

# IIEP NEWSLETTER

Vol. XVI, No. 4

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 1998

## Challenges facing education reforms in Latin America

*The wave of education reforms in Latin America has heightened public awareness of the importance of education in development strategies, increased investment in education, and made considerable progress in institutional reform, essentially by establishing outcome-measurement systems and greater school autonomy. However, pupil results are still far from satisfactory and the pace of reform is slow. This article discusses the possible reasons for this and how such phenomena can undermine a society's economic competitiveness and democratic governance.*

ONE of the central ideas in educational reform has been that education contributes to social equity. However, the link between education and social equity is not one way. Neither is it static. Observation of the real situation in Latin America suggests that in some circumstances the equation needs to be reversed: *it is not merely a matter of what contribution is made by education to social equity but rather how much social equity is needed for education to be successful.*

Analyses of wealth distribution all indicate that in Latin America inequality is significantly higher than in other world regions with a similar level of development. A recent study<sup>1</sup> on poverty, inequalities, and the training of human capital showed that on average, Latin American countries had a Gini coefficient<sup>2</sup> 4.1 points higher than other countries with similar levels

of per-capita income. Likewise, available evidence shows that poverty rose right throughout the eighties in both absolute and relative terms and that though it has declined in relative terms since 1990, the number of people living in poverty is still rising.

It is recognized that pupils' living conditions have a fundamental impact on educational achievement. All findings on learning outcomes concur that results are dependent on family social status and wealth. However, the same investigations point to another phenomenon not so apparent as the first: namely, that institutional and pedagogical changes have no effect on the achievement of pupils living below the poverty line.

This suggests that the difficulties in boosting pupil performance are closely linked to the deterioration in the 'educability' of pupils beginning their schooling. 'Educability' does not

1948–1998

### Universal Declaration of Human Rights



FIFTY years ago in Paris, on 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.\*

#### Article 26

(1) Everyone has a right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and vocational education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

In its everyday challenges, working with educational planners worldwide, the IIEP is continually reminded of the importance of these principles and makes every effort to create an environment where they can be respected.

### Inside

#### On-line training

The IIEP boosts institutional capacity in higher education through more flexible 'virtual' training programmes.

3

#### Research

Recent *Sacmeq* research in Southern Africa shows the impact of gender, social background and school location on reading levels.

5

#### Training

Participants in IIEP's 1998/99 have arrived and start their training in Paris, as well as in Buenos Aires.

7

#### Publications

IIEP's recently launched series 'Trends in school supervision' has produced some interesting studies in Asia.

10

mean inherited biological or genetic traits, which are immune to the effects of social policies. Rather, the term refers both to the basic *cognitive development* which occurs in early childhood with healthy emotional stimulation, proper diet, and appropriate health care, and to *primary socialization*, by which children acquire the ethical values and attitudes which enable them to become part of a specialized agency – such as the school – outside the family circle.

Since a high percentage of pupils beginning their schooling is less 'educable', any efforts made by the education system become ineffective. While education is a factor which contributes to social equity, *some basic levels of social equity are necessary for education to have any chance of success*. This explains why some reforms have focused primarily on pre-school education, given its impact on social equity and the subsequent education performance of pupils.

## The patterns of educational change

The education reform processes in Latin America have always followed the same pattern. Priority has gone to institutional reform and in particular to decentralization and the creation of systems to measure outcomes. The principle behind this has been that institutional changes spur pedagogical innovation – such as the generation of school charters (*proyectos institucionales*), a greater ability to innovate, and the diversification of teaching methods – all catering to the social and cultural diversity of the population. Still, Latin America's experience is showing that though institutional change is necessary, it takes more to bring about pedagogical transformation. In this sense, it could be said that the concentration on institutional aspects has diverted attention from teaching and the main actor in teaching, namely, the teacher.

Current thinking in Latin America is that the approaches on which education reform was based in the past ignored, underestimated, or merely paid lip service to the role of teachers. While such approaches might have been considered valid in the context of former

education strategies, everything seems to indicate that they cannot be maintained in future plans. Both from the strictly pedagogical point of view as well as that of the institutional organization of educational activities, the teacher will have to play a central part in future education reforms. Accordingly, comprehensive policies will be required with regard to teachers, who must as a matter of urgency be given the proper training.

## Relations between the public and private sectors

Education reform has spurred alliances between the public and private sectors. Over recent decades some traditional barriers have been overcome and, based on the principle that it is both possible and necessary to build new alliances in education, the way opened towards greater linkages between agencies. However, this cannot be used as a pretext to remove responsibility from the national government in at least three areas: defining democratically education goals; evaluating the outcomes of work undertaken; and, intervening effectively to compensate for disparities where achievements are below standard.

In short, Latin American countries have realized the predominant importance of education in strategies aimed at promoting economic competition and political democracy. Education reforms designed to steer the education supply in accordance with such goals need continuity in their application. Over the coming years, it is probable that, with the consolidation of the initial phase of institutional change, reforms will focus on modifying styles of learning and the teaching guidelines currently used in schools. If such reforms fail to reach the school and the classroom they will have little social impact.

JUAN CARLOS TEDESCO

*This article is based on a presentation at the Conference on Building Latin America's future: public/private partnerships for education. World Bank, Washington, 4-6 June, 1998.*

<sup>1</sup> J.L. Londoño. *Pobreza, Desigualdad y Formación del Capital Humano en Latin America, 1950-2025*. Washington, World Bank, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> The Gini coefficient (or concentration ratio) is the most widely used statistic summary for describing inequality.

## In this issue:

<i>Challenges facing education reforms in Latin America.</i>	1
<i>Boosting institutional capacity through 'virtual training' – report of a distance education course on financial management for universities.</i>	3
<i>Current issues seminars.</i>	4
<i>The impact of gender, social background, and school location on reading levels in Southern Africa.</i>	5
<i>Appointment of first Sacmeq Director.</i>	6
<i>The new trainees have arrived! The 1998/99 Annual Training Programme commences.</i>	7
<i>The course in IIEP-Buenos Aires.</i>	8
<i>News from former trainees.</i>	8
<i>Forthcoming IIEP activities.</i>	9
<i>Improving supervision: a challenging task – a look at the new IIEP series on 'Trends in school supervision'.</i>	10
<i>World Conference on Higher Education.</i>	12
<i>Increasing girls' and women's participation in basic education – IIEP Fundamental Series No. 54.</i>	12



The IIEP Newsletter is published quarterly in English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

All correspondence should be addressed to:  
The Editor,  
IIEP Newsletter,  
International Institute for  
Educational Planning  
7-9, rue Eugène-Delacroix,  
75116 Paris.

Telephone: +33.1.45.03.77.00  
Fax: +33.1.40.72.83.66

E-mail: [newsletter@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:newsletter@iiep.unesco.org)

IIEP web site:  
<http://www.education.unesco.org/iiep>

# Boosting institutional capacity through 'virtual' training

*In an effort to make flexible learning opportunities more widely available, the IIEP has continued to diversify the modes of delivering its training courses. A course on **Strategic financial management in higher education institutions** was offered to 13 universities from 9 countries in the Southern Africa region through the internet over a 12-week period from 4 May to 31 July 1998.*

**T**HIS course was offered in response to the growing preoccupation of UNESCO Member States with the need to improve the managerial effectiveness of higher education institutions.

## Innovative instructional model

It was designed with the specific objective of strengthening institutional, rather than individual capacity in financial management and targeted senior- and middle-level managers with related responsibilities.

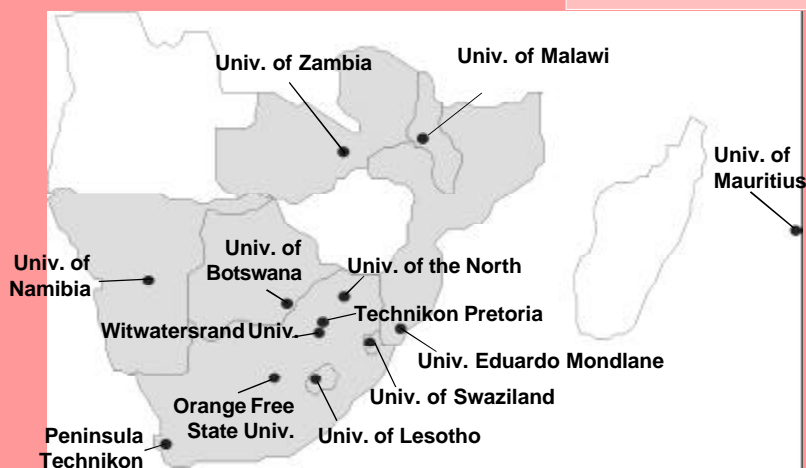
To ensure institutional commit-

ment, Vice-Chancellors were invited to apply on behalf of their institutions, to state the interest and commitment of the institution to improve managerial effectiveness, to nominate the individual participants and to guarantee their release time for five hours per week for the duration of the course. With this formal institutional commitment, a group of three to five staff members was formed in each institution. These participants worked together as a team with one member designated as a co-ordinator, whose role it was to arrange meetings convenient to all group members and to ensure that the responses of the

institution to assigned tasks were forwarded to the IIEP within the deadlines. At least one member of the group had to be fully computer literate. The group in each institution also interacted 'virtually' through the Internet with all the groups of participants in other institutions, sharing information and asking questions.

The course was based on a set of four printed modules that had been designed for individual study or distance learning. The instructional design of the course provided several types of tasks with a variety of approaches. The first task was independent study of the module with a set of questions to guide the reading of the module and reflection upon the information presented. Subsequently, the group met to discuss the questions posed and to prepare the institutional response to the group task or activity. The IIEP course team then responded to each submission individually and distributed a synthesis of the replies to all the institutions in order to share the input from the participants. Several activities were designed to promote direct information sharing, among the participants in the larger 'virtual' group of all the institutions, on improving financial management in the universities. These activities included an on-line discussion on income-generating activities within the universities, a structured exercise based on a computerized simulation model to explore alternative strategies to handle a financial crisis in a

## Southern African universities participating in the IIEP distance course



hypothetical university, and a final round table discussion on innovative strategies.

## Interactive communication

In designing the interactive aspect of the course, ready access and ease of use was paramount in the selection of the communication mode. All interactions took place through e-mail messages to one IIEP address.

Well in advance of the formal start of the course, the communications-related information submitted by each institution was reviewed for potential problems and the communications capability tested through a series of messages. This step was essential in order to identify any potential problems before the course began, so that participants would be unlikely to face aggravating communication problems that would disrupt their participation in the course. There is always the potential for interruption in electronic communication, but every effort was made to ensure that this was minimized. Since e-mail interaction is immediate, there can be a high level of frustration when communication links break down.

Frequent messages to participants provided continuous contact and interaction with the IIEP course team throughout the three-month period. The IIEP address was monitored continuously to ensure a quick acknowledgement of all received messages. In addition, a 'course hotline' was set up for any communication problems with the universities.

This formula of simplifying the communications technology and ensuring rapid on-line support appeared

to work well. Although some individual participants with limited experience in using e-mail encountered initial difficulties, these were usually resolved with the assistance of the group co-ordinators.

In evaluating the communication function, participants noted that they found e-mail fast, efficient and inexpensive.

## A more powerful capacity-building model

According to the comprehensive evaluation of the course, the key objective of institutional capacity building was met successfully. Although some participants noted that they missed the opportunity for the informal exchange of information and the forming of professional friendships that are so often the outcome of meetings and workshops, they also recognized that the participation of the whole team in a workshop was not feasible. It would have been too costly, both in terms of time and resources. In fact, the chance to work together as a team on issues, problems and tasks provided an occasion to explore together problems and potential solutions related to the challenging issue of financial management in the context of a structured activity.

In comparison to a traditional IIEP face-to-face workshop or intensive course, the approach used in this course has several advantages.

*First*, the distance-learning method allows a group of people from each institution to participate. This is a significant advantage when strengthening institutional capacity. More intense participation is required. The tasks and the written statements from

the groups provided an opportunity for deeper reflection and insight, as well as a wider sharing of experiences.

*Second*, the significantly longer schedule means that there is more time for reflection on the course content and for interaction with others, sharing information and experiences among the participants.

*Third*, participants remain in their institutional setting, and are, therefore, able to apply directly the skills and competencies acquired during the course. The members of the course team also benefit from the fact that they remain in their offices with ready access to the documentation and references that are often used to enhance their responses and comments.

*Finally*, most participants noted that they intended to remain in contact with one another through e-mail in order to continue the dialogue and the exchange of experiences initiated during the course. Their experience during the course allowed them to increase their ease in using this method of communication for professional interaction. They now have a powerful tool at their disposal for future problem solving.

The outcome of this pilot course clearly points to the possibility, in the near future, of the IIEP delivering courses through virtual training on a regular basis in order to meet the ever-increasing demand from UNESCO Member States for the Institute's assistance in strengthening their national capacities

MICHAELA MARTIN, SUSAN D'ANTONI,  
JOHN HALL AND BIKAS C. SANYAL

## Seminars on current issues in educational planning

Now under the direction of Kenneth N. Ross, these seminars continue to be very popular.

The most recent seminar, held on 20 October 1998, was concerned with *Training evaluators to support school-based management*.

Presented by Dr. John Owen from the University of Melbourne, this seminar looked at new approaches to the training of evaluators in education systems that have transferred substantial resources and decision-making

powers to the school level.

If you are passing through Paris in the near future, please contact the IIEP to see whether a seminar coincides with your visit.

# The impact of gender, social background, and school location on reading levels in Southern Africa

*Literacy data collected in five countries in Southern Africa have shown that while there were no differences between male and female reading levels at the end of primary school, there were, however, considerable variations among pupils coming from different socio-economic groups and living in different locations.*

**S**INCE 1992 the IIEP has been working with many countries in the Southern Africa Sub-region in order to build the capacity of ministries of education to undertake large-scale educational policy research studies that can be used to monitor the quality of education. One of the major outcomes of this initiative has been the implementation of a cross-national survey of schools that gathered data about the conditions of schooling and reading literacy levels of pupils at the upper end of primary school. A total of five countries completed this important study in 1998 as part of the research programme of the *Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality* (SACMEQ). The data collected during the survey covered some 750 schools, 1,500 teachers, and 15,000 pupils and was recently used to address two major questions regarding Grade 6 reading literacy levels. Are there significant differences in the reading literacy levels of boys and girls? How does the magnitude of gender differences compare with the magnitude of differences related to social background and school location?

The reading literacy test used in this study was scored by calculating the percentage of test items that were correct for each pupil. Averages of these percentage correct scores were then calculated for each nation overall and also for sub-groups of pupils defined by gender, social background, and school location. The results of these

analyses have been presented in *Table 1* below.

For example, the first and final entries in the first column of the table show that male Grade 6 pupils in Mauritius had an average score of 52 per cent correct responses on the reading test, whereas the Mauritian national average score for Grade 6 pupils was 53 per cent correct.

It can also be seen from the table that the national average scores for all five countries ranged from a low of 37 per cent correct in Namibia to a high of 53 per cent correct in Mauritius.

## Gender differences

In the first two lines of the table, the averages for male and female pupils have been presented. In Mauritius, these figures indicated that the average score for females were three percentage points above the average for males. This small difference was well within the bounds of chance fluctuation in the data and, therefore,

could not be interpreted as statistically significant. The gender differences in average scores for the other four countries were also not statistically significant. They ranged from one to two percentage points. It may also be seen that the course of these differences was not constant across countries.

The absence of gender differences in literacy levels in this Grade 6 study deserves further consideration. *First*, female participation rates at the Grade 6 level, although not shown in the table, were fairly equal for all countries at around 50 per cent. This suggested that the girls were **not** some form of a 'selected elite'. On the other hand, it is widely known that female participation in secondary and tertiary levels was lower than male participation. This could potentially mean that the equally talented girls at the end of primary school were not moving through to higher levels of education. *Second*, this lower female participation at higher levels of education has not always been accompanied by better

Table 1: Reading literacy levels by sub-groups of Grade 6 students

Sub-groups	Average percentage correct on reading literacy test questions					
		Mauritius	Namibia	Zambia	Zanzibar	Zimbabwe
Gender	Male	52	38	39	42	44
	Female	55	37	38	41	46
Socio-economic status	Rich	63	55	41	45	57
	Poor	43	31	33	32	37
School location	Urban	58	57	41	48	55
	Rural	50	31	38	39	41
National Average %		53	37	38	41	45

average examination performance for this sub-group of pupils. One of the countries involved in this study has disclosed that boys are doing much better at secondary school examinations even though the participation rate of girls is lower. This result goes against what would be expected and suggests the need for research to examine whether the educational environment of secondary schools in some parts of Southern Africa is as conducive to learning for girls as it is for boys.

### Other differences

The averages on the reading literacy test for the pupils from rich and poor families have also been presented in the table. Since the relative wealth of the five countries was different, a categorization of 'rich' and 'poor' within each country was made on the basis of an inspection of the frequency distribution of a number of possessions in the home. The averages in the table showed that the differences

between the pupils from rich and poor families were quite large. The largest difference of 24 per cent was found in Namibia and the smallest was 8 per cent in Zambia.

The averages on the reading literacy test for the pupils going to urban schools and those going to rural schools in the table revealed that, with the exception of Zambia, there were considerable differences in reading literacy related to school location. The largest differences of 26 per cent were found in Namibia.

### To sum up

While there were no differences between boys and girls in reading literacy at the end of primary school, the differences among pupils from different socio-economic groups and living in different locations were quite large. Further analyses revealed no interactions among these three factors, which indicated that boys and girls were reading at similar levels within the same socio-economic group and

within the same school location group.

There are large disparities in wealth in Africa, and the rich tend to live in urban areas where the better teachers prefer to live and the schools are better equipped. It could be concluded that there should be better allocation of teachers and resources so that the rural areas get some of the better teachers and more school materials. Further research to discover the causes of these inequities should provide valuable information that could be used to advise the ministries of education in the SACMEQ countries.

MIOKO SAITO

A detailed article can be found in: Saito, M. (1998). "Gender vs. socio-economic status and school location differences in Grade 6 reading literacy in five African countries". In: *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 249-261. For more information on this research, please contact Mioko Saito at the IIEP.

## SACMEQ NEWS

# Appointment of first SACMEQ director

**T**HE Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) has recently appointed Mr Friedhelm Voigts as its first full-time Director. In 1991, SACMEQ started life as a small project within the IIEP that was focused on capacity building programmes designed to provide educational planners in Zimbabwe with the skills to undertake large-scale educational policy research on questions related to improving the quality of education.

SACMEQ is now a thriving international non-governmental organization that is permanently housed at the UNESCO Sub-regional Office in Harare,

Zimbabwe. During 1998, seven countries completed SACMEQ national policy studies – five of which were launched in April at the MINEDAF Conference for African Ministers of Education. In 1998, educational planners from 14 ministries of education (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania – Mainland and Zanzibar – Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) commenced work on the design of SACMEQ's second major policy research project.

Mr Voigts's appointment as SACMEQ Director represents a consolidation of the Consortium's role as a major contributor to policy analysis and development concerning

issues of educational quality. He comes to this position with many years of experience as an educational planner in Namibia and several years as one of SACMEQ's most successful National Research Co-ordinators.

The first task for SACMEQ's Director will be to prepare for the annual meeting of its Managing Committee, scheduled to take place in Harare on the 19 and 20 November 1998. This meeting will review progress to date and then finalize a programme of training and research for 1999.

The staff of the IIEP and the members and friends of the SACMEQ network wish Mr Voigts all the very best in his new and challenging role.

KENNETH N. ROSS

# The new trainees have arrived!

*The 1998/99 session of the Annual Training Programme started in Paris on 28 September 1998. Thirty-five full-time trainees, 17 from the African Region, 7 from the Asian and Pacific Region, 6 from the Arab States, 4 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 1 from Europe (19 English-speakers and 16 French-speakers) are participating in the IIEP's last programme this century.*

On the 8 and 9 October 1998, the Annual Training Programme (ATP) course participants and members of the IIEP teaching staff left Paris for the *Orientation Seminar* – a crucial moment in the course since it sets the framework for the coming eight months training. This was the first opportunity for the trainees to learn about trends in educational development, policy and planning in the countries represented, to share their expectations with fellow colleagues and the IIEP staff, and inform themselves as to the various characteristics and options offered in the ATP. Last, but not least, the *Orientation Seminar*, organised by the French National Commission for UNESCO, provides an excellent opportunity for the trainees to socialize with each other under pleasant circumstances, on this occasion in the village of Fontenailles.

A first striking feature in the discussions was the differences in size, population, economic development and the diversity in the organization of the education systems among the countries represented. So, what could participants from such different backgrounds have in common? Quite a lot, as it turned out.

The policy and planning process of education in the trainees' countries is becoming increasingly complex, involving new actors, both within and outside education, at the local and school levels, as well as foreign

agencies. There are new challenges through the emergence or reinforcement of private education, new modes and technologies for the learning process, and also quests for more diversity in financing education.

The discussions focused mainly on serious concerns about: (i) the match or mismatch between the countries' ambitions for the future development of their education systems and resources available; (ii) the need for better co-ordination between the different sectoral ministries (education, labour, finance, etc.) in order to avoid duplication; and (iii) improving 'the spirit of national ownership' of the countries' educational development and keeping the influence of external agencies on policy planning and development at a reasonable level.

Another common feature of the educational development in trainees' countries is that planning is still centralized, but the tendency is clearly in the direction of increased de-concentration and decentralization, and a move away from 'top-bottom and top-heavy' towards more consultation and participation. However, implementation is slow and hesitant due to a lack of administrative capacity, resources and, above all, the need for those concerned to change their attitudes and behaviour as required by the changing procedures.

There were significant differences between countries concerning the time horizon of educational planning. The importance of medium-term

planning (4 to 6 years) tended to diminish in favour of both a shorter time span, with special emphasis on the activities linked to budget preparation and rolling plans, and on long-term prospective planning. However, crisis management was not an uncommon feature either.

The last point brought up another burning issue: the sometimes limited use made by the political decision-makers of the diagnoses, predictions and alternative options elaborated by planners. Many of the trainees mentioned, as a priority in their training at the IIEP, the need to increase their competence not only in analyzing data but also in interpreting the results, disseminating and communicating them in a form accessible to decision-makers.

The pragmatic approach of participants, seen in their perception of educational problems and their willingness to take into account economic constraints and especially politics in their propositions, are both understandable and justified. The need for a greater dissemination of research studies is yet another illustration of their concern. Even if final decisions are the prerogative of political powers, such actions are likely to stimulate the debate not only within ministries but also among all actors concerned.

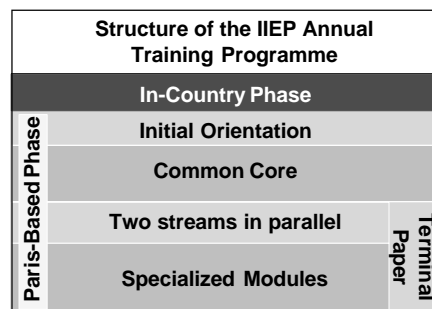
As regards the reinforcement of national capacities, some main trends and concerns of the countries evolved from the discussions. They covered practically the entire planning process

and underlined the need for trained professionals in various analysis and diagnosis techniques, as well as professional capacity in developing proposed solutions and in monitoring the implementation of educational programmes and projects.

The seminar discussions enabled participants not only to compare the role planning plays in the management of education in the countries represented, but also to enumerate the tasks and individual responsibilities of the participants within their respective administrative structures. Taking into account the specificities of each country, the needs of each planning service and the personal interest of each individual, the participants felt that their training at the IIEP should help them to:

- ▶ improve their competence in using methods and techniques of educational management and planning;
- ▶ acquire new skills to analyze the current situation of an education system and to contribute effectively towards policy formulation;
- ▶ improve their capacities to interpret results of analyses and to communicate the findings.

After explanations by the IIEP teaching staff about the various components of the Annual Training



Programme, trainees were able to express their individual training needs and outline their projects. Bearing in mind the time constraints and intensive nature of the IIEP training programme, these training projects should be related to one or other of the two parallel streams provided, namely *Education and training for development* and *Basic education for all*, thus dividing the trainees into two balanced groups during the first specialization phase. The provisional choice of participants for specialized modules shows a clear preference for the modules on *School mapping and micro-*

*planning, Educational development projects and Monitoring and evaluation of educational quality.* The structure of the programme also requires also the participation of all trainees in all the units of the **Common Core** (see figure on *Structure of the ATP*).

The 1998/99 ATP trainees and the IIEP staff still have before them seven months to meet the training objectives outlined during the two-day orientation seminar and we all look forward to a year of intense study with much enthusiasm.

LARS MÄHLCK, DRAMANE OULAI  
AND KHADIM SYLLA

### Meanwhile, in IIEP-Buenos Aires...

The course has started well. Everybody has arrived and everything is going as planned! The group of participants is both interested and participative. They are due to undertake a study visit to Uruguay in the first week of November 1998.

## NEWS FROM FORMER TRAINEES

### **Arnaldo Valente Nhavoto**

1981/82 ATP trainee from Mozambique

We would like to apologize to all our readers, and in particular to Minister Arnaldo Valente Nhavoto, for having incorrectly spelt his name in this column in our last issue.

### **K. Ng Wong Hing**

Participant from Mauritius in ITC on 'Capacity building in educational management', 1996

Recently nominated Rector of the Sir Leckraz Teelock State Secondary School in Mauritius, K. Ng Wong Hing is one of the lucky rectors with access to e-mail and the internet. A

regular visitor to the IIEP web page, he invites *IIEP Newsletter* readers to visit his school's web page, recently opened by the Mauritian Minister of Education and Human Resource Development. The address is:

<http://afterschool.intnet.mu/slt>

### **Mirta I. Judengloben**

1993/94 ATP trainee from Argentina

Mirta is currently working in co-operation with the UNDP in the *Proyecto Joven* Statistics and Studies Unit. The project in which more than 100,000 young people have already participated, provides training and apprenticeship programmes for youth

from disadvantaged backgrounds, with little education or working experience. It receives financial assistance from the Interamerican Development Bank. For those interested, Mirta's e-mail address is: [mjudengl@trabajo.gov.ar](mailto:mjudengl@trabajo.gov.ar)

### **Felicity Leburu-Sianga**

1995/96 ATP trainee from Botswana

Shortly after finishing her training at the IIEP, Felicity now informs us that she has been nominated Chief Education Officer in the Department of Teacher Training Development of the Botswanan Ministry of Education. Felicity's e-mail address is: [f.m.leburu-sianga@bipp.norcol.ac.uk](mailto:f.m.leburu-sianga@bipp.norcol.ac.uk)





*“An institution in touch with its environment”*

- **Team workshop on “Education and training strategies for disadvantaged groups in French-speaking Africa”**  
(Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso  
2–5 November 1998)

The main aim of this workshop is to examine the preliminary reports written by the national teams on the Non-Formal Basic Education Centres (CEBNF) in Burkina Faso, the Nafa Centres in Guinea, and the Education for Development Centres (CED) in Mali. During the workshop, participants will prepare the field surveys programmed to take place at the end of this year (choice of methods, elaborating the survey tools, determining the sample, planning the visits). The meeting is being organized by the Direction of Studies and Planning of the Ministry of Basic Education, IIEP’s partner for this operation. The next team meeting will be held early in 1999 to discuss the first survey results.

- **First meeting on “Educational budgeting in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam”**  
(Siem Reap, Cambodia  
17–20 November 1998)

The aim of this project is to analyze and compare the budget preparation and implementation process in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. Each country will be represented by budget experts from the ministries of education and officials in charge of education budgets within the respective ministries of finance. Two other meetings will be organized in 1999 and 2000, and several case studies will be published in the IIEP series ‘*Financial management of education systems*’.

- **Study visit of the IIEP Annual Training Programme to the Academy of Reims, France**  
(Reims, France  
29 November – 4 December 1998)

As usual, participants in the IIEP Annual Training Programme will undertake a study visit in France to study the education system. This year the French National Commission for UNESCO has organized a visit to Reims, capital of the Champagne region, in order to study how the French system has adapted to changes in school enrolments, how a network of schools is managed, and how each school year is prepared. During the visit the IIEP trainees will be working in groups to study four main aspects of the system, namely: decentralization, orientation and regulation of student flows, educational quality and attempts to overcome school/pupil failure, relationships between schools, firms and the labour market.

- **Sub-regional workshop on “The management of primary teachers in South Asia”**  
(Wattala, Sri Lanka  
14–18 December 1998)

The aim of this joint IIEP/DSE workshop is to take stock of the current utilization and deployment of primary teachers and to explore possible avenues for improvement. It will address the crucial issue of how to make sure that teachers are provided to the schools which need them most, and where they can give their best. Policy makers, senior officials and researchers from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will meet to discuss to what extent reforms already undertaken by Southern Asian countries to improve their systems of staff management (decentralization, change of staffing norms and procedures etc.) have succeeded in engendering the desired changes, and to identify new ways of enhancing the process of primary school staffing and teacher deployment.

- **Sub-regional workshop on “Improving supervision and support services in schools”**  
(Bamako, Mali  
15–19 December 1998)

Supervision services play a major role in improving the quality of education. However, for a long time now, these services haven’t received the attention they merit. In an effort to identify strategies to revive their important role, the IIEP is organizing, in co-operation with the Ministry of Basic Education and the Malian National Commission for UNESCO, a workshop in Bamako, Mali which proposes to contribute towards improving school supervision and support services through an exchange of experiences between countries in the sub-region. Invited to attend are: heads of central inspectorates and education advisory services, trainers of supervisory personnel, regional-level inspectors and education advisors from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali and Senegal. On the agenda for discussion: the organization and functioning of school supervision and support services, new experiences at both the national and international level, strategies for improving school supervision in the region, and finally, the training of inspectors and education advisors.

- **Sub-regional workshop on “Higher education management”**  
(Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand  
1–5 February 1999)

Jointly organized by the Association of Universities in Asia and the Pacific (AUAP) and the IIEP, this sub-regional workshop will be held at Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. Targeting senior managers of universities in the region, the course content will focus on the strategic management of universities.

*Persons interested in applying to the above workshop should contact:*  
Professor Ruben Umaly,  
Secretary General, AUAP  
e-mail: cenintaf@ccs.sut.ac.th

# Improving supervision: a challenging task

*In 1996, the IIEP started an extensive inter-regional research project on improving supervision. Its main objective is to examine how the structures and management of supervision can be reformed so that their huge potential in improving the quality of schools is realized. One important activity will be the development of a training package for staff in charge of the organization of supervision. So far the project has undertaken a wide range of research activities scanning two continents – Asia and Africa – and covering a set of diverse issues. This article will try to draw some preliminary conclusions from this research, and in particular, from the studies published so far, which all concern the Asian continent.*

**T**HE national diagnoses of Bangladesh, the Republic of Korea, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the state of Uttar Pradesh in India show that supervision and support services are confronted with many different problems. Some of those – the lack of transport facilities, the number of vacant posts, the generally too-high-number of teachers and schools for which each supervisor is responsible (see *Table 1*), the scarcity of training opportunities – are linked to resource constraints. They are, therefore, more manifest in the less-developed countries of S. Asia than in Sri Lanka, and especially Korea. However, this should not lead to the conclusion that the problem is only a financial one. It is more correct to say that – and this is a first conclusion from the studies – *as long as a number of basic factors are not put right (transport to go from offices to schools being number one) supervisors can never be expected to perform their tasks efficiently.* While too little information on budgets and costs is available, it seems that ensuring the availability of this basic minimum should not seriously handicap government budgets. Also, paying salaries to supervisors without giving them the tools to work is a waste of resources. At the same time, obviously, several structural and management issues will need to be resolved.

## Giving schools support and autonomy

In this regard, several reforms and innovations are being tried out and show the direction to take and the possible potholes on the road to improvement. One important reform, which two monographs address, concerns the increased role of actors within the school. The New Zealand case is an example of a profound overall policy which gives school directors and school boards the ultimate power to select and supervise their own staff. In addition, every three or four years, the government sends an inspection team which examines the whole school's performance and can take, if necessary, punitive measures, such as replacing the Director or the Board. The Sri Lankan project seems, at first glance, very similar: schools are required to take responsibility for their own improvement; changes have to come from within by improving the relationship between staff and the community. But one fundamental difference exists between these two cases and it concerns the support available to schools. In New Zealand, but for the three- or four-yearly inspections, schools are left alone. They have their own financing and can, if necessary, use it to train teachers and to look for pedagogical advice. However, much of

Titles already available in this series:

Ali, M.A. 1998. *Supervision for teacher development: a proposal for Pakistan.*

Carron, G.; De Grauwe, A. 1997. *Current issues in supervision: a literature review.*

Carron, G.; De Grauwe, A.; Govinda, R. 1998. *Supervision and support services in Asia. Volume I: A comparative analysis. Volume II: National Diagnoses.*

Fergusson, V. 1998. *Supervision for the self-managing school: the New Zealand experience.*

Khaniya, T.R. 1997. *Teacher support through resource centres: the Nepalese case.*

Perera, W.J. 1997. *Changing schools from within: a management intervention for improving school functioning in Sri Lanka.*

this is not readily available, in particular to the more remote and small schools. In Sri Lanka, support to schools, precisely because the schools involved were among the most disadvantaged, was a core component of the project, without which it might well have failed. The original aspect of this project lies in the form this support took: a trainer is assigned to a small number of schools. He (seldom she) visits the schools every two months to discuss in a workshop with the whole staff what the school's main needs and problems are and how to solve them. In between these workshops, staff, in groups or alone, undertake some

activities, which can be of a very practical nature (such as building a fence around the school). The progress on these activities is recorded in an activity book, which allows staff and trainers to follow how the school is changing. One crucial lesson from this project is that, in order to help the poorest performing schools or those with low quality resources, teachers and facilities, consistent and continued supervision is needed, but this should not be to the detriment of their autonomy.

## Reform structures and improve management

Three related questions are in different ways addressed in the publications:

- how should supervision be structured so that it can offer supportive surveillance to schools?
- what should, in addition to offering such support, be the core tasks of supervision?
- what tools, in addition to the basic minimum talked about above, should be available to supervisors for them to work successfully?

Supervision systems have undergone quite a number of structural changes. The most important and most prevalent result from the realization was that supervisors were too far from school to be able to give constant attention. *To bring supervision close to schools, the accepted principle is that it should be a top-light and bottom-heavy system.* To put this principle into practice, two reforms are being attempted. On the one hand, schools come together to give each other support and undertake free supervision. On the other hand, a special category of staff is created, which acts closer to school, such as master teachers or resource persons who work within resource centres. The Nepalese case shows the potential of these centres, but also highlights two core problems. The resource persons, it was thought, should be well-qualified people with sufficient academic background. This, however, almost automatically excluded primary school teachers, who in Nepal seldom have

university degrees. The not-unexpected result was that the resource persons, young university graduates without primary school experience, were not accepted in many schools and their advice

was felt to be of little use. A second problem was that, when these resource centres were integrated into the existing administration, they started to suffer from the same weaknesses as the administration (lack of resources, lack of flexibility) and, most unfortunately, demanded schools to concentrate on administrative norms rather than on creativity and innovation.

*To enable supervision staff to focus on support to schools, that focus needs to be clearly present in their job-description.* The contribution of Pakistan makes an original proposal in this regard. Three tasks should be at the core of a supervisor's work:

- they must represent standard criteria, measures and mechanisms for assessing the performance of schools, and they should motivate them to meet the expectations of their stakeholders;
- they must introduce new instructional strategies, learning materials and management approaches into the school and the classroom;
- they should systematically document and communicate schools' needs for external assistance to appropriate agencies.

That most supervisors do not spend most of their time on these tasks, is clearly shown in the national diagnoses (see *Table 2*). Obviously, this is not only the result of a badly designed job description. Supervisors realize that, even if they have the power to control schools, in the eyes of teachers they seldom have the authority to offer advice. Several factors explain this:

- The almost complete absence of induction or in-service training, which would both motivate and strengthen them. The situation in Sri Lanka and Korea is in this regard better than

**Table 1. The two most time-consuming tasks of supervisors**

Country	Tasks
Bangladesh	School inspection (56%) Administrative work (31%)
Korea	Administrative/office work (54.5%) School inspection (7.5%)
Sri Lanka	Supervision of primary classes (32.1%) Supervision of school administration (21.4%)
Uttar Pradesh	Supervision of buildings and construction (30.3%) Collection of information (28.6%)

elsewhere, and this is shown to have positive implications for their work.

- The lack of a rewarding career ladder. Korea again is a bit of an exception, as it allows much movement from schools to supervision services and back, which keeps supervisors in close contact with the reality of the classroom.

- The scarcity and/or irrelevance of supervision manuals and guidelines.
- Most crucially, the poverty of the database, on which supervisors rely.

*The development of such a database, with core information on the quality of each school's management and on the achievement of its students remains a challenge but also offers an opportunity.* An opportunity for supervision to become a flexible and diversified system, which adapts its interventions in accordance with the needs of the schools, concentrates on the weakest ones and works towards innovation rather than control.

ANTON DE GRAUWE



# Looking ahead at universities for the 21st Century

*With the aim of laying down "the fundamental principles for the in-depth reform of higher education throughout the world", UNESCO organized the World Conference on Higher Education at its Paris headquarters from 5 to 9 October 1998.*

**O**VER 4,000 participants from 182 Member States and the USA met in Paris in October to attend the *World Conference on Higher Education* in order to discuss the relevance of higher education, its quality, financing and management, the role of international co-operation, and to put forward proposals for reform. Previously, five regional conferences had been organized in Havana (November 1996), Dakar (April 1997), Tokyo (July 1997), Palermo (September 1997) and Beirut (March 1998) to produce proposals for major policy priorities for each region and the strategies needed to address them.

In addition to a series of five special lectures on contemporary issues, four major themes constituted the basis for discussion by commissions during the Conference: relevance of higher education, quality, management and financing, and international co-operation. Twelve round tables were organized for debates focused on these additional themes. The Conference debates focused on three main

themes: higher education and development, new trends and innovations in higher education, and higher education, culture and society. At its conclusion, a series of far-reaching proposals to reform higher education and adapt it to the needs of a changing world were adopted. The principles underpinning the proposals are mapped out in a 12-page *World declaration on higher education for the 21st century: vision and action* and a 7-page *Framework for priority action for change and development of higher education* to ensure implementation and follow-up.

In its 17 articles the *Declaration* redefines the missions and functions of higher education, emphasizing, among other things, the role of lifelong learning and value-based education. It gives a new vision of higher education, highlighting the need to ensure equitable access to higher education for all based on merit, with particular emphasis on women and disadvantaged groups. However, the diversification of the system proposed should focus on students and teachers as the main actors, as well as on creating stronger links between higher

education, research, and the world of work, notably by facing the challenges posed by increasing unemployment. The *Declaration* specified the move from vision to action in quality evaluation, the use of new technology, management and financing. Emphasis was put on international co-operation, partnerships and alliances with the working world, and measures to stem 'brain-drains' depriving developing countries and countries in transition of high-level expertise. In this respect, several speakers highlighted the fact that the brain-drain contributes to the huge gap between North and South, and that it was necessary now to reverse the trend, favouring the return of graduates who study abroad.

Finally, the move from traditional to 'virtual' universities was one of the main points raised in the debate on the impact of technology on higher education, and the need for universities to keep pace with technological developments and not to run the risk of being marginalized by a more dynamic private sector.

BIKAS C. SANYAL



## IIEP FUNDAMENTALS SERIES

### *Increasing girls' and women's participation in basic education*

Nelly P. Stromquist

IIEP Fundamentals No. 56

Paris: IIEP, 1997.

**T**HIS is a manual for educational planners and decision-makers, as well as for teachers and school administrators, on the importance of education for women's advancement and how they can make school environments more effective and friendly for girls. Several areas of intervention (includ-

ing curriculum content, instructional methods, teacher training, student incentives, and supportive mechanisms) are discussed. The contributions of actors in the educational system, such as parents, NGOs, the private sector, donor agencies and others, are explored in order to identify their potential and

limitation in the transformation of educational settings toward a more gender-sensitive climate and practice. Case studies of successful efforts in three countries (Argentina, Guatemala, and Balochistan Province, Pakistan) illustrate the change process.