to apply their number skills to the solution of various problems, of the kind encountered in everyday life. The essential feature of these questions (distinguishing them from the number operations questions) was that students were not told which operations to carry out; rather, they had to work this out for themselves from the given information.

All the questions included in the test were based on material which - according to the curriculum and textbooks - should have been covered during the first four years of the primary course and the first half of the fifth year.

In two subsequent studies, the first carried out in Indonesia in 1996, the second in the Philippines in 1998-99, expanded versions of the same test were administered by one of us (AS) to post-primary students. Both studies were components of wider surveys, designed to provide inputs for quality-improvement projects. In the Indonesia study, 507 Grade 7 and 468 Grade 9 students attending 16 junior secondary schools were tested; in the Philippines study, the totals were 360 Grade 8 and 207 Grade 10 students attending 15 high schools. Within each school visited, the students to be tested were selected randomly from class lists, but the schools themselves were selected purposively, to provide as wide a range of socio-economic and geographical variation as we could manage within the time available. In Indonesia, the schools visited were drawn from four provinces; but in the Philippines they all came from a single region.

### Results

The results from the three studies do of course show numerous points of difference; but nevertheless, their most striking feature is their uniformity. The students tested tended to make the same types of errors - whether they were attending school in Indonesia or the Philippines, and whether they were enrolled in the primary or the secondary grades. While some of their errors were simply the consequence of carelessness in carrying out routine operations, many others sprang from systematic misunderstanding of basic number concepts. Two points about these systematic errors are salient:

First, their prevalence. Many systematic errors are very common. With a number of questions the proportion of students making a particular systematic error was larger - sometimes by a considerable margin - than the proportion answering correctly.

Second, their persistence. In most cases, progress towards eliminating systematic errors during the secondary course is only modest.

In a brief note we cannot of course discuss these errors in any comprehensive fashion; instead, we illustrate them with two examples, through Student A and Student B:

Student A consistently makes the Decimal Point Ignored (DPI) error: in evaluating decimal numbers he simply ignores the decimal point and treats the decimals as if they were whole numbers. Student B, by contrast, consistently makes the Reversed Order with Decimals (ROD) error: he holds to the theory that decimal-number values work in the reverse direction to whole-number values.

The DPI and ROD misconceptions are of course well known: both have been reported from a variety of studies, including the APU studies carried out in England and Wales during the 1980s. We interviewed small numbers of students who had made each error in both Indonesia and the Philippines. The reasons for the DPI error are clear. Most students who made it had a good understanding of whole-number values. They knew that the number of digits in a whole number is a guide to its value - one-digit numbers are always smaller than two-digit numbers, two-digit numbers smaller than three-digit numbers and so on - but did not realise that the same rule cannot be applied to decimal numbers. The ROD error, however, is less straightforward, and many of the students who made it could not explain their reasoning. In some cases, it seemed that the student was aware that decimal numbers are evaluated differently from whole numbers, but had interpreted 'differently' to mean 'in the opposite direction'. Other students appear to have generalised from their understanding of fractional number values. Having learned that, for example, the number fraction  $\frac{1}{6}$  is smaller than  $\frac{1}{3}$ , they argued, by analogy, that the decimal fraction 0.6 is smaller than 0.3.

In the surveys ROD errors were relatively infrequent, but DPI errors were extremely common: in both Indonesia and the Philippines they accounted for between 50% and 83% of responses to all the items which identified them. By contrast, the proportion of correct responses was never as high as 20%, and in most samples was much lower.

Moreover, it seems from the evidence that relatively few students develop a better grasp of decimal number values during their secondary schooling. The DPI misconception was a little less common in the higher grades, but this drop was partly offset by a rise in the proportion of ROD misconceptions. Between them, the two errors accounted for 80% of all responses to the key Question given by Grade 9 students in Indonesia, and 84% of responses given by Grade 10 students in the Philippines.

Decimal numbers are of course widely used at secondary school, not only in mathematics but also in the science subjects. The fact that so many students lack understanding of decimal number values must act as a major barrier to their progress.

#### **Teacher-developed strategies for improvement.**

At present, teacher education programmes in both Indonesia and the Philippines consist of two main components: a subject content component, taught usually by subject specialists with little or no school teaching experience, and a pedagogical component, taught usually by general educators who focus on matters such as classroom management, child development, educational philosophy, and the like. In consequence, newly-qualified teachers enter the classroom with virtually no preparation for tackling subject-specific learning difficulties - of the kind we have been discussing. Subsequent professional development courses generally do little to fill the gap.

The primary-level survey in Indonesia provided an opportunity to explore this issue further. In each school visited, we invited the teachers to look at the (unmarked) test scripts with us, as soon as the testing was completed. The range and frequency of the errors their students had made nearly always came as surprise. Clearly, most of these teachers were not accustomed to looking at the ways by which pupils reach their answers - partly, perhaps, because of the pervasive influence of external examinations, which are always predominantly in multiple-choice format.

Where time allowed, we suggested to the teachers that they select two or three of the commonest errors their students had made, and then devise a lesson to remediate them. This suggestion was always accepted willingly; usually with enthusiasm. The selections varied a good deal, but in every group, without exception, the decimal-value errors discussed above were included. Consequently we decided, after about half the fieldwork had been completed, to devise two standard follow-up questions, to assess the effectiveness of the remedial lessons.

The results were variable. In two of the five groups where the two standard follow-up items were used, the proportion of correct responses rose sharply, by more than 50% (12% to 81% in one case; 3% to 54% in the other). In two further groups there were moderate gains, amounting to between 30% and 50%; while in the fifth group, gains were small. Before remedial teaching, the overall success rate of the 151 pupils in these five groups was 14%; after remedial teaching it was 60%. By comparison, Indonesian Grade 9 students tested in the secondary school survey achieved only 28%.

We do not know, of course, to what extent these gains were permanent: we had at most two days for each school visit, and follow-up after an extended period was impractical. But from their comments to us, it was clear that for most teachers, the notion that they could use tests as a source of ideas for improving teaching, rather than as simply as a means for awarding grades, came as something of a revelation. The key point is that once the teachers' attention had been drawn to the evidence available to them from their students' test records, the majority were able to devise effective remedial lessons, with only limited help from outsiders. If similar learning experiences could be provided to teachers both during their initial training and during subsequent professional development courses, the impact on the effectiveness of basic numeracy education might well be substantial.

#### Some Notes

1. It should be pointed out, however, that the Philippines was one of only four participating countries ranked (by the World Bank) in the lower-income or lower middle-income groups. Among these four countries, the Philippines ranked second in mathematics: higher than Colombia and South Africa, but well below Thailand.
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#### UNEQUAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL IN TWO SCOTTISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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One of the concerns that provided the impetus for the Jomtien conference and which resonates throughout the documentation proceeding from it (Haggis et al. 1990) is the concern that in the information age the gap between information rich countries and poor countries will become an increasing obstacle to development. IT is transforming the meaning of functional literacy, and globalisation the landscape over which it is developed and practised. Across countries there are nodes or centres of information activity, which exist side by side spatially with areas of relative poverty. The mid-decade report concluded that in European and North American contexts "low levels of learning achievement, semi-literate school leavers, and new skill requirements have combined to generate new literacy problems in this region", indicating that the problem of education for all being reduced to schooling for all is a pertinent critique in the west as much as elsewhere around the globe (Unesco, 1996). This note details how such inequalities of educational provision play themselves out in a Western context, as increased understanding of the internal dynamics of unequal educational provision in the countries that come to international policy negotiations as powerful brokers may give us crucial insights into how these inequalities come to be replicated, even magnified, on a world scale.

The disparity in IT provision is neither inevitable nor accidental, but a direct consequence of overall national policy (DES, 1988,1992) and its regional counterpart. Under the pressure of market-oriented education policy, quite drastic chasms and bulges have appeared on the landscape of education. The so-called legislation of parent choice (Bastiani, 1993) has given rise to dramatic shifts in school rolls. The introduction of league tables for school performance combined with funding tied to the number of pupils attending, has precipitated a flood of students into schools at the top of the table, leaving those who can to flee those schools at the bottom. Observations from a qualitative study contrasting two schools in a northern British city dramatise the dynamics at work. In the near decade since the introduction of these policies, schools with the best reputations have become extremely overcrowded, a few housing over twice the number of pupils that the buildings and grounds were intended to accommodate, whilst schools a few miles away echo emptily, using only a quarter of the classrooms for combined age classes that only number in the teens. Whilst de-moralised teachers battle away with scarce resources finding themselves teaching to the lowest common denominator in a class of wide ranging ability in the poor performing schools, teachers in the high-performing schools are forced into teaching to the higher ability students and devoting less resources to the time-consuming task of working out individual problems with pupils with less ability, and feel themselves caught in a cycle of stress and pressure, which they resent passing on to the pupils, as they strive to maintain or improve their pupils' performance on tests. The consequence is a polarisation of provision, higher ability pupils in the poor performing schools as well as lower ability pupils in the high performing schools are sacrificed to market forces, whilst the all important culture and community feeling crucial to morale and motivation across the school also suffers. In the high performing school overcrowding has had the following consequences.. At break three football games are played over the top of each other in different directions on the same limited space. The library is actually the corridor through the upper primary, as the increase in number of classes per year take up every classroom in the building as well as a porta cabin in the midst of the already limited play space. There are four lunch shifts with some children sitting on benches around the perimeter of tables and eating their lunch on their laps. The increase of anonymity has led to problems which have been remedied by the posting of signs at the entrance to the upper primary thought to be characteristic of times long gone: "No Parents Beyond This Point". Perhaps the most telling difference which symbolises the damage caused by overcrowding is its effect on all school assemblies. All-school assemblies, in British education one of the important occasions for generating a sense of community within the school whilst strengthening the school's bonds with the community at large can no longer serve this function. The school auditorium simply cannot accommodate all pupils at the same time, let alone the parents.

Meanwhile, a little more than a mile away, the poorer school has experienced very different destabilising consequences. The school roll had fallen so low that the education department forced a merger between it and the other poorly attended school in the area. This merger caused anger within the larger community as parents battled against each other to prevent their school from being the one that closed. In the end, the merger occurred mid-year, breaking apart one school community, as many parents refused to send their children the required distance across busy roads and enrolled their children elsewhere. Combining the two different school communities that had had markedly different behaviour management programmes has been difficult. The tensions in the wider community have been played out amongst pupils giving rise to a dramatic rise in behaviour problems, and ultimately in pupil exclusions. The latter school can hardly be described as "a zone of creativity, safety and stimulation" (State of the World's Children 1999).

These consequences of overall educational policy and the impact, particularly on the poorer school, can hardly be remedied by the high-profile rhetoric of commitment to IT or the promotional policy initiatives attached to it (Scottish Office, 1999). The differences in children's experience of IT in the two schools differs greatly, not so much because of differences in actual IT equipment, although these are marked, but because of the dynamics surrounding the computer monitor.

In the high performing school it is evident where at least some of the extra money from increased student numbers is going. All classrooms have a computer with Internet access. In addition to support from department experts, the school can afford to second a teacher one day per week to work throughout the school troubleshooting and encouraging innovative use of IT in the curriculum. Students regularly use the Internet to find information and pictures relevant to current project work. Large folders full to overflowing with such downloaded information are prominently on display in the classroom. A display in the hall boasts posters pupils developed from scanning the jacket covers of their favourite books. Children are encouraged to type poems and stories. A loose-leaf binder is kept by the computer in which pupils record the time they use the computer and the kinds of activities that they engage in. In addition, half of the hallway, which holds the school's library, has been converted into a computer lab, with 14 new I-Mac computers.

At the other school, such a focus on IT curricular development is simply a luxury that cannot be afforded. There is only one computer with Internet link for the entire upper primary, although there are two older models. The computer is occasionally used to type out text for displays, or letters. The children flock to the computers. For a while there was fierce competition for a place at the one computer with Internet access. However, it was felt children were accessing inappropriate site such as WWF and Southpark, and the remedy decided upon was to disable the internet connection entirely. The researcher's observation of pupil's time at the computers confirms, indeed, these sites were pupil's primary goal. However, their hunt and peck strategies, neither systematic, nor informed by basic search engine knowledge, were often painstakingly slow and, often as not, aborted. Apart from a brief visit by departmental staff early in the year, there is no evidence of an attempt to teach the skills that would increase children's interaction with the limited IT available. For the most part, children roam through the other educational games loaded on the hard disc, watching the antics of the graphics programs without learning how to manipulate them.

These two schools look out upon the same prominent local landmark, yet have quite a different perspective upon it. In this respect the geographical landmark is analogous to a virtual landmark; it symbolises each school's relationship to the crucial literacy of the 21st century, IT literacy. One looks out upon the cresting wave of the rock face; the other watches its retreating back. Globalisation is producing an IT literacy landscape with many such landmarks. It should be asked how many schools around the globe have such very different views and what this means for the vision as a whole of Education for All.

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## EFA IN INDIA: THE PROMISE OF LOK JUMBISH

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In view of the size of the country, it is not surprising that there are numerous programmes striving towards the EFA goal. If we take primary education only, for the last several years the central government and the 25 or so state governments have launched several programmes for Universal Primary Education (UPE). In addition, several hundred NGOs are making their contribution to this goal. Even so, out of about 250 million children in 6-14 age-group more than 100 million are still out of school, nearly two-thirds of them girls.

As regards the number of children out of school, the situation was about the same in late eighties. Two ambitious programmes were planned by the central government in collaboration with the state governments: Bihar Education Project, which started in 1991 and in 1997 got absorbed by the World Bank assisted District Primary Education Programme, and Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan, a state with a population of 50 million. *Lok*, a Hindi word, means people and *Jumbish*, an Urdu/Persian word, means movement. Thus Lok Jumbish (LJ) was intended as a people's movement for UPE. It began in 1992 and was funded till 1999 by Swedish International Development Agency, Government of India and Government of the state of Rajasthan in the ratio 3:2:1. An independent and autonomous organisation was established for management of LJ.

The aim of LJ is to provide primary education of good quality for all boys and girls. Its assumptions are as follows:

- (a) Provision of education for girls can be ensured only if the existing stereotype regarding women's status in society is questioned and education becomes an intervention for women's equality;
- (b) People would like to educate their children but they have developed an attitude of indifference and cynicism because of the poor quality of education and the manner in which the government has taken them for granted;
- (c) While wage employment of children must be banned, work at home and in family occupations is not necessarily bad for them. Hence, non-formal education should be provided to children who cannot attend school. If NFE programmes are given due attention their quality can be comparable with formal schooling;
- (d) Quality of education can be only as good as the quality of teacher. Demoralized and discredited teachers can contribute little to educational renewal;
- (e) The most crucial intervention has to be a reform of educational management. Competence and commitment of the management personnel determine the nature of change.

The real unit of implementation of LJ is the village. Trained and motivated field personnel, mostly women, undertake environment-building to arouse the attention of the village community towards the status of women and to analyse and understand the educational scenario. A women's group and core team, with men as well as women, are selected by the village community. These persons are provided residential training and are imparted skills in school mapping and micro-planning. The former is a tangible instrument through which community undertakes household-wise a survey of children's participation. The village community, along

with the local teachers, undertakes an analysis of the situation concerning the school. Gradually, a plan for school improvement as well as a scheme for UPE evolves. A village map is drawn up. It shows all the households, clearly indicating the children not attending school. Simultaneously, a school improvement plan, based on norms and standards laid down by LJ management in consultation with the state government is prepared. The block level management committee takes steps for improvement of school facilities and the village core team undertakes child-wise micro-planning to ensure enrolment and regularity of attendance. Progress of every child is monitored to see that he/she completes primary education.

Another aspect of micro-planning relates to the special needs of a cluster of villages or the whole block. For example, in some blocks a large-scale seasonal migration takes place because parents leave their village in search of work or to find grazing areas and water for their cattle. Children in such villages drop-out from the school. This affects girls more adversely because they invariably have to leave the village with their parents. Where the number of such children is large, the academic session is altered. Instead of having vacation in summer months, school is closed during migration period. Where the number of such children is small, seasonal hostels are set up for them. Another interesting example of micro-planning relates to a block which has a majority of Muslim population. Girls in this block had traditionally gone only to the mosque school. Sending them to government school, where teaching is done by Hindu men, was unthinkable. Persistent attempts to persuade the mosque imams, winning the confidence of mothers and introduction of Urdu bore results. Girls' enrolment increased from about 9 percent of 56 percent within four years.

Practically all of the 58 blocks (covering a population of about 12 million) where LJ is being implemented for over 3 years have a similar example to relate. At the root of this upsurge of innovative initiatives is the fact that the community, and LJ personnel drawn from among them, have become convinced that management of basic education has been entrusted to them. Flexibility has been built into the management system to allow decision making at the local level and to respond with understanding, and additional funds, where the local community comes up with a solution to an age-old problem.

The evaluation of the non-formal education programme of LJ, done by a well-known organisation of management consultants and social science researchers, brought out the difference community involvement had made. It was observed that more than three-fourths of the enrolment in these centres comprised girls who claimed that they could not go to the day school because they had unavoidable domestic chores to attend to. These NFE classes were reported to be taking place for three hours at night. However, girls found it difficult to go to the NFE centres due to distance. The women's groups of the village intervened and by turn its members took responsibility to escort the girls to the centre and wait there to escort them back. A collective of several women's groups was formed for organizing sports and recreational activities for the NFE students.

Even though the gains made in class room learning situation are rather limited, the Lok Jumbish programme has succeeded in energizing the teachers, in creating a stir among the village community and in giving space and opportunity to women to question their present status of silence and subordination. One of the quantifiable outcomes of LJ effort has been impressive improvement in age-specific enrolment.

Table: Age-specific improvement in enrolment in LJ villages

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Total	46.71	59.76	69.20	76.81
Boys	61.14	70.00	77.53	84.28
Girls	29.43	47.92	59.53	68.14

Source: Lok Jumbish: The Seventh Report, 1998.

Sida discontinued its assistance to LJ with effect from July 1998. Although DfID has made a commitment to provide funds for the next four years, their assistance has not yet materialized due to administrative delays. Meanwhile, homogenizing winds are blowing across the country. LJ is facing pressure to fall in line with the other, and larger, externally assisted District Primary Education Programme, which is also now present in the State. It is not improbable that the norms acceptable in DPEP would be adopted for LJ and the innovative diversity and participatory practices would give way to more of a straitjacket of rules and procedures.

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#### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA: TEN YEARS AFTER JOMTIEN

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The post-Jomtien period has been a decade of contradictory developments in education in India. There has been some remarkable progress in case of some of the indicators on the one hand, and at the same time, equally if not more important, conspicuous failures on the other hand. Policy responses to some issues could be regarded as encouraging, to some issues negative, bereft of long term vision, and on balance to many issues 'half-hearted.'

First, the remarkable achievements: The rate of literacy (among the population of age 7 and above) has increased from 52 per cent in 1991 to 62 per cent in 1997, according to the estimates based on the National Sample Survey. The significant improvement can be noted in case of all sections of society -- males, females, rural population and urban population as well. A ten per cent point increase in literacy in a seven year period is indeed remarkable.

Secondly, increases in enrolments in elementary education are impressive.(1) The enrolments in primary education have increased from 97 million in 1990-91 to 108.7 million in 1997-98 at an average annual rate of growth of 1.7 per cent. Similarly, the enrolments in upper primary education increased from 34 million to 40 million during the same period, at an annual rate of growth of 2.3 per cent

More than the quantitative changes, several policy initiatives were made and several developments have taken place.

Much before Jomtien, a National Policy on Education was formulated in 1986, which was revised in 1992. The Policy lays special emphasis on universalisation of elementary education. A countrywide programme of improvement of infrastructure facilities in schools under the name Operation Blackboard was launched.

The Constitution was amended to empower local bodies and to decentralise administration to the district and local layers of administration and to increase active participation of the village communities at various levels of administration. This includes specifically education administration as well.

Huge amounts of international aid flowed into the primary education sector, relaxing the resource constraints to some extent. A massive programme of District Primary Education has been launched and now covers about 240 districts out of the 500 odd districts in the country. While these could be viewed as some positive aspects, there are also major developments on the other side.

First, the gross enrolment ratios, the most important and widely used indicator of level of development in primary (and upper primary) education have declined steeply -- both in primary and upper primary levels of education. The enrolment ratio in primary education decreased from 100 per cent in 1990-91 to 87.7 per net in 1997-98 and in upper primary education from 62.1 per cent to 58.5 per cent. As a result, the goal of universal elementary education has had to be postponed yet one more time beyond the end of the century.

Despite international aid for primary education, the share of elementary education in GNP, an indicator of priority a nation accords to elementary education, declined from 1.53 per cent in 1989-90 to 1.38 per cent in 1995-96. The problems of resource allocation got complicated further with the adoption of economic reform policies.

Instead of improving access to education, by opening schools with sufficiently good physical and human infrastructure, tokenism has guided the government in opening a large number of 'incomplete' and highly inadequate schools under a scheme called the 'Education Guarantee Scheme'. Later we may realize the need for yet another 'operation blackboard programme' to convert these places into proper schools or at least into school-like structures.

Also a large number of un/under qualified and un/under-trained teachers are appointed as school teachers. Recruitment of *para* teachers and voluntary and contractual teachers has become an important phenomenon. In some cases, even fully qualified teachers are recruited at salaries much below the normal salaries. Financial constraints on the one hand, and involvement of the local youth, educated enough or not, on the other have been the guiding concerns in this regard. Reliance of the government on non-governmental organisations, voluntary institutions and private sector has increased for providing universal elementary education, through various less expensive, less reliable and least sustainable 'alternative' schooling systems.

Finally, the lack of serious commitment of the government to elementary education is clear, when we note that the efforts to make elementary education a fundamental right did not take off further, after the introduction of the Bill to amend the Constitution in the upper house of the Parliament in 1997.

In short, Jomtien provided a highly favourable environment for promotion of basic education. Many developing countries could not capitalize on it enough. Unfortunately, India is also not an exception to this. The single most important contribution of Jomtien was revival of the hopes of the people in basic education. In India, people hoped to realise the long cherished Constitutional Directive of universal elementary education at least by the turn of the century. The hopes of the people are belied, despite their enthusiastic participation in literacy and education campaigns; and thus we have entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the goals unreached and hopes unfulfilled.

1. Primary and upper primary education together constitutes the Constitutional Directive of universal elementary education in India. Elementary education comprises primary education (with classes 1 to 4 or 5 depending on individual states) and upper primary of classes 6 (or 5) to 8.

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**QUALITY IN PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION: EMERGING ISSUES FOR DISTRICT  
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Over the last year, we (eight researchers, seven of us Indian) have been working with primary teacher educators in six District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. DIETs were envisaged in the 1986 / 92 policy as an educational lighthouse for the District, ushering in a new focus on improving the quality of primary teachers through systematic in-service training, curriculum development, technological inputs and so on. They have been running now for about ten years, and it has been widely noted, from Joint Review Missions through State governments to DIET staff themselves, that they have not had the expected impact either in the DPEP (1) or non-DPEP Districts. Teachers describe DIET training programmes as sporadic, not needs-based, too theoretical, not practical enough, and with no follow-up. They have become increasingly reluctant to attend and if they do, it is because they'll get a paid few days out, rather than a valuable training opportunity.

Unless primary teachers do receive good quality training, many of them will continue to resist implementing the competency-based approach to teaching and learning. This approach demands a radical departure from the teacher-centred, chalk and talk, less labour intensive approach that they have known until now and it only slowly taking root. It is however on teachers' acceptance of the need for this approach, and on their ability and will to implement it, that quality improvements in the search for Education For All depend. DIETs have an important part to play, providing the real value of their position at the District level is worked out, allowing them to escape from their current impasse between not enough and too much decentralisation, and to find a new direction in the search for quality.

DIETs in Western India are predominantly staffed by ex- upper secondary teachers, who can meet the requisite qualifications of a Master's degree in both a subject area and in education: the qualification of seven years of relevant primary schooling experience was often waived in favour of these certificates. Except in Gujarat, a training or orientation programme to a new posting in the DIET was rarely offered, leaving many staff unfamiliar with the intended functions of not only the DIET, but also the 1986 / 92 policy which provides the conceptual framework for all educational activities. DIET staff are notoriously reluctant to visit the field but in these circumstances, the absence of will to go and expose to primary teachers their limited knowledge is quite understandable.

The DIETs' nodal agencies, the State Councils of Educational Research and Training, have strong centralising tendencies, perpetuated not least by DIETs' financial dependency. Training programmes in Western India are usually conceived at the State level and passed in cascade mode down to teachers. DIETs are expected to tailor programmes to local needs, but do not have the professional tools to find out with accuracy what those needs are. In DPEP Districts, there is also an emerging clash with the successful initiatives to establish Block and Cluster Resource Centres. Much closer to teachers, these are mostly able to fulfil teachers' immediate

training needs by providing a platform for discussion and sharing. This model has inherent limitations, however, and teachers continue to look up to the DIET for guidance. Work in two DPEP Districts in Madhya Pradesh showed that perceptions of BRC/CRC staff and DIET staff are wildly at variance, the former being unable to mention any incidents where the DIET had been able to help with practical local problem solving, which is what the DIET believes it is doing.

Ironically, given the challenges which moving towards a competency-based system is causing teachers and teacher educators, the notion of competence may come to the rescue of DIETs. Experience has shown that existing recruitment criteria did not lead to the creation of capable primary teacher educators, and the fact that DIET staff were all too often non-practitioners has been a major practical constraint in their ability to grow into a creative and proactive role.

Our research and DIET staff teams are trying to develop DIETs as a more effective link in the quality chain by reviewing the competencies that staff need to have in the context of decentralisation. Discussions with primary teachers indicate some of the things they would like DIET staff to be able to do: these areas can be broken down into the competencies that are required to carry them out. The delineation of these competencies is currently providing a framework for participatory professional development. Grappling with questions of this nature is providing DIETs (and the research team) with the key to identifying the capacities required of themselves, as well as stimulating thought and discussions with teachers about what competencies they wish to develop. This, we feel, is giving the abundant EFA rhetoric of quality in teacher education the sense of direction that is required for it to make practical advances.

1 District Primary Education Programme

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## EFA 2000: ASSESSING PROGRESS SINCE JOMTIEN SOME ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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### Context and the Challenge

Even when the Global Conference was held in 1990, action for universalising primary education was already in all the countries. Jomtien only marked the urgency for advocacy and action. Therefore, though Jomtien provides a common benchmark for assessment, each country has to decide on the period which is most meaningful for the purpose. A second point to note is that the move towards the goal of EFA is by its very nature an uneven multi-speed traffic. While some countries may have galloped and gone ahead riding on the crest of economic development, many countries just do not have the capacity to speed up. Therefore, no common scale of measurement can be used for assessing progress in different countries. This poses a serious challenge. How do we assess change without decontextualising the measuring yardstick? This does not seem to have got adequate attention while deciding on the 18 EFA indicators. A more important challenge is the need for capturing the "Dynamics of Change", not merely the "Statistics of Change". Traditional indicators of educational diagnosis such as literacy rates, enrollment/attendance/completion rates, and learner achievement figures are good for describing the status of EFA but are not adequate for capturing improvement and progress. They do not tell the complete story of change, nor do they characterise the conditions under which different countries have made progress in statistical terms.

### Framework for Capturing the Dynamic Aspect of Change in EFA

The first requirement for capturing the dynamic aspect of change is to adopt analytical indicators in place of aggregate indicators. An indicator of gender inequality would be a better than merely presenting enrollment rates for boys and girls. We have also to move from capturing global (national) changes to capturing specific changes - specific target groups identified for special action, specific target localities such as urban slums, underdeveloped districts, and specific subsectors of basic education identified for special attention. The second requirement is to focus on process indicators - change in processes that promote and sustain progress such as changing policy environment, supportive legislative measures, civic society responses, intensified actions/programmes in the field, local community consultation processes, and improvement in the quality of teaching-learning processes. Of course, in order to capture such changes it is essential to carry out concurrent analysis, assessment and documentation. Coming out with a framework at the end of ten years cannot achieve any purpose.

### Five Emerging Areas of Concern

- (1) Most of the intensified actions in the post-Jomtien period are project-based and not integrated with the main system. This is particularly true of activities supported by external funds. This has led to the emergence of parallelism of operations, debilitating the main system of management and also raising questions of sustainability.
- (2) Intensified activities during the last ten years have also brought to light the low capacity for activity designing and implementation at the local level. This is clearly reflected in low levels of utilisation of funds at the local levels. This has also led to a dangerous phenomenon of proxy management by central authorities in the name of local level functionaries.

- (3) Another major concern that needs immediate attention is the indiscriminate use of learner achievement testing (paper and pencil tests) at very early stages of education, as the sole basis of quality assessment and monitoring.
- (4) The fourth area of concern is the emergence of undesirable and avoidable tensions pitting one subsector of education against the other. Three such areas of tension are clearly visible in many countries: (a) Primary Education vs. Adult Literacy Programs; (b) Formal Education vs. Non-Formal Education; and (c) Basic Education vs. Higher Education. Unfortunately, often these unnatural dichotomies have been prompted and nurtured by the international donor agencies due to rigidities of funding frameworks and decontextualised and short-term visions for development of education.
- (5) The fifth area of concern is the decreased emphasis on non-project related empirical research and analysis. This is happening through three discernible factors: (a) increased and easy availability of finances for conducting project related researches; (b) differential norms of support for researchers engaged in project related and original research activities; and (c) as a corollary of the above, many capable professionals from universities and other research institutions are relegating original research in favouring project based research, which are operated with better terms and conditions.

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EDUCATION FOR ALL IN BURKINA FASO,  
still not for tomorrow.....

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After independence, the August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1965 decree organizing the primary school system of the former Upper-Volta re-emphasized the goal of achieving by 1980 universal school, a target that had been fixed by the conference of Ministers of African States, held in Addis-Ababa in 1961; but the same decree made also the goal contingent on 'the capacity of educational structures'. In 1960, the gross enrolment rate was 6.5% for the 7-14 years age group; in 1980, it was still only 15.8%.

The Sankarist revolutionary period (1983-87) emphasized increasing the educational supply - 'one village, one school', while the World Bank project aimed at achieving a primary school rate of 60% by the year 2000. Both the actions undertaken during the 1990 decade and the Jomtien declaration confirm the stress placed upon primary schooling, both as far as local authorities and their international partners are concerned. But at the beginning of the academic year 1998/99 the gross rate (relative to the 7-12 years age group) reached only 40.5%, with the net rate being at the level of 32.5%.

Thus, just at the beginning of the new century, only one third of the school-aged Burkinabè kids are attending primary school. This national average masks some important geographic disparities (one fourth of the provinces have a gross enrolment rate below 20%) as well as the persistent under schooling of girls (with a net enrolment rate of 27.7% as opposed to 39.7% for boys).

In addition, although they have improved, teaching conditions remain below par. In 1997/98, the average number of pupils per class was 50, which is beyond the international average (35); almost one half of teaching force (43%) do not have a professional diploma; only 1% of rural schools as against 37% of their urban counterparts have electricity. The efficiency of the educational system remains poor. In 1997/1998 the repeaters were about 17% of the over-all school population since out of the 1000 kids entering the primary first grade, only 308 (that is less than one kid out of 3) obtain the graduating certificate at the end of the cycle.

The recent years have been characterised by a growing dimension of foreign aid originating from bilateral and multilateral technical and financial partners, but also from the growing number of NGOs involved in basic education (about 50 today). In addition to diverse reforms tried out by public authorities, these multiple forms of assistance are not well coordinated and they contribute to make the country a kind of experimental arena.

To be sure, the recent implementation of a national framework for coordinating the activities and initiatives of the major technical and financial partners involved in basic education represents some progress (although it is commonsensical) but it occurs after 40 years of so-called cooperation! This coordination is implemented in the context of the 'decennial basic education development project for the period 2000-09' adopted by the June 3<sup>th</sup> 1999 decree. One of its objectives is to reach a gross primary school enrolment ratio of 70% by 2009.

Despite past and current financial efforts, Burkina Faso is still far from being able to ensure 'Education for All'. The objective is made more difficult by the rate of demographic growth (the average annual growth is 2.6%). Facing all these constraints, whether they are defined in quantitative or qualitative terms, the objective of a formal schooling available to all remains a formidable challenge with multifaceted stakes for Burkina Faso.

The main concern of institutional actors seems to be to seek systematically 'an increase of the number of children enrolled', - to increase school enrolment rates without paying a proportionate amount of attention to the educational aspects of the policy,- that is, to educational quality. What will be then the meaning of achieving a universal enrolment, but without students having reached an appropriate level of skills. **Improved schooling is fine, but for what kind of education?**

Admission in post primary and post secondary educational institutions remains selective in Burkina Faso and this characteristic is underscored further by the World Bank's ambition to privatize the secondary and post secondary school systems. This raises the issue of identifying both the specific functions of the various educational sectors and appropriate linkages between them: **'A school' (or an educational system) for what and for whom?**

The international community is increasingly involved both in financial terms and in defining policies. As the national partner seems unable to offer alternative educational projects, the way coordination works for the time being is likely to strengthen the current trend. This process affects also major issues within the international community itself, notably with regard to the logic governing the returns to investments, whether these returns are defined in financial terms (supply of equipment and services) or 'ideological' terms (that is, through the selection of curricula and textbooks and through training programs). In other words, **who will define the Burkinabè school of the future.**

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## NUMBERS AND THE AIDS' EFFECT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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*The silence of the academics can only frustrate the layperson. There is something in us, or at least something in some of us, that urgently seeks to make sense out of disconnected data and unassimilated experience...The urgency increases when the subject at hand, like war or disease, involves life and death, including the potential death of all people on earth. We need to know, and we need to know something more than piles of unrelated observations. (Blood Rites, Barbara Ehrenreich, Virago 1997, p2)*

The gains of EFA are being undone by the AIDS pandemic. Nevertheless, most countries do not factor the influence of AIDS into education planning. What must we do to understand how to live with AIDS, as individuals, communities, and civil societies? How can we mitigate the pandemic's consequences? Does education's planning and management paradigm need to change? This note addresses the first question, in an attempt to find practical answers to the other two.

**What do we know about AIDS in Southern Africa?** Our education systems are vulnerable to AIDS because of political, economic and social instability. They are characterised by high attrition, repetition and drop-out rates and over-age s which are related to viral transmission. Large numbers of traumatised, malnourished and stunted AIDS orphans live outside community control and are lost to schooling. Rising STD infections among scholars and teachers make them more vulnerable to HIV, while old killers like TB, malaria and cholera take advantage of depleted immune systems. Morbidity and mortality rates among children, teachers, administrators and parents are rising inexorably. In Africa, post-infection life expectancy is 6-8 years.

- In *Southern Africa*, life expectancy rose from 44 (1950s) to 59 (1990s), but will fall to 45 by 2010. 20% of 15-19 year olds are HIV+. About 10% of school children are infected.
- In *Mozambique*, there will be more than 250,000 AIDS orphans by the end of 2000, and one-quarter of all children will be living in a family where HIV is present.
- *Namibian* schools in 2010 will be 8% lower than in 1998. About 3,500 serving teachers will die by 2010; AIDS-related teacher attrition is likely to be about 3% pa over ten years.
- In *South Africa*, perhaps 3.6m South Africans (8.6% of the population) are infected. Prevalence in girls 15-19 has risen from 12.7% to 21% in 1999.
- In *Swaziland* about one in five Swazis over 14 are HIV+. The population is already 7% below expected levels and by 2016 it will be 42% lower than projected without AIDS. There are currently 35,000 AIDS orphans; by 2016, there may be 120,000.
- *Zambia*: Mortality among educators in 1998 was 70% higher than that of the 15-49 age group, and equals two-thirds of annual TTC output; by 2005 losses will exceed output. This year, there will be 1.66m AIDS orphans, and 7% of Zambia's households will be child-headed, without adults.

**What we can predict about the impact of AIDS on education in the region?** Fewer children will enroll in school because HIV+ mothers die young, with fewer progeny; children die of AIDS complications; and children who are ill, impoverished, orphaned, or careers for younger children, or those who are earners or producers, are out of school. Qualified teachers and officials will be lost to education. They are particularly vulnerable to infection because of their comparatively high incomes, often remote postings, and social mobility. Other teachers will be

lost as they leave education for better jobs elsewhere. Teacher Training Centres' (TTC) capacity to keep up with educator attrition will be undermined by their own staff losses. There are likely anyway to be fewer tertiary students as secondary school output and quality goes down, and as higher education itself declines due to staff attrition. In some countries, management, administration and financial control is already deteriorating. Under these circumstances, ministries will find it difficult to provide formal education of the scope and quality envisioned after Jomtien. Sick and death benefit costs are rising, along with additional costs for teacher training. Governments will come under increasing pressure to finance other social sectors. Contributions from parents and communities are declining, and many households are no longer willing or able to keep children in school. Thus the cost of schooling is shifted back to governments. What is ultimately incalculable is the trauma which overwhelms individuals and communities. At the very least, in pragmatic rather than humanitarian terms, school effectiveness will decline where 30-40% of teachers, officials and children are ill, lacking morale, and unable to concentrate on learning, teaching and professional matters. All of this means that we must anticipate a real reversal of development gains, that further development will be more difficult, and that current development goals will be unattainable.

***What initial steps can we take to address the impact of AIDS on education quality and provision?*** Ideally, policy makers planning to mitigate the impact of AIDS would base their plans on a complete picture of the current shape of the epidemic, derived from full information about levels of infection, determinants of spread, and factors affecting vulnerability of various population groups. Nowhere in the world is this possible; we have no models or previous experience. We cannot wait for detailed data, perfected statistics, and painstaking analysis before acting. We need to rely on whatever we have, or can get, if we are to maintain and consolidate gains in education quality and provision.

***Collective dedication:*** Education planners, their political masters, and development agency partners must assert their collective will to understand and mitigate AIDS impact.

***Intelligent planning:*** Common agreement is required now about the necessity to factor in the influence of the pandemic in educational and cross-sectoral planning.

***Information collection:*** Minimum information requirements might be: the numbers of people likely to fall ill, the duration of illness, and age distributions; the numbers of people dying, analysed by age; and impact on population size and distribution. We need to know about teacher and child illness, death and attrition rates so as to project teacher requirements, shifts, geographical and age shifts etc. The paucity of hard data must be supplemented by indicative figures for key groups, to help focus and target interventions, and to establish benchmarks for risk categories. Clearly, ethical and human rights issues related to testing are involved here, and need to be addressed.

***Understanding and using the data:*** Whatever information is available needs to be translated into useable form so as to create education sector models and projections which take account AIDS.

***Analysing impact:*** Ministries need to clarify their understanding of the influence of the pandemic on the education service in terms of staff and capacity losses and projected replacement costs, and to determine how this will affect the delivery of services at all levels. They need to have and use estimates of changing demand for services, according to geographic area, and projections of student populations. They need to consider the psycho-social effects of AIDS on the school community, and how it will affect morale and performance of educators, children and parents.

**Appropriate intervention:** It may be possible to slow the spread of the epidemic, to reduce its impact, or to circumvent its worst consequences. At the very least, it should be possible to target resources where they are most needed (by making provision to replace teachers lost to AIDS for example), to avoid wastage (by building fewer schools where populations are decimated, or for which there are no teachers for example), to identify at-risk student populations (in hostels for example, in countries where secondary school expansion will require hostel facilities), and to consider the precarious state of procedures and management capacity when creating sector plans.

We have tried for 20 years to stem this pandemic. We have failed. We must now learn to live with AIDS in our schools and communities. We can start by being aware, analysing available information, and planning pragmatically. The EFA paradigm must confront this reality.

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#### EFA IN LATIN AMERICA: THE QUANTITATIVE CHALLENGE

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Latin America (LA) has tried hard to advance toward the EFA-Jomtien goals, but results are rather scant. The 12 billion dollars invested in that period with the support of the World Bank (WB) and the Inter American Development Bank (IADB) and near universal access to primary education have shown that the region really wants to improve its education, but no real improvement in the quality levels of Latin American education (LAE) is observed in the last decade. Fortunately the EFA evaluation has shed light in this complex problem.

The EFA evaluation for LAE shows that 95% of each single age population group eventually enrolls at primary school, but only 33% gets some type of infant or preschool education. Furthermore, present achievement scores are too low in relation to developed countries. Comparative information on learning in the region -- made available through the UNESCO/OREALC Laboratorio regional study on learning in third and fourth grade -- shows that

the average student of 11 Latin American countries answered about 50% of the questions correctly, compared to about 85% correct answers for Cuban students. The study also shows that rural areas score lower than urban areas, capital cities score better than smaller urban areas, and private schools (except for the Dominican Republic) score better than public schools.

50 percent of correct answers -- when items were based on a consensus of the participating countries on the "minimum expectations of a common curriculum", and there are four alternative answers for each of 100 items -- is a poor outcome, but the real outcome is even worse. Such a percentage always includes a certain number of "correct answers by chance". For example, if the average student knows one third of the correct answers, one of each four questions of the remaining 67 will be a "correct answer by chance". The record will show 50% of correct answers, but still half of fourth grade students will not be able to understand even a simple paragraph in the first page of their national newspaper. Students with most reading problems are concentrated in the lower half of the social-economic distribution of the society. In the lower half of this distribution, some three quarters of Latin American students are not able to read with an acceptable level of comprehension. This means that the labour force is not going to be able to: read manuals describing the way to operate the next generation of machines; learn about safety instructions, and health suggestions; or learn how to use available services in the society.

Something went wrong with education projects implemented in the last decade and this has not yet been identified, let alone corrected. This poor regional result seems to be linked to the lack of formal *ex-post* evaluations for most of the implemented projects, and poor *ex-ante* professional review of the strategies included in each project. This is not the place to suggest probable causes of the problem. We can, however, point out that education projects implemented in the last decade do not include the three highest cost-effective strategies suggested by a group of ten world experts. According to their estimations countries should start by undertaking interventions which do not cost much but have an impact. For example, (1) *the best teacher should be assigned to the first grade* in order to help students to learn to read as well as possible (this is specially relevant in LA with such a poor reading and writing record). (2) The experts also highlighted the need to have enough time to learn; so they suggested that *the official length of the school year should be enforced*. (3) The third priority was given to a *policy not to switch classroom teachers during the year*. Not a single project has supported these three strategies in any of the projects financed in the decade. This finding may result from limited access to research reports or vested interests.

It is also puzzling that the Colombian Escuela Nueva approaches and methodologies have not been adapted in education projects designed to develop basic education in other Latin American countries. In spite of being one of the few programmes successfully evaluated in the region, it has only been used by USAID to impressively improve primary education in Guatemala and Nicaragua. Why has such a well proven strategy been overlooked in most Latin American countries?

In summary, public spending in education is often inefficient. Countries have to learn from past mistakes. It is necessary to pay attention to the quality issue, and to identify the real problems. It is time to learn about the causes of poor quality in order to design relevant strategies. Given that the analysis of education development should probably be regional, the funding mechanisms for this task should also be designed to operate at a regional dimension. Otherwise, the region will have to bear the economic implications of implementing solutions that are not related to the causes of the problems.

## EFA THE URBAN-RURAL CONTRAST

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Of the world population of about 5.9 billion (1998), about 2.6 billion is engaged in agricultural population, and of the economically active world population of about 45.6% (1.3 billion) is active in agriculture. In Africa, which is far behind in reaching the goals of Education for All, about 424 millions of the total 749 million population is in agricultural population, and 58.7% of the total economically active population is related to agriculture.

Since the World Conference on Education For All (WCEFA, Jomtien March 1990), all developing regions increased basic education school rates and reduced adult illiteracy. None, nevertheless, has reached the targets for the decade set in 1990, which will be reviewed at the forthcoming Dakar World Forum on Education For All.

Rural population education needs are often neglected because rural people live often in remote, expensive-to-reach areas. Rural education infrastructure (buildings, roads and accessibility to schools) is mostly inadequate. Moreover, education systems are often urban biased. In order to reach the EFA targets, the rural population's basic learning needs must be specifically addressed. Conversely, pursuing the goals established by the World Conference on EFA can contribute to reduce poverty, increase food production and eliminate hunger.

There is a need to give increased priority to Education for All Rural Populations, and to identify and address the specific needs of this target group. Curriculum relevance can be improved by including basic environmental management skills and basic agricultural skills in formal and informal education, and teachers need to be trained and motivated to work in rural areas by appropriate incentives.

There is, thus, a need for more public financing for education for rural development (which does not necessarily mean public provision) and of specific compensation strategies focusing on expanding access to basic education for rural population, and improving the quality and equity of education in rural areas. Difference in needs has to be acknowledged, and addressed with appropriate specific strategies in order to reach the satisfaction of equal rights and basic needs, while preserving cultural difference. The traditional discrimination towards education for rural population should be reversed by "positive discrimination" strategies tailored to specific education needs.

New partnerships need to be developed in order to achieve the aim of reaching education for All Rural Populations, between government (Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Health, etc), private and public organisations, civil society, the mass media, religious organisations.

Agricultural Higher Education and Research Institutions and extension personnel can collaborate to improve the relevance of education systems for rural populations.

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## REVIEWING THE NUMBERS FROM THE ANDES

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Meaningful education for all – at the primary level - that was the message from Jomtien ten years ago. At first glance, one could think that the objective has been reached in Latin America.

Recently a World Bank publication on *Educational Change in Latin America and the Caribbean* commented as follows: "There has been a widening of access to education at all levels throughout the Region, with 85 percent of the primary-school-age group now enrolled in school." Nevertheless, specifying the educational achievements in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, the World Bank summarised them in this way: "Primary education is now *nearly universal* in the LAC region." [emphasis added]

"Universal" or "nearly universal" or "not universal" - those are the terms that need to be more carefully defined. We shall address the actual educational achievements in this short note.

In the same document, in Annex C, the Latin American countries are grouped according to their primary school completion rates (above 75%, 50 to 75%, below 50%), to their secondary education enrolment rate (above 54%, 40 to 54% and below 40%) and to the higher education enrolment rate (above 25%, 15 to 25% and below 15%). Only Chile, Argentina and Uruguay reached above 75% at the primary level. From the Latin American countries, Bolivia and Venezuela come below 50%.

Peru which reaches 50 to 75% in primary education, comes to between 40 and 54% in secondary education and above 25% in higher education enrolment. Together with Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Guyana, Costa Rica (and also Grenada, Barbados and Dominica), Peru belongs thus to the countries "of high educational development" in the Region; whereas Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Dominican Republic and Santa Lucia belong to the countries "with low educational development".

However, according to an investigation of the "Red Nacional de Educación de la Niña", the rate of illiteracy for the female rural population in Peru is at 36% (for 1996). Whereas the women in the urban areas have 8.3 years of schooling, women in rural areas only reach 3.7 years in primary school. Moreover in 1997 there were more than 200,000 girls and young rural (female) adolescents between 5 and 17 years who did not attend any school.

'Universalisation of education' thus simply means that nearly all the children stand a chance to enter primary school. Very rapidly, however, many of them drop out from school; so that in some countries not more than half of the children who entered, complete primary school, which in the case of Peru is only of 6 years' duration. The large majority of those completing primary school can continue in secondary schools, but here there is even less retention than in primary education. Again, a considerable proportion of those completing secondary school reach university or other institutions of tertiary education. For the large number of children who do not complete the primary school there is almost no chance for further education.

According to the latest figures of UNESCO for Latin America the net enrolment rate of access to the first grade has not changed during the decade. Only three countries reported improvements. According to these figures up to 28% of the children do not reach grade 5 of primary school.

Furthermore, there is another clear indication of what figures mean in the educational context: To assist in the evaluation of the process of Jomtien, UNESCO defined 18 indicators for all countries to report progress against. From the 19 countries of the Region, one country (Venezuela) did not provide any data at all. None of the remaining 18 countries managed to provide complete data on all the 18 indicators. Only four reported on more than 15 indicators, ten between 10 and 15 indicators, and five countries only reported data for less than 10 indicators.

There is ample evidence that the majority of children do not learn much at school. Ernesto Schiefelbein has stated that at the beginning of the 21st century the labour force of Latin America is still unable to read adequately. This is more or less confirmed by the results of the Evaluation of the Quality of Education of the UNESCO Laboratorio Latinoamericano. In the case of Peru it was not even possible to publish the results.

### Conclusion:

Latin America at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is far from fulfilling the promise of Jomtien. The same applies to the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America, which between 1980 and 2000 aimed at an universalisation of a basic education of eight years. Only Chile, Argentina and Uruguay have reached this goal, and at least in the case of Uruguay had already achieved this well before 1980.

“Universalisation” of education in most of the Latin American countries so far only reaches more or less half of the school age population.

It should not surprise us, under these circumstances, that the World Bank is stating that the gap in educational performance and competitiveness between Latin American and OECD countries is widening and that the major weakness of Latin American countries in the global market of today is the lack of human capital. The real universalisation of basic education and of quality is the basis for the development of human capital. This has still to be reached in Latin America. Without effective and quick steps in that direction, the countries of the Region will fall further behind.

Looking at the weak reporting of statistics to the Regional Meeting of the evaluation of Education for All in Santo Domingo, the numbers’ game still has to be played seriously. A transparent and sound monitoring of the quantitative as well as the qualitative aspects of the development of basic education is a prerequisite for the development of human capital, so urgently needed for the fighting of poverty and correcting the extreme inequality of income in the Region.

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## THE AID NUMBERS – THEN AND NOW

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Immediately after Jomtien, we (King and Carr-Hill, 199) were asked to assess the levels and trends of aid to basic education during the later 1980s for the first Forum Secretariat of Education for All. After a trying six months of seeking to understand the disparate statistics that we were able to extract from the funding agencies, we said:

The survey suggested that many agencies found difficulty in reporting their contribution to basic education. In some cases ... this was because agencies collected data by different geographical and income categories, but for the main 'Jomtien components' of basic education (early childhood education, primary schooling, adult literacy, etc.), it was plain that many agencies simply could not provide these breakdowns (King and Carr-Hill, 1991: 15)

We went on to say: "It was equally plain that many agencies were determined to rectify the situation.", citing the responses of Switzerland and USA.

However, in a document on *Funding Agency Contributions to Education for All* prepared as a background paper for Dakar, Bentall et al (2000) show how they encountered similar difficulties – and some others. In fact, their coverage of the bilateral agencies was, if anything, poorer than in 1991. One can only agree with DFID when they say:

Weak data are a major constraint to the development of effective national planning and performance monitoring. This is reflected in the lack of effective capacity to collect education statistics at national and global levels (DFID 2000, para 2.52).

Indeed! It has to be seen as astonishing that the situation has not improved in the interim.

Some of the reporting difficulties that have not been resolved from ten years ago are purely technical: they include how to categorise early childhood education (AsDB), changes in codes during the decade (Netherlands), etc. However, some of the issues mentioned were that the definition of basic education is quite rightly left to recipient governments (DFID); and that the new "basket" funding provides new difficulties for disaggregation (DANIDA).

This latter is becoming particularly pertinent as difficulties related to the current reporting system are likely to be exacerbated as more agencies move to adopt Sector Wide Approaches in one form or another.

One could argue that it may not only become impossible but not necessarily relevant to ensure full intra-sector accountability for the different education sub-sectors since the potential strength of such budgetary sectoral support lies in part in the fact that all sub-sectors are covered. But this would constitute a leap of faith that we all actually agree what is the appropriate intra-sectoral balance in any given situation. More prosaically, one would want to ensure that the current 'sector' includes all the relevant components. For example, the Ugandan Education Sector Investment Programme, recognised as an exemplar of its kind, excludes adult education which is included in the portfolio of a different Ministry (Community Gender and Labour Relations).

Instead, it would seem safer to try and follow the prescription DFID hands out to developing countries: "Government systems for managing and tracking expenditure remain weak and need support." (para 3.27)

DFID goes on to say "While proportions vary, funding agencies should in general allocate a larger share of their resources than in the past to support for primary and basic education" (DFID 2000, para 4.37)

But there seems little point in having a target, if one is unable accurately to reflect progress towards or away from it. As DFID also say:

The availability of better data at national and international levels will allow governments and society and agencies to get a clear view of progress towards targets (DFID 2000, para 6.8)

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#### DISAGGREGATED NUMBERS - THE ESSENTIAL TOOLKIT TO UNDERSTANDING EFA

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One significant change in the reporting of educational statistics for the EFA 2000 Assessment has been the expectation that countries would tender a Country Report supplemented by both electronic and printed sets of their data on 18 'core indicators' of basic education. Country data sets were to be based on Excel templates included as part of the *EFA 2000 Assessment: Technical Guidelines*. *Technical and General Guidelines* prepared by the EFA Forum Interagency Global Technical Advisory Group (GTAG) requested countries to compile data from sub-national

administrative units, such as the State / Province, or District, further disaggregated by gender (M/F) and locality (Urban / Rural).

This was a major departure from past reporting practices. At Jomtien in 1990, at the various meetings of the Nine High Population Countries (E9), and at Amman in 1996, international comparisons and regional and global syntheses were based on national-level figures supplied by countries. There was no expectation that the sub-national, disaggregated database underlying these national figures would be required, or subjected to any form of scrutiny. Concerns about inflated figures, the use of estimates, and data inconsistencies surfaced at the Amman EFA Forum.

The basis for these concerns could be illustrated by comparing different 'official' sources of reported data from South Asia for the important indicator: "Net Ratio: Primary".

**Table. NET ENROLMENT RATIO: PRIMARY EDUCATION  
MID-DECADE SOURCES FOR SOUTH ASIA  
UNESCO (JUNE, 1996); SAARC (AUGUST 1996); MICS 1995/96**

	Amman UNESCO June 1996		Rawalpindi SAARC August 1996		Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys 1995 or 1996	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<b>Bangladesh</b>	89	78	82	82	82	81
<b>Bhutan</b>	57	15	58	47	-	-
<b>India</b>	98	76	98	76	-	-
<b>Maldives</b>	-	-	100	100	-	-
<b>Nepal</b>	80	46	81	62	80	60
<b>Pakistan</b>	36	25	71	46	71	62
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	100	100	100	100	-	-

To educators familiar with the realities of primary schooling in this high-population region, aggregated data raise serious questions about their accuracy and reliability. Comparisons *between* countries should not be made from these data. Undoubtedly, the situation of primary school access has improved considerably for many countries in Asia, where governments have made primary schooling a priority issue. National 'averages' show an apparent *decline* in some cases, based on the aggregation of sub-national data. The situation may be that more children in aggregate numbers and age-specific cohorts are now enrolled in school than ever before, yet the absence of accurate age-specific population data for many countries hampers accurate computation of NER.

With disaggregated data, it is now feasible to make more use of the new desk-top presentation tools to show the differences within a country and between boys and girls. While access may be apparently encouraging for most countries, few countries were confident that their data reflected the regular *attendance* of primary children. When Asian countries have addressed this issue, it is not uncommon to note high rates of absenteeism and repetition, especially in the early grades, considerable *drop-out* before the basic primary cycle has been completed. The limited life-relevance of so many primary schools is also reflected in disappointing levels of *learning achievement*.

More seriously, it is of limited interest to assume that a single figure can represent the diversity known to exist in every country for any education indicator. Data collated for the large Asia – Pacific EFA Regional Conference in January 2000 helped countries to focus much more on

disparities *within* countries, and continuing disparities between rates for girls and boys, and urban and rural children. Issues related to data quality, education quality, preparation for schooling, education of adolescents, and the continuing concerns about high levels of illiteracy among women in Asia were addressed in almost all country reports.

The EFA 2000 18 core indicators are an 'incomplete set'. Much more needs to be known and reported about the attendance of children at all levels of basic education, including the critical pre-school and adolescent years. The EFA 2000 Assessment has triggered more attention to data issues generally.

Despite these limitations, there is now a wealth of data available for more detailed verification and analysis. There is a 'new order' in the approach to international education data where it is no longer acceptable to tender figures that are at best political or administrative estimates. Data collation, verification, presentation and analysis tools are becoming more widely available. With greater transparency and availability of information, *disparity reduction* and better targeting of scarce resources become feasible. The basic education agenda can move beyond achieving national goals to realising the right of every child to basic education of good quality, no matter where he or she may live.

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**WE ARE MISSING THE POINT.....  
BASIC EDUCATION IN THE TIME OF AIDS IN AFRICA**

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I have stopped asking what has happened to colleagues when I return to an educational institution in Africa and no longer find the once familiar faces there. Bad as this is, it's worse if I visit schools and look for headmasters or teachers we had trained a couple of years ago, only to be informed that they have died recently of AIDS. Instead of curriculum problems or school prospects, we talk about funerals and what should be done for those left behind, mainly the children. With more and more educators dying of the ghastly pandemic at an increasing speed, less and less learning opportunities will be made available to children in schools. There are already schools with large numbers of pupils and only a few teachers, and even those teachers are more concerned with looking after the sick and their families than teaching in their schools. Thousands of school hours are lost daily in Africa due to AIDS.

Are we professionally prepared for what is presently happening in large parts of Africa? Have we adjusted our agendas and plans? Does "Education for All" include also those children who have lost their parents or teachers and struggle for survival?

It seems that only few organisations (like Unicef) have taken up the challenge of providing education to children experiencing these extreme difficulties. More needs to be done and it requires urgent and systematic action. Since it will be impossible to catch up with providing enough well trained teachers and advisors to maintain the traditional means of education through schools, more out-of-school alternatives have to be developed. Innovative ways of using peer groups could also be considered in the absence of sufficient trained teachers. Needs-oriented curricula have to be developed as well as learning materials that are self-explanatory.

Although much has been accomplished in the field of basic education since Jomtien there is an urgent need to reflect on the situation in Africa and develop solutions to help those children suffering from the disastrous consequences of the AIDS pandemic. – The forthcoming Forum in Dakar should have it high up on its agenda.

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## GENERATING DATA ON EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION IN MOROCCO

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Despite the priority given to education by the Moroccan government and the resulting advances made, expanding access to primary schooling in Morocco has been and remains very problematic. This is most dramatically reflected in the regressive pattern of primary observed during the 1980s following the introduction of the first stabilisation programme in 1983, and the resulting exacerbation of social inequalities and urban-rural disparities. The increasing inequality was clearly reflected in more widespread exclusion from schooling among children in rural areas, particularly for girls (Belarbi, 1996). Although the government has managed to reverse this regressive trend, low levels of attainment in basic education continue to be an issue of major concern for Morocco. Widespread exclusion from schooling and significant knowledge gaps based on gender, residence and income continue to plague the development of basic education, particularly in rural areas.

Substantial research on access to schooling in Morocco exists and significant effort has been made since Jomtien to monitor participation trends in schooling (see for example Belarbi, 1996; Khandker, Lavi & Filmer 1994; the Moroccan MoE, 1994; MoE & IREDU 1993). Yet, documenting patterns of take-up of basic education in Morocco remains hampered by serious data deficits. This situation is not at all specific to Morocco, and the mid-decade review of EFA goals (Amman 1996) drew attention to international educational data deficits and to the urgency of improving the knowledge base on basic education. More particularly, the lack of data on populations excluded from education was one of the main research challenges identified at the open dialogue session devoted to the role of research in monitoring EFA goals.

Indeed, national educational indicators which are not disaggregated by residence and gender do not allow for a clear understanding of local patterns of schooling and regional variations in the relative weight that household living conditions, poverty, and local value systems have on the family decision-making process. In the case of Morocco, it has been suggested that beyond significant issues such as inefficient and inequitable resource allocation among educational subsectors, demand-side factors (and the weight of poverty on household demand, more particularly) appear to be more significant determinants of primary schooling in Morocco (Tawil, 1997). With the exception of rare local qualitative surveys (see for example Zouggar 1991), most knowledge and data generated on patterns of take-up tend to be supply-oriented and thus provide little useful information on variations in household demand.

One way of generating better quality data on patterns of take up of primary education consists in the exploitation of existing data contained in national household surveys. Data such as that collected through the Moroccan Living Standards Measurement Survey of 1991 can provide valuable information on out-of-school children, traditional Quranic education and on the demand for child work. Simple cross-tabulations of the data set according to gender, residence and

household income partially confirm some common assumptions relative to determinants of access to schooling. On the other hand, this same data suggests the need for a re-examination of some widespread working assumptions relative to exclusion from primary schooling.

#### **Access to primary schooling**

The data, for instance, have clearly confirmed how access to schooling is a very acute problem for children (7-12) from rural families, and particularly for girls. Although access to primary schooling is almost universal in urban areas, close to 45 percent of rural children in the 7-12 age range have never been enrolled in school. This urban-rural bias is compounded by a very significant gender-bias that is reflected in the extent of educational exclusion among girls from rural households with over 60 percent having never received any formal education (primary or Quranic). At the same time, analysis of the data set also clearly confirms disparities in access to primary schooling based on household income level: children from the wealthiest households (income quintile V) are twice as likely to ever attend school than children from the poorest households (quintile I). This discrimination based on income is amplified by significant gender disparities, particularly in rural areas where girls from the poorest households (quintile I) have only some 17 percent chance of ever receiving any formal education.

#### **Quranic education**

Likewise, preliminary analysis has also confirmed that, as an alternative to primary schooling, Quranic education is only really a significant educational alternative to primary schooling for boys from rural families. Indeed, the participation rate of rural boys in Quranic education is 8.4 percent. The data also show, however, that there is a clear relationship between household poverty and the take-up of Quranic education. Unlike patterns generally observed for primary schooling, the poorer the family, the more likely that some of the boys attend Quranic schools. The highest participation rates (11.7 percent) are indeed observed among rural boys from households belonging to the lowest income quintile.

#### **Child work and schooling**

Gross activity rates for children under the age of fifteen increase from 2.5 percent in urban settings to as much as 13.6 percent in rural areas. Surprisingly, however, the household data indicates that there is no clear correlation between family income levels and children's participation in work. The observation that working children in Morocco are not necessarily those from the poorest households calls for a re-examination of a number of commonly-held assumptions about poverty and its link to child work. It might be useful, for instance, to investigate the extent to which child work may also be explained by the low perceived benefits of schooling as a means of upward mobility in the context of widespread unemployment in contemporary Morocco.

#### **Primary school drop out patterns**

A closer examination of drop out patterns indicates that, globally speaking, drop out rates are not clearly correlated to family income levels. Moreover, while similar overall drop out rates are observed in urban (7.1) and rural (5.7) areas, it appears that in rural areas drop out rates are highest for boys (6.6) while they are highest for girls in urban settings (7.35). Finally, in rural areas, it is girls from the wealthiest families that are most likely to drop out.

Such observations, and particularly those relative to child work and drop out patterns, suggest the need for a radical reconsideration of widely accepted assumptions that guide our understanding of educational exclusion in Morocco. In this perspective, recourse to, and fuller exploitation of existing data sets such as living standard measurement surveys is indeed a promising avenue for a more comprehensive understanding of determinants to access to basic education among children.

The results presented here are more fully developed elsewhere: "Household demand, basic education and exclusion: Focusing on out-of-school children in Morocco" to appear in Malmberg, Hans & Heino (Eds,) *Basic Education For All: A global concern for quality*.

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EDUCATION OR SKILLS FOR ALL LIFE?  
Or  
IS EDUCATION ALL LIFE SKILLS?

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In 1990, I wrote in Norrag News No. 9 devoted to the follow-up of Jomtien: "Are integration efforts between schooling, training and production definitively meaningless? What are the mechanisms foreseen to allow basic general education/schooling to be a good preparation for the productive life?" This question was in line with the comments by K. King in Norrag News No. 8: "There was a tendency within the Conference not to pay attention to the work and employment relations of schooling or literacy for all".

Nearly ten years afterwards, what is new? Have Life Skills for all replaced Education for All? The Dakar Framework on Education for all consists of 8000 words. The word Skills is used 19 times, 10 of these referring to Life skills. The concept of Work is used 6 times, 3 of them in relation with the Working children and 1 with some Working skills. Finally the word Employment appears just once. From this short example we can see that the "numbers game", which Wolfgang Kuper is playing elsewhere in this issue, is also meaningful when applied to words! It seems that the only newness, when compared with the Jomtien Declaration, lies in the use of such a vague concept as Life skills instead of Skills.

1) Exactly one year ago, the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, organised by Unesco in Seoul and devoted to "Lifelong learning and training: a bridge to the future" (sub-title: Work, education and the future), forwarded the following recommendations to the Director-General of Unesco:

- TVE is one of the most powerful instruments for enabling all members of the community to face new challenges and to find their roles as productive members of society (Rec. 4.1, under the heading of TVE for all)
- In the light of the new expanded vision for TVE, which has been endorsed at this Congress and which stresses the need for incorporating a new relationship between the various sectors of education and training, an holistic approach to the preparation for life and the world of work and increasingly seamless pathways in lifelong learning, the Congress recommends that the DG of Unesco, in close Cooperation with the ILO, develops a common concept of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, (TVET) to guide the Unesco strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Rec.6.7) The juxtaposition of what we find in the Dakar Framework and in the Seoul recommendations raises some issues in different fields:

2) At the organisational level (the least interesting!) one can, one more time, wonder about the knowledge production and management skills of some of the UN family members.

As far as Unesco is concerned, it seems that the "holistic TVET approach" that constituted the core of the Unesco DD-G's for Education presentation in Seoul has been largely ignored by the contributors to the writing of the draft Dakar document. It would be interesting to know why such a perspective, which is applied in different ways to basic education (in and out of schools), appears only once in the Framework when reference is made to some Working skills? Is the conceptual and ideological gap

between the educators and the trainers still cutting across Unesco in such a strong way?

As far as ILO is concerned, the decline of the institutional and knowledge base of this organisation on training issues during the last few years has not allowed it to develop the debate that was proposed in the Seoul recommendations. The uncertainties about the future of the Unesco project on Vocational Education (Unevoc) also reflect this situation. The coming discussion during the next ILO Conference based on a document entitled "Training for employment: social inclusion, productivity and youth employment"<sup>4</sup> might clarify the orientations of the Organisation in the fields of training and skills development.

That is why it is expected that the new DGs of both Unesco and ILO would soon take some clear positions on these issues.

As far as the World Bank is concerned the last decade is considered by some specialists as a lost one, as no concern has been expressed for the field of Skills since the publication in 1991 of the Policy paper on VTET. This situation might change in the near future, as it has appeared during the last meeting of the Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development hosted by the World Bank, the Inter-american Development Bank and the USAID, March 2000 in Washington (Paper 5: Poverty, Growth and Skills Development: a focus on Latin America. <http://www.vetnet.ch/wg>) where some concerns for skills development in post-basic education have been expressed by some Bank members. Should we have to wait one more decade to get a real concern for some better defined Life Skills in basic education? Or will the World Bank play, as usual, the referee role in the match between Unesco and ILO?

2) At the conceptual level, the reluctance of the Dakar Framework contributors to seriously deal with the issue of Life Skills might be explained by:

- their poor knowledge of the employment and work related Needs of the learners in spite of the 26 references being made in the text to this concept (the scientific nature of which has been questionable for a long time!). For example, the executive summary of the reference document for Dakar on Literacy and Adult Education produced by the International Literacy Institute does not refer to Employment and only once to Work (and then only to working parents!).

- the ignorance of the holistic vision of the Seoul Congress - which was already referred to by the participants to the Francophone Congress on vocational and technical training in 1998 (without any more reference to Education), in favour of a quite traditional model of a learner centred education, largely formal and school based in spite of the usual plea for more attention to be paid to Adult education

- the conceptual difficulty to precisely define the very concept of Skill, which further impedes giving a real content to the notion of Life Skills: current definitions are mostly referring to an enterprise environment and, furthermore, the English and French meaning are quite different. According to G. Leboterf: a "skilled/competent" worker is able to mobilise and put into action in an efficient+effective way the different functions of a system, by integrating and mobilising a full range of resources such as knowledge, abilities, capacities in a given context, while insisting on the interdependence between this individual and his environment"<sup>5</sup>. Referring to a French definition helps us to explain

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<sup>4</sup> ISBN 92-2 111513-5

<sup>5</sup> G.Leboterf La compétence , un attracteur étrange, Paris

the difficulty encountered in giving a genuine content to the notion of Life skills. The French concept of *competence* refers to the capacity it gives to an individual to be effective, i.e. to act in accordance with the set of external objectives put forward for this action. When translated into English, the same concept leads to Skill which can in turn be translated in French by *competence* and *qualification*: The first one puts the emphasis on an individual dimension in a specific context, while the second one refers more to a collective perspective by which a group of individuals can be identified as well as to the characteristics an individual wishing to belong to this group has to comply with.

3) A first framework for an operational definition of Life Skills is being developed by Jon Lauglo in a research piece he has recently produced for the World Bank on basic education for adult learners <sup>6</sup>. Even though the reflections are based on a post basic schooling age population, the evidence of ABE impact in terms of personal efficacy and active citizenship, of more effective oral communication, of improved family health and, finally, in terms of economic benefits could provide a ground for starting defining different Life Skills in reference to some specific environments. (Lauglo has reflected on some rural African contexts.) This evidence would also help to put some flesh on the vague notions of social and communication skills which schools are now supposed to instil (like in the Outcomes-based education of South Africa). Supporting the reinforcement of some analytical capacities at the national and regional levels (Strategy no 11 in the draft Dakar Framework) to reach a more refined content for the notion of Life Skills would then be of the utmost importance if we want the issue of Norrag News dated January 2015 to be devoted to Education and Skills for All!

<sup>1</sup> ISBN 92-2 111513-5

<sup>2</sup>.G.Lebotarf, *La compétence, un attracteur étrange*, Paris

<sup>3</sup>.Presented at the DAE WG on NFE Symposium Johannesburg, 2 December 1999

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<sup>6</sup>Presented at the DAE WG on NFE Symposium Johannesburg , 2 December 1999

TARGETING YOUTH AND SKILL IN THE ABSENCE OF AN INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT TARGET

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As globalisation's effects become ever more apparent, it is vital that the international education community address its impacts on their area of work. In this short piece I want to argue that the international development targets (IDTs) for education are inadequate as a route map for education in the coming years. At the heart of their inadequacy is their failure to address new economic challenges. Basic education as part of a poverty eradication strategy is a valuable idea but neither the current poverty strategy nor the current education strategy, as they are represented in the IDTs, contains a sufficiently broad strategic vision.

Globalisation puts increasing pressure on education to address issues such as competitiveness. This means not just at the national and enterprise levels, but in terms of individuals being better equipped to respond to economic challenges and opportunities and to access sustainable, decent work, whether in wage- or self-employment, or in a combination of both. Along with allied forces, which can be summarised as Post-Fordism and the knowledge economy, globalisation suggests a broadened notion of skill. This moves away from the notion of skills as technical and shifts towards a concept whose boundaries with attitudes and knowledge are blurred. With a surfeit of available knowledge now potentially available, the challenge of the educational process becomes about developing skills, such as the ability to learn, to communicate, to innovate and to cooperate. Universal primary education can help deliver these skills. However, in a globalising economy where success is closely linked to the levels of these skills possessed, it is evident that primary schooling can only be a minimalist solution. For those countries at the bottom of the economic pile, UPE will do little or nothing to make them really competitive in the areas that matter.

Thus, even though UPE is difficult to achieve, we must also be focusing on post-basic education and training. This is particularly important given the large numbers of youth for whom a mediocre basic education is not a preparation for the world-of-work but who find themselves in the labour market at an early age. It is also of importance given the hundreds of millions of adults that either failed to get educational opportunities when they were young or whose education did not prepare them sufficiently for successful work. Globalisation suggests that skills development will be key for this population but also for the young people who are in or out of school. Globalisation raises the importance of high skills levels for economic success at national, enterprise and individual levels. The converse of this is that a lack of skills is increasingly a major factor in social exclusion.

For a development agenda that seeks to address growth and poverty simultaneously, the current narrow education focus is untenable. Of course there are serious resource and implementation problems facing UPE in many countries. Of course the issue of gender

disparities in access to schooling is in urgent need of action. However, the challenge that lies in front of both the World Education Forum on Jomtien + 10 and the General Assembly Special Session on Copenhagen +5 is to broaden the education vision so that it can address the central importance that a broad notion of skills does and will have in empowering individuals, in promoting growth and in fighting poverty.

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**World Literacy: Post-Dakar Challenges**

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The 1990 World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in Jomtien, Thailand included adult literacy as one of its six major worldwide goals. Specifically, a number of national educational goals related to youth and adult education were agreed upon, including: (1) to reduce the number of adult illiterates to half of the 1990 level by the year 2000; and (2) to improve learning achievement to an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (which might vary from country to country). As part of all Jomtien goals, a new approach to learning was emphasised, one that focused on measurable learning achievement (rather than mere class attendance or participation).

These challenges, then, have formed the basis for much of the renewed international interest in literacy and adult education over the past decade, and, in many ways, remain the continuing Jomtien challenge for the first quarter of the new millennium. During the 1990s, views on literacy and illiteracy have changed dramatically. Many literacy specialists and policy makers have moved away from the monolithic view of illiteracy as a disease in which the germs might be eradicated with an appropriate drug or vaccination. Rather, literacy is now more broadly viewed as a product of educational, social and economic factors that cannot be radically changed in short periods of time.

Indeed, while numerous efforts have been undertaken in both research and practice in the past decade, it comes as no surprise that the fundamental problems, and the global statistics, on literacy have changed only moderately, whether in industrialised or developing countries. Nonetheless, due in large part to increasingly competitive and knowledge-based economies across the world, most governments and international/bilateral agencies have expressed increased concern about illiteracy and low literacy since Jomtien, even though resource allocations have remained at a disproportionately small fraction of what is contributed to formal schooling.

In order to provide worldwide statistical comparisons, international agencies have relied almost entirely on data provided by their member countries. According to the most recent UNESCO statistics (and estimates), world illiteracy rates have been dropping over the last 2-3 decades, apparently due primarily to increases in primary school enrolments. Yet these data also indicate that the actual numbers of illiterates have remained relatively constant, due to population growth.

It was once assumed that increased efforts for achieving universal primary schooling would lead to a drop toward zero in adult illiteracy around the world. These optimistic views are no longer widely held, for a variety of reasons including: continued increases in population growth in developing countries; declining quality of basic education where rapid expansion has taken place; upward changes in the skill standards for literacy, both in developing and industrialised countries; improved measurement of literacy through surveys which show that previous estimates of literacy based on school grade levels achieved often overestimate actual basic learning competencies.

Literacy and adult education will need to focus more than ever before on which *kinds* and what *levels* of literacy are required for each society, as well as for specific groups within that society. The year 2000 international statistics, dramatic as they remain, do not fully reveal the endemic problems associated with adult literacy work. The central problem, as with the broader field of education, is the *quality* of the education as it relates to the *individual* adult learner.

National campaigns and programmes have often gone wrong because of the need for too rapid progress and for economies of scale. This combination of factors has led to low motivation on the part of adult learners around the world, and to poor outcomes in both learning achievement and participation rates. What is needed is a greater focus on programme quality along the following themes: professional development, learner motivation, knowledge-based programme design, and increased openness to new approaches. Each of these challenges is described very briefly below:

*Professional development.* The professional development of administrators, directors, teachers, and tutors is an ongoing and critical process for programme improvement in literacy and adult education. Teachers and administrators should have more opportunities to investigate local problems and to invent local solutions. By assuring a greater percentage of full-time teachers, literacy programmes will have a great incentive to invest in staff training and development, which are central to improving the quality of all literacy and adult education programmes.

*Learner motivation.* The motivation of adult learners is a key dimension that either can promote participation and retention, or, when lacking, can lead to poor take up and retention of literacy and adult education programmes. In contrast to what was thought over recent decades, the challenge of motivation lies not in providing the "political will" of governments, but rather in finding ways to provide what the private sector terms, rather simply, "customer service." Thus, in order to reach the unreached and the most excluded (e.g., unschooled, women, ethnic-linguistic minorities, rural dwellers, and migrants) programmes will need to be tailored to address diverse needs, and have direct, discernible outcomes, and incentive-rich experiences.

*Knowledge-based programme design.* Much more needs to be done in order to build the knowledge base and expertise employed in the service of literacy and adult education. Relative to other education areas, few research studies are being produced in literacy and adult education, and donor agencies have been too reluctant in their support of serious evaluation studies or applied research. To move the field forward will require a greater emphasis on what works and what doesn't, as well as further support from donor agencies.

*Openness to new approaches.* A striking aspect of adult literacy work is its relative isolation. For the most part, literacy and adult education specialists and practitioners have little contact with mainstream specialists in education, and even less with sectors outside of education. There is an overall need to be open to diversity in learners and in the contexts in which they reside. No new approach is more obvious than technology, which has been taken up increasingly in the formal school settings, but has yet to have a serious input into adult education in most countries. Indeed, in developing countries, the overall limitations in fiscal and human resources have meant that technology remains far from being implemented, even though substantial cost-effectiveness appears to be achievable. With national economies and civic participation more dependent than ever on an educated and literate citizenry, the world education community is faced with multiple and serious challenges. On the one hand, agencies which support or engage in literacy work need to be more realistic about what can be achieved within budget constraints. Such realism entails lowering expectations about major changes in individual, social, and economic outcomes, while at the same time holding literacy service providers to higher standards of accountability and professionalism. As in formal schooling,

literacy and adult education do not provide a magic answer for any society, but they are part and parcel of all aspects of national development.

On the other hand, agencies can enhance adult literacy programmes by: ... Building a more solid knowledge base for field-based innovations, ... improving professional development and human resources capacity, ... providing better pathways from non-formal youth and adult literacy programmes into the formal school system, ... combining non-formal programmes for adults and early childhood programmes, ... taking advantage of new technologies, and ... investing resources in assessment, evaluation and monitoring, surveys and applied research, and ... creating new synergies and collaborations between governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Our global thematic study has attempted to highlight some of the most important problems and prospects in improving the quality of literacy and adult education work, and efforts to meet the needs of people who are often excluded or marginalized from quality education. The importance of literacy and basic learning competencies in the lives of people the world over is difficult to overestimate. The simple fact that even today nearly one-quarter of humanity lacks such essential and obtainable competencies still shocks the world. It will be all the more striking in the year 2020, if we have been unable to substantially improve this situation. Yet the tools for making major gains are within reach if the best know-how can be put into service. Future literacy and adult education work will require a sustained, coherent, informed and increased effort.

NOTE: This paper was adapted from: International Literacy Institute, D. Wagner et al. 2000 *Global Thematic Study on Literacy and Adult Education*. Paper prepared for the World Education Forum, Dakar, April, 2000.

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## LITERACY AGENDA FOR DAKAR

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The Jomtien Declaration had challenged the participating countries to achieve by 2000 a fifty percent reduction in their 1990 illiteracy rates. This must have seemed a reasonable goal.

In 1991, the literacy rate for the 7+ population in India was 52 percent, with the remaining 48 Percent of the 7+ population being illiterate. In terms of the Jomtien resolution India should have added another 24 percent to its literacy rate by 2000. Needless to say, we are nowhere near the 76 percent mark.

Of course the literacy rate for the country will only be known after the 2001 census operation is over. In the meantime the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) has estimated that the literacy rate in 1997 was 62 percent – an increase of ten percentage points over the 1991 figure of 52. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) has, quite justifiably, celebrated the ten percent increase in six years and has projected another two percent in 1998, bringing the total projected literacy rate to 64 percent. The NLM has now predicted that India will achieve a literacy rate of 75 percent by 2005, a mere five years behind the Jomtien deadline.

The NLM has also claimed that for the first time since 1961 the absolute number of illiterates in India has shown a downward trend in 1997. In other words, although the literacy rates have risen every ten years, the absolute number of illiterates has also increased on account of the population growth. In 1961, the total number of illiterates was 249.40 million which rose to 328.88 million in 1991. In 1997, the projected number was 294.46 million, and the predicted number of illiterates in 2001 is 268.42 million (out of a projected population of 1031.63 million).

These are heady projections, and we should begin to breathe with ease because the threshold for the total literacy would seem to be within sight.

But what does being counted as literate denote? In the context of NLM a person who has successfully completed the basic literacy course of 200 hours, spread over a period of six to ten months, is declared literate, and is called a neo-literate. Such a person is expected to handle simple literacy tasks in his/her day-to-day life. Whether such a neo-literate is actually able to handle simple literacy tasks has not been systematically measured until now.

In a recent research study in Delhi supported by UNESCO, it has been discovered that only about 12 percent of nearly 8000 neo-literates who had passed the NLM test, actually use their literacy skills in a number of ordinary day-to-day activities. And not all these 12 percent neo-literates are highly motivated to pursue their education. Nor do they find adequate opportunities to read regularly, although they would like to.

This is the situation in a metropolis where there is a great deal of literacy in the physical environment of the neo-literates. If a literate environment produces only a 12 percent population of keen neo-literates, there is reason to believe that a large number of neo-literates relapse into illiteracy very quickly.

In Dakar it would be worthwhile debating the issue of fragile literacy which results in relapse into illiteracy, and ways and means of ensuring consolidation of literacy skills by creating literate societies where literacy actually empowers.

Without adequate and continued support many of the so-called neo-literates are likely to remain illiterate, and although they will be counted among the literates their chances for survival in a literate world will continue to be minimal.

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### ABE TO RISE AGAIN?

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The Sub-Saharan Africa Region of the World Bank is reassessing the case for encouraging countries to invest more resources in Adult Basic Education (henceforth ABE) to supplement the role of primary schooling in the effort to realize Education For All. The core of ABE will be literacy and numeracy skills—the other curriculum elements of ABE will depend on the target group and on local circumstances.

There is good evidence about the beneficial impact of ABE for those adults and youth who take part in it. Best documented are a positive synergy effect on the schooling of children of ABE-participants, and improved personal efficacy of the participants (or 'empowerment' for those who prefer terms derived from conflict theory). In many cases improved health and economic livelihood are also shown.

The growing importance of *civil society* in development assistance strategies adds to the case for investing in ABE. ABE connects with civil society in two ways: NGOs and CBOs (Community Based Organizations) are important providers of ABE, and ABE helps to develop civil society.

However three ghosts from the past stand in the way of renewed commitment to ABE: the claims that ABE has alarmingly low internal efficiency, that literacy skills quickly atrophy, and that learning of literacy is rendered difficult by the biological clock. However these ghosts can now be laid to rest.

#### *Is internal efficiency too weak?*

Indicators designed to measure internal efficiency in formal education are ill-suited to a type of education whose very nonformal character means that there will be greater ease of wandering in and out. If ABE succeeds in becoming a local community event it will and should include some fringe participants. What matters more than drop out should be whether sufficient numbers stay in the course beyond the initial period of coming and going, so that those who remain are not demoralized by shrinking numbers, and that they benefit enough to justify the cost incurred in running the course. However, even conventional indicators usually show respectable internal efficiency. According to international documentation now available, *of those who initially enrol in ABE*, in the case of most programmes one finds that at least 70% are retained in the course, and that at least 60% meet such requirements as are made for 'passing'. But the variation in drop-out and completion rates among programmes and among locations in the same programme is great. This means it is important to monitor implementation.

*Is retention of literacy skills too poor?*

Then there is the claim that literacy skills are easily lost. Relevant research has always been sparse. It still is. But such evidence as is available does not indicate that reading skills are especially vulnerable to atrophy. In a number of countries (Uganda, Kenya, Indonesia) further gains seem to outweigh cases of 'loss'. Writing and arithmetic require more use in order not to atrophy.

*Are adults too old to learn?*

There are theories which imply that the capacity of adults to learn to read and write has been greatly reduced by the ticking of the biological clock. However, if age is a disadvantage it is not especially decisive since other conditions can combine to outweigh its importance. A number of studies show that those adults who enroll in ABE, can acquire basic literacy much faster than children do in primary school. One reason for these 'good results' is probably the high motivation found among those who enroll in ABE. It takes strong motivation and strong social support to enrol in ABE and complete the course. Programmes should therefore respond to demand (which usually is strong) rather than seeking to 'eradicate illiteracy' through mass campaigns that round up the reluctant ones.

*Some 'greater difficulty' for older learners points to the importance of out-of-school youth as target group for ABE. Another natural target is adult women. In nearly all African countries women show more interest in ABE than what men do.*

The documentation in support of the assertions above (which are not necessarily official views of the World Bank) can be obtained by sending me an email to: ([jlauglo@worldbank.org](mailto:jlauglo@worldbank.org)). The paper on Engaging with Adults (still in the making) will also discuss policy issues. Given that there is a case for engaging more with adults, we are asking the question - how should one do it?

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## MEETINGS

Thank you once again for sending in listings of meetings that are to take place in the next six months or thereabouts. As previously:

O = Open; I = By invitation

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title of Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>O or I</b>
<b>Apr</b> 26-28	World Education Forum	Dakar Senegal	Education for All Forum and the Government of Senegal	Svein Osttveit EFA Forum Secretariat 7, Place de Fontenoy 75352 Paris 07SP Tel: (33) 1 4568 1524 Fax: (33) 1 4568 5629 efa@unesco.org	I
<b>Apr</b>	Training evaluators in universities	Central America	DSE	C Hensert DSE P O Box 300462 53225 Bonn Germany	I
<b>Apr</b>	Further training for university staff	Indonesia	DSE	C Hensert DSE Address as above	I
<b>May</b> 5-30 <b>June</b>	University staff development programme	Witzenhausen Germany	DSE	C Hensert DSE Address as above	I
<b>May</b>	National languages	Namibia	DSE	U Bude DSE Address as above	I
<b>May</b>	Curriculum Reform	Gauteng South Africa	DSE	U Bude DSE Address as above	I
<b>June</b> 15-17	Education as a human right	Oslo Norway	NASEDEC	Convenor: Robert Langley Smith Secretary: Ragnhild Tungesvik <a href="mailto:lins@lu.hioslo.no">lins@lu.hioslo.no</a>	O
22	Annual conference. Britain and the Commonwealth. International student mobility	London UK	Council for Education in the Commonwealth	John May c/o CEC Commonwealth House 7 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Road London SW4 7NQ Tel/Fax: 020 7498 1202 secretariat@cecom.org.uk	O

23-24	Thinking quality initiative Conference	Hong Kong	Hong Kong Baptist University	Conference Secretariat c/o Centre for Educational Development Hong Kong Baptist University Kowloon Tong Hong Kong Tel.: (852) 2339 7209 or 2339 7230 Fax: (852) 2337 5131 think@hkbu.edu.hk Website: www.hkbu.hk/~think	O
July	Qualitative empirical research	East Africa	DSE	Wolfgang Gmelin DSE Address as above	I
July	Mother tongue education	Burkina Faso	DSE	I Jung DSE Address as above	I
Aug 30 - Sept 2	Innovations in higher education	Helsinki Finland	University of Helsinki	Conference Manager Sari Lindblom-Yvonne Development Studies P.O. Box 3, 00014 University of Helsinki Finland Tel.: (358) 9 191 22963; Fax: (358) 9 191 22192 inno2000@helsinki.fi Website: www.helsinki.fi/inno2000	O
Sept 3-7	19th European Congress of Comparative Education.	Bologna Italy	The Comparative Education Society of Europe (CESE)	Conference Secretariat Dipartimento di Scienze dell' Educazione Via Zamboni 34 40126 Bologna Italy Tel: (39) 051 25 84 42; Fax: (39) 051-22-88-47 cese-org@scform.unibo.it Website: www.unibo.it/CESE-conference	O

8-10	BAICE 2000 Conference. Democracy and citizenship	Birmingham UK	British Association of International and Comparative Education	Lynn Davies CIER School of Education University of Birmingham Birmingham B15 2TT Tel.: (44) 121 414 4823; Fax: (44) 121 414 4865 L.Davies@bham.ac.uk	O
9-13	5th European Conference on higher agriculture education: from production agriculture, to rural development	Plymouth UK		Eiren Williams University of Plymouth, Tel: (44) 1626 325667	O
Sept	Further training for university staff	Indonesia	DSE	C Hensert DSE Address as above	I
Sept	Curriculum reform	Gauteng South Africa	DSE	U Bude DSE Address as above	I
Oct 18-20	Technologies of Information and Communication in Engineering education, training and industry	Troyes France		Claudine Huboud-Peron Email: tice2000@univ-troyes.fr	O
Oct	National languages	Namibia	DSE	U Bude DSE Address as above	I
Oct	Curricula environment education	Ethiopia	DSE	U Bude DSE Address as above	I
Nov 18	17th Annual Conference of the Hong Kong Educational Research Association; 'Education Reform in Hong Kong: Prospects and Possibilities'	Hong Kong	The University of Hong Kong	Mark Bray, Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong. mbray@hku.hk	O

<b>Nov</b>	14th Commonwealth Education Ministers Conference. Education in a global era. Challenges of equity and opportunities for diversity	Halifax Canada	Commonwealth Secretariat	The Commonwealth Secretariat Marlborough House Pall Mall, London WC1 5HX	I
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## EDUCATION FOR ALL: THE CHALLENGE OF UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION. A COLLOQUIUM ON DFID'S DRAFT TARGETS PAPER.

Thelma Henderson, Warwick

Email: [THson@aol.com](mailto:THson@aol.com)

The draft Targets Paper sets out DFID's strategy for helping to achieve the international development targets for education, agreed by the international community over the last few years. These targets concern the achievement of primary schooling for all and gender equity in schooling by the year 2015. The period March-May 2000, has been designated as a period of external consultation on the document and the colloquium represented a part of this exercise.

### The Paper

The draft strategy paper takes UPE as its focus, following from the Jomtien Conference in 1990. This focus was chosen in the belief that without a critical mass of people with primary education, it would be difficult for development to take off. But UPE is recognised as only a part of education, and DFID is working with UNESCO on secondary education and will take account of the paper on higher education recently published by the World Bank.

The preparation of the strategy paper has involved reflection on past experience and consideration of new ways of working, including co-operating with other funding agencies; working with other governments on agreed policies; taking account of the contribution of other sectors, such as health; creating long term partnerships; aiming for better collection and analysis of data. The paper itself provides an analytical framework for strategy consisting of a set of challenges, 12 lessons and 12 priorities. At the end of the paper DFID's strategy is encapsulated in three strands (a) strengthening international commitments; (b) having the strongest bilateral country programmes; (c) making use of knowledge and research.

### The Discussion.

DFID was warmly congratulated on the paper.

The issues which were raised during the day included the following:

1. The framework of the paper. It was recognised that the framework outlined in the paper was underpinned by strong principles. But flexibility in its application to different educational contexts and varied circumstances.
2. The presentation of the paper. A plea was made for less abstract, more engaging language and for the insertion of actual examples which would ground the text in reality. Consistency in working issues, such as gender, through the text was called for, as was more cross-referencing within the text and to the other strategy papers. It was hoped that the document would be made accessible to a wide audience.
3. The focus on UPE. Although the focus was on UPE, its relationship to other parts of the education system should be recognised. Little was mentioned of the subsequent unmet demands for junior secondary education. Little was mentioned on the subject of teacher education and teacher support and motivation. Yet it is the teachers who are expected to bring about development and change.

4. Issues of demography. Various trends need to be considered in relation to enrolment: (a) the projections of population in the different regions and (b) the unfolding of enrolment. For instance, in order to achieve UPE in 2015, there must be universal enrolment in Primary 1 by 2009; (c) the effect of the HIV/Aids pandemic, which has already had a dire effect on the increase in the number of orphans and the reduction in the number of teachers.
5. Gender. There is evidence that it is the ability to earn an independent income, rather than the amount of education acquired, that leads to an improvement of women's status in the household and in society. It is important therefore for education to provide women with skills that can be used in the labour market.

Boys' attitudes to girls also need to be targeted. In a recent study in Zimbabwe, for instance, it was found that for every adolescent boy infected with HIV/Aids, there were six adolescent girls. In similar vein, the main reason for girls dropping out of school is not shortage of money but pregnancy.

6. Quantity and quality. A great deal of emphasis is placed on quantity and not enough on quality. The number of enrolments is important but so is the quality of the process of education, and the outcomes that result from it. An enrolment of 100% that results in only 20% being effectively educated cannot be counted as successful. Quality should be emphasised at all levels: in the school classroom; in the training of teachers; in management and administration.
7. Management information systems. The call for better statistics should be heard here at home as well as in the corridors of Ministries of Education overseas. Where financial management is concerned there are recognised problems. Different recipient governments use different systems of accounting as do different donors. DFID has recently funded a study of this problem.

**THE INSTALLATION OF BETTER MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS IMPLIES THE USE OF IT AND, WITH IT, THE USE OF SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER EQUIPMENT THAT NEEDS MAINTENANCE, AND PERSONNEL WHO ARE HIGHLY SKILLED. YET IN MANY PLACES THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WITH SUFFICIENT TRAINING TO DO THIS. THE PROBLEM WILL BE EXACERBATED BY DECENTRALISATION.**

8. Implementation. A great deal more thought needs to be given to implementation. Some aspects of this relate to the management of change, the process of learning, systems of assessment and systems of monitoring. These need to be grounded in real contexts and circumstances. Nor should we be complacent about implementation. For instance, what will be the outcome on the strategy of the political and professional choices that have to be made on a daily basis within Ministries of Education.
9. Commitment. Not all the countries that attended the Jomtien Conference have been equally committed to the obligations they said they would honour in 1990. The reform of national education systems needs to be emphasised in the strategy paper and cases of reform could be included as examples.

The draft Targets Paper will be taken to the World Forum on Education that takes place in Dakar in April. After publication in July, it will be considered again at the meeting of the Commonwealth Education Ministers scheduled to take place in Halifax Nova Scotia in November.

## NORRAG AGM

The next AGM - in Germany – This will be a chance to review options and make decisions on future work themes and funding of NORRAG NEWS. By towards the end of this year, a good deal more should be known from a series of consultations and discussions with the membership and with agencies. The next Annual General Meeting & Conference we are currently proposing to be linked to the 12th Annual Conference of the European Association for International Education (EAIE). If NORRAG's AGM is either just before or just after the EAIE (30 Nov to 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec, Leipzig), it could provide a number of advantages in terms of participation and networking. The theme of EAIE will be 'Re-forming higher education – the international way'. Michel Carton is proposing the following theme for its next meeting.

**Re-forming development and international education studies:  
a challenge for Europe**

Development and International education studies are at a turning point. After the difficult period of the 80's, a strong renewed interest is perceived for these fields in relation with the different consequences of globalisation on the North and the South.

The session would focus on:

- the challenge to the "inter-disciplinarity" of these fields of studies from the increased focus on disciplines
- the shift in aid agency support towards training and capacity building in the South
- the increase in institutional competition and marketisation
- the comparative advantage of Europe vs US for those from the South interested in post graduate training abroad.

These themes are of particular importance for NORRAG and EAIE, as they relate to some study fields which are at the crossroad of different scientific, pedagogical and institutional dimensions of their respective activities.

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**FUNDING NORRAG NEWS - A WAY FORWARD.**

Pravina King, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh  
[P.King@ed.ac.uk](mailto:P.King@ed.ac.uk)

There has been discussion over the past few years about how Norrag News might find a new and more sustainable ways of developing.

In principle, its core funding has been secured for the next five years with joint funding from the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Funding remains to be secured to take forward two initiatives that have been discussed on several occasions, by the membership, as well as the executive. Norrag New would need to have secure funding from about ten agencies or organisations for five years initially, to take forward these initiatives. Preliminary conversations with several agencies and organisations have been positive. Norrag will be writing to these to take the initial discussions forward.

There have been two main areas of discussion.

1. Should Norrag be available on the internet? There are several reasons to see this as a useful way forward. But there is also a concern not to lose the idea of the newsletter being participatory rather than just a product to be consumed.

Being available on the internet would certainly widen Norrag's readership as well as help to cut down on postage to far flung places. It would mean that organisations could print multiple copies to use in workshops with their partners. Feedback from these workshops could provide material for future issues of Norrag, building on themes that have already been discussed or, providing new themes. The aim would be to have value added, to the publication, through these contributions from different parts of the world. It is possible that workshops might result in sufficient material being generated to justify the production of a stand alone issue.

2. Norrag being available on the internet will not mean its demise as a membership organisation. Numbers have grown steadily and continue to grow. There is a strong desire amongst the membership not to lose the sense of being a participatory group. Subscriptions will continue to be collected from members.

A questionnaire will be sent out with the next issue to ascertain whether members would like to continue receiving hard copy or would prefer to download a copy off the internet. Those I have talked to indicate they would prefer to receive hard copy. However, some of you may prefer to download only what is of interest to you. It is likely there will be a preparation phase to get the internet copy online but we will keep you informed as the project develops.

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PUBLICATIONS LINKED TO NORRAG & SOME OF ITS MEMBERS

[We continue to feel that it would be a worthwhile task to compile a list of what NORRAG members have published or been responsible for publishing through their agency in, say, 1999-2000. If anyone would like to assist with this, please make contact.]

New Book Announcement

Brock-Utne, Birgit, 2000: *Whose Education for All? The Recolonization of the African Mind*. New York/London: Falmer Press. 340 pages, hard-back - 50\$ - ISBN 0-8153-3478-8.

Can be ordered at:

Taylor @ Francis, 47 Runway Road, Suite G, Levittown, PA 19057, US or call (1)215.269.0400 or toll-free: (1) 800-627-6273 or fax (1)215.269.0363. E-mail:

Bkorders@taylorandfrancis.com

For a review copy call Brian Hughes: (1 )-212-216-7848

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Hong Kong and Macau compared

The Comparative Education Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong is pleased to announce publication of a new book: *Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macau*:

*Comparative Perspectives on Continuity and Change* edited by Mark Bray & Ramsey Koo. The book focuses on all levels of education. It is the first detailed work of its kind, and is a significant contribution to the broad field of comparative education as well as to study of the specific societies which are its main focus. Contents: Introduction (Ramsey Koo) Levels and Sub-sectors 1. Pre-school Education (Margaret Wong) 2. Primary and Secondary Schooling (Bob Adamson & Titus Li) 3. Teacher Education (Titus Li & Ora Kwo) 4. Higher Education (Andrew Yung) Political, Economic and Social Issues 5. Church, State and Education during the Colonial Period (Beatrice Leung) 6. Higher Education, Imperialism and Colonial Transition (Philip Hui & Helen Poon) 7. Education and the Labour Force (William Ma) Curriculum Policies and Processes 8. Curriculum Reform (Jennifer Lo) 9. Civic and Political Education (Thomas Tse) 10. Secondary School History Curricula (John Tan) 11. Secondary School Mathematics Curricula (Tang Kwok Chun) Conclusions 12. Methodology and Focus in Comparative Education (Mark Bray) 13. Continuity and Change in Education (Mark Bray)

Publication date: November 1999. Price: US\$32 including postage (add US\$5 for airmail). 286 pages. ISBN 962 8093 82 7. Order from: The Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong. Fax (852) 2517 4737; E-mail: cerc@hkusub.hku.hk. Make checks payable to "The University of Hong Kong".

#### **NORRAG & UNESCO PRESS PUBLICATION**

Kenneth King and Lene Buchert (Eds) 1999 *Changing international aid to education: global patterns and national contexts* (UNESCO Press, Paris ISBN 92-3-1033514-2 Paperback, 326 pages). This book is one of the outcomes of the Oxford Conference of 1997, since many of the papers were first presented there. In addition, a number of further chapters were commissioned. NORRAG members included in this book are: Aklilu Habte, Simon McGrath, Steve Heyneman, Wolfgang Gmelin, Myra Harrison, Yumiko Yokozeki, Nobu Sawamura, Peter Williams, Lene Buchert, Ulla Kann, Kenneth King, Beatrice Avalos, Kai ming Cheng, and Michel Carton. The book can be ordered most easily from the NORRAG Secretariat. See the flyer attached to this issue of NN.

#### **South Africa - Education and Training**

A book that has emerged from cooperation between the University of Western Cape and the University of Edinburgh:

Wally Morrow and Kenneth King (Eds) 1999 *Vision and Reality: changing education and training in South Africa* (University of Cape Town Press, Cape Town. ISBN 1-910713-27-1. paperback, 300 pages). It has sections on Policy and implementation: rhetoric and reality; integrating education and training; transforming professional teacher education; changing teaching and learning practices in adult and higher education; and on diversity and social cohesion in education.

A limited number of copies can be obtained from the Centre of African Studies (address as NORRAG NEWS); otherwise from The University of Cape Town Press, Private Bag, Rondebosch, 7701, Cape Town. For an email order to UCT Press:

Customer Services Division, Juta & Co, Bo Box 14373, Kenwyn 7790 South Africa. Email cserv@juta.co.za. It costs 79 Rand in South Africa which is approximately £10. sterling.

Or from the African Book Centre, 38 King Street, London WC2E BJT. Email: africabooks@dial.pipex.com

#### **Enterprise in Africa: between poverty and growth**

This book, edited by two NORRAG members, King and McGrath, is concerned with the sustainability of the livelihoods of those who work in micro-enterprises, the informal sector, or the informal sector in Africa. It contains some of the best known analysts from Africa, Europe and North America on African enterprise. And amongst other main topics it is very much interested in the impact of education and training on enterprise development. Available from

Intermediate Technology Publications, 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HH. Fax: +44 (0) 171 436 201. Email [orders@itpubs.org.uk](mailto:orders@itpubs.org.uk). (ISBN 1 85339 478 5, paperback: £14.95 (\$27.50))

A limited number of copies can be ordered via the Centre of African Studies (address as NORRAG NEWS)

#### **Educaid: Norwegian co-operation in basic education**

is a rather NORRAG-like publication, of just 4 pages, which can be obtained from Pilestredet, 52, N-0157, Oslo, Norway. Email: [lins@lu.hioslo.no](mailto:lins@lu.hioslo.no). The latest issue, not surprisingly, was on Education Sector Programmes.

#### **Explaining the achievements of Cuban education**

Lavinia Gasperini, who has been a NORRAG member both when she was in Italian Cooperation, and for the last several years in the World Bank, has written a very interesting account of Cuba's very remarkable achievements in the education sphere. This was presented in a World Bank seminar in November. The title is 'The Cuban education system: lessons learned and open dilemmas'. It can be obtained directly from Lavinia on the following email: [lgasperini@worldbank.org](mailto:lgasperini@worldbank.org)

#### **The Working Group for International Cooperation in Vocational and Technical Skills Development**

has just produced the latest in its series of Papers. This is very relevant to the theme of the present issue: *Sector Programme Support and Human & Institutional Development in Skills Development* (though this is not our snazziest title!). This and the others are available from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), CH-3003, Bern. The Secretariat for this Working Group is provided by NORRAG, with the support of ILO and of SDC. We don't seem to have acquired an ISSN no for this series yet. The latest issue, like the earlier ones, is edited by a NORRAG member, Simon McGrath. This one is 32 pages long.

#### **Secondary schooling in developing countries**

Keith Lewin and Françoise Caillods have been preparing a publication for IIEP which looks at many general issues affecting secondary education, as well as examining the situation in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Sri Lanka, China, Costa Rica, and the francophone countries. IIEP is at 7-9 rue Eugène Delacroix, Paris. It will be recalled that the WB were set to do a policy paper on secondary education, but that never happened.

#### **Improving European Commission Development Cooperation: the case of education**

This is a publication that has just been presented by Actionaid to the European Commission in the European Parliament. It analyses how the Commission measures up to a ten point action plan; discusses some of the key challenges in the current EC approach to those issues, and then makes a series of recommendations. There is a useful analysis of the character and tradition of EC aid to education, and a select bibliography. It is written by Martha Caddell and Kenneth King. It can be acquired from Actionaid, Hamlyn House, Macdonald Road, London N19 5PG.

Email: [mail@actionaid.org.uk](mailto:mail@actionaid.org.uk) (22 pages)

The publication is also available in French, Spanish and Italian.

#### **ADEA & Partnership in Education in Africa**

The proceedings of the last ADEA biennial in Dakar were available in time for the 1999 biennial. Its theme of partnership is directly relevant to this issue of NORRAG.

*Partnerships for Capacity Building and Quality Improvements in Education.* Paris: Association for the Development of African Education (ADEA), 1999. Available from ADEA, 7-9 rue Eugene Delacroix, Paris 75116. Email: [adea@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:adea@iiep.unesco.org)

**Techknowlogia: Online Journal of Technologies for Knowledge and Learning**

This online journal's Editor in Chief is Wadi Haddad who was one of the original members of the Research Review and Advisory Group (RRAG). Apart from other responsibilities, he now runs an organisation called Knowledge Enterprise Inc. The latest issue comments as follows:

'The Journal is published bimonthly on the Internet by Knowledge Enterprise, Inc., in collaboration with UNESCO, OECD and GIC. You can find it at: <http://www.TechKnowLogia.org>, and subscription is FREE.

TechKnowLogia provides policy makers, strategists, practitioners and technologists at the local, national and global levels with a strategic forum to share policies, strategies, experiences and tools in harnessing technologies for knowledge dissemination, effective learning, and efficient education services. It also reviews systematically the latest systems and products of technologies of today, and peeks into the world of tomorrow.

Since its launching one month ago, TechKnowLogia is now read in almost 100 countries by a highly influential group of people: decision-makers at policy and programme levels, CEOs of Information and Communication Technology firms, senior academics, officers of development agencies and practitioners in education and technology. We are also featured on a number of prominent web sites - and the circle is ever widening.'

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