Chapter 5

From targets to reform: national strategies in action

Achieving greater gender equality within and through education will not happen easily. But it is clear that progress is possible and that the benefits will be far-reaching. These are major messages of this year's report. It is also clear that national policies and reforms designed to achieve all the EFA goals will fail in the absence of strategies to address gender-related inequalities of access, participation and learning and recognition of the gender-differentiated social and economic outcomes in society as a whole. This is just as true for industrialized and transition countries as for South Asia, the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa, where the challenge of achieving gender equality appears most daunting.

The next two chapters recall some of these issues and revisit the gender dimensions of EFA. However, their main purpose is to offer an analysis of the national policies and reforms that can make a substantial contribution to achieving EFA (Chapter 5) and to assess the extent that international co-operation in education is making a difference (Chapter 6).

Analysis of the policies required to achieve gender equality makes clear that while major changes can be made within education systems, many fundamental changes lie outside the mandate and competence of education ministries and institutions. Broader political and social measures have to be taken if the promise of better social services is to be realized.

While governments are responsible for enabling their citizens to benefit from the right to a good education, these functions extend well beyond specific, technical educational responses, important as these are. Ensuring the equitable allocation of resources to education, strengthening public service institutions and engaging in dialogue with civil society are characteristics of broad-based government reform and not of sector strategies alone. Without attention to this broader environment of good governance, education-specific policy levers are likely to fall well short of their intended outcomes. At the same time, good education is itself a powerful force for bringing about the wider social and economic changes on which its own development depends.

It is clear too that the complementarities of basic social services should be exploited more effectively (UNDP, 2003*b*). This is not a new message, but the nexus of health, education, water and sanitation does need to be seen in a more unified way. A cross-sectoral approach is required if the many positive relationships between basic education, better health and nutrition, safe water and good sanitation are to reap their substantive human benefits. In addition, for many countries, any assessment of policy and its impact on better education that fails to take account of HIV/AIDS and of the effects of conflict on the lives of millions of people, will be seriously limited in its analysis and application (UNESCO, 2002*a*).

With this as background, **seven** main areas of analysis follow:
- Patterns of performance – what drives progress?
- Importance of context
- Commitments and time-bound targets
- Evidence of national reform
- Participation – is civil society involved?
- Decentralization – is it making a difference?
- Making primary education affordable.

Without attention to good governance, education-specific policy levers are likely to fall well short of their goals.

The chapter concludes with a brief examination of EFA and its policy implications in transition and industrialized countries.

Patterns of performance – what drives progress?

A central question for this and future issues of the *EFA Report* concerns the identification of key factors determining rates of progress towards EFA. Policy analysis is hampered by a lack of good international data to facilitate cross-country comparisons.[1] However, case-study material and policy analyses of a qualitative kind are important means of identifying best practice and suggesting priorities for policy reform. The second part of this chapter draws on this type of material. In addition, there are more quantitative approaches that can be used to suggest policy insights.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the Education for All Development Index (EDI) offers one way of obtaining a quantitative summary of progress towards EFA.[2] It also provides an opportunity to investigate the extent to which progress towards EFA is associated with factors that may be a function of policy choice. For example, to what extent is EDI associated with public spending on education, income levels, aid flows, national debt, and good governance?

Statistical analyses, using data for the ninety-four countries for which EDI has been calculated for the year 2000, show evidence of some significant relationships between these variables (Box 5.1). The following generalizations are suggested by the results.

The impact of economic growth. By itself, the correlation between growth and EDI is not strong, rather it is mediated by other factors. Economic growth appears to have a positive impact on EDI only if the institutions of the country function well, which suggests that growth has to be well managed in support of education. Furthermore, although the potential benefits to EDI from economic growth are present for all developing countries, they appear to be particularly marked for those at higher income levels.

Moderate levels of national indebtedness are associated with higher levels of EDI, but only

1. This is not to deny the growing literature on educational reform. The Human Development Network of the World Bank is an expanding resource, decentralization has a vast literature, regional policy studies exist (e.g. Adams, 2002; Moulton et al., 2001) and aid agencies are reviewing their contribution to educational reform (e.g. AUCC, forthcoming).

2. Some potential uses of this index – and its limitations – are indicated in Chapter 2, and are more comprehensively discussed in Appendix 2.

for the more democratic regimes. Moreover, for high levels of debt the analysis suggests that the value of an extra dollar borrowed will be negative for EDI.

The per capita value of total aid flows has a positive impact on EDI where there is an effective institutional structure, and where the environment is democratic. Thus, aid will be helpful for EFA where recipient conditions allow the resources to be well used.

Higher levels of domestic educational expenditure improve EDI but the strength of the relationship is clearly mediated by the income level of the country. In the poorest democratic countries, where both access and quality are low, extra investment appears to have greater impact on EDI than similar increments in richer countries.

The legal guarantee of free education in poorer countries is not associated with higher levels of EDI, even in democracies. However, there is a significant and positive correlation between legal guarantees and EDI where living standards are high. Thus, legislation is beneficial only to the extent that provision of education can be ensured, and where people are in a position to benefit from such learning opportunities. If there are strong constraints on resources from both the supply and demand sides, legal guarantees have a limited meaning.

School fees: The actual incidence of school fees has a negative impact on EDI, as expected. The effects appear to be significantly greater in authoritarian states. This may suggest that democratic governments find ways to moderate the negative impact of fees, for example by providing targeted subsidies to households on the basis of need.

The crucial role played by good governance is a common feature of these results. By 'good governance' we mean, on the one hand, the effectiveness of the legal-institutional framework of the country and, on the other, the democratic accountability of the state. The two are, of course, related, and while in some cases (as with the impact of economic growth) the effectiveness of the state apparatus seems to be a sufficient guarantee to ensure that the fruits of a successful macroeconomic policy are translated into educational gains, this is not always so. In

Box 5.1. Some determinants of the Education for All Development Index

Empirical analysis has been conducted which examines the extent to which variations in EDI are associated with other variables. The data set used for the ninety-four EDI countries includes twenty other variables of interest. Simple correlations indicate that higher levels of EDI are significantly associated with higher per capita incomes, economic growth rates, life expectancy, the incidence of democracy and of better governance, and negatively with rates of population growth, the incidence of school fees and the frequency of war.

Many of these independent variables are correlated with each other. Factor analysis has been used to design composite variables, in order to avoid multicolinearity. Three composites are used: the first is a background variable that includes population growth, life expectancy, infant mortality and per capita income; the second is a group of governance indicators including the rule of law, and the efficiency of state institutions; the third group comprises proxies for the extent to which the state is undemocratic. A time dimension is added by using data for the years 1990 and 2000 wherever possible, so as to increase the depth of the results.

These variables are used in the following statistical model, using a standard ordinary least squares estimating procedure:
$$EDI_{t,n} = \alpha_n + \beta_1 I_{t,n} + \beta_2 U_{t,n} + \beta_3 B_{t,n} + \beta_4 I_{t,n} \times U_{t,n} + \beta_5 I_{t,n} \times B_{t,n} + \beta_6 B_{t,n} \times U_{t,n}$$
where I stands for institutions, U for undemocratic (the higher the value of the variable the less democratic the country), and B for background information. The first interactive term, I*U, measures whether institutional development will matter differently in democratic and non-democratic countries. The second interactive term, I*B, is there to see whether institutions have a different impact on EDI, depending on whether the initial living standards are high or low. The final interactive term, B*U, looks at whether living standards matter differently in democratic and non-democratic countries.

The results show that (other things being equal) EDI is increased with better institutional development, greater democracy and higher living standards (i.e. β_1 and β_3 are positive whereas β_2 is negative). All three coefficients are highly significant. Overall, the model suggests that institutional development matters most for poor countries (β_5 is negative and significant), the more so in countries which are more democratic (β_4 is negative and significant), while living standards are important regardless of other circumstances ($\beta_6 \approx 0$).

The introduction of other variables into this basic model suggests that educational aid has an impact on EDI only where there is a transparent democratic system and a good institutional framework; that educational expenditures (as a proportion of GNP) increase EDI, but again particularly so where democracy and institutional development are well established; that moderate levels of debt can have a positive impact on EDI whereas high levels have a strongly negative impact; that legal guarantees of free education only affect EDI in higher-income states; that fees have a strongly negative impact on EFA, particularly where levels of democracy are low; and, finally, that economic growth only has a significant impact on EDI where levels of institutional development are relatively well developed.

Source: Silva (2003).

A successful educational policy needs a careful combination of targeting and realism.

other cases, (as with debt management) it appears to be crucial that the state is accountable to the electorate, in order to ensure that its policies actually benefit the public. Finally, these findings suggest that a successful educational policy necessitates a careful combination of targeting and realism: while educational expenditures will have the most significant impact in poorer countries, legal guarantees of free education are unlikely to help unless the country is able to ensure that the facilities are available, and has a population that is willing and able to use them. At present these results are suggestive, and the approach merits further attention and development.

Importance of context

The broad relationships set out above are important. But they are limited in their value as predictors of progress unless they are mediated through the particular circumstances of individual countries. For some, the sheer numerical scale of the educational challenge is the defining factor, for others responding to the diversity of their societies is key. Being a small nation-state may limit options, while levels and patterns of poverty circumscribe action in the poorest countries. For an increasing number of states the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of conflict will dictate both the policies that are needed and the reforms that are possible.

3. Each year the UNDP *Human Development Report* explores major issues of global concern, addressing changes in per capita income, human resource development, and basic needs as a measure of human progress, while assessing the role of people in development. UNDP has established three composite indexes: the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and the Human Poverty Index (HPI). The latter ranks countries according to their national levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and life expectancy (UNDP, 2003*b*).

The challenge of numbers

For some countries, the sheer scale of the challenge, in terms of the numbers of people whose educational rights and opportunities are being denied, requires a policy response that is systemic and nationwide. Table 5.1 identifies fifteen countries where more than 1 million children were out of school in 2000. These countries account for about 40% of the global population of out-of-school children and about the same share of the world's adult illiterates. And this list excludes a number of very large countries for which no data are recorded for 2000, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, India and Nigeria.

Elsewhere, the absolute numbers may not be large by international standards, but those without learning opportunities comprise a very high proportion of the school-age population. Table 5.2 shows seventeen countries (all from the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa) with a primary-school net enrolment ratio (NER) in 2000 of below 60 (again limited by the fact that NER is unavailable for fifty-two countries worldwide). This table overlaps with Table 5.1 in the case of seven countries: Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, the Niger, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania.

For all these countries and more, piecemeal reform and individual projects will not make the difference. They require a massive expansion of basic education linked to difficult decisions about investment in adult literacy in systems where resources are severely constrained.

The burden of poverty

The incidence of absolute poverty relegates education as a personal and family priority, let alone allowing governments to fulfil their educational responsibilities. In Francophone West Africa, poverty is a defining characteristic of life. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and Togo are all classified as least developed countries. The Human Poverty Index[3] (UNDP, 2003*b*) ranges from 38.5 for Togo to 61.8 for the Niger and, despite improved economic growth in the 1990s, the gap is widening between those who constitute the 20% poorest and the 20% richest. Climatic instability, a fragile natural resource base, dependence on a small number of exports,

Table 5.1. The scale of the challenge (2000)

Country	Primary-school-age children out of school (thousands)	Adult illiterates (15+) (thousands)	Out of school and illiterates (% of total population)
China	8 054	141 903	11.8
Pakistan	7 785	46 702	38.6
Ethiopia	5 499	21 005	42.1
United Rep. of Tanzania	3 618	4 827	24.0
Islamic Rep. of Iran	2 436	10 552	18.5
Sudan	2 405	7 881	33.0
Indonesia	2 046	19 377	10.1
Bangladesh	1 957	50 558	38.2
Kenya	1 909	3 049	16.2
Saudi Arabia	1 438	2 760	20.6
Ghana	1 290	3 239	23.5
Niger	1 287	4 564	54.0
Mozambique	1 153	5 741	37.7
Yemen	1 098	4 914	32.8
Angola	1 010	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Statistical annex, Tables 2 and 5.

Table 5.2. Net enrolment and adult illiteracy (2000)

Country	Primary NER	Adult illiterates (15+) (thousands)
Niger	30.4	4.564
Djibouti	32.6	0.127
Burkina Faso	35.5	4.504
Angola	36.9	n.a.
Eritrea	41.0	0.908
Ethiopia	46.7	21.005
United Rep. of Tanzania	46.7	4.827
Guinea	47.0	n.a.
Sudan	49.5	7.881
Burundi	53.7	1.734
Guinea-Bissau	53.5	0.417
Central African Rep.	54.7	1.129
Mozambique	54.4	5.741
Comoros	56.2	0.177
Saudi Arabia	57.9	2.760
Chad	58.2	2.423
Ghana	58.2	3.239

Source: Statistical annex, Tables 2 and 5.

the incidence of conflict and the spread of HIV/AIDS is a formidable environment in which to define education policy and make progress towards EFA, although as Table 5.3 shows it was possible during the 1990s to increase the proportion of national expenditure on education in the majority of these countries. Aid dependence is high compared with the average level for the Africa region as a whole, although its per capita level fell in all nine countries during the 1990s. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the educational indicators of these countries are some of the poorest in the world, as Chapter 2 and the annexes to this report demonstrate.

Inclusion: tailoring policies

In most of the countries cited above, but also in states with much higher levels of primary-school enrolment and literacy, policies are needed to provide all children with the opportunity to learn. Even in countries where NERs are relatively high (85 and over), context specific solutions are required to meet the needs of those who are difficult to reach by virtue of gender, geography, language, ethnicity, orphanhood, and rural and urban poverty. The incidence of conflict heightens the complexity of the policy response required.

The rights of ethnic minorities provide one example. China is confronted with the needs of the least-developed parts of the country, primarily remote rural areas and regions in the west, as well as large migrant communities that have moved into China's cities (Maher and Ling, 2003). In Viet Nam, in 1998, 82% of ethnic minority children were enrolled in primary school (Viet Nam Poverty Task Force, 2002) compared with 93% for the Kinh majority. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which has 47 officially recognized ethnic groups with 149 sub-groups, a much higher percentage of ethnic minority children have never enrolled in,

Table 5.3. Francophone West Africa

	Public expenditure on education as % of GDP[1]		ODA US$ per capita (in constant 2000 US$)[2]		ODA as % of GNI[2]		Debt service as % of GDP[1]	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Benin	3.2	3.8	56	38	15.3	11.1	2.1	3.5
Burkina Faso	2.3	3.5	35	30	13.6	15.5	1.2	2.5
Côte d'Ivoire	4.8	4.4	54	22	7.4	3.6	11.7	10.9
Guinea	1.8	1.9	51	21	11.6	5.2	6.0	4.4
Mali	2.1	2.6	56	33	20.3	15.6	2.8	4.2
Mauritania	2.1	2.4a	121	80	24.1	22.0	14.3	10.7
Niger	3.1b	2.3c	53	19	16.7	11.7	4.0	1.6
Senegal	3.3	3.9	112	44	15.3	9.9	5.7	5.2
Togo	4.5	4.3	70	15	17.4	5.9	5.3	2.4
Total Africa – north of Sahara			69	16	5.7	1.1		
Total Africa – south of Sahara			34	19	7.3	4.2		
Total Africa			41	20	6.9	3.1		
Total LDCs			35	19	18.2	8.3		
Total developing countries			15	10	1.7	1.0		

Sources: 1. UNDP (2002, 2003)
2. DAC on-line database (OECD-DAC, 2003, Table 2a and Reference Section)
a: Data for 2001; b: Data for 1989; c: Data for 1999.

or attended school, than children who have Lao as their first language (Seel, 2003).

The social and economic implications of exclusion also give rise to significant political and educational policy issues in the industrialized world, even when the numbers of people involved are small by world standards. This is an issue which is revisited in the last section of this chapter.

Small states

Of the 203 states listed in the annexes to this report, 58 have a population of less than 1.5 million (28.6% of the total); 43 have a population of under 500,000. For many of these countries, primarily in the Caribbean and the South Pacific, EFA policies are constrained by size of population, limiting the ability of governments to offer a complete range of educational opportunities. The implications of out-migration and the intensification of globalization set additional educational challenges for very small societies. Kiribati, (population 83,000) in the South Pacific, has to meet the needs of communities inhabiting islands spread across over 3,500 m^2 of ocean (Mackenzie, 2003).

Commitments and time-bound targets

Powerful global symbols

Different contexts will require policies tailored to national circumstances but virtually all states have made formal international commitments to Education for All. Indeed, if the obligations and intentions agreed by governments over the last fifty years had been met, the dialogue at the World Education Forum would have been very different.

Treaty obligations

As indicated in Chapter 1, international commitments are of two types: treaty obligations and political commitments. As regards the former, formal obligations require states to observe and report on their performance under the five major human rights treaties, all of which affirm the right to education. By ratifying these treaties, states create legal obligations towards their own citizens as well as to other governments. At its best, the reporting

requirement assists states to improve their performance under each treaty, while indirectly strengthening international understanding and co-operation in support of better education.

The reporting record of countries varies, and more than one third of ratifying states have reports overdue. Nevertheless, by far the majority of the world's states have given full or partial guarantees of the right to education, which represent legal obligations. Box 1.1 in Chapter 1 summarizes these guarantees and Appendix 1 provides a fuller account.

Political commitments

Governments also agree to **international frameworks for action**. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000) and, more specifically for education, the *World Declaration on Education for All* and the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* (WCEFA, 1990) and the *Dakar Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2000f) are clear cases in point. These commitments are not binding on individual states but they are influential and are increasingly subject to both international and national monitoring processes. The *EFA Report* is an example of the former, while national reports charting progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide an example of the latter.[4]

Regional commitments may also be significant. In the 1960s, a series of regional plans, goals and targets were agreed in Africa, Latin America, and Asia and the Far East (Table 5.4). It is sometimes forgotten that ambitious targets were set for the achievement of universal primary education and other levels of education well before the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990.

National commitment is essential

International commitments are important but it is at the national level that a public, political and professional coalition around EFA is essential. Constitutional and legislative provision is a backbone for policy and reform. A good number of states enshrine the right to education in their constitutions – 83 out of 131 countries based on one survey of treaty reports, excluding OECD countries (Tomasevski, 2003). For example, under the Constitution of South Africa, the Bill of Rights (South Africa, 1996), guarantees

If the obligations and promises of governments over the last fifty years had been fulfilled, the dialogue at the World Education Forum would have been very different.

4. As of August 2003, there are twenty-seven Country Reports on Millennium Development Goals prepared nationally in association with UNDP, 2003a (www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html).

Table 5.4. Setting targets for formal education in the 1960s

Regions	Goals and targets	Target dates	Situation in 2000
Africa 1961	Increasing primary-school enrolment for the continent as a whole from 40% to 51% and secondary enrolment from 3% to 9%.	1966	Less than six out of ten primary-school-age children were enrolled in 2000. In countries for which there are data, GER in secondary and higher education is 27% and 2.5% respectively.
	Universal compulsory and free primary-school enrolment, 23% secondary-school attendance and 2% attendance at higher education institutions.	1980	
Latin America 1962	Completion of six years of primary education by all children in both rural and urban areas.	1970	Latin America and the Caribbean have a regional average of 97% primary NER in 2000. Yet, in half of the countries, only 87% of the children who have access to school reach the 5th grade.
Asia and the Far East 1960	Universal, free and compulsory primary education of at least seven years' duration for all children in Asia.	1980	In East Asia and the Pacific sub-region, the average NER was 93%. In South and West Asia only 81% of primary-school-age children were enrolled. But this is an eight-point increase on 1990.

Sources: UNESCO (1960); UNESCO (1961); UNESCO (1962); Statistical annex, Tables 5 and 6.

every citizen the right to a basic education including adult basic education and to further education *which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible*. The recent amendment to the Indian Constitution strengthens that country's commitment to education by requiring that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine (India, 2002). The Constitution of Brazil has ten detailed articles on education, covering the principles on which education should be provided, the duties of the state and its constituent federal parts, and stipulates minimum levels of financial provision (Brazil, 1998).

Of course, it is the extent to which these rights and obligations translate into enforceable legislation and well-conceived policies, plans and programmes that is the key issue. Constitutional guarantees in themselves do not make the difference. As one commentator (Juneja, 2003) has observed, the legislation that gives effect to the new constitutional clause on free and compulsory education will play a determining role in the future of Indian education. He concludes that what is needed is not legislation in the 'old compulsory mode' but legislation that will enforce the rights of every child to good quality education.

Setting national targets

Increasingly, governments are setting very specific, time-bound national education goals and targets within their plans and programmes. In part, this reflects their international commitments, including those made in Dakar. In countries where external aid is significant, the modalities of sector-wide approaches, Poverty Reduction Strategies and budget support require the setting of clear and realizable targets. But, more generally, this culture is pervading public service provision, partly in response to rising expectations of what public education systems should be expected to provide.

The eighteen countries in Table 5.5 provide a sample of states that have embraced target-setting in a significant way. Thus, they have recommitted themselves to achieving UPE in terms of enrolment and participation within the Dakar and MDG timeframes, interpreting their own national needs and goals within the 2015 objectives.

These countries are not only setting UPE targets in terms of net and gross enrolment but are also including measures of participation, survival, graduation and completion. In some cases, intermediate benchmarks are being set, notably in the countries with the lowest NERs, such as Chad, Mozambique and Pakistan. Table 5.5 also includes countries with relatively high NERs, such as Brazil, China and the Philippines. As noted earlier, these heavily populated countries

Ambitious targets were set for achievement of universal primary education and for other levels of education well before the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien.

Table 5.5. Setting UPE goals and targets

Countries	UPE enrolment targets	Primary NER (2000)[a]
Bangladesh[1]	Eight years of primary education compulsory and universal by 2010.	88.9 (6–10 age group)
Bhutan[2]	Increase the enrolment of children aged between 6 and 12 in primary schools to 90%–95% by 2007.	n.a.
Brazil[3]	Achieve universal access to primary and lower secondary education for all children within five years (2001–06) ensuring access and conditions of permanence in school to all children.	96.7 (7–10)
Chad[4]	Raise the admission rate to the first grade of primary school from 82% in 2000 to 90% in 2005/2006. 100% GER by 2015.	58.2 (6–11)
China[5]	By 2015, nine-year compulsory schooling should be universal in the whole country. NER approaching 100% by 2005.	92.7 (7–11)
Egypt[6]	Full absorption of the 6–15 age group in schooling by 2005.	99.6 (6–10)
Ethiopia[7]	UPE by 2015. GER of 65% (Levels 1–8) by the end of 2004/05.	46.7 (7–12)
Haiti[8]	NER for 6–11-year-olds of 100% between 2010 and 2015.	n.a.
Honduras[9]	Universal graduation from the 6th grade for all 12-year-olds by 2015.	87.6 (7–12)
India[10]	Enrolment of all children in schools or other alternatives by 2003. All children complete five years of schooling by 2007 and all children aged 6 to 14 complete eight years of schooling by 2010.	85.7 (6–10)
Lao PDR[11]	NER to 95% by 2015 and 98% by 2020.	81.4 (6–10)
Mauritania[12]	Primary NER 100% by 2008. Rate of access to first grade 100% by 2005.	64.0 (6–11)
Mozambique[13]	Every child aged 6 to enter primary education (EP1). Survival rate of 95% by 2013. EP1 completion rates 80% by 2008. Expanded access to EP2. 95% survival rate by 2015.	54.4 (6–10)
Niger[14]	Primary GER 70% by 2012; 84% by 2015.	30.4 (7–12)
Pakistan[15]	Universal participation of all 6-year-old children in UPE by 2015. Participation rates of 79% by 2005; 93% by 2010 and 100% by 2015.	60.1 (5–9)
Philippines[16]	Universal participation of all 6-year-old children at Grade 1 by 2006. Universal access to elementary education by 2015.	92.9 (6–11)
United Rep. of Tanzania[17]	Primary NER of 90% by 2005.	46.7 (7–13)
Viet Nam[18]	95% of children complete primary education before age 12 by 2010.	95.4 (6–10)

Sources:
1. Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (2002).
2. Bhutan (2002).
3. Guimaraes de Castro (2002*b*).
4. Chad (2002).
5. Maher and Ling (2003).
6. Egypt (2003).
7. Ethiopia (2002).
8. Haiti (1997).
9. Honduras (2002).
10. India (2003*a*).
11. Seel (2003).
12. Mauritania (2002).
13. Mozambique (2003).
14. Niger (2002*b*).
15. Pakistan (2002).
16. Philippines (2003).
17. United Republic of Tanzania (2003).
18. Viet Nam (2003).
a. Statistical annex, Table 5.

5. Human Rights in China states that its estimates are based on incomplete data and that the figure could be higher than 1.8 million, given that China's migrant population is estimated at between 100 million and 150 million.

6. The World Bank (2002*c*) reports that, based on Brazil's 2000 Census data, the percentage of children aged between 7 and 14 who are out of school dropped from 18.2% in 1992 to 5.1% in 2000.

continue to have significant numbers of children out of school.

In China, although the exact numbers are not known, one recent study suggests that among urban migrant populations alone, an estimated 1.8 million children, aged between 6 and 14 are not receiving an education (Human Rights in China, 2002).[5] In Brazil, the percentage of children out of school has fallen considerably[6] but the absolute number remains significant in a country where 45 million people out of 175 million live in poverty.

Some countries are setting **gender-related targets**. Bangladesh, which has made dramatic progress in enabling girls to benefit from schooling, has intermediate and 2015 targets for gender-disaggregated primary-school gross and net enrolments. Chad plans to have parity of enrolments by 2015. The Niger aims to have 42% of all school-age girls in school by 2005, 68% by 2012 and 84% by 2015, while the United Republic of Tanzania is maintaining its commitment to the MDG and EFA goals of gender parity in school enrolments by 2005.

Quality-related, time-bound objectives are less apparent and are almost entirely associated with primary education. In all cases proxy indicators are set, as Table 5.6 demonstrates.

Jordan has set itself a very precise set of quality-related input targets, as Box 5.2 shows. This represents detailed planning with well-defined markers and indicators for the period up to 2008, under the programme entitled Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy supported by the World Bank.

Literacy goals feature as part of education plans in some countries. For example, the Brazilian government has stated boldly that illiteracy will be eradicated by 2010. Bhutan has set 2012 for full adult literacy. China plans to eradicate illiteracy among 15–24-year-olds (an MDG indicator) by 2010. By 2020, it is proposed that illiteracy among the 15–50 age group will be less than 1%. Egypt has endorsed the EFA literacy goal and intends to reduce illiteracy to less than 15% among 15-year-olds and over. India has set a *sustainable threshold* of 75% literacy for both men and women by 2005. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is operating in a longer timeframe, planning to increase levels of literacy to 90% for those over 15 by 2020. Pakistan intends to achieve the Dakar literacy goal by 2015. In all these cases, the attainment of these targets will require strengthening of data and data systems on literacy.

Table 5.6. Setting quality-related school-level benchmarks and indicators

Indicators	Countries	Targets
Drop out	Bangladesh	Reduced progressively to 15% by 2015
Repetition	Niger	5% by 2012
Retention and completion	Mauritania	84% by 2010 and 100% by 2015
Primary-secondary transition	Chad	60% by 2015 from 47% in 1999/2000
Pupil/teacher ratios	Ethiopia	45:1 by 2015
Textbook/student ratios	Chad	3:1 in mathematics, science and French
Pass rates	United Rep. of Tanzania	50% pass rate in Standard 7 by 2005
School improvements	Guyana	All schools up to basic standard by 2010
New curricula	Mozambique	New primary curriculum operational by 2006

Source: See Table 5.5.

These are all demanding targets. Their achievement depends in large part on universal primary education of good quality, but all will require attention to educational opportunities outside of the formal system. Some countries give importance to **early childhood care and education (ECCE)**. By 2010, in China, it is planned that the participation rates of children in pre-school institutions should be 80% and 90% by 2020. Egypt has a number of major goals in this area and by 2020 it intends that pre-school provision should be part of free and compulsory

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Box 5.2. Goals and targets: education reform for the knowledge economy in Jordan

1. New curriculum framework emphasizing basic skills, core competencies and essential learning for a knowledge economy developed and in place, for 50% of subjects by 2006, 100% of subjects by 2008.

2. Examination database with 50% of core competencies completed by 2006, and 80% by 2008.

3. Percentage of teachers utilizing e-learning enhanced curriculum increased from 10% to 50% by 2006, and 100% by 2008.

4. Teachers trained with basic ICT skills increased from 5,000 to 30,000 by 2006, and 50,000 by 2008.

5. Percentage of trained teachers utilizing new methodology increased to 40% by 2006, and 80% by 2008.

6. Number of schools with access to computers increased from 2,100 to 2,700 by 2006, and 3,000 by 2008.

7. Percentage of students using an on-line learning portal increased to 30% by 2006, and 70% by 2008.

8. Rehabilitated schools provide safe access to 244,800 students by 2006.

9. Computer classrooms extended to provide access to 270,000 students by 2006, and 468,800 students by 2008.

10. Science laboratories extended to provide access to 126,000 students by 2006, and 252,000 students by 2008.

Source: World Bank (2003*a*).

basic education, with 75% of the 4–6 age group absorbed by 2015. Pakistan has drafted a three-phase, benchmarked set of proposals to reach 50% participation rates by 2015.

Adult learning receives less attention. Brazil is committed to ensuring that by 2006, the first four grades of primary education will be made available to 50% of the age group of 15 and above who have not completed the first level of schooling. The Lao People's Democratic Republic plans that 50% of the newly literate should continue complementary education to acquire basic educational and vocational skills.

Industrialized countries

The practice of setting education performance-related targets is a common phenomenon in industrialized countries. But here the focus is a little different. Where full primary enrolment and gender parity have been attained, the challenge is to offer education of good quality for all, for life in knowledge-based economies. Problems of social cohesion, poverty in the midst of affluence and changing patterns of gender relationships all affect the definition and role of education in predominantly urban societies.

7. This system can be viewed on http://nclb.ecs.org/nclb/-national grid.

Reforms focused on reducing inequality of learning outcomes in the United States are indicated in Box 5.3. European reforms were debated at the Lisbon Summit of the European Union in March 2000, where it was agreed to make continuous efforts to turn Europe into the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Recognizing that human resources are crucial in realizing this ambition, a benchmarking process is being developed that challenges member states to aim for higher performance levels in education and training. In particular, a list of six *Indicators and Reference Levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training* has been established for 2010 (European Council, 2003). Together, these targets address four of the Dakar goals (Box 5.4).

Both of these examples reflect recognition of the importance of education for social cohesion and economic competitiveness. They also show that governments are less shy than hitherto in applying business techniques, such as benchmarking, to education and training.

The international dimension also seems to be important. The regular publication of comparable education statistics of industrialized countries such as *Education at a Glance* by the OECD and international student achievement surveys such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have created more transparency regarding the educational performance of participating countries. This has helped to create an increasing sense of educational competitiveness.

Is target-setting productive?

Targets and indicators should not be confused with wider educational goals and objectives. They are not ends in themselves. At best their use helps to improve performance and enhance accountability (White, 2002). Planning the ways in which targets will be reached should contribute to identifying better resource allocations and working practices. Greater accountability is a positive check on politicians, managers and educators. However, there are dangers that people working within education systems may be driven by the need to reach overly narrow targets that fail to capture the complex notion of quality.

Box 5.3. United States – tackling inequalities

In the United States, education is high on the political agenda. In 2002, the federal government launched a twelve-year plan entitled *No Child Left Behind*. By the school year 2013–14, 'all students [will be] proficient in reading/language arts, math and science'. This requires that low achievement, especially among low-income, minority and disabled children, should be eliminated by 2014 when every child must be proficient in the three core subjects. To measure this, Academic Achievement Standards have to be adopted by every state by 2006.

For the years 2002–08, the Act contains a detailed timeline consisting of thirty-four stipulations. These concern the development and implementation of tests and standards; the qualifications and training of teachers; the accountability of states and schools (e.g. by means of state/school report cards); the planning process at state level; and financial aspects. Additional funds are available to schools with a high proportion of poor students, and states are obliged to use part of their federal funds for school improvement. They risk losing federal money if they do not comply. A web-based monitoring system indicates which states are on- or off-track, to allow states to learn from one another.[7]

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2002*a* and 2002*b*).

Box 5.4. European Union – benchmarks for higher performance

■ Reduce the number of early school leavers to 10% or less by 2010. Early school leavers are defined as those aged 18–24 with lower secondary education or less.

■ Increase the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology by at least 15% between 2000 and 2010, while reducing the gender imbalance. These subject areas are considered crucial for economic growth and innovation, and girls especially represent a large unused human potential.

■ Increase the number of those having completed upper secondary education at age 22 to at least 85% by 2010.

■ Decrease the percentage of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading literacy – as measured by PISA – by 20% between 2000 and 2010.

■ Increase the average number of workers aged 25–64 partaking in lifelong learning (in the last four weeks prior to measurement) to 12.5%.

■ A substantial annual increase in the per capita investment in human resources.

Source: European Council (2003).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is a stronger coalition around global goals and targets than ever before. This includes education. But many educators are not entirely enthusiastic about this trend. As one commentator has noted (Chabbott, 2003), attempts to introduce global targets into the discourse in Jomtien, especially by UNICEF, were not well received. The 1990 Declaration contains no target commitments, rather it states that 'Countries may wish to set their own targets for the 1990s in terms of the following dimensions' (i.e. UPE by 2000, reducing adult illiteracy by half). Dakar is more aggressive in this regard. There is a global commitment to achieve the EFA goals, while accepting the need for national interpretation. Chabbott suggests that some educators find targets anathema, believing that education cannot be reduced to the sort of targets that characterize child survival and immunization campaigns. Governments are nevertheless increasingly setting targets for the complex process of education, accepting, as did Dakar, that this is a tool for injecting both urgency and focus.

However, in embracing targets for education, it has to be acknowledged that the international record has not been good compared with achievements in other sectors, notably health. In part this can be explained by governments setting targets within their own political cycles, while improvements in education take time. One commentator on the United Nations goals argues for:

● framing and measuring goals in ways that contribute to real and desired objectives;
● defining different degrees and dimensions of achievement;
● recognizing achievements in individual countries and the proportion of people benefiting;
● assessing the extent of the advance towards each goal;
● measuring advancement against starting points and comparing like with like;
● analysing causes for success within this multidimensional analysis.

These ideas are put forward in the context of international goals (Jolly, 2002) but they also have relevance to the process of setting and using goals and targets in individual countries. Interpreting the Dakar EFA goals nationally deserves a similar approach.

Evidence of national reform

Education systems are highly complex and have to be planned. Yet a constant process of policy review and reform in the education sector is also a fact of life. Rarely do education systems have the chance to stabilize. This long-term activity is subject to the short-term imperatives of political cycles, which complicates the search to understand what really makes a difference (Martinic, 2003; Corrales, 1999). Here a largely descriptive approach is adopted, providing instances of reform at work in eight countries prior to a more detailed examination of three specific strategies: participation, decentralization and making primary education affordable to households.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is a stronger coalition around global goals and targets than ever before.

The brief country profiles that follow exemplify a set of generally accepted tenets about the prerequisites for improving education. As noted elsewhere in this report, a strong legislative base is necessary even if this does not in itself guarantee change. Leadership at the highest level makes a difference if the legal guarantees are to be met and, in the constant battle to secure resources for education, those which are available must be used efficiently and managed well, centrally and locally. The underpinning requirement is education grounded in professional competence and sound pedagogy.

Leadership at the highest level makes a difference if the legal guarantees are to be backed up.

Many countries still benefit from the very strong impetus given to education in the immediate post-independence period. Algeria demonstrated this commitment between 1966 and 1977 by making major investments in education (Kateb, 2003). Its National Commission for Education Reform in 1970 stressed the democratization of education, leading to an expansion of primary-school enrolments from 47.2 NER in 1966 to 83.0 NER in 1998. But for Algeria – and many other countries – consolidating these early gains has proved problematic.

Bangladesh has experienced a regular flow of policies and reforms for well over a decade. The enactment of the Compulsory Primary Education Act in 1991 and the introduction of a competency-based curriculum framework in 1994 laid the foundations for a major expansion in education provision that then faced the triple challenge of quantitative expansion, qualitative improvement and better management. In recent years the National Education Policy (2000), the Primary Education Development Programme and the National Plan of Action for Children (1997–2002) have all been constructed to address these challenges (Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO, 2002). The education of girls has been made a priority and there has been innovation through greater dialogue with communities, through UNICEF's Intensive District Approach to Education for All and as part of the Effective Schools Through Enhanced Management (ESTEEM) programme supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). In this progression of policy debate and development, education has remained a politically contentious issue, in a country with a strong and vocal non-government education sector. Some commentators argue that education needs to be depoliticized –

however unlikely this is – if lasting achievements are to be sustained (Fransman et al., 2003).

Successive Chilean governments have pursued education sector reform. A major efficiency-oriented reform, initiated in 1981 under an authoritarian regime, was for the most part preserved by a centre-left coalition government after the transition to democracy in 1990 and complemented with significant quality-oriented reforms and targeted support for schools in low-income and rural areas (Corrales, 1999). A specific concern has been to address the pedagogical issues acknowledged as contributing to discrimination against women (Avalos, 2003). These include the curriculum and textbooks, teacher-education programmes, school-based sex education and scholarship programmes for students attending the 'poorest' schools.

Developing education in Mauritania starts from a low and difficult base. A process of government decentralization was initiated in 1986, a pluralist democracy was established in 1991 and an economic reform programme commenced in 1992. In education, the focus has been on expanding access to schooling and major gains have been made: primary gross enrolment for girls has risen from 47.2% in 1991 to 84% in 2001/02. In 1999 a sector reform was introduced to place education 'at the heart of development' and was soon followed by the National Development Programme for the Education Sector (NDPES – 2001–2010), developed through a year-long process of consultation. Improving access, improving quality, and the education of girls are its three pillars. In assessing the chances for success one writer has identified the steady application of political will, active participation across society, close attention to the monitoring of progress, and sustained support from the international community (Kamil Hamoud Abdel Wedoud, 2003).

In Kiribati, strong and sustained political leadership led to the establishment of a junior secondary school on each of the twenty inhabited islands of the country, thereby giving all children the opportunity of a nine-year cycle of basic education. This was costly: the recurrent budget increased by US$2 million in 1998. Education's share of the budget increased from 19% to 23% in one year. Even so the costs of financing the programme have almost certainly been underestimated. The focus now, as in so many

countries, is on quality and on the investment needed to secure this (Mackenzie, 2003).

At the other end of the population scale, **China's** underlying prescription for education is *Essential Quality Oriented Education (EQO)* which places nine years of universal, compulsory education and the eradication of illiteracy among young people as important priorities. Increasing attention is now being given to assisting the country's most disadvantaged groups. There are plans to increase the level of transfer payments to the western and ethnic-minority areas, as low local investments in education represent the key constraint to better education for ethnic-minority groups. In addition, the use of local languages, the recruitment of local teachers and better parents' education programmes will become accepted strategies. Multiple channels of educational opportunity are proposed for the disabled, especially in disadvantaged areas, and a target has been set of 95% primary-school enrolment for the children of rural-urban migrants by 2005. School-based programmes are planned to help address the spread of HIV/AIDS. Given the very strong growth of the Chinese economy in recent years, notably on its eastern seaboard, these objectives should not be out of reach (Maher and Ling, 2003).

Cambodia is committed to universal access to, and completion of, primary and lower secondary education by 2010. It has instituted a rolling five-year *Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) 2001–2005*, within which there are twelve *Priority Action Programmes (PAPs)* designed to promote equity, quality and efficiency of education governance and financing. These programmes include attention to in-school and out-of-school HIV/AIDS awareness, and scholarships and incentives for equitable access and efficiency at all levels of the system. While there have been considerable improvements in gender parity, efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the pursuit of gender equality goals has some way to go (Velasco, 2003).

Ecuador went through a three-phase process of experimentation, assessment and diagnosis, and broad-based consultation and reform between 1991 and 1997. A pilot programme designed to increase school enrolment and community participation in rural schools was followed by a major baseline assessment of education policy

involving a wide range of stakeholders, leading to the ten-year (1995–2005) *Education Reform Plan (Plan Decenal de Reforma Educativa en Marcha)* (World Bank, 2000). Decentralization has been one defining characteristic of the whole reform process.

While these brief sketches have their limitations, they tend to confirm that reform in education is invariably part of wider reforms designed to promote poverty reduction, better governance and economic growth. Few, if any, of the reforms address the totality of EFA, and in many instances attention to access is followed by a concern for quality rather than both occurring in tandem.

Participation – is civil society involved?

The next three sections take a closer look at three strategies and reforms that lie at the heart of many government policies: the engagement and **participation of civil society**, better management of education through **decentralization**, and the reduction of **private costs, especially for primary education**.

One of the major strategies agreed at the World Education Forum in 2000 was to 'ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development' (UNESCO, 2000*f*). It echoes the statement made ten years earlier at the World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien, on the importance of partnerships between government organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious bodies and family groups. These commitments are similar in intent to many international statements on governance 'with' as opposed to 'of' the people. The United Nations Millennium Declaration states that 'we [national governments] resolve to... *work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all our countries*' (United Nations, 2000).

Translating these international commitments into national and local policy processes requires action well beyond the province of those working in the education sector. As noted in the next section of this chapter, government reforms in

Reform in education is part of wider reform to promote poverty reduction, better governance and economic growth.

Partnerships are not possible unless governments provide the space and opportunity for dialogue to take place.

support of decentralization may be one way of enabling the stronger engagement and participation of civil society in education. Greater autonomy in the management of schools and local institutions can provide opportunities for citizens to be heard through the development of school plans, the management of budgets, and the recruitment of personnel. However, at the national level, dialogue between the representatives of civil society and central government on education-sector policy and strategies appears to be much more limited and difficult to manage. Why is this so?

In part, it is a function of the heterogeneity of civil society. In Brazil, there are over a quarter of a million organizations in the so-called 'third sector', employing more people than the government. The range of interests represented by these bodies is a great strength in responding to a diversity of needs, but it also presents a considerable challenge to the development of common positions and a collective voice around specific education policies. Pressure groups, urban movements, religious associations, national and international NGOs, have their own stance and priorities with many organizations playing more than one role.

In addition, most education NGOs are active as service providers,[8] without the resources to participate in time-consuming policy-related dialogue. Even where there is a clear wish and capacity to be engaged in policy, partnerships are not possible unless governments provide the space and opportunity for dialogue to take place (Schattan et al., 2002). This section examines the extent to which these spaces are being created and used against the background of the Dakar commitments.

National EFA forums: gauging their impact

The World Education Forum proposed the strengthening or the creation of national EFA forums, as one approach to allow civil society to be part of mainstream EFA policy-related processes. To assist this initiative, UNESCO (2001) issued detailed guidelines on how to develop a national consultative and co-ordination body that would bring together a broad range of representatives with a vital stake in basic education. The Forum was conceived both as a vehicle for dialogue and for the co-ordination of

planning and monitoring progress towards national EFA goals.

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which national EFA forums are operational as there is no international database available. The Collective Consultation of NGOs Forum in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2003 concluded that national EFA forums and consultations were not well established (CCNGO, 2003). Some recent small-scale regional studies offer some insights into particular national processes. A survey by the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (Razon, 2003) looks at Bangladesh, Fiji, Nepal and Samoa and suggests that EFA forums serve primarily as a means of sharing information. It is in separate technical committees where civil society organizations (CSOs) can have some influence. This appears to have been true in Bangladesh, through the work of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), and on the issue of 'second chance' education in Samoa, through the Education Advocacy Alliance – a small coalition of NGOs. Conclusions on the limitations of current practice are given in Box 5.5, which also highlights a problem for governments – the extent to which they are knowledgeable about who within civil society is active and experienced in the field of education and able to bring something to the policy table. A judgement cannot yet be made as to whether EFA forums will be an influential force, and evaluative work on this matter is strongly needed.

Civil society at work

Despite the many constraints that limit purposeful dialogue across and between government, civil society and individual citizens, there is a growing body of knowledge suggesting that partnerships for EFA can work. This proposition is explored below through a small set of examples.

Dialogue and consultation

In **Guatemala**, the peace treaty signed in December 1995 brought to an end thirty-six years of bitter conflict. The Peace Accords generated a widespread desire for a more inclusive society that would involve civil society in policy-making (Pérez Obregón, 2003). Working in the context of the Accord on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was designed to promote a multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic nation, a three-year process of dialogue

8. In India, 63% of education sector organizations see themselves as assisting government, a similar percentage make direct education interventions, over half describe their work as innovatory and 50% as working in geographical areas neglected by government (Nawani, 2002).

Box 5.5. CSOs – finding a place at the table

Spaces for participation and of citizen involvement in national EFA processes are shaped, to a large extent, by the political context in which citizens are invited to participate in the making of policy. National policy frameworks frequently view CSOs as either state appendages for more efficient delivery of social services or as sources of innovative approaches and ideas, but seldom as partners in policy.

Some CSOs were able to gain representation in EFA forums but many were not able to do so because they were not invited, lacked the

information and knowledge about EFA and its processes, or did not have enough resources to participate. This was especially true of those outside the capital and those which are not members of, or have no access to, CSO advocacy networks. Governments' lack of knowledge of EFA stakeholders and the absence of clear criteria on how to enlist the latter's participation excluded many citizen organizations from EFA planning and limited the possibilities for broadening the base of support for EFA.

Source: Razon (2003).

resulted in the establishment of a consultative group on education in 1998. After further talks, two committees were created, one governmental, the other primarily representing indigenous peoples. Bipartite committees held discussions with municipal, departmental and national organizations on a wide range of proposals that contributed to the creation of a Joint Committee on Education Reform with a broad and diverse membership. This in turn led to a consensus on a set of proposals enshrined in the National Education Reform. One positive expression of this process is The National Languages Act (2003), a recent commitment to protect the right of indigenous peoples to speak one or more of twenty-one Mayan languages. However, the implementation of the reform programme more generally is proving problematic and there is a sense of disappointment at the difficulty of translating the Peace Accords into legislation and action. The Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC) protested recently at the failure of government to sustain a participatory process for an education and rural development policy based on the Peace Accords and the National Education Reform. Nevertheless, the process in Guatemala does point to a willingness to find space for dialogue and a consultative process to define reform (Pérez Obregón, 2003).

In **Viet Nam**, the development of the National Education for All Action Plan 2003–2015 (Viet Nam, 2003) involved a process of workshops, fact-finding, research and analysis in all the country's sixty-one provinces. The aim was to reach consensus on education targets and objectives, and identify action programmes. The

Action Plan will be implemented through provincial plans that will involve People's Committees, the provincial departments of education and the provincial departments of finance.

This process drew on a strong tradition of national and central planning, involving mass organizations for women, youth and farmers which are the major social institutions in the country. In contrast, national NGOs (not linked to government) are a new phenomenon. However, over time these organizations are likely to grow in importance as the Vietnamese Government plans to promote the greater participation of citizens in policy matters.

Beyond consultation

In different ways, both Guatemala and Viet Nam demonstrate an initial step by governments to enable people to be aware of their rights, create discussion forums and propagate an interest in education. However, to move beyond this initial 'success' to a more sustained process of co-operation is more difficult. Already, there is a measure of disillusionment in Guatemala at the lack of funding to implement reforms agreed as a result of the consultative process (Pérez Obregón, 2003).

A more extended engagement that goes beyond dialogue is found in Brazil (Schattan et al., 2002). Set up during the 1990s, Management Councils that operate from local to federal level have an equal number of representatives of civil society, service providers and the government. The councils take responsibility for policy in health, education, social assistance and provision for

children and adolescents. They oversee management of public resources (federal, state and municipal) and of the infrastructure of schools, community and health centres.

Created in 1995, Comunidade Solidária is one such management council which develops proposals with a focus on education and training. It has invested in the design of innovative programmes in the areas of literacy education and professional development; involving a range of public and private partners that provide technical capacity and resources. Methods, costs and results are monitored to offer reliable guidelines for programme replication (Cardoso, 2001).

Additionally, popular social movements have been successful in working jointly with government. This is explained in Box 5.6, where MOVA-SP has not only worked with government to tackle illiteracy, but also with a literacy programme developed by Comunidade Solidária. Both MOVA-SP and Comunidade Solidária demonstrate a process of advocacy and social movement leading to mutually agreeable partnerships between CSOs and government.

Schattan et al. (2002) point out that the institutionalization of participation through these Brazilian councils has been considered in recent literature as a useful mechanism of *deliberative*

democracy (Bohman and Rehg, 1997; Cohen, 1997; Habermans, 1997; Avritzer, 2000) or *associative democracy* (Cohen and Rogers, 1995; Hirst, 1994). It provides opportunities for purposeful discussion on public policies, leading to the democratization of the decision-making process and the possibility of increased accountability to citizens (Schattan et al., 2002). On the other hand, critics argue that the state may evade responsibilities by transferring some of the tasks to civil society. NGOs are especially vulnerable to this, entering into partnerships focused on rendering services, in which they have little influence over decisions previously taken by the state (Teixeira et al., 2002).

These examples point to the potential benefits of developing education policy in a more open and democratic way, involving a range of agencies and partners, encouraging greater levels of commitment among those involved.

Learning by doing

As noted above, a particular issue for the numerous NGOs involved in education is how to translate a broad variety of individual objectives into a joint position with well-defined policy proposals. This does not require total agreement among all the groups participating in education reform processes. In fact, a level of compromise is often needed in order to achieve changes.

Box 5.6. Brazilian partnerships against illiteracy

The Young People and Adults' Literacy Movement of the City of São Paulo (Movimento de Alfabetização de Jovens e Adultos da Cidade de São Paulo, MOVA-SP) is a partnership of the São Paulo municipal government (led by the Workers Party) and several popular movements and social organizations interested in stamping out illiteracy. This partnership involves the sharing of power between the state and social groups. In order to achieve this, a reform agenda – the result of a joint collaboration between City Hall and the popular movements – made changes in the structure and organization of classrooms and classes. Additionally, it led to the allocation of additional funds to support the programme. Currently, other Brazilian cities such as Santo André, Ribeirão Pires and Mauá in the State of São Paulo, Angra dos Reis in the State of Rio de Janeiro, and Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul are developing programmes similar to MOVA-SP.

Comunidade Solidária's programme, Solidarity Literacy, is a product of the types of social movement that resulted in the political modernization projects exemplified by MOVA-SP. The result of a partnership between Comunidade Solidária, the Ministry of Education, Brazilian universities, city halls and representatives of private initiatives, the programme is designed to assist young people between the ages of 12 and 18 who cannot read and write and live in the municipalities with the highest illiteracy rates in the country. A pilot project was implemented during the first semester of 1997 in thirty-eight municipalities of the northern and north-eastern regions, where illiteracy rates exceed 55%. After being assessed and improved by the participating universities themselves, the programme was expanded in June 1997. These initiatives were recognized and supported in the ten-year Brazilian Education Plan (2001–2011).

Sources: Teixeira et al. (2002); Brazil/ILO/CINTERFOR, 2003.

In the Philippines, the government made public its commitment to the outcomes of both the Jomtien and Dakar conferences. Post-Jomtien, this prompted CSOs to establish stronger relationships with government. In the early 1990s, a series of acts, plans and reforms encouraged this.[9] However, expectations of a 'Grand Alliance' did not materialize. The National Council on Education for All (NCEFA) was short-lived and was not convened after 1993. Although government drew on various CSOs to contribute to specific education initiatives, this was not conceived as part of a national partnership. The organizations involved were either accredited by the Department of Education or were deemed credible by the government.

At the end of the decade, the EFA 2000 Assessment process was strongly criticized by CSOs for its failure to consult, although ultimately the Philippines EFA Assessment Report (Raya and Mabunga, 2002) stated that the active participation of all stakeholders was critical. The report recommended the revival of the 'Grand Alliance' through NCEFA. Thus, a new window of opportunity was opened for the major CSO networks and education-focused NGOs, in part facilitated by the international NGO OXFAM in creating opportunities for dialogue between the Department of Education and CSOs (Raya and Mabunga, 2002). This marked the start of an active period of preparation for the Philippines' participation by CSOs in the World Education Forum in Dakar.

CSOs in the Philippines learnt a number of lessons during the 1990s, especially the importance of forming a broad network to rally around issues of education reform. This was realized in part through the Civil Society Network for Education Reform or E-Net[10] and through public consultations. Thus, in February 2000, the College of Community Health, Development and Management (CCHDM) co-ordinated a consultation on EFA with indigenous peoples, teachers, local government units, line agencies, private groups, and NGOs. The results of this activity were then presented at a National Conference on *Philippine Education Reform and Human Development: A Civil Society Perspective.*

Although civil society appears to have learned some lessons regarding networking, building strategic contacts, engaging internationally as well as nationally, developing well-conceived, well-founded demands, and promoting a strong advocacy strategy, it still remains uncertain whether the post-Dakar decade will be characterized by a more inclusive and participatory approach than the 1990s.

The challenge of scale

In India, there are an estimated 100,000 CSOs/NGOs, a major expansion in number since the 1980s (Clarke, 1998). Disillusionment with the public sector is seen by some to be a major factor in this expansion (Nawani, 2002). Most are small and local. Some work closely with government, some independently, while others act as critics of government policy and practice.

In *Education for All: National Plan of Action;* (India, 2003a) the government sets out a mission-driven approach to the achievement of EFA. At individual state level, this requires missions that will involve NGOs, social activists, university teachers, teachers' union representatives, Panchayati Raj[11] representatives and women's groups in achieving EFA goals. It remains to be seen whether this harnesses the rich experience and capacities of civil society in education policy development and review (Roy and Khan, 2003). One recent example where civil society engaged closely with national policy is set out in Box 5.7.

To make its mark, civil society needs to promote policy options that are informed by grass-roots experience and rigorous analysis. One commentator (Kohli, cited in Roy and Khan, 2003) identifies five strategies, each of which requires its own expertise which may not be characteristic of CSOs/NGOs that are primarily service providers:
- the development of common positions and perspectives;
- the creation of alliances and networks;
- a solid base of research and analysis;
- communication strategies for different audiences;
- free flows of information.

> To make its mark, civil society needs to promote policy options that are clearly informed by grassroots experience and rigorous analysis.

9. These actions are the following: enactment of the 1991 Local Government Code; signing of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by the Philippines Government in 1990; enactment of the law on Child Rights (RA 7610); adoption of a comprehensive programme for children – the Philippine Plan of Action for Children (PPAC); and restructuring of the education bureaucracy (tri-focalization) (Roy and Khan, 2003).

10. E-Net is a mixture of various networks, organizations and individuals involved in education work and advocacy.

11. Panchayati Raj is a three-tier system of local government, which became a constitutional part of democracy in India in 1993.

Both the Indian and Philippine cases suggest that networks and access to information are key steps in building strong partnerships. Additionally, strong networks provide citizens with opportunities to publicise changes in policy (Kohli, cited in Roy and Khan, 2003).

Building capacity

A capacity-building programme has been launched by UNESCO in eleven countries of Africa[15]. It is designed to enhance the professional and institutional capacities of NGO/CSOs. Its focus, defined by the organizations themselves, is on policy, the curriculum, pedagogy, and project and programme development in education (Bah, 2003).

The programme is conceived within the framework of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA) through a participatory process involving African regional 'focal points', the African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), and resource persons from both African civil society and African governments. UNESCO, the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation and other partners, such as Luxembourg Development Cooperation, support the initiative.

As Box 5.8 suggests, the process of identifying and addressing needs (and therefore the process

of capacity-building itself), requires context-specific answers. The ability to understand and influence the government requires similar skills in most societies.

International networking

As noted in Chapter 6, over the past two decades there has been a rapid growth in the activities of international NGOs and networks. The Global Campaign for Education and the Global March Against Child Labour are two prominent examples. These organizations are having increasing impact on international policy dialogue and are also contributing to the development of capacity at the national level (Chapter 6).

CCNGO/EFA, based at UNESCO, connects approximately 700 NGO/CSOs, two-thirds of which are in developing countries. It operates primarily through regional consultations in order to build strong relations with national CSOs. A strategy of growing importance is to facilitate policy dialogue around specific themes, such as literacy and lifelong learning, and higher education, as this is seen as an effective way of bringing like-minded experts together. Approximately 500 NGOs are involved in this way.

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) is another well-established network. Its primary goal is to influence policies and practice aimed at attaining gender equality in education

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Box 5.7. **Triggering the debate: constitutional amendments and CSOs in India**

In 2002, the 93rd Amendment of the Constitution Bill[12] (making education a fundamental right, free and compulsory for all children aged 6–14 years) was passed. One critique of the Amendment galvanized a broad civil society front: the National Alliance on the Fundamental Right to Education (NAFRE). NAFRE decried the Amendment as a retrograde step due to the exclusion of the 0–6 age group in the provision of free and compulsory education, that had been provided in a Supreme Court judgement of 1993 (Unnikrishanan vs. the State of Andhra Pradesh). NAFRE and FORCES[13] argued that although it is well established that the development of a child in the age group of 0–6 is critical, the provision for pre-primary education including crèche facilities in the country has been very limited. Moreover, the conception and

implementation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) located in the Department of Women and Child Development[14] neglects the crucial area of education. The campaign united CSOs involved in education and brought education issues to the fore in public consciousness and policy debates. This augurs well for enhanced accountability in the future. Furthermore, the inclusion of early childhood care and education (ECCE) in Article 45, albeit as a directive principle of the state (implementation is discretionary), recognized the critical links between pre-primary education, child care and development, thus opening some space for a prospective convergent approach.

Source: Roy and Khan (2003).

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12. The Bill has been notified and renumbered in the Gazette of India as the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002.

13. Forum for Childcare and Creche Services, focusing on early childhood care and development.

14. ICDS, and therefore the existing government provision for the age group 0–6, does not come under the Department of Education, although both departments are within the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

15. These are Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Box 5.8. Guinea and the Niger: who calls the tune?

Guinea and the Niger belong to a group of sixteen African countries with primary gross enrolment ratios (GERs) of below 50% in 2000.

Prior to 2000, CSOs were used extensively in **Guinea** to channel aid, implement projects and programmes, reach out to, and mobilize, disadvantaged local communities, and experiment with new teaching and learning approaches (AED/SARAII Project, 2002). Very few CSOs participated in policy development, although a few, mostly branches of international NGOs, had more national visibility and impact.[16] Most were limited in their technical capacity, lacked financial resources and/or were dependent on foreign aid (Barry, 2003). In the **Niger**, a country the size of France, political crises and deep poverty heightened the challenge for poorly resourced CSOs. The circumstances of these countries require broad partnerships if there is to be progress towards EFA. Neither governments nor CSOs alone can deliver on EFA.

In building capacity, understanding local cultures, practices and politics is vitally important if the programme is to be owned and developed by different communities. The culture of planning, implementing and monitoring an agreed course of action cannot be prescribed externally, especially when new capacities are in the process of being built. Pressure on local organizations to plan and behave in 'modern' or 'Western' ways can lessen a sense of understanding and ownership and, ultimately, efficiency.

Some of the best national NGO/CSOs are locally grounded, run voluntarily and driven by a strong sense of commitment. They demonstrate an extraordinary ability to anchor learning within their own contexts while having the capacity to innovate. Capacity-building programmes should recognize these attributes. These programmes may be efficient in their own terms even if they lack staff experienced in skills defined in international management terms.

Source: Bah (2003).

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and it has had major successes in placing the issue of girls' education on the agenda of policy-makers in Africa. It operates through national chapters and an example of its work at country level is provided in Box 5.9.

Conclusions

This brief survey suggests a heightened level of activity on the part of CSOs in support of policy development, even in countries where there is little tradition of government engaging with civil society. On the other hand, many lack the requisite technical and political skills to influence government. It is also difficult for constructive criticism of government not to undermine productive partnerships.

Thus, the extent to which the processes envisaged by the World Education Forum will affect outcomes depends largely on the willingness of governments to be more open to processes of public participation in decision-making.

Decentralization: is it making a difference?

Meanings and motives

Decentralization can make a big difference in the provision of social services. This is a message of the *Human Development Report 2003* (UNDP, 2003b) in the context of defining policies that will contribute to the elimination of human poverty. But it requires good governance (Box 5.10), an argument that echoes the *World Development Report 2000/2001* (World Bank, 2000): *to benefit poor people* [decentralization] *must have adequate support and safeguards from the centre and effective mechanisms of participation*.

16. For example, Aide et Action, Plan Guinée, OC International (OCI), Save the Children, World Education, Internationale Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes (IIZ/DVV), Centre Africain de Formation pour le Développement (CENAFOD), Forum des Éducatrices de Guinée/Forum for African Women Educationalists (FEG/FAWE), and Coordination des ONG Féminines de Guinée (COFEG).

Box 5.9. FAWE in Uganda – setting a trend

FAWE supports the monitoring of education in Uganda and has helped to provide scholarships for girls from poor households who perform well in the national primary leaving examinations, but fail to join secondary school because their parents or guardians cannot afford the monetary costs involved. This started out on a small scale, but because it was managed effectively, and the performance of the girls was carefully monitored, the project has attracted funds from donor agencies. A growing number of girls are now in secondary school sponsored by FAWE and as a result a number of other NGOs led by women have adopted this approach.

Source: FAWE (2003).

With or without good governance, one recent survey suggests that 80% of developing countries, plus some of the transitional economies of Eastern and Central Europe, are experimenting with some form of decentralization. In 1999, 96 out of 126 countries had at least one elected sub-national level of government, while 42 countries had two or more levels. In 1997, 52 countries had a measure of fiscal decentralization (Work, 2002).

Decentralization for better education rests primarily on the assumption that the quality of education will be improved as a result of greater efficiency in the use of resources and better responsiveness to specific problems. A World Bank definition (Box 5.11) captures this intent for school systems and indicates the implications this process may have for more fundamental shifts in the meaning of education.

As Table 5.7 suggests, the motives for introducing decentralization are many and varied. Some are fuelled by donor agencies as a means of promoting local democracy through the work of NGOs (e.g. Netherlands, 2002; Nach Mback, 2001). Within countries there may be a genuine wish to respond to demands for greater participation or to political pressures. For example, in recent years, devolution of authority in the Russian Federation, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and the Sudan has been a response to the risk of secession (Bray and Mukundan, 2003). Efficiency motives may be influenced by a wish to lessen the financial burden on central government.

A historical perspective indicates that decentralization is neither a new idea or process. McGinn (2001) recognizes a number of trends over the past half century. These include:
- a move away from decentralization being conceived as a technical instrument to becoming an accepted component of 'modernization';
- a concern for outcomes as well as inputs;
- recognition of diversity – of place, community and need;
- a more inclusive approach to stakeholders;
- the need to broaden the revenue base;
- a shift from local management to local governance.

The trends have often involved policy reversals. Thus, in 1973, Bangladesh eliminated local management of schools, passed legislation to restore local control in the early 1980s, reverted to central control in 1990 and, most recently, is moving towards local management again (McGinn, 2001).

Colombia demonstrates the inherently political nature of decentralization (Bray and Mukandan, 2003). In the mid–1980s, decentralization was perceived by the government to be a means of promoting stability and political legitimacy. From the early 1990s, resources were transferred from the centre to municipalities, and schools were given direct responsibility for managing personnel, designing aspects of the school curriculum and having some financial control. A greater voice was also given to parents, teachers and students. A voucher scheme for poor students was instituted. However, only 70% of schools had transferred to municipal control by 1993. The enterprise did not have total government support and the teachers' unions, key to making the reforms work, feared the loss of national bargaining power.

Box 5.10. Conditions for success

Decentralization tends to be successful when the central government is stable, solvent and committed to transferring resources, when local authorities are able to assume those responsibilities and when there is effective participation by poor people and well-organized civil society. These conditions generally result in responsive policies and services, increasing growth, equity and human development.

Source: UNDP (2003*b*).

Box 5.11. Getting the conditions right

Decentralization is the process of reassigning responsibility and corresponding decision-making authority for specific functions from higher to lower levels of government and organizational units. Educational decentralization is a complex process that deals with changes in the way school systems go about making policy, generating revenues, spending funds, training teachers, designing curricula, and managing local schools. Such changes imply fundamental shifts in the values that concern the relationships of students and parents to schools, the relationships of communities to central government, and the very meaning and purpose of public education.

Source: Fiske (1996).

Table 5.7. Decentralization: motives and objectives

World Bank[17]	McGinn and Welsh	*Human Development Report* (not specific to education)
1. Education finance ● Generation of resources through local taxation ● Reduce operating costs ● Shift financial burden from central government to regional or local government, community organizations and/or parents **2. Efficiency and effectiveness** ● Elimination of bureaucratic procedures ● Improved motivation and productivity of officials ● Centralized planning leads to expensive education ● Better allocation of resources to match needs ● Increased school-level authority eliminates need for central decision-making and improves administration and accountability **3. Redistribution of political power** ● Decentralization promotes legitimacy and greater community voice ● Legitimacy to local institutions ● Weakens political opposition **4. Quality** ● Decision-making close to each school ● Focus on local cultural and learning environments ● Greater local accountability through incentives for quality performance **5. Innovation** ● More suppliers leads to variety of experience ● Innovation through competitiveness	**1. Quality** ● More inputs for schooling ● Improved quality of inputs ● Increased relevance of programmes ● Increased innovation ● Better range of options ● Reduced inequalities of access ● Better learning outcomes **2. Operation of systems** ● Greater efficiency in allocation of resources ● Greater efficiency in resource use ● Increasing match of programmes to employer requirements ● Better use of information **3. Sources and levels of funding** ● Increasing the overall sum of money for education ● Shifting the source of funding from one social group to another **4. Benefits for central government** ● Lessens external political problems ● Reduces bureaucratic headaches ● Relieves central government of financial burden ● Increases political legitimacy ● Reduces corruption at central level **5. Benefits for local government** ● Increases revenues for local use ● Increases capacity of local government ● Improves responsiveness of central government to local needs ● Redistributes political power *Source*: McGinn and Welsh (1999).	**1. Faster responses to local needs** ● Local authorities respond to local conditions ● No more waiting for central permission ● Opportunities for women to participate **2. More accountability and transparency; less corruption** ● Money that is diverted corruptly from development programmes often declines **3. Improved service delivery** ● Reduces absenteeism – so enhanced services at no extra cost ● Greater public concern regarding discipline ● Increased accountability and better monitoring **4. Better information flows** ● Better early-warning systems **5. More sustainable projects** ● Local involvement in design, execution and monitoring ● Participatory budgeting and accounting enhances efficiency, transparency and gender responsiveness **6. Redress of regional inequalities** ● Lessens potential conflict ● More equitable distribution of national funds **7. Increased energy and motivation** ● Encourages local solutions ● Promotes innovation ● Reduces workload in hierarchical systems **8. Expanded opportunities for political representation** ● Stronger voice in public policy ● Increased representation among women and marginalized groups *Source*: UNDP (2003*b*).

Ways to decentralize

Where, then, do the real opportunities lie for better education through decentralization and where is it working well for EFA? There is no comparable data on which to draw, although there are broad surveys of aspects of decentralization (e.g. Crook and Sturla Sverrisson, 1999) and a growing number of regional and national studies (e.g. Narodowski and Nores, 2002). The decentralization experience of seven countries is briefly reviewed below.

Since 1992, Indian decentralization has 'picked up steam' (Mahal et al., 2000). Changes in the Indian Constitution (1992) made it incumbent on individual states to set up representative rural (*panchayats*) and urban bodies. This process was to be accompanied by the establishment of state finance commissions (that would recommend appropriate devolution of resources to the new bodies), and the creation of district planning committees. The exact responsibilities and the specification of the mechanisms to ensure accountability were left to state legislatures to determine. As a result, decentralization finds

17. Based on material from the World Bank Global Education Reform website. www1.worldbank.org/education/globaleducationreform

In South Africa, mandatory school governing bodies assist principals, teachers and parents.

expression in different ways in different states (Govinda, 2003). In Madhya Pradesh *gram panchayats* (village-level authorities) take on responsibility for the construction and maintenance of schools, school inspection, the distribution of free textbooks and uniforms, the management of scholarships for Scheduled Castes and Tribal children and for non-formal education. One positive benefit has been the greater willingness of parents to send girls to school. However, in other states – for example, Maharashtra – these types of responsibility lie at the level of the *zilla parishad* or district level. The recent and varied experience of Kerala is analysed in Box 5.12. This highlights the complexity of the decentralization process where vested interests remain strong.

With the planned enactment of the Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill, 2003, allied to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme for Universal Elementary Education (UEE), designed to attain UEE for 6–14-year-olds by 2010, decentralization should become an even more prominent part of India's national effort. SSA is defined as a partnership between central, state and local government, involving *Panchayati Raj* institutions, school management committees, village and urban-slum level education committees, parent-teachers' and mother-teacher associations, tribal autonomous councils and other grassroots structures in the management of schools (India, 2003*b*).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan builds on a number of initiatives from the 1990s. One commentator recognizes at least eight national and state initiatives and programmes, including literacy missions, which have encompassed different approaches to decentralization (Raina, 2002). The debate around these initiatives centres in part on the extent to which the practice of decentralization is about delivery mechanisms rather than learning processes, and decentralized management rather than educational decentralization. Other concerns relate to the power of the national elite being replaced by the power of the local elite: 'Indian central government plans for universalizing elementary education (grades 1–8) would come to nought unless collective voice and collective action becomes effective in all states...' (Mehotra, 2001).

In **South Africa**, decentralization and democratic participation has been a live issue for the past decade, particularly in relation to school autonomy. During the apartheid era, the democratic movement sought to develop parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs). The South African Schools Act of 1996 drew on this tradition, establishing mandatory school governing bodies (SGBs). These bodies were designed to assist school managers and teachers, encourage parents to support their children's education, and mobilize additional resources. The recent establishment of the National Association of School Governing Bodies offers some evidence of the significance of SGBs, although there is some way to go in building capacities to enable them to function strongly (Nzimande, 2002).

But some of these developments have raised questions about the balance between the central and decentralized modes of governance, the regulatory role of the state in pursuit of national norms and educational equality, and strong community control (Sayed, 2003).

In **Jordan** (Work, 2002), the ministry of education has delegated financial and administrative authority to local units, reorganized the ministry to be more responsive to local governments and allowed local decision-makers to promote participatory budget development. District governors advertise, recruit and hire civil service staff through personnel units.

In **Oman** (Oman, 2001), local support councils have been established to contribute to the running of schools, representing the school itself, students and parents. Parents' councils are empowered to make proposals on admission policies and student achievement.

The United Republic of Tanzania's Primary Education Development Plan 2002–2006 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001*b*) states that 'central ministries will continue to focus on policy development and monitoring. There will be increased delegated authority to local government and schools to manage education provision and development. The ultimate aim is for each district to be able to provide equitable access by children to education services'. The role of school committees is set out in Box 5.13. It includes both planning and financial accountability functions.

Box 5.12. Decentralization in Kerala: strong rhetoric, entrenched patterns

Kerala State, in the south-west of India, is one of the most developed parts of India. Its average literacy rate of 90.9% contrasts with the national average of 65.4%. Basic education is almost universal. In 2002/03, 5,335,600 children were enrolled in school, of whom 49.2% were girls. The state has a strong reputation for political participation, and its leaders have been outspoken champions of decentralization. However, the volume of rhetoric has barely been translated into reality.

In some respects, initiatives in Kerala derive from national reforms. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian Constitution (1992) required state governments to establish local self government institutions (LSGIs), also known as *Panchayati Raj* institutions. Rural areas were required to have a three-tier system for villages, blocks and districts. The constitutional amendments demanded devolution of significant powers, responsibilities and finances to these bodies.

In Kerala, these initiatives fitted well with local priorities. Enthusiasm moved into a higher gear in 1996 with the election to state government of a radical leftist regime which included in its major activities a People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning (PCDP).

The PCDP was designed to include education alongside health, community governance and other aspects of development, and was implemented with a 'big-bang' approach. A system of multi-level planning was devised in which the village *panchayat* was the lowest unit of administration. In the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997–2002), state development grants to local communities were increased from 5% to nearly 40%.

At that time, Kerala had over 11,000 government and government-aided schools. Administrative responsibility for these schools was transferred from the state government to the LSGIs, with primary education being made the responsibility of the lowest tier, i.e. the village *panchayats*. The State Planning Board introduced a Comprehensive Education Programme as a general guideline for *panchayat*-level programmes, and the campaign was supported by primary-school curriculum revision.

Continuity more than change

Yet while proclamations are relatively easy to issue, real change is more difficult to achieve. An evaluation after six years indicated continuity more than change. State-level regulations continued to dominate, and bottom-up initiatives were few in number.

One more problem was that village authorities lacked understanding of the tasks devolved to them, and even where they did understand they lacked expertise to conduct the tasks. For example, few village *panchayats* realized the significance of their new powers to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning; even fewer felt competent to use these powers effectively. Teachers resisted what they saw as political incursions into their professional domain; and few village-level leaders felt adequate to challenge the professional views asserted by the teachers.

However, local leaders in a few *panchayats* did find ways to support their schools and to diversify the nature of provision beyond the existing mould. For example, Panniannur and Pinarayi *panchayats* had leaders who were experienced in education and who showed particular interest in implementing educational projects. These cases, which emerged in response to specific socio-political conditions, showed that the advocacy of decentralization did lead to some changes. Nevertheless, the positive examples were few in number, and the overall picture was largely one of continuity of the old patterns. Experience so far thus suggests that a fully decentralized system of educational administration is unlikely to develop. State-level administrators are anxious to preserve the coherence of the education system and to limit the inequalities that would arise in a heavily decentralized framework. And state-level politicians, despite their public pronouncements, are anxious to maintain their existing powers.

Source: Bray and Mukundan (2003).

This represents a very significant attempt to give much greater autonomy to local communities. It requires some investment of people's time, and comparative experience suggests that unless village plans provide the basis for real action, long-term commitment cannot be assured. These issues are acknowledged in Tanzanian research (United Republic of Tanzania, 2001*a*) where, for example, it has been noted: 'There is a significant relationship between village level social capital, of which trust is a major determinant, and parental participation in school-related activities. Although parents retain a degree of confidence in the school committee and the head teacher, there is widespread mistrust of local government as a service provider. This stems from a perception that school fees and other obligatory payments are neither accounted for nor turned into better education. As long as local governments remain under-resourced, it will be a major challenge to turn this situation around' (Narayan, 1997).

Brazil has one the most decentralized fiscal systems of all developing countries (Crook and Sturla Sverrisson, 1999). It is also characterized by great diversity in its educational structures and systems that are managed by 26 states and 5,561 municipalities where the role of central government in primary and secondary education is mainly redistributive and supplementary (Guimaraes de Castro, 2002*a*). One expression of

It is hard to gauge the relationship between decentralization and learning outcomes.

these characteristics is the Fund for Primary Education Development and Maintenance and Enhancement of the Teaching Profession (Fundef). Global revenue for education is allocated between states and municipalities to ensure that there is a minimum level of investment for each student. Funds are set aside for states that cannot meet this commitment. To follow up on the availability and use of funds at the community level, committees have been established. Each government (state or municipal) is required to present a monthly report showing how funds have been used. The new Brazilian government plans to strengthen these mechanisms (Lodi, 2003).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has made significant progress in expanding educational opportunities after long periods of colonialism, conflict and economic crisis (Seel, 2003). Mass organizations such as the women's and youth unions have traditionally played an important part in community-level development. However recent restructuring and plans for decentralization aim to bring programme implementation to district and village level, and planning and budgeting to the provinces, while the centre retains overall policy direction and monitoring responsibilities. There is an increasing focus on learning outcomes as distinct from educational inputs. School development is being discussed in terms of being responsive to learning needs, with attention to the monitoring of learning and of community participation in schools. The local

recruitment of ethnic minority teachers is also being explored.

Developing a balance sheet

This set of examples points primarily to work in progress, but a number of trends can be detected. These include:
- a new balance between the authority and responsibility vested in different levels of government – in federal as well as unitary states;
- new responsibilities for schools, parents and communities;
- greater devolution of financial authority and personnel management;
- some evidence of local – school and district – planning.

These are primarily shifts in the locus of management responsibility. There is much less evidence of the decentralization of the processes that define and monitor teaching and learning activities. There is even less evidence of decentralization developing as the result of local pressure rather than through centrally determined political decisions. It is also difficult to gauge the relationship between decentralization and learning outcomes, even though this is the real test.

There are circumstances in which decentralization can increase disparities. For example, in Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal,

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Box 5.13. School committee responsibilities in the United Republic of Tanzania

■ Sensitize and involve all pupils, parents and school staff in respect of the roles they can play in maximizing the benefits of primary school.

■ Oversee the day-to-day affairs of the school.

■ Work together with the head teacher and other teachers to prepare a Whole School Development Plan.

■ Approve Whole School Development Plans and budgets and submit them to the *mtaa* (committee in urban areas) or village council and subsequently to the ward development committee and eventually to the local government authorities for scrutiny, co-ordination and consolidation, and submission to the Regional Secretariat.

■ Facilitate planning, budgeting and implementation of Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) activities

■ Open bank accounts and to efficiently and effectively manage funds … while guaranteeing maximum accountability and transparency … including making incomes and expenditures publicly available.

■ Ensure safe custody of property acquired

■ Prepare and submit accurate and timely progress and financial reports to the village council, *mtaa* committee and local government authority.

■ Communicate educational information to all parents, pupils, community stakeholders, etc.

Source: United Republic of Tanzania (2001*b*).

where increased levels of authority have been given to communities and NGOs, tensions have been evident between public and non-governmental schools, including different and uneven interpretations of what should be taught (Charlier and Pierrard, 2001).

Other challenges associated with the effective implementation of decentralization are highlighted in Box 5.14.

Industrialized countries – towards greater flexibility?

For education systems in industrialized countries, decentralization 'has variously meant devolving power to the regions, the regional outposts of central government (deconcentration), the local authorities, the social partners and the institutions themselves' (Green, 1999). As a result, a variety of governance models exist in practice. In some countries, for example France and Japan, most power lies at the centre. In Germany and Switzerland regional control is strongest, while the Nordic countries are known for their emphasis on local control. In the United Kingdom and the Netherlands substantial power has been devolved to schools themselves, as well as to the educational marketplace (Green, 1999).

Notwithstanding these differences, industrialized countries share a common interest in innovation for the better governance of education. In 1996, OECD education ministers expressed concern at the ability of their education systems to adapt quickly. They called for more flexible frameworks (OECD, 1996). In 2001, they noted the increasing diversity of learners' needs and the importance of maintaining cultural diversity while improving quality. Strengthening the connections between schools and their communities was seen as an important strategy (OECD, 2001*b*).

The rapidly changing environment of schools is invariably mentioned as the main driver of governance innovation. Systems built on the need to prepare people for repetitive, obedient work and to shape national identity (Barber, 2003) are being replaced by education that is responsive to fast-changing technologies and markets, that not only call for different learning outcomes (problem-solving, networking, communication and learning skills, flexibility, mobility) but also for changes in the organization of the learning process (Carnoy and Castells, 1996). Schools

need more autonomy in order to be more responsive to the changing needs of the workplace, the increasing heterogeneity of student populations and the growing complexity of the learning market (Halasz, 2003).

Decentralization is not seen as merely the unconditional delegation of authority to the school level. Even in countries where school autonomy is greatest, there are mechanisms designed to link school improvement with systemic improvement, while rigorous procedures are put in place to ensure accountability. The former Swedish education minister, Ylva Johansson (2000), suggests that 'experimentation should be fostered within the broad frameworks of national goals, with imaginative solutions devised for the real challenges being confronted on the ground. Evaluation and feedback are critical. Some 'failures' are inevitable and must be accepted in

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Box 5.14. Impediments to decentralization

■ emptiness of ownership: token or ritual planning exercises at local levels which have no financial or political reality

■ poor central management of the liquidity of funds scheduled for local use

■ paucity of real resources at a local level, resulting in disillusion

■ complex procedures transferred to local levels with even less chance of their effective implementation

■ threat and reality of corruption: discretionary power over scarce resources allied to weak systems of accountability

■ decentralization limited to external agency projects or a condition of agency support; support for particular communities may weaken relationship between communities and local government

■ limited management capacities; poor communication and information systems

■ unequal representation in school and local authorities; gender and ethnic imbalance

■ backlash from educational professionals; a perceived and/or real loss of authority

■ government subsidies to local government may not be used for service provision, so the costs of new local structures may eat into local education budgets

Sources: Charlier and Pierrard (2001); Hallak and Poisson (2001); Romeo (2003); Prud'homme (2003).

Networks may offer a better way of exchanging knowledge about what works for schools.

order to encourage risk-taking; valuable lessons can be learned from them as well as from the successes. These practices should not remain isolated examples, but be disseminated so that they can enjoy a much broader impact'.

The United Kingdom, for example, applies the principle of intervention in inverse proportion to success. Initially, schools are granted a large amount of freedom and power. But there are national standards.[18] Schools that do well retain this amount of autonomy. Schools that do particularly well receive even greater autonomy, can be financially rewarded and will serve as examples for other schools. Those schools that perform poorly may loose autonomy and eventually risk direct intervention from central government, a 'takeover' by the private sector or closure. But schools are not left on their own. A well-defined framework is put in place for the early identification of poor performance by means of regular assessments and inspection. Inspection results are disclosed publicly, both to generate the pressure to improve and, in theory, to help schools to identify other schools from which they can learn. The creation of a National College for School Leadership is one of various measures to strengthen schools so that they are able to respond to this challenging framework (Barber, 2003).

In Hungary, involvement of the private sector and the application of business models (benchmarking, quality management) are important in school improvement strategy. The rapid transition from central control to community-owned schools has highlighted the importance of school heads and teachers having the ability to fulfil their new roles. Schools are assisted by consultants from various sectors in defining their goals, in partnership with the local community. Schools are also supported in their development into learning organizations, implementing 'Total Quality Management' and disseminating the best of their experience throughout the education system (Halasz, 2003; Hirsch, 2003).

The Netherlands introduced 'freedom of education' in 1917: parents and civil society organizations were given the right to establish schools according to preference and receive public funding if a minimum set of general conditions were met. This tradition has caused a deeply rooted belief that 'it is not the

government's job to intervene at (school) level' (Netherlands, 2003b). In this culture, the school itself is the primary actor in the system of quality assurance and accountability. 'Self-evaluation' by the school is the core instrument. The school inspector assumes the role of 'critical friend'; on the one hand, he/she assesses the performance of a school with, as in the United Kingdom, the closure of the school as ultimate sanction in case of lasting under-performance. On the other hand, the inspector seeks to prevent this from happening by supporting the school in its process of improvement. As in Hungary and the United Kingdom, publicly disclosed performance data play an important role (Netherlands, 2001).

Networks of schools and teachers are important vehicles for the exchange of good practice and for professional development. In Portugal, the proliferation of such networks is one of the core strategies in the government's policy of decentralization. In order to ensure the dissemination of successful innovations and a professional consultation among schools and among teachers, Portugal has initiated the 'Good Hope Programme':[19] a government-funded scheme to establish links between schools (Céu Roldao, 2003).

More classic, centrally-driven reform policies may be insufficiently informed by the body of knowledge about school effectiveness (Hargreaves et al., 1998), and therefore inadequately tailored to local contingencies. As a result, they have generally failed to improve student achievement (Hopkins and Levin, 2000). Networks may offer a more influential way of exchanging knowledge about what works for schools. This is important in highly decentralized systems, where channels for top-down dissemination of knowledge may be absent in the first place.

Making primary education affordable

It is very expensive to be poor (Maarifa Ni Ufungo, 2001). One clear manifestation of this truth is that poverty is a major barrier to schooling and to many other types of educational opportunity. As a result, the right to education, and the huge demand that it generates, cannot be satisfied.

Parents and guardians are unable to pay the direct fees and charges which allow their children to attend school, as well as meet the indirect costs that often have significant implications for being able to sustain even the most basic of livelihoods.

These realities are better understood now than fifteen years ago when cost-sharing was advanced as a means to lessen the burden of cash-strapped governments and to generate community ownership of schools. Indeed, it is the application of cost-sharing and cost-recovery strategies and the detrimental effects of structural adjustment during the 1980s and early 1990s that held down enrolment levels. Nevertheless, now, in terms of legal obligations, a majority of countries have a commitment to provide free primary education.

Hard choices for households

Chapter 3 of this report documents the fact that the hard decisions taken at household level are often differentiated by gender and that fees and charges affect girls' chances of learning more than those of boys.

In many countries, fees and charges are more complex than is obvious at first sight. An example from the United Republic of Tanzania in 2000 illustrates the point (Table 5.8). A family in the Kilimanjaro District is required to pay a minimum of ten school charges. The total of these charges then has to be multiplied by the number of children in the family and by the number of years that each child attends school. These direct costs have to be found from an income which varies seasonally, is uncertain annually and in some cases is less than the total cost of school charges shown in Table 5.8. One estimate (Global Campaign for Education, 2003*a*) for the whole country suggests that, prior to the removal of school fees in 2001, it cost about half the annual income of poor rural families to send one child to primary school for one year.

A recent six-country study (Boyle et al., 2002) of Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zambia sets the difficult household decisions regarding school fees in a wider context. The study concludes that both for the poorest and for the better-off groups, the costs of education are the predominant reason given for children in the household *never* having attended school. This

finding is even stronger for children who have *dropped out* of school and is more pronounced in urban areas where fees are higher and there is less flexibility in payment requirements than in some rural schools. However, although direct charges are critical to preventing full and sustained access to school among the poorest communities, a wide range of other socio-cultural factors are significant. Four points receive particular attention in the study:

- Even the poorest households make judgements about the quality and relevance of schooling and make sacrifices for what they perceive to be education of good quality.
- Gendered decision-making characterizes the trade-offs on schooling for different children. Girls are likely to suffer most.
- Demand for schooling is vulnerable to economic and natural shocks. HIV/AIDS and poor health in general are significant factors.
- Violence and sexual harassment in schools is more pervasive than is often accepted.

Table 5.9 summarizes the reasons for *leaving* school, as distinct from attending, in four of the six countries. This reconfirms that money is the primary constraint. Unfortunately these data are not disaggregated by gender.

So, while people do make important judgements about affordability, they do so in the framework of a complex set of other factors which also influence their decisions. This being so, government policies on direct charges and costs which are insensitive to the complexity of household decision-making – let alone the impact of supply-side policies – are likely to fall short of their objectives.

Difficult choices for governments

In this context, it is instructive to look at recent developments in sub-Saharan Africa, in a group of five countries that have introduced free primary education over a period of eleven years since 1994 (Table 5.10).

In sub-Saharan Africa, making education more affordable and accessible has been a major talking point in most recent political campaigns, manifestos and elections. This is understandable for a number of reasons. The right to education is better understood. It remains a source of hope and opportunity for people who live with poverty, and most governments recognize that investment

Even the poorest households make judgements about the quality and relevance of schooling.

Table 5.8. Costs of primary schooling in Tanzania

School charges	Amount per child (Tanzanian shillings)	Total annual costs for four children
Tuition fees	2 000	8 000
Other (including uniform and equipment)	7 950	31 800
Games fees	1 000	4 000
School repairs	1 000	4 000
School guards	500	2 000
Bookkeeping	800	3 200
Food	1 000	4 000
Cook	500	2 000
Teacher Resource Centre	200	800
Examinations	2 000	2 000
Totals	16 950	61 800

Note : These data are for one family in the Kilimanjaro District of the United Republic of Tanzania, drawn from a survey conducted in 2000 – before the government announced 'free' primary education in 2001. There were nine members in the household, seven of whom were children, four in school. The family could afford one meal a day. Both parents valued education, the wife completing Standard 7 at school.

Source : Maarifa Ni Ufungo (2001).

in education is significant for national economic and social reforms. In Malawi, free primary education was a rallying call for the United Democratic Front prior to the 1994 election, while more recently, in Kenya in 2002, it was a major campaign pledge by the future president, Mwai Kibaki. In four out of the five cases, free primary education was announced following the election of a new government. As Table 5.10 demonstrates, the political announcements were followed by dramatic short-term responses in terms of primary-school enrolment. In Nairobi, early in 2003, many schools very rapidly experienced a doubling or more of numbers. Three primary schools near the slum areas of the capital registered increases of 1,400, 1,400 and 1,500 respectively (United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2003). In Malawi, net enrolments prior to 1994 had been 58% for girls. This increased to 73% by 1996. In Zambia, in 2002, the first school year after the announcement of cost reduction measures, primary enrolments grew by 7% compared with 2% in the previous year.

As Table 5.10 shows, the actual interpretation of 'free' takes on different meanings in different countries. In none of the sample countries are

households free of meeting some direct costs. For example, in the Kilimanjaro area of the United Republic of Tanzania, an NGO study early in 2003 (Maarifa Ni Ufungo, 2003), one year after the abolition of tuition fees for 7–10-year-olds, found that the average total outlay by parents for one child was now in the range of 2,000–8,000 Tanzanian shillings compared with 7,600–10,600 shillings prior to 'free' primary. Total costs, including a calculation to cover indirect costs, suggested that the cost of keeping one child in school for one year was still nearly 13,000 Tanzanian shillings. The cost of uniform remained a burden but the stigma of sending a child to school without it remained strong. And the inability to pay for books remained a severe curb on regular attendance. Nevertheless, it appears that overall national enrolments in the United Republic of Tanzania have risen dramatically as a result of the abolition of tuition fees.

The sudden and dramatic response to the introduction of free primary education necessitated strong supply-side responses. All five governments increased the share of the national budget to education. Primary education has increased its share of the education budget to 55% or more (Table 5.10). However, in response to the vastly increased numbers of students, the unit expenditures per student typically fell substantially in the immediate aftermath of the abolition of fees.

Meanwhile, the total costs to government continue to rise. In Uganda (Uganda, 2003) it is projected that for the period 2002–15 there will be a 57.7% increase in the total number of primary-school pupils, more than double the number of teachers will be required, and non-salary expenditure will be pegged at close to 25%. The 2015 budget is estimated to be 3.5 times that of the base year.

Sustaining quality

Sustaining the provision of good quality education against this background will be difficult and it is clear from Table 5.10 that there is, and will remain, heavy dependence on external funding. In the short term, this is needed to help meet the intense pressures exerted on fragile systems by sudden increases in enrolment, but it will also be needed in the longer term as population growth and the shift to UPE and towards schooling of

Table 5.9. What is the main reason for leaving school? (%)

	Nepal	Bangladesh	Uganda	Zambia
Lack of money for school expenses	14.9	61.9	48.1	55.3
Did not want to continue	24.1	11.5	6.8	14.4
Difficulties with school work	–	3.5	0.8	–
Expelled	–	0.9	0.8	0.5
Earning money	13.8	2.7	0.8	–
Need to work at home	13.7	5.3	0.8	–
Illness	4.6	3.5	9.8	2.9
Marriage	8	–	7.5	1
Pregnancy	–	–	9.8	1.9
Death in the family	1.1	0.9	2.3	1
Failed a grade and would have to repeat	4.6	2.7	1.5	11.5
Too old to go to school	1.1	–	1.5	–
Completed schooling	5.7	–	4.5	3.4
Transfer	–	–	0.8	–
Withdrawal by parent/guardian Corporal punishment	3.4	–	0.8	–

Note: Columns do not add up to 100 owing to some reasons being non-specified.
Source: Boyle et al. (2002).

higher quality continue to require increased budgetary provision. Projections for four of the five countries show that a more than doubling of educational aid, in real terms, will be needed in order to sustain their move towards UPE over the years to 2015 (Colclough et al., 2003).

In all five countries, the announcement of free primary education has been seen as a defining moment in their educational history. But some difficult lessons are being learned, notably whether primary and then secondary schools can offer an education of sufficient quality to retain much larger numbers of students. In Malawi, the Malunga Commission was established by the government to assess why the education system was failing so many students, as reflected by the low level of performance in the Malawi School Leaving Certificate Examination for secondary students. It concluded that the lack of qualified secondary teachers was the root cause of the problem and that this could be traced back to the decision taken in 1994 to introduce free primary education (*Africanews*, 2003). While secondary schools had been opened quickly, in recognition of the impending increase in the number of

primary-school leavers, this had not been matched by an increase in the number of qualified teachers. The Commission said that 12,000 secondary teachers were needed but that there were only 5,000 in the system, of which 1,600 were qualified.

In Uganda, there is little question that there has been significant progress in reaching out to all primary-school-age children. However, some NGOs suggest that between 13% and 18% of children may still not have access to primary education and/or attend alternative education centres (Murphy, 2003), while official net enrolment rates suggest that UPE has been achieved. However, attaining equitable and good quality education for all remains a difficult challenge.

Recent studies suggest significant levels of drop-out. Ugandan P1 enrolments in 1997 were as high as 2,159,850 but had fallen to 832,855 in P5 in 2001. A recent mid-term review of Uganda's Education Strategic Investment Plan indicates a 'drastic decrease in enrolment in the transition from P1 to P2 which might relate to

Table 5.10. Free primary education in five African countries

Country	Date of introduction	What does 'free' mean?	Enrolment	Government finance	External agencies

Kenya	January 2003	Free tuition and no school levies, but the costs of uniform and examinations remain.	*Out-of-school children*
			  2000 1.9 m
			Total enrolment
			  2002 6.0 m
			  2003 7.2 m
			GER
			  1990/91 91.90
			  2000 93.42
			  2001 94.00 (F 93.4)
			  (2002 87.60)
			  (2003 104.00)
			NER
			  2000 69.27
				Prior to free primary, 29% of recurrent budget on education. Now 36% of budget (6% of GDP). 55% on primary. 93% on salaries.	2003 World Bank approved US$50 million and DFID US$21 million. Other agencies helping to bridge immediate gaps in advance of strategic plan.

Malawi	October 1994	Free tuition, books and stationery. Uniform not compulsory.	*Total enrolment*
			  1993/94 1.9 m
			  1994/95 3.2 m
			GER
			  1990/01 61.00
			  1996 138.00
			  1999/00 158.00
			  2000 135.28
			NER
			  1992 77.00
			  1996 67.00
			  (2000 104.18)
				Education 11% of government recurrent budget (1990/01) to 24% (1997) when 65% on primary education.	40% of the primary education budget at introduction of free primary education.

Uganda	January 1997	Free tuition for 6–12 year-olds. Costs remain for clothing, school food, some materials and school fund contributions.	*Total enrolment*
			  1996 2.7 m
			  2002 7.2 m
			GER
			  1990 61.30
			  1995 74.30
			  2000 128.91
			  (2001 135.80)
			NER
			  1990/91 47.70
			  (2000/1 109.50)
				12% of government budget in 1992 to 25% in 1998. 70% of this on primary education.	Agencies cover over 50% of education budget.

United Rep. of Tanzania	October 2001	Free tuition for 7–10-year-olds first, later to be extended. No mandatory cash contribution. Uniforms not compulsory.	*Out-of-school children*
			  2000 3.62 m
			GER
			  1990/01 69.10
			  2000 63.18
			  (2002 100.40)
			NER
			  1990/01 49.80
			  2000 47.57
			  (2002 99.30)
				Post free tuition, education receives 25% of the government budget of which 62% is for primary.	Agencies provide over 60% of the primary education budget, excluding direct budget support.

Zambia	February 2002	User fees abolished. Uniforms not compulsory. Fees can be levied by PTAs and boards but no student can be excluded because of cost.	*Out-of-school children*
			  2000 701,000
			GER
			  2000 75.97
			  (2001 76.90)
			  (2002 81.00)
			NER
			  2000 65.21
			  (2001 65.10)
			  (2002 66.10)
				13.2% of government budget in 1996 to 20.1% in 2002. 56% on basic education.	Agencies cover 27% of total education expenditure in 2000. Approximately 50% of basic education budget.

Sources: Riddell (2003) and a variety of national documents. Figures in parentheses are not found in the administrative data used in the Statistical annex of this report.

the fact that schooling is simply not affordable for those who do not earn a cash income' (Uganda, 2003).

At the level of policy, all five countries have recognized the many implications of reducing the cost of education to parents, reacting to the enrolment surge and improving (or at least sustaining) the quality of education. But the implementation of free primary education is complex and difficult, especially in relation to the training, professional development and support of teachers. In Malawi, in 1994, 19,000 untrained teachers were recruited, received a three-week orientation course, with in-service education provision scheduled to follow. However, neither Zambia nor Kenya deployed untrained teachers. Kenya is currently mapping its teacher requirements. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the government plans to recruit 45,000 new teachers in the period 2002–06, with a substantial increase in double-shift and multi-grade teaching.

These intentions and plans have to be set against the backdrop of HIV/AIDS and its impact on the teaching force. While there is some debate about the scale of prevalence of HIV/AIDS among teachers and future trends across sub-Saharan Africa (Bennell, 2003; Kelly, 2003), there is little question that teachers are seriously affected as a group. For example, it has been estimated that the average annual percentage of teachers who will die from AIDS in the period 2000–10 (assuming that teachers have the same infection rate as the general population) may be as high as 2.1% in Zimbabwe, 1.7% in Zambia, 1.4% in Kenya and 0.5% in Uganda (World Bank, 2002*g*).

Lessons are emerging from the experience of these five countries (Riddell, 2003). Enabling children to realize their right to a basic education is essential and the cost of that education should not be a barrier. The measures taken by the five governments have been important in breaking down some of those barriers. And they reflect a willingness to meet international obligations and commitments along with a clear acknowledgement of the macro-level benefits that accrue from primary education.

But others have argued that some of the detailed micro-level challenges of educational development have been overlooked, while a dependence on external funding agencies has accentuated concern for targets and performance indicators to the detriment of processes that recognize context, capacity and a realistic pace of change.

It is probably fair to say that Uganda has to date been the most successful of the five countries in the aftermath of the introduction of free primary education. Why is this so? In large measure, because of the types of policies and strategies identified in Box 5.15 which demonstrate the importance of a strong macro-planning framework allied to detailed strategies to address the complex education measures needed to achieve real UPE – a recurring theme in this chapter.

This is not to suggest that Uganda's problems are over. The recent mid-term review of ESIP 1 concluded that 'the primary focus and success to date has been … increasing numbers of learners in primary school but … the improvement of educational quality, the delivery of education services (including devolution of responsibilities to the District) and capacity development in strategic planning and programming have not been achieved according to … original targets'. Nevertheless a framework for action is in place (Uganda, 2003).

So free primary education has had important benefits. The demand for education has been re-stimulated. More children are in school. Commitments are being sustained and new modalities of working with agencies are making some progress, although it seems clear that the enrolment impact of suspending school fees should have been better anticipated. Plans should have been in place and new resources identified. Nevertheless, the benefits are plain for children previously denied any educational opportunity at all.

Projections for four of the five countries show that educational aid will need to be more than doubled to sustain their move towards UPE by 2015.

Box 5.15. Policy and strategy in Uganda

1. The policy environment
- Vision 2025
- Poverty Eradication Action Plan
- Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP 1 1998–2003)
- Political commitment reflected in sustained levels of financing for primary education
- 'Buy in' to UPE across government
- Increase in consistency and predictability of external funding base, including budget support
- Commitment to regular monitoring of performance and progress

2. Attention to Sector Objectives within ESIP 1 – areas of focus*

a. *Access and equity*
- expansion of facilities
- efficiency measures (better use of teachers)
- access to post-primary vocational skills programmes
- access to higher education

b. *Quality improvements*
- primary textbooks
- teacher training
- higher education

c. *Delivery of educational services*
- school and community
- district
- central government

d. *Capacity development in strategic planning and programming*
- ESIP management (i) implementation mechanism
- ESIP management (ii) capacity building
- government agency consultative mechanisms

* This part of the table draws on the management framework used in ESIP Reviews, e.g. the Final Report of the Mid-Term Review of the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) in Uganda, January 2002 (Uganda, 2003).

Source: Murphy (2003).

Fees and Poverty Reduction Strategies

In a review of twenty-five Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (Tomasevski, 2003) the significance of school fees is mentioned explicitly in fourteen PRSPs (Table 5.11). Burkina Faso and Yemen make particular reference to the fact that fees should not be charged for girls, while in Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Viet Nam it is stated that the poor should not pay fees.

In the light of the evidence cited in this section (and in the section on 'Patterns of performance – what drives progress?') it is difficult to see how any PRSP can ignore the issue of the affordability of primary education and of the need to eliminate or significantly reduce the charges that households bear in sending children to school. But this is not uniformly the case, as Table 5.11 shows.

EFA in industrialized and transition countries

The *EFA Report* accords priority to those countries where the challenge of achieving EFA is greatest. This is in accordance with the *Dakar Framework for Action*, which recognizes the pressing challenges and needs of sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, other countries among the international category of least developed countries, and those nations beset by conflict. The overall assessment of progress towards EFA in Chapter 2 confirms the validity of the Dakar diagnosis.

However, this is not to suggest that the *Dakar Framework for Action* excludes industrialized and transition countries from the need to attain EFA goals and to contribute to post-Dakar activities and processes within their own borders. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, the situation in some transition countries is not significantly better than that in some developing regions. Furthermore in industrialized countries no one would claim that current education provision meets the needs of all groups in society.

This section explores how the EFA challenge is understood in a sample of industrialized and transition countries and compares their policy agendas against the EFA goals.

Industrialized countries

The terminology of 'industrialized' and 'developing' countries has many conceptual weaknesses. But it is kept to here to distinguish those countries with high per capita incomes from the rest. Their education indicators at the macro level are well in advance of other groups in terms of enrolment at all levels of the formal system (Statistical annex, Tables 3–7) and of learning outcomes for young people and adults

(UNESCO Institute for Statistics/OECD, 2003*b*; OECD/Statistics Canada, 2000).

Very few industrialized countries set their own education policies in terms of Education for All, and only a small minority have produced an EFA plan. The latter include the Nordic countries (Denmark, 2003; Finland, 2002; Iceland, 2002; Norway, 2002; Sweden, 2002). In the United Kingdom, the National Commission for UNESCO has produced a report on the national and international implications of EFA (UK National Commission for UNESCO, 2003).

The Norwegian EFA Plan illustrates the way in which some industrialized countries have interpreted the *Dakar Framework for Action*. It develops an inventory of the challenge that the Dakar agenda represents in the Norwegian context. It concludes that while a distinctive set of EFA-related issues remains to be addressed in Norway, 'the Norwegian school system is of a high standard in international terms, and these unresolved problems are small in comparison with the challenges in the field of aid and development. Seen from a Norwegian perspective, international development work is therefore the most important focus of EFA' (Norway, 2002). Norway is typical of most industrialized countries that follow the agenda set in Dakar primarily through their development ministries and agencies rather than through their ministries of education.

The Nordic countries recognize that while they may have achieved UPE and gender parity in primary and secondary education, the other goals are less clearly defined and are 'based on a different logic and are more challenging and future-oriented' (Denmark, 2003). The Danish EFA plan pinpoints two major trends in education policy development: decentralization and internationalization. From the 1940s to the beginning of the 1970s, new policies were developed at the central level and implemented in a top-down manner. Thereafter, there was greater space for innovation at local level, which became the driving force for change. There is now what is described as a process of *governed co-operation,* whereby the role of government is to see that there is a continuous and ordered process of negotiation and improvement.

At the same time there has been a growing international dimension to education policy and

Table 5.11. School fees and PRSPs

Region/Country	PRSP year	Are school fees mentioned?	Additional comment
Sub-Saharan Africa			
Benin	2003	No	
Burkina Faso	2000	Yes	Not for girls
Ethiopia	2002	No	
Ghana	2003	Yes	
Malawi	2002	Yes	
Mali	2003	Yes	
Mozambique	2001	Yes	Not for the poor
Niger	2002	No	
Rwanda	2001	Yes	Reducing private costs
Senegal	2002	No	
Uganda	2000	Yes	
United Rep. of Tanzania	2000	Yes	
Arab States			
Mauritania	2000	No	
Yemen	2002	Yes	Not for girls
Latin America and the Caribbean			
Bolivia	2001	No	
Guyana	2002	Yes	
Honduras	2001	No	
Nicaragua	2001	No	
Central Asia			
Azerbaijan	2003	No	
Kyrgyzstan	2003	Yes	Not for the poor
Tajikistan	2002	Yes	Not for the poor
East Asia			
Cambodia	2003	Yes	Not for the poor
Viet Nam	2002	Yes	Nor for the poor
Central and Eastern Europe			
Albania	2002	No	
South and West Asia			
Sri Lanka	2003	No	

Source: Tomasevski (2003).

reform. Denmark is a member of UNESCO, OECD, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Each of these bodies is seen and used by the country 'as a background of theory, concepts and ideas for a never-ceasing debate on international issues' (Denmark, 2003).

Denmark, like other members of the European Union, participates in the *open method of co-ordination,* also known as the Lisbon process. This is an activity that selects indicators to compare the educational performance of member states and helps to identify good practice (see Box 5.4). Benchmarks serve to challenge and stimulate those with relatively poor performance. But the Danish EFA plan

continues to emphasise the responsibility of member states for the content and structure of their own national education systems (Denmark, 2003). The example of Denmark suggests national policy development being *driven* by a democratic process of decentralization and *inspired* by the international context. The *Dakar Framework for Action* is seen as one of the elements of this.

Those few countries that have developed an EFA document appear to have done so with the following objectives in mind:

- To improve the domestic education system by reviewing it along the lines of the Dakar goals. In this light, the Nordic countries have exchanged their EFA plans and produced a synthesis document (Nordic Council, 2003). The UK National Commission for UNESCO has organized six national conferences, one for each of the goals. Baltic Sea countries (and observers from the United Kingdom and Belarus) met in Riga in January 2002 (UNESCO 2002*a*, Box 5.1).

- To be accountable to the world community for the commitment to meet the Dakar goals, again regarding the domestic education system (Nordic EFA plans).

- To enhance understanding and awareness of the challenges facing the global community, especially less-developed countries (UK National Commission for UNESCO).

- To identify ways in which poor and rich countries can learn from one another's experience. The report of the UK National Commission for UNESCO identifies the 'commonalities and contrasts' between developing countries and the United Kingdom for each of the Dakar goals.

It follows that the Nordic and British documents are not action plans. They serve the objectives of review, accountability, awareness-raising and mutual learning, but they do not contain new, financially underpinned commitments to specific short-term action. The United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO's report, moreover, is not an official government statement but a public initiative.

Fighting polarization and exclusion

In the examination of their own national circumstances, the emphasis in the Nordic and British documents is, in the words of the Norwegian plan, on 'approaches to problems associated with, amongst others, the mentally/physically disabled, minority groups and people with reduced literacy levels' (Norway, 2002). While the Nordic countries have well-developed and well-resourced education systems in which a majority reach very high levels of competence (OECD/Statistics Canada, 2000), and while educational achievement in the United Kingdom has improved markedly in recent years, there are serious concerns in all these countries for those who do not yet benefit fully from the learning opportunities on offer.

More broadly, the American *No Child Left Behind* policy and the European Union benchmarks regarding school drop-out and basic skills reflect the same concerns for those at risk of exclusion, as shown earlier in this chapter. The Finnish EFA document captures this: 'Civilization belongs to all. A genuine information society is within the reach of every citizen. Development must not lead to polarization and exclusion' (Finland, 2002). In the United Kingdom, increased competitiveness between schools is seen as giving rise to tensions between performance and inclusion. There is also a worry that 'the 3Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic) may squeeze out creative subjects, that examinable subjects will displace other parts of the curriculum, and that the child's personal development may be sacrificed to the goal of acquiring information' (UK National Commission for UNESCO, 2003).

In this light, ECCE (the first of the Dakar goals) is regarded as playing 'an important part in levelling out social and learning disparities', as the Finnish plan puts it (Finland, 2002). Yet, enrolment disparities persist. In Norway, 63% of all children between the ages of 3 and 5 are enrolled, but among minorities the figure is 30%. In the United Kingdom, ECCE has recently been an area of massive expansion with an initial focus on the urban poor. In 2004 there will be free nursery education for all children from age 3.

The second goal, UPE, has generally been achieved in all countries. But truancy and drop-out do occur and there is a particular challenge in reaching refugees, asylum seekers and travelling populations.

The language of instruction is becoming an issue. The Finnish and Swedish documents indicate that minority children have the right to be taught in their original language, and in Finnish or Swedish as a second language (Finland, 2002; Sweden, 2002). Some other industrialized countries see a dilemma: if education fully respects the languages and cultures of ethnic minorities, this can, in principle, hinder the integration of the children into their home societies in the long term.

Free education is also a point of discussion among industrialized countries. In the Nordic countries, this adage is generally understood literally. There are little or no costs involved in schooling, transportation and school meals. A more demanding interpretation is that free education can be regarded as being achieved when a country's social and income policy (child benefits, student support, social security, minimum wages) is such that any family is guaranteed to be able to afford the costs involved with schooling. This is a medium-term objective in all the countries.

Bridges towards a job

Goals 3 and 4, meeting the learning needs of young people and adults, represent a special challenge to industrialized countries. On the one hand, there is a tendency towards universal upper secondary education (see Box 5.4), while more than half of the age cohort pursues tertiary education. On the other hand, if an individual does not complete upper secondary education in a country where almost everybody else does, this becomes a strong disadvantage in a comparative sense. Where such disadvantages are concentrated in specific groups, they affect the social fabric. Furthermore, this overall rise of educational attainment encourages people to maximize their stay in education, in order not to fall behind in the increasingly competitive labour market. Thus, young people tend to prefer theoretical pathways that qualify them for further study, rather than vocational ones. This trend poses problems for individuals who have a more practical learning style and are weaker in cognitive learning (OECD, 2000).

In all industrialized countries there is a group of people for whom the regular education system does not provide the opportunities that fit their learning styles and needs. The International Adult Literacy Study (OECD/Statistics Canada,

2000) suggests that this group ranges from 10%–20% of the population in most industrialized countries. This represents an important message for all countries aiming to reach and serve the 'last 10%–20%' of their populations.

Innovative policies are needed to address this group. Sweden, the United Kingdom and other countries are experimenting with Individual Learning Accounts. These ensure the right to learn regardless of age, time, place and provider, and encourage the learner to save for this purpose. Earlier, the United Kingdom pioneered the development of National Vocational Qualifications and Accreditation of Prior Learning. The former aim at making vocational pathways more transparent, flexible and hence more attractive. The latter policy allows individuals to make better use of the competencies they have acquired informally in the workplace or in daily life. Guidance and counselling – in relation to both education and the labour market – are crucial to this policy. Lifelong learning strategies are increasingly harmonized at EU level (Colardyn, 2002).

Learning at work also takes place in apprenticeship systems. Several European countries have retained these, while the United Kingdom and Sweden have (re)introduced them (OECD, 2000). The innovative Production Schools in Denmark (Denmark, 2003) and the Study and Working Life Centres in Sweden (OECD, 1999) bring workplace learning into the school itself. The Norwegian Competence Reform is a framework that encompasses a number of the policies just mentioned. It also implies the right of any individual to complete upper secondary education and thus to acquire access to tertiary education.

Segregated workplaces

In relation to Dakar Goal 5, an important message is conveyed by the Nordic and British documents: half a century of gender parity does not necessarily result in gender equality. The Finnish document, for example, states that the 'last restrictions on women's university studies were removed in the early 1900s, and already in the 1950s about half of university student were women' (Finland, 2002). Today more women than men attend higher education in the whole OECD area (OECD, 2001a; OECD-DAC, 2003). In fact, the learning achievement of girls is markedly better than that of boys, as all the documents underline,

Half a century of gender parity does not necessarily result in gender equality.

In the education sectors of Nordic countries, around 70% of workers in the lower ranks are female.

while the British document even speaks of a 'crisis in male identity' (UK National Commission for UNESCO, 2003).

But at the same time, strong disparities persist in the *choices* that women and men make when enrolling in higher education and, earlier, when deciding which subjects and pathways to follow in secondary education (see Chapter 2). As a result, women tend to have less favourable career prospects than men. The Norwegian document states that the country has 'one of the most gender segregated workplaces in the whole of the OECD' (Norway, 2002). In the education sectors of Nordic countries, around 70% of workers in the lower ranks are female. At higher levels of education and among education managers this proportion is much lower. The policy responses of the countries include a campaign to recruit more male candidates for teacher training, a network for men working in schools and in teacher training (Norway), and gender-sensitive reviews of curriculum and content in Sweden and Iceland. One of the EU targets for 2015 is to raise the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology, mainly by making these studies more attractive to young women.

Patterns of achievement

A strong commitment to the quality of education (EFA Goal 6) is illustrated by the exceptionally high levels of expenditure on education (as a percentage of GDP) in Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Sweden. More moderate levels are found in Finland and the United Kingdom, while in all these countries the share of private contributions to education is relatively small (OECD, 2001*a*).

In recent surveys that measure learning achievement (UNESCO Institute for Statistics/OECD, 2003*b*; Mullis et al., 2003), Finland and Sweden tend to perform very well, the United Kingdom being a runner-up. Norway and Denmark seem to lag behind, despite their high levels of expenditure. However, when measuring the competences of adults, the performance of Denmark and Norway is as excellent as that of Sweden and Finland (OECD/Statistics Canada, 2000). One explanation is that young people in Norway and Denmark 'catch up' thanks to the generous provision of learning opportunities for adults. Another is that the pedagogies aim at laying the foundation for a

life of learning, rather than at the mastery of subject matter at an early age. In either case, the examples of Denmark and Norway question the adequacy of assessments during school age.

Nevertheless, *disparities* in educational achievement appear to persist. Norway addresses these in a broad and coherent approach, consisting of a scheme of grants to encourage, reward and highlight good practice within schools; a 'Quality Portal' to help schools in more systematic analysis of data about education quality; and local trial projects to stimulate schools to benefit more from deregulation and decentralization. The major efforts that the United States and the United Kingdom undertake in this respect have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

Transition countries – combating decline

The term 'transition country' applies to countries moving from planned to market economies, in Europe and in Asia. In education they are broadly characterized by the need to combat the tendency to decline. Primary NERs fell between 1990 and 2000 by a few percentage points in Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Mongolia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and they fell quite sharply in Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovenia (Statistical annex, Table 5). In the Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan, primary GERs declined markedly. Pre-primary education seems even more vulnerable to crisis: GER declined between 1990 and 2000 by more than 10 percentage points in Albania, Bulgaria and Hungary, while it collapsed from 72.7 to 34.9 in the Republic of Moldova (Statistical annex, Table 3).

In Europe, the transition countries have a rich pedagogical tradition. Most have attained and maintained high levels of learning achievement. In a recent survey (Mullis et al., 2003), the rankings of the transition countries are generally as good as those of the industrialized world. However, as a result of rapid political, social and economic change, the level and quality of the financial, human and material resources available to basic education have declined.

In the **Russian Federation**, for example, the large-scale political and economic transformation that started in 1990 has had a

strong impact on many aspects of life. Making a new society and a new economy based on the principles of democracy, federalism, the market and a respect for human rights, while sustaining a decent standard of life for all, has presented a major challenge. One aspect of this has been to try and counteract many new risks confronting young people – especially those faced with neglect, orphanhood, drug addiction and violence (Russian Federation, 2003).

The modernization of Russian education is driven in part by a long-term vision of a post-industrial information society that will allow the country to compete in a globalized economy. Aware that there is a long way to go, Russia has set its planning horizon at 2025, with intermediate targets every five years. The Dakar goals are part of this long-term vision but so too is higher education, where reform is underway. The role of private providers will be regulated and student support schemes will enhance access and equity. Another priority is to make vocational education more flexible. The regions in the north, where extreme natural circumstances make provision difficult and costly, and the Chechen Republic, where conflict disrupts the continuity of education, are scheduled to receive special attention.

Decline is also threatening the Moldovan education system. As a result of the crisis in pre-primary education, only 20% of 1–5-year-olds now have access to kindergartens, exclusion being particularly severe in rural areas. Pre-school is mandatory at ages 5 to 6, but even at this age only 60% attend. In primary education, the number of out-of-school children has risen sharply, especially 'in rural areas, where poor families cannot even cover all the expenses needed for clothes, footwear, food, school supplies and textbooks', according to the Moldovan EFA plan (Republic of Moldova, 2003). Insufficient or non-existent transport facilities and lack of heating in schools often makes going to school, or staying there, physically impossible, especially in winter when schools may even close. An ageing teaching workforce and a deteriorating material infrastructure complete this dark picture of an education system where primary GER fell from 93.1 to 83.8 between 1990 and 2000.

In the midst of this period of decline, the country ensured the constitutional right to free,

compulsory education (Republic of Moldova, 1994). In the EFA plan, education is seen as a *priority branch of production*, both as an occupational area in itself and as an area for advantageous investment. A *market economy based on private and public property, free initiative and competition* is seen as the context for this new education system. Stress is placed on national and universal values and a determination to depoliticize education, avoid excessive centralism and lessen levels of paramilitary training. A national EFA conference in 2001 resulted in the creation of the National EFA Forum and the development of an EFA plan which has three main priorities: good quality early childhood care and education; access to good quality formal basic education, with a focus on children in very difficult circumstances; and appropriate non-formal education and learning opportunities.

A global agenda

Based on the above, the following observations can be made regarding the commonalities – concerning EFA – between developing, transition and industrialized countries.

A century after the introduction of compulsory education, industrialized countries have not yet achieved high quality for all. The specific learning needs of roughly 10%–20% of the population are not adequately met, even if most of these people attended school. In some countries, half a century of gender parity has not resulted in gender equality. The experience of the transition countries suggests that even the universal provision of primary education – regardless of quality – is a fragile achievement and is not resistant to socio-economic crisis.

In some industrialized countries, the concept of education as a national service that is distributed in a more or less uniform way throughout the country is losing its credibility. Decentralization, in order for schools to be more responsive to a diversity of demand at a local level, is an important issue (Istance and Kobayashi, 2003). Developing countries, in their turn, face the challenge of achieving universal access to education within a relatively short time-frame. The pressure to quickly complete this large-scale 'roll-out' operation may make it difficult to do justice to the diversity of learning needs that industrialized countries are still struggling with.

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Focus on groups at risk of exclusion is an important feature of policy in industrialized, transition and developing countries.

There is a temptation for developing countries to *first* accomplish the expansion of capacity and *then* address the more specific needs of certain groups and communities.

The experience of northern countries suggests that this is to be avoided. Having developed their education systems in response to industrialization and the emergence of the nation-state (Barber, 2003), countries in the north now find themselves 'concerned about the education system's capacity to change quickly, at a time when many factors are combining to influence the shape of tomorrow's schools. …This means rethinking the way in which much education is currently organized, with the objective of … making it more accessible to … adults returning to learn, the disadvantaged and those with disabilities' (OECD, 1996*b*). *Bold experimentation* is said to be needed, 'in order to arrive at imaginative solutions devised for the real challenges being confronted on the ground' (Johansson, 2000).

Thus, the quality of education, with a focus on groups at risk of exclusion, appears to be an important feature of policy in of industrialized, transition and developing countries. Decentralization can be instrumental for schools in trying to respond to a diversity of needs but, as shown earlier in this chapter, many countries are wrestling with it and seeking to prevent harmful side effects. This points to the importance of strengthening school management.

Teachers, too, are high on the global agenda (UNESCO/ILO, 2002). Many developing countries need to ensure the 'supply' of sufficient numbers of teachers during a phase of rapid expansion – sometimes impeded by HIV/AIDS – while transition and industrialized countries are faced with ageing teaching workforces and a low level of interest among young people in entering the profession. In all countries, solutions that

predominantly address the quantitative aspect of the problem will have repercussions on the quality of teachers. This is all the more important as teachers are critical to the innovation of education and the improvement of learning achievement among low-performing groups (OECD, 2001*b*).

There are also discrepancies between the various policy agendas. While UPE is one of the core goals for developing countries, universal upper secondary education is clearly the next frontier for industrialized countries. Higher education is seen as crucial for countries to become and remain competitive in the global knowledge economy. The expansion of higher education raises searching questions of affordability, privatization and equity in the North, while the South is still wrestling with more basic education priorities. The two come together, however, around the issue of global trade in higher education services.

Vocational education is important in all regions but not always for the same reasons. For developing countries, strengthening vocational education may help to better reap the benefits of educational expansion. For industrialized and transition countries, the challenge seems rather to raise the esteem of this sector that is so often regarded as second rate in comparison with theoretical pathways into university.

Lifelong learning, too, has different connotations. For developing countries, the emphasis is on meeting the learning needs of youth and adults, partly to compensate for a lack of good initial schooling. Industrialized countries tend to adopt a 'cradle-to-grave' interpretation (OECD, 1996*a*) in which all initial learning from early childhood on aims at building the motivation and skills needed for a life of recurrent learning in multiple settings. Although this vision is in essence equally relevant to developing countries, their

immediate policy priorities tend to be to provide as many people as possible with at least some basic skills.

Among all commonalities and discrepancies between policy agendas, one thing seems absolutely unique for transition countries. They face a double challenge. On the one hand they need to restore and ensure the continuity of the purely operational functioning of the education system. This is a matter of training teachers, printing textbooks and repairing school buildings, not unlike the situation in many developing countries. On the other hand, and at the same time, transition countries are pressed by the forces of globalization to quickly regain lost ground – in an economic sense – vis-à-vis the industrialized countries. In today's world, this can no longer be accomplished by a strategy of low-skilled and low-cost labour, as the Russian and Moldovan EFA plans underline. Fortunately, there still is an impressive intellectual, pedagogical and technological heritage that can support transition countries in their double challenge. But there is a risk of 'lost generations', and this heritage seems to be in danger.

Most industrialized and transition countries have achieved the goals of UPE and gender parity, but they have not achieved gender equality and the other goals. There is clearly a case for 'mutual learning' between countries of the South and the North. ■