



The African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC)

Factors Affecting Transition to Secondary Education in Africa

November 27, 2007



Purpose of the Study

- Gain a clearer understanding of the nature, scope and extent of challenges in secondary school transition in sub-Saharan African (SSA).
- Identify research gaps on the issues and design of interventions to enhance transition to secondary education for targeted groups- girls, the poor, ethnic minorities and those affected by HIV and AIDS



Four Critical Factors Influencing Transition in Africa

- These have been identified as:
- I: Financing
- II: Family Networks and household composition
- III: Inequitable distribution of secondary school opportunities between urban poor (slums) and non poor and rural and urban areas
- IV: Quality and relevance



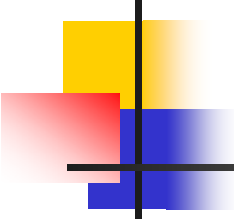
I: Financing

- Finances constitute a constraint for governments and households
- In most countries in SSA, secondary education tend to be most neglected and receives less than 20 per cent of state resources



Financing Contd.

- **Kenya**-households shoulder 60% of secondary school costs compared to 20% for primary and 8% for university education costs
- **Malawi**-Secondary education receives 14.6% of education budget



II: Family Networks and Household Composition

- High dependency rates diminish chances of secondary education
- **Malawi**-0-14 year-olds have a dependency rate of 94% and this makes transition rate to secondary school much lower than that of South Africa which has a higher enrolment and dependency rate of 59%



II: Family Networks and Household Composition

- Chances that a child will access secondary education decrease with the number of secondary school-going age children in the family
- Chances of secondary education in poor households increase where there are strong family networks-extended family shares the burden

III: Inadequate distribution of secondary school opportunities



- Slum children who miss places in government schools enroll in private schools but the high costs bar most of them and they end up enrolling in poor private schools with little meaningful learning



III: Quality and relevance

- Perceptions of curricula inadequacies have given rise to apathy, school disaffection, antisocial behaviors often leading to low transition
- Poor households are unlikely to spend their meagre resources on secondary education without immediate economic benefits
- Poor quality of primary schools in urban slums also tends to lead to low transition



Quality and relevance Contd.

- Performance at primary school leaving examinations-examinations are content rather than skills based and failure rates are high in many countries
- Only those students who are in good schools or can afford to pay extra tutoring pass well and continue to secondary school
- Girls perform well in lower primary but generally boys perform better in the national examinations



Other factors Contd.

- Gender dimension-transition skewed in favour of boys in many countries in SSA
- Several factors affect girls more than boys-demand factors-parents tend to favour boys' education
- Economic factors-poverty, direct and indirect costs
- Opportunity costs vs. low rates of return



Other factors Contd.

- In Africa, girls constitute 75% of all excluded children
- Gender-specific barriers include language, inadequate schools in remote areas, poor quality of schooling and poor performance, few textbooks, poor facilities



Other factors Contd.

- Impact of HIV and AIDS- most infections occur among 15-49 year-olds thus affecting secondary education seriously
- In Kenya it was estimated that upto 20% of 14-17 year-olds, a majority of them, girls were infected in 2000



Successful Models

- Political commitment and pragmatic education planning-**Korea**
- Partnerships-responsibility for education is shared between central government, local authorities and private sector-**Zimbabwe**
- Early recognition of system challenges and institutionalizing corrective measures-**Botswana**



Successful Models Contd.

- Gradual growth through financing through a mixture of public contributions, efficiency gains and strategic donor assistance-**Malawi**



Research Gaps

- Observation-it is impractical to isolate factors affecting transition from other aspects of schooling like enrolment, repetition, survival, completion and graduation
- Need for more research on-national policies, interplay of factors across regions, gender, role of private providers and exact impact of HIV and AIDS



Conclusion

- Two observations- (1) difficulty in characterizing factors influencing transition in Africa; and (2) Diversity of the continent
- Solution is to study country groups using diverse classifications-regions, economies and language



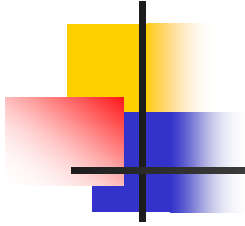
Conclusion

- The two most critical issues in transition to secondary education are-cost of secondary schooling and supply of enough places



Finally

- Policies to improve transition must target the rural and urban poor
- Countries have to make a deliberate choice and harmonise strategies for increasing access and those for addressing issues of quality and relevance



Thank you for your attention!!!!

