

See also

Mixed results in
achievement

Page 4

The challenge of
grade repetition

Page 5

Gender gap in
learning

Page 6

Where have all
the textbooks
gone?

Page 8

Paid tuition,
a potential
challenge to EFA

Page 9

HIV and AIDS pre-
vention education
programmes

Pages 10-11

Data visualization

Page 12

IIEP Publications

Page 16

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Educational, Scientific and
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International Institute
for Educational Planning

In search of quality: what the data tell us



SACMEQ III Project
presents its first
findings

Demus K. Makuwa ▲ IIEP, Acting Director of the SACMEQ Coordinating Centre
d.makuwa@iiiep.unesco.org

In line with its decades-long commitment to achieving quality education, IIEP has provided technical support to the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) since its launch in 1995. SACMEQ – which has a membership of 15 ministries of education in the region¹ – aims to undertake integrated research and training activities that will expand opportunities for educational planners

and researchers to: (a) receive training in the technical skills required to monitor, evaluate, and compare the general conditions of schooling and the quality of basic education; and (b) generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan the quality of education. SACMEQ's research and training activities have been funded for over a decade by the Government of the Netherlands.

Providing research evidence to decision-makers

SACMEQ's research and training activities have been delivered through a collaborative 'learning-by-doing' mode, where educational planners are involved in all stages of its policy research cycle – systematically proceeding from general policy concerns to specific research questions, data collection and analysis, reporting and policy suggestions, policy debates and agenda for action, and programme implementation aimed at improvements in the equity and quality of education.

SACMEQ has successfully completed three large-scale educational policy projects at 5–6 year intervals in order to monitor change over time. The SACMEQ I Project was conducted during the period 1995–1998 and covered around 1,000 schools and 20,000 Grade 6 pupils in seven countries. The SACMEQ II Project was conducted from 1999 to 2004 and covered around 2,000 schools and 40,000 Grade 6 pupils from 14 countries.²

A more ambitious initiative

The SACMEQ III Project represents a larger and more ambitious initiative. The main purpose of the SACMEQ III Project was to gather information that could be used by ministries of education to track trends in (a) the general conditions of schooling, (b) the reading and mathematics achievement levels of Grade 6 pupils and their teachers, and (c) the knowledge that pupils and their teachers have about HIV and AIDS. Preparations for SACMEQ III Project data collection commenced during 2006, with the design of the study, development of tests, trial testing, and refinement of all survey instruments. The data collection took place in 2007, and involved around 60,000 pupils, 8,000 teachers and 2,800 school heads.

SACMEQ's conceptual model for monitoring, and evaluating the quality of education is influenced by a holistic approach to educational quality that takes into account the inputs, processes and outcomes of education. This entails the collection of information about school contexts (size, location, type of school and school resources) and the characteristics of pupils (age, gender, school attendance, grade repetition, number of siblings and home background), teachers (age, gender, qualifications, teaching subjects, classroom resources, behaviour and perceptions) and school heads (age, gender, qualifications, management training and experience) – in addition to the assessment of learning outcomes. Analyses of the interaction between these variables have helped SACMEQ ministries of education and stakeholders to monitor implementation and better align their actions. Using the more advanced statistical techniques, SACMEQ's results have been used in educational sector plans by ministries of education, and as reference for the *EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR)* and other publications in the field.

First research results

This issue of the IIEP Newsletter gathers together a selection of important educational policy-related issues examined by the SACMEQ III Project, such as the levels of reading and mathematics achievement of pupils. The reader will find here no easy answers, but may be motivated to seek out the reasons why the quality of education has been improving in some SACMEQ countries, while either remaining the same or deteriorating in other countries.

Grade repetition is an issue shared by most SACMEQ countries. Yet it is well known that many decisions about grade repetition can be faulty because they are often based on arbitrary school-level perceptions. What progress has been made towards gender equality in



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achievement? Have pupils been given the textbooks they need to use at school? What are the challenges that paid tuition poses in the context of EFA? How effective are HIV and AIDS prevention education programmes, given the high prevalence rate of the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa?

The abridged SACMEQ results presented here provide evidence-based information that will support decision-making in relation to some of the above-mentioned questions. One of the most innovative aspects of the SACMEQ III Project is that it provides baseline data on the knowledge that pupils and their teachers have about HIV and AIDS and the impact that this pandemic has had on the functioning of schools in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Further research results will be reported during 2010–2011 in the form of national reports and a comprehensive international report. ■

For additional information about SACMEQ, please visit www.sacmeq.org

¹ The 15 member 'countries' are: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Note that, for the sake of simplicity in presenting tables and texts in SACMEQ publications Zanzibar is labelled as a separate country – when in fact it is an integral part of the United Republic of Tanzania. Tanzania participates in SACMEQ as two separate Ministries of Education (Mainland and Zanzibar).

² For more information on SACMEQ I and SACMEQ II projects, see *IIEP Newsletter, No. 1, January-March 2006*.

In search of quality: what the data tell us	1
Editorial: Moving towards quality education for all	3
Mixed results in achievement	4
The challenge of grade repetition	5
The gender gap in learning – back to square one	6
The gender gap in school management positions	7
Where have all the textbooks gone?	8
Paid tuition, a potential challenge to EFA	9
How effective are HIV and AIDS prevention education programmes?	10
Data visualization	12
IIEP Summer School	13
Challenges of financing basic education – IIEP Policy Forum 2010	13
Training for capacity development: the successful expansion	14
Upcoming activities	15
Guidebook for planning education in emergencies and reconstruction	15
IIEP Publications	16

Moving towards quality education for all

Following the stage of data collecting among 60,000 pupils, 8,000 teachers, and 2,800 school heads over 15 countries, the results of the SACMEQ III Project are now being disseminated, with the green light of the Ministers of Education of all member countries.

Overall, findings show mixed results. For those ministers whose national results do not show improvement between the years 2000 and 2007, approving publication is an act of courage and a laudable commitment to transparency and evidence-based policy formulation.

Results alone, as important as they are for comparing between and within the 15 countries, are not sufficient. In order to be able to formulate appropriate policies, senior education officers need to know the reasons behind the differences. Some ministers are already thinking of commissioning national universities and research institutes to conduct policy-oriented studies based on SACMEQ's results. International education research institutes can also contribute in this regard, thus bringing closer together the domains of research, policy formulation, and development.

At a time when the international community has made big strides in access to education, more attention is being focused on how to realize quality education for all. In such a context, the evidence gained through the systematic work of SACMEQ during the past 15 years, and the policy-oriented research it continues to generate, are attracting a good deal of international interest. SACMEQ member countries are proud that they have produced such quality research. IIEP is also proud to have been a founding partner of SACMEQ and to have significantly contributed to its systematic work – and its success – since 1995. ■

New Director for IIEP



It is with great pleasure that I announce to readers of the *IIEP Newsletter* that UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova has appointed Khalil Mahshi to the Institute's Directorship on 3 August 2010. Khalil is a well-known figure to IIEP's constituency. As head of the Institute's Technical Assistance and Sector Planning Team, and as Deputy Director, he contributed over the past 10 years to IIEP's good reputation.

The quality of its staff and Directorship has been IIEP's defining strength through its history of service to Member States. In accepting the Governing Board's recommendation to appoint Khalil Mahshi, a proven educator, planner and manager to the Directorship, Director-General Bokova continues this tradition of excellence. I feel confident that IIEP's staff, Governing Board, and partners will give Khalil their full support as collectively we work together to realize UNESCO's and our common strategic goals.

Raymond E. Wanner
Chairperson, IIEP Governing Board



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All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Editor
IIEP Newsletter
International Institute for Educational Planning
7-9 rue Eugène Delacroix
75116 Paris, France
Telephone: +33.1.45.03.77.00
Fax: +33.1.40.72.83.66
newsletter@iiep.unesco.org
www.iiep.unesco.org



United Nations
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International Institute
for Educational Planning

Mixed results in achievement

Scientific assessment of trends over time in reading and mathematics achievement

Demus K. Makuwa ▲ IIEP, Acting Director of the SACMEQ Coordinating Centre
d.makuwa@iiep.unesco.org

One of the most exciting features of the SACMEQ Project has been that participating education systems have been able to make a scientific assessment of trends over time in the reading and mathematics achievement levels of Grade 6 pupils. They have also been able to make valid comparisons

of the performance of their own education systems with the performance of other similar ones.

Achievement trends

Research results show that, between 2000 and 2007, only five SACMEQ countries registered substantial improvements for both reading and mathematics. Mozambique is the only country which registered a substantial deterioration in achievement in both reading and mathematics. This drastic decline of over 40 points was probably linked to rapid structural changes in the education system during this period. These resulted in massive increases in Grade 6 enrolments without corresponding increases in human and material resources.

In contrast, the increases of over 40 points in reading and maths average scores for Namibia in 2007 could be attributed to actions taken by education authorities (using evidence of poor results during SACMEQ I and II) to target the six poor-performing regions with interventions to improve the quality of education.

In terms of achievement levels, six countries showed high levels for both reading and mathematics in 2000 and 2007. On the other hand, three countries showed much lower levels of achievement. The other six countries had ‘mixed’ performance levels.

These results highlight the EFA challenge for all countries to strike a balance between increases in enrolment and improvements in the quality of education for all. ■

Levels and trends in pupil achievement for SACMEQ countries

	Pupil reading score			Pupil mathematics score		
	2000	2007		2000	2007	
Botswana	521.1	534.6	▲	512.9	520.5	▶
Kenya	546.5	543.1	▶	563.3	557.0	▶
Lesotho	451.2	467.9	▲	447.2	476.9	▲
Malawi	428.9	433.5	▶	432.9	447.0	▲
Mauritius	536.4	573.5	▲	584.6	623.3	▲
Mozambique	516.7	476.0	▼	530.0	483.8	▼
Namibia	448.8	496.9	▲	430.9	471.0	▲
Seychelles	582.0	575.1	▶	554.3	550.7	▶
South Africa	492.3	494.9	▶	486.1	494.8	▶
Swaziland	529.6	549.4	▲	516.5	540.8	▲
Tanzania	545.9	577.8	▲	522.4	552.7	▲
Uganda	482.4	478.7	▶	506.3	481.9	▼
Zambia	440.1	434.4	▶	435.2	435.2	▶
Zanzibar	478.2	533.9	▲	478.1	486.2	▶
Zimbabwe ¹	504.7	507.7	▶	xx	519.8	xx
SACMEQ	500.0	511.8	▲	500.0	509.5	▶

Notes about trend:

▲ Increased by 10 points or more ▶ Minimal change (less than ±10) ▼ Decreased by 10 points or more
¹Zimbabwe did not participate in the SACMEQ II Project (2000) and the value given in grey (reading) is from the SACMEQ I Project (1995).

How to read the table

These research results were derived from tests that were based on a careful analysis of official curricula, school syllabi, and textbooks used in school systems. These tests included ‘overlapping’ test items which made it possible to employ Modern Item Response Theory methods to undertake item analyses and test scoring procedures. The test scores were transformed so that pupils and their teachers from both studies were placed on a single scale with a mean score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100.

In order to examine levels of achievement the average scores have been colour-coded to show their levels relative to the overall mean of 500. Green figures indicate 10 points or more above the SACMEQ average, red figures indicate 10 points or more below the SACMEQ average, and black figures indicate similar (within 10 points) to the SACMEQ average. In order to show trends in achievement a colour-coded arrowhead has been added in the table to show changes in average scores between 2000 and 2007: a green arrowhead denotes an increase in average achievement by 10 points or more, a red arrowhead denotes a decrease in average achievement by 10 points or more, and a grey arrowhead denotes a negligible change (either way) of less than 10 points.

The challenge of grade repetition

Grade repetition rates are still far too high

Njora Hungi ▲ IIEP
n.hungi@iiep.unesco.org

Most SACMEQ school systems have grade repetition problems, as demonstrated by a recent SACMEQ III Project. Overall, more than one-third of the Grade 6 pupils questioned indicated that they had repeated a grade at least once. About 12 per cent of the pupils reported that they were repeating Grade 6 in the year that the SACMEQ III data were collected (2007).

There were large differences in grade repetition rates across SACMEQ countries, but in many countries the repetition rates were very high. For example, over one-half of the Grade 6 pupils in the SACMEQ III Project in five countries (Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Uganda and Lesotho) reported that they had repeated a grade at least once since they started school. There were also considerable percentages of pupils who were

repeating Grade 6 in 2007 (particularly in Uganda, Mauritius, and Swaziland).

Towards lower levels of grade repetition

Encouragingly, the levels of grade repetition observed during 2007 in this project were generally lower than the levels that were recorded during 2000. For example, the overall percentage of Grade 6 pupils repeating a grade at least once went down between 2000 and 2007 by a factor of 8.7 per cent. While this trend towards reduced grade repetition was welcome, grade repetition rates are still far too high in most SACMEQ countries. This situation demands some policy interventions.

Many decisions about grade repetition can be faulty because they are often based on arbitrary school-level perceptions rather than justifiable national criteria. As a result some pupils (especially in high-achieving schools) are made to repeat grades when they would be promoted if they attended lower-achieving schools.

In developing countries, grade repetition is often considered to be a remedy for low-achieving pupils, based on the assumption that automatic promotion would disadvantage them. However, educational research has shown that (a) 'neither automatic promotion nor grade repetition addresses the problems of low achievers satisfactorily', and (b) 'potential solutions lie in providing these pupils with more and better learning opportunities' (Brophy, 2006). These solutions include early intervention for at-risk pupils through supplementary instruction, and closer collaboration with parents to ensure that the pupils are supported and encouraged at home. ■

Percentages of Grade 6 pupils repeating grades in SACMEQ countries in 2000 and 2007

	Repeated at least once		Repeating Grade 6 this year			
	2000	2007	2000	2007		
Botswana	31.4	31.3	▶	5.5	5.2	▶
Kenya	64.1	48.2	▼	17.7	13.8	▼
Lesotho	60.8	51.7	▼	14.6	15.1	▶
Malawi	66.1	60.3	▼	12.5	15.6	▲
Mauritius	18.7	22.3	▲	18.2	21.7	▲
Mozambique	78.2	59.6	▼	26.5	5.5	▼
Namibia	54.1	43.2	▼	15.9	17.2	▶
Seychelles	10.3	2.2	▼	2.6	0.3	▼
South Africa	42.3	28.5	▼	12.8	9.5	▼
Swaziland	59.3	56.4	▶	20.6	21.2	▶
Tanzania	23.3	20.4	▶	6.6	1.5	▼
Uganda	52.9	52.7	▶	22.7	27.7	▲
Zambia	51.5	33.6	▼	23.5	7.8	▼
Zanzibar	27.6	15.3	▼	4.7	3.1	▼
Zimbabwe ¹	39.9	31.4	▼	xx	8.5	xx
SACMEQ	45.8	37.1	▼	14.6	11.6	▼

Notes about trend:

▲ Significant decrease (desirable change) ▶ No significant change ▼ Significant increase

¹Zimbabwe did not participate in the SACMEQ II Project (2000) and the value given in grey is from the SACMEQ I Project (1995).

Reference

Brophy, J. 2006. *Grade repetition*. Paris: UNESCO-IIEP (Education Policy Series 6).

The gender gap in learning – back to square one

A need to change the focus from access and participation to learning achievement

Mioko Saito ▲ IIEP
m.saito@iiep.unesco.org

Gender equality in learning achievement has been one of the most important issues identified by the SACMEQ decision-makers since the early years (Saito, 1998). In industrialized countries the gender gap in reading is dominated by girls and has widened throughout the years. The strong domination of boys for mathematics has been diminishing (OECD, 2009). What has been the evolution in reading and mathematics achievement between Grade 6 boys and girls in Southern and Eastern Africa between 2000 and 2007?

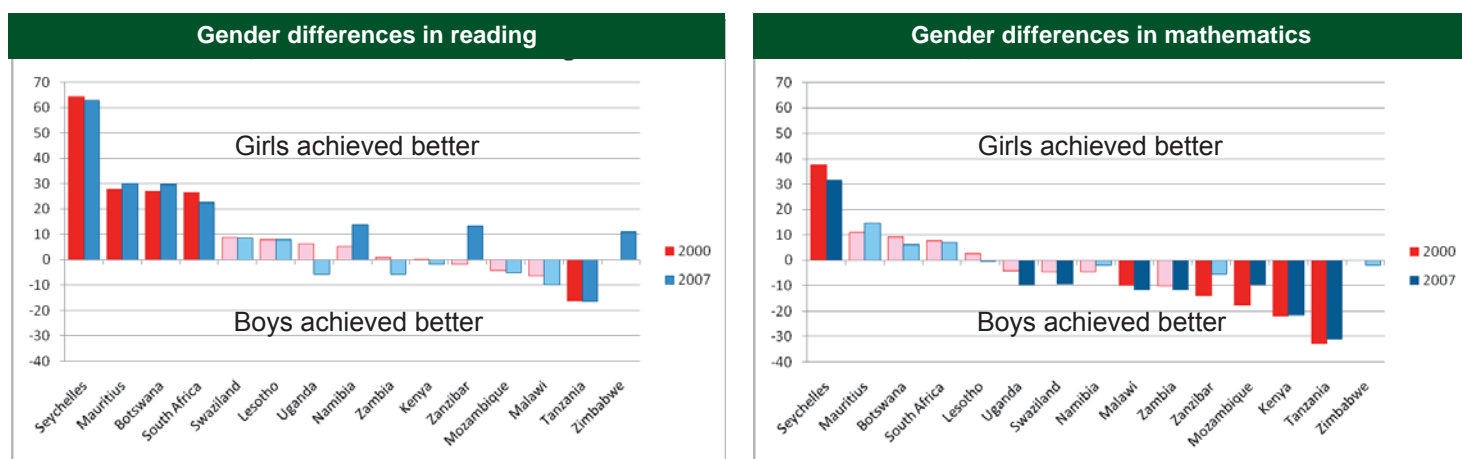
SACMEQ III data show two main features. The first one was that the set of countries in which girls performed better than boys

for reading in 2000 was almost exactly the same set of countries where girls performed generally better than boys in 2007. Similarly, the set of countries where boys performed better than girls for mathematics in 2000 was almost exactly the same set of countries where boys performed better than girls in 2007.

The second feature was that, not only were the directions in gender differences consistent for countries across 2000 and 2007, the magnitude of these differences were also consistent, regardless of the change in the overall mean scores at country level. There was remarkable stability in reading and mathematics gender differences within countries in the period 2000–2007.

Although it is beyond the scope of this article, further analyses at more disaggregated levels showed that only in more advantageous areas (urban schools and high socio-economic

Gender differences in reading and mathematics for SACMEQ II (2000) and SACMEQ III (2007)



How to read the graphs

Countries are ranked by the size of the gender differences in 2000 for each subject. The statistical significance at the 95 per cent confidence level (shown by darker shades) was present if the size of the gender difference was larger than twice the size of the sampling error. The SACMEQ reading and mathematics tests used in 2007 were sub-sets of questions used in 2000, and these tests were equated using the Rasch measurement technique. The test scores were standardized during 2000 for each subject based on the overall mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100. The gender differences have been calculated by subtracting the boys' scores from the girls' scores. That is, the positive scores indicate that girls performed better, and the negative scores indicate that boys performed better.

groups) was there a reasonable improvement in the gender equality.

Reducing gender disparity in achievement is an area which shows very slow progress. The above results have particular significance for those international organizations and donors that have applied enormous resources and efforts to a wide spectrum of educational programmes aimed at reducing gender differences in education. These results seem to suggest that there is a need to move the focus of gender-related interventions beyond

‘access’ and ‘participation’ and concentrate more on ‘achievement’, especially in less advantageous areas.

The reasons for absence and/or presence of gender disparity in achievement need to be further examined together with school practices as well as their traditional context. Ministries of education in SACMEQ countries are facing many challenges in this area. ■

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The gender gap in school management positions

Njora Hungi ▲ IIEP
 n.hungi@iiep.unesco.org

Research results from the SACMEQ III Project show that about one-third of Grade 6 pupils were in schools with female school heads. However, there were large variations in the percentages of female school heads across the

SACMEQ countries. For example, in Malawi and Kenya less than 15 per cent of the pupils had female school heads. While in Seychelles and Lesotho over 75 per cent of the pupils had female school heads.

Within some school systems there were differences in the percentages of pupils with female school heads between rural and urban areas – with more pupils tending to have female school heads in urban areas. However, the differences in percentages of pupils with female school heads between urban and rural areas were not large in Botswana, Lesotho, Kenya, Namibia, Seychelles or Swaziland.

Because school heads are drawn from the existing teacher population, it might be expected that the gender balance among teachers (around 60 per cent female across all countries) would be approximately the same as the gender balance among school heads.

For SACMEQ countries it was only in Seychelles and Lesotho (and to some extent in Botswana) that the percentages of female

school heads were similar to the percentages of female teachers. For all other countries, in both urban and rural settings this ‘gender gap’ exceeded 10 per cent. That is, there was considerable bias in the allocation of school managerial positions in favour of males for 12 school systems.

No gender equality in school managerial positions

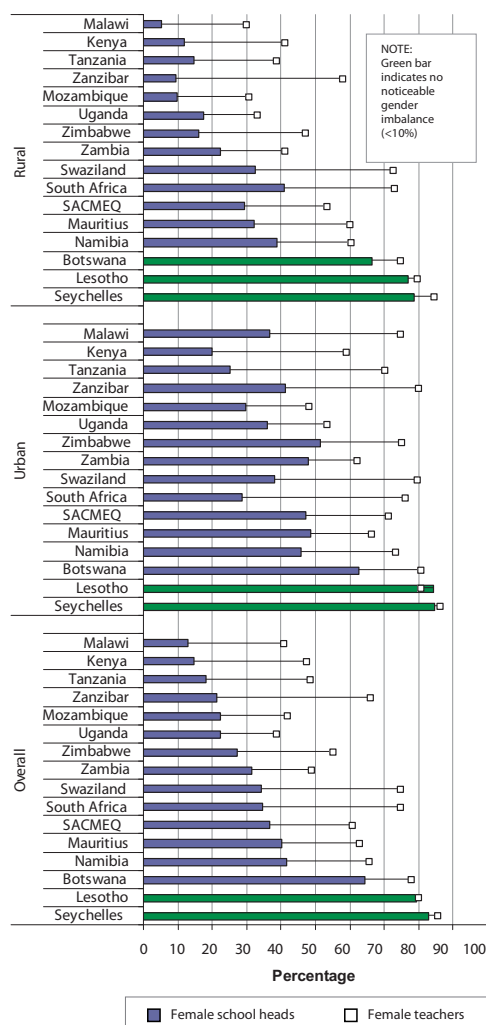
In most school systems, it is clear that there is no gender equality in school managerial positions. This outcome has implications on two levels.

First, female teachers may see their gender as a barrier to their professional advancement, and this could be harmful to their morale.

Second, these gender inequalities could send the wrong signal to pupils (both boys and girls) that female teachers are incapable of being leaders.

The way forward in this area is to open up informed dialogue among the key stakeholders in the process of managing the career progression of teachers. ■

Percentages of female school heads and female teachers



Where have all the textbooks gone?

Textbook access levels vary significantly across countries

Kenneth N. Ross ▲ Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne
k.ross@unimelb.edu.au

The capacity to read well is not only an essential life skill – it also represents the main gateway to further learning in all other school subjects.

The Grade 6 pupils who participated in SACMEQ II (2000) and SACMEQ III (2007) were asked whether: (a) they used a reading textbook by themselves, (b) they

shared a reading textbook with one other pupil, (c) they shared a reading textbook with two or more pupils, or (d) no pupils had a reading textbook.

The research results in 2007 show that there were large variations in textbook access levels across countries. Almost all Grade 6 pupils in Mauritius and Swaziland had sole use of a textbook; and, in contrast, very few pupils in Tanzania had sole use of a textbook. The other countries had textbook access levels that ranged between these two extremes: six countries had moderate levels of textbook access (around 50 per cent sole usage); and six countries had much lower levels of textbook access (around 15 to 30 per cent sole usage).

The textbook situation in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe was of great concern because around one in five pupils were in a classroom in which no pupils had a textbook.

Access to reading textbooks for Grade 6 pupils

	% at Each Access Level in 2000				% at Each Access Level in 2007			
	No Text	Share 2+	Share 1	Sole Use	No Text	Share 2+	Share 1	Sole Use
Botswana	2.3	5.7	14.6	77.4	3.8	11.1	21.7	63.4
Kenya	2.8	46.1	24.3	26.8	2.2	58.6	21.5	17.8
Lesotho	12.1	16.3	16.3	55.3	7.2	17.4	19.5	55.9
Malawi	4.5	23.8	14.7	57.0	7.9	55.5	9.5	27.1
Mauritius	0.0	5.2	3.3	91.5	5.2	4.2	2.9	87.7
Mozambique	6.3	20.3	20.2	53.2	8.2	24.9	14.1	52.8
Namibia	5.1	18.1	30.1	46.6	5.6	31.1	31.3	31.9
Seychelles	8.0	17.0	28.1	47.0	3.6	6.7	47.4	42.3
South Africa	16.6	17.1	20.7	45.5	10.7	16.1	28.2	45.0
Swaziland	5.8	4.1	15.9	74.2	0.0	0.6	0.2	99.2
Tanzania	35.9	48.2	9.9	6.0	23.1	63.7	9.7	3.5
Uganda	20.6	52.8	11.9	14.7	20.4	47.6	14.5	17.4
Zambia	14.0	44.2	27.5	14.2	17.2	39.4	20.3	23.1
Zanzibar	24.6	62.3	9.2	3.8	2.2	32.9	16.8	48.1
Zimbabwe	7.5	48.5	19.6	24.3	19.3	47.0	19.0	14.7
SACMEQ	11.1	28.7	17.8	42.5	9.1	30.5	18.4	42.0

How to read the table

The textbook access trends between 2000 and 2007 have been summarized in the final column of the table by colour coding the 2007 percentages according to the following rules: Green = a substantial improvement (of around 10 per cent or more) in the percentage of Grade 6 pupils having sole use of a textbook between 2000 and 2007; Red = a substantial deterioration (of around 10 per cent or more); and Black = negligible change.

Variations across time points

Only three countries registered improvements of around 10 per cent or more in sole usage of textbooks between 2000 and 2007, and five countries registered deteriorations of around 10 per cent or more in sole usage of textbooks. The result for Malawi was particularly worrying: the country registered a fall of almost 30 per cent in sole usage of textbooks between 2000 and 2007. There was negligible change in sole usage of textbooks for seven countries.

These results provided a rather bleak outlook with respect to the numerous large-scale initiatives and associated high levels of funding that have been devoted over many years to designing, producing, and distributing school textbooks in the region. The general message was that reading textbook access levels for Grade 6 pupils in many countries were rather poor – and that these access levels had tended to either stagnate or deteriorate in many countries between 2000 and 2007. ■

Paid tuition, a potential challenge to EFA

Does private tuition
increase inequities
among primary
school children?

Laura Paviot ▲ Consultant in Education
laura.paviot@yahoo.com

Depending on the context, extra lessons may serve different educational purposes. In some countries extra lessons are unpaid because they reflect a ‘remedial strategy’ supported by the ministry of education with the purpose of assisting students who encounter learning difficulties.

In other countries extra lessons are paid for and serve as an ‘enhancement strategy’ aimed at students who are already performing well at school but wish to succeed in national high-stakes examinations at the end of primary school. Often in this context, school teachers are the main providers of paid tuition which

is delivered to their own pupils – even though this is sometimes considered an illegal practice and often operates outside official taxation systems.

Evidence from the SACMEQ research programme suggests that in countries where there is a high incidence of paid tuition there is also the likelihood that socio-economic inequities will increase because it is often the children from wealthy homes that have access to the financial means required to pay for extra lessons.

The issue of paid tuition has raised a great deal of concern among African researchers because it has the potential to challenge the Education for All initiative – which seeks to supply education of good quality to all primary school children regardless of their socio-economic background.

Assessing paid tuition

In response to these concerns, the SACMEQ III Project research teams decided to assess the degree to which paid lessons were provided to Grade 6 pupils. For the SACMEQ countries overall, a surprisingly high figure of around one in six Grade 6 pupils (15.5 per cent) were receiving paid tuition in 2007. The results for individual countries suggested three main groups. First, there were three ‘high incidence’ countries (Mauritius, Kenya, and Uganda) in which paid tuition covered around 25 to 75 per cent of Grade 6 pupils. Second, there were four ‘moderate incidence’ countries (Seychelles, Tanzania, Zanzibar, and Zimbabwe) in which 10 to 15 per cent of Grade 6 pupils were covered. Finally, there were eight ‘low incidence’ countries in which less than 10 per cent of Grade 6 pupils were covered.

On the basis of these research results it was decided that a more detailed investigation should be undertaken of the high incidence countries. The aim of this research will be to examine the nature of paid tuition in terms of several critical questions such as: Who is receiving it? Where is it delivered, and by whom? What do children do during paid tuition hours? What is the main reason for taking it? ■

Percentages of Grade 6 pupils
receiving paid tuition

	SACMEQ III (2007)
Mauritius	74.6
Kenya	46.3
Uganda	25.1
Zimbabwe	15.4
Tanzania	14.3
Seychelles	11.6
Zanzibar	11.4
Mozambique	7.1
Zambia	6.1
Botswana	5.9
Malawi	4.5
South Africa	4.0
Namibia	2.9
Lesotho	2.5
Swaziland	1.1
SACMEQ	15.5

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Paviot, L., Heinsohn, N. and Korkman, J. 2008. Extra tuition in Southern and Eastern Africa: Coverage, growth, and linkages with pupil achievement. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28 (2), pp. 149-160.

How effective are HIV and AIDS prevention education programmes?

Prevention education programmes need a comprehensive review

Stéphanie Dolata ▲ IIEP
s.dolata@iiep.unesco.org
Kenneth N. Ross ▲ Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne
k.ross@unimelb.edu.au

The SACMEQ III Project has introduced an innovative set of indicators on HIV and AIDS and, in particular a HIV and AIDS knowledge indicator for pupils. They will provide valuable baseline information for educational planners and decision-makers in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of HIV and AIDS prevention education programmes that are presented in primary schools across the 15 Ministries of Education.

Low level of pupil knowledge about HIV and AIDS

A first set of results showed substantial differences in Grade 6 pupil knowledge across the SACMEQ countries. Pupil knowledge levels ranged from 'relatively higher' in Tanzania (with an average transformed score of 576, and with 70 per cent and 24 percent of pupils reaching the minimal and desirable knowledge levels, respectively) to 'relatively lower' in Mauritius (with an average transformed score of 453, and with 17 per cent and 2 per cent of pupils reaching the minimal and desirable knowledge levels, respectively).

But the alarming feature of these research results was the generally low level of knowledge about HIV and AIDS among Grade 6 pupils. Overall, only 36 per cent of pupils reached the minimal knowledge level, and only 7 per cent of pupils reached the desirable level. In addition, within most countries only around 20 to 40 per cent of pupils reached the minimal knowledge level, and less than 10 per cent of pupils reached the desirable knowledge level.

These research results should send a major shockwave through those governments, international agencies, and development partners that have made substantial investments

in HIV and AIDS prevention education programmes for Africa. Grade 6 pupils are at a very vulnerable average age of 13.5 years – and yet their knowledge about HIV and AIDS is clearly inadequate for the task of guiding their decisions about behaviours that will protect and promote health. This is not an acceptable outcome – given the extreme human suffering caused by HIV infection and the massive amount of effort that has been devoted to large-scale prevention education programmes.

High level of teacher knowledge

In contrast to the low levels of pupil knowledge, a second set of results illustrated that Grade 6 teachers in the SACMEQ countries had high knowledge levels with respect to the HIV and AIDS prevention education curriculum that had been officially specified for primary schools. The average transformed score for teachers across the SACMEQ countries was 746, and the national averages ranged from a high of 793 in Kenya to a low of 698 in Mauritius. Almost all teachers in the SACMEQ countries reached the minimal knowledge level, and around 80 to 95 per cent of teachers in most SACMEQ countries reached the desirable knowledge level.

The HIV and AIDS knowledge gap

This contrast between the very low knowledge levels of most pupils about HIV and AIDS and the very high knowledge levels of most of their teachers is also a great concern. This was an unexpected result because SACMEQ research teams had assumed that if teachers had high levels of knowledge about HIV and AIDS then they would be able to transmit this

knowledge to their pupils. Further research will be required in order to examine and evaluate possible explanations for this knowledge gap.

The time has come to launch a comprehensive review and evaluation of all aspects of the delivery of HIV and AIDS prevention education programmes in African schools. The

goal for such programmes must be to ensure that all children leave primary school with the basic knowledge that is required to guide their decisions about health protection and to promote safe behaviours related to HIV and AIDS. ■

Performance of Grade 6 pupils and teachers on the HIV-AIDS knowledge test

	Pupils						Teachers					
	Transformed Score		Reached Minimal Level		Reached Desirable Level		Transformed Score		Reached Minimal Level		Reached Desirable Level	
	Mean	SE	%	SE	%	SE	Mean	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Mauritius	453	5	17	2	2	1	698	6	98	1	63	3
Lesotho	465	4	19	1	5	1	751	8	99	1	82	3
Zimbabwe	477	5	30	2	4	1	785	7	99	0	93	2
Seychelles	488	2	25	1	3	0	789	3	99	0	95	0
Zambia	488	4	35	2	4	1	744	7	98	1	86	2
Uganda	489	4	33	2	4	1	708	9	98	1	72	3
Botswana	499	4	32	2	7	1	782	6	100	0	93	2
SACMEQ	500	4	36	2	7	1	746	7	99	1	82	2
Zanzibar	501	3	38	1	4	0	657	5	94	1	45	3
Namibia	502	3	36	2	6	1	764	6	100	1	87	2
South Africa	503	4	35	2	8	1	781	6	100	0	93	2
Mozambique	507	6	40	2	8	2	741	7	99	1	81	3
Kenya	509	4	39	2	7	1	793	8	100	0	95	2
Malawi	512	5	43	2	9	1	714	9	99	1	72	4
Swaziland	531	3	52	2	4	1	759	7	100	0	89	2
Tanzania	576	4	70	2	24	1	724	7	99	1	82	3

How to read the table

The HIV and AIDS Knowledge Test (HAKT) was focussed specifically on the official curriculum frameworks for HIV and AIDS that had been adopted by SACMEQ Ministries of Education. The 86 HAKT test items addressed 43 curriculum topics concerned with 'basic knowledge required for protecting and promoting health'. These topics covered five main dimensions: definitions and terminology, transmission mechanisms, avoidance behaviours, diagnosis and treatment, and myths and misconceptions.

The HAKT was administered in late 2007 to around 60,000 Grade 6 pupils and their teachers in over 2,500 schools across the SACMEQ countries – and the resulting data analyses indicated that this instrument had a high level of reliability, and that it was suitable for placing pupils and their teachers on a common scale of knowledge about HIV and AIDS.

The performance of pupils and teachers was summarized in the form of three scores:

Transformed Scores – scaled HAKT scores that were transformed to an overall SACMEQ mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100;

Minimal Knowledge Scores – dichotomous scores that indicated whether or not respondents had mastered at least 50% of the officially-designated curriculum that was assessed by the HAKT; and

Desirable Knowledge Scores – dichotomous scores that indicated whether or not respondents had mastered at least 75% of the officially-designated curriculum that was assessed by the HAKT.

Data visualization

Frank van Cappelle ▲ IIEP
 vancappelle@gmail.com

Turning data into information for decision-makers

One of the identified weaknesses in using research results to aid evidence-based decision-making has been inadequate or ineffective communication and dissemination of results. StatPlanet is a data visualization and mapping application designed to support evidence-based decision-making by facilitating and improving its communication and dissemination. It provides an intuitive interface through which SACMEQ data can be easily explored and presented in various formats with the click of a button. StatPlanet is available as a web-version (to disseminate data online or through an intranet) as well as an offline version (to disseminate data via USB key, CD or other means).

It can also be used to produce visualizations for reports or articles, as shown below. This visualization clearly illustrates the discrepancy between the percentage of Grade 6 pupils that have female teachers compared with the percentage of Grade 6 pupils that are in schools with female school heads, as discussed on page 7 ('The "gender gap" in school management positions').

Visualization options

StatPlanet's data visualization options include bar charts, scatter plots, time series graphs and thematic maps (where countries or regions are coloured according to a data range).

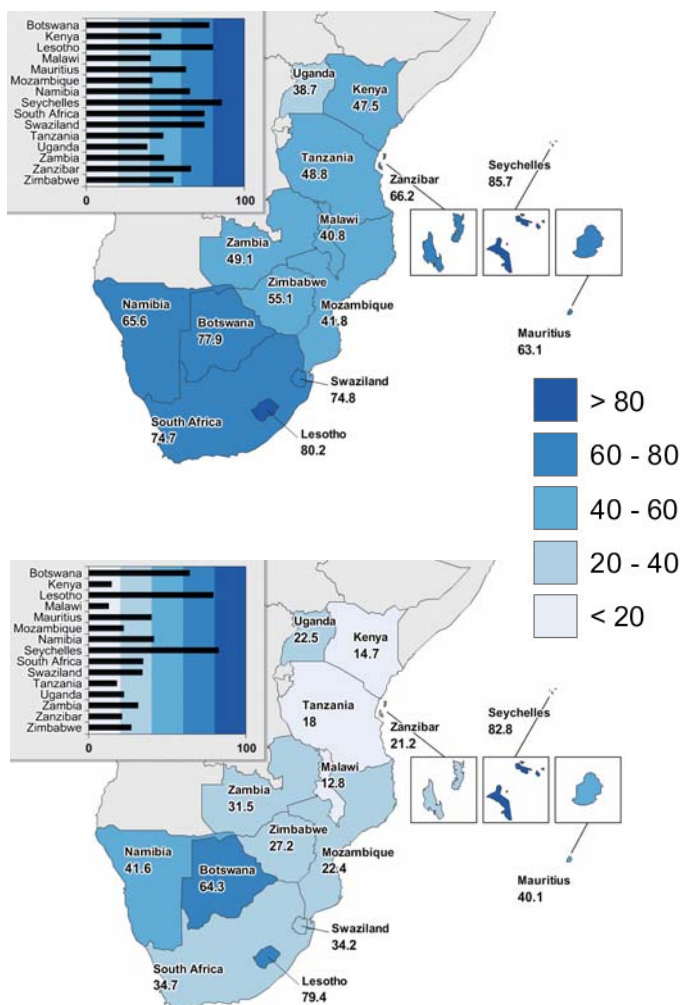
Customization

Data can be displayed at any administrative level for any country or region by importing the relevant map into StatPlanet. StatPlanet was customized to visualize SACMEQ data at two levels of aggregation – the national and the regional level.

For importing data, StatPlanet includes an open-source Excel-based data editor. It can automatically import data from a range of file formats regardless of the way the data is structured. This allows for SACMEQ, EMIS (Education Management Information Systems) and other kinds of data to be efficiently imported and visualized in StatPlanet. It can thus be used as a system for the rapid dissemination of results. This can be advantageous for improving the linkages between research and policy, as the sooner the results are released, the higher the policy interest is likely to be.

The SACMEQ data can be explored through StatPlanet on the SACMEQ website (www.sacmeq.org). ■

Percentages of female teachers (above) and female school heads (below) in SACMEQ countries



IIEP Summer School

Quantitative methods for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education

By Yahoko Asai, Amath Camara, Adnane Daoudi, Chaiwat Kaewphanngam, Mohammad Azim Karbalai, Ibrahim Gibril Kargbo, Lomthandazo Mavimbela, Beatrice Muganda, Gabriel Obbo-Katandi, Rebeca Otero Gomes, Anandita Philipose, Shaunda Wood (participants)

The summer school took place from 28 June to 9 July 2010 in Paris.

While some were on summer vacation on a tropical beach, we chose to take the IIEP Summer School during the heat wave. And we do not regret it!

Through lectures and extensive computer laboratory sessions, we learned technical design of studies that offer clear guidance for policy concerning the quality of education; development of data collection instruments that provide valid measures of the conditions of schooling and educational outcomes;

use of scientific sampling procedures for making measurable sample estimates of important population characteristics; and management, analysis, and reporting of data for policy purposes. It is amazing how much we covered in such a short period of time!

One of the highlights was the visit by the UNESCO Director-General, Ms. Irina Bokova, who came to the classroom during the discussion on gender disparity, school inputs, and health issues using the SACMEQ data archive.

Although we were a mixed group of university professors, education specialists in international development/funding organizations and ministry officials, we all thought that the course was very useful and relevant for our profession, especially in putting the importance of sound quantitative research into context. Some of us have already applied the skills in our professional work and even trained our researchers.

We would like to express our appreciation to the IIEP's Equity, Access and Quality team of lecturers for sharing their expertise and experience in this field. We feel honoured to have been part of a very interesting team with diverse perspectives. We strongly feel the need to maintain the professional networking. ■

For more information about IIEP Summer School 2010, contact m.saito@iiep.unesco.org

Challenges of financing basic education

Revisiting solutions involving the private sector — IIEP Policy Forum (9-10 September 2010)

Ilona Genevois ▲ IIEP
i.genevois@iiep.unesco.org

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Summit was recently held in New York. The Summit is considered as a crucial event, since the aim of the MDGs is to halve the number of poor people and to achieve certain targets in the areas of education, by 2015. One of its conclusions was that additional financing is one of the main factors to accelerating the achievement of the MDGs.

While the international community is considering approaches to augment education spending, more than 70 participants met at the latest IIEP Policy Forum, which took place in Paris on 9-10 September 2010. The participants – including four ministers

of education, four state secretaries, ten bilateral donor agencies as well as NGOs, institutional policymakers and educational planners from many countries – discussed the current challenges of financing basic education, with particular emphasis on private sector solutions.

In developing countries, public funding for educational development is usually insufficient. Thus government resources are often complemented by development partner funding, household and community contributions, and public-private partnerships.

Presentations and discussions during the IIEP Policy Forum made

it clear that households are the first partner to ministries of education for financing basic education. Households react positively when their education costs decrease, and thus fee-free policies encourage enrolment. Also, private provision of education is developing in many countries and it can be often considered as a signal of the poor conditions of schooling in public schools. Other conclusions at the Forum were that improving quality in public schools should be a priority for governments, and that public-private partnerships can and should play a role in education. ■

Training for capacity development: the successful expansion



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Partners

These various IIEP training programmes would not be possible without the generous support of many partners, including the governments of donor countries and International donors, notably:

- Austria,
- Flanders,
- France,
- Japan,
- Norway,
- Republic of Korea,
- European Union,
- Fast Track Initiative (FTI),
- UNICEF,
- World Bank.

For more information

on all IIEP training activities, visit the training section of IIEP website:

www.iiep.unesco.org

Patricia Dias Da Graça ▲ IIEP
p.diasdagraca@iiep.unesco.org

Devising education reform processes, foreseeing their implications in terms of resources, and coping with the persistent challenges of decentralization are just some of the tasks which await today's educational planners, and for which IIEP attempts to equip them through its various training programmes, including its widely acclaimed Advanced Training Programme (ATP).

The 32 participants in the 45th session of the ATP (2009/10) accordingly celebrated the completion of their training in the closing ceremony at the end of June 2010. In so doing, participants from 23 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Arab States set the seal on their several months of study and shared experience. The 2010/11 ATP got under way in September with the usual preliminary phase of training in the country concerned, provided through the IIEP distance education platform. The arrival of the 2010/11 group of participants in Paris will be marked on 4 October 2010 by the official opening of the 46th session of the ATP, followed by day-long briefing sessions organized jointly with the French National Commission for UNESCO.

To supplement the ATP, IIEP also offers distance training for officials unable to travel to Paris. In September 2010, around

60 public servants from the ministries of education in six countries in English-speaking Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar) have thus embarked on the final module of an 11-month distance training programme on education sector planning. Based on partnership with local training institutions, this programme aims to strengthen the capacities of participants in preparing development plans for the education sector in their country.

Other training activities

In 2010, IIEP significantly reinforced its short-term distance education course offer oriented towards important themes surrounding education management. These courses respond to the specific training needs concerning, among others, budget, human resource management or statistics. As a result, approximately 500 education managers were trained. With institutional capacity development as the main objective, these training offers were provided to teams officially proposed by member states.

IIEP continues to offer intensive courses on a regular basis tailored to education management teams at the national level. These courses are organized at the regional level around common interest themes for national institutions in that region, or take place within the context of operational projects in a country. ■

Upcoming activities

October

4–15 October

Web Forum on 'Higher Education Institutions operating as centres for HIV treatment, care and support'

Organized by the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) in association with the UNESCO HIV and AIDS Clearinghouse.

Contact: <http://forum.hivaidsclearinghouse.unesco.org>

11–13 October

Workshop on 'Anti-Corruption Policies and Practices in the Education Sector in Vietnam'

Hanoi, Vietnam

Contact: m.poisson@iiep.unesco.org

4 October – 26 November

Distance course on 'Education Sector Diagnosis'

Language: French

Contact: dse@iiep.unesco.org

13–14 October

International Seminar on 'School, Identity and Discrimination'

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Contact: n.lopez@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar

18–22 October

Launch of the project: 'Improving school financing: the transfer of grants to schools'

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, University of Lesotho and Centre for Education Policy Development.

Maseru, Lesotho

Contact: c.lugaz@iiep.unesco.org

20–22 October

5th meeting on 'Educational Quality Assessment Systems and Closing Ceremony of Planning and Management of Educational Policies and Programs course'

Brasilia, Brazil

Contact: lfumagalli@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar

28 October

Online Seminar 'Integrating ICT in education: the model 1-1'

Organized by FLASCO Argentina and IIEP Buenos Aires.

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Contact: tlugo@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar

November

8–10 November

Seminar on 'The role of steering policies and governance reforms in the management of higher education' in the East and South-East Asian region

Hanoi, Vietnam

Contact: m.martin@iiep.unesco.org

22–24 November

Workshop on 'Enhancing transparency and accountability in the education sector in Nepal', organized by the Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, DFID and AusAID

Katmandu, Nepal

Contact: m.poisson@iiep.unesco.org

15–19 November

Education Cluster Coordinators' training on behalf of the Global Education Cluster

Paris, France

Contact: l.macewen@iiep.unesco.org

Guidebook for planning education in emergencies and reconstruction

Anja Hopma ▲ IIEP

info@iiep.unesco.org

The world owes its children security and development through the provision of high-quality, inclusive education. This Guidebook aims to support educators in providing education in areas affected by conflicts or disasters. Published for the first time in 2006, this revised version is now available.

When serious crisis or conflict hits a country, schools are often abandoned or reduced to rubble, depriving children of their right to education. The 2010 Humanitarian Appeal of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated, for instance, that '810,400 children, youth and adult learners will not have equitable access to education in Sudan in 2010, and a valuable opportunity to build a culture of peaceful co-existence will be missed'.¹ Educators need to know what can be done to mitigate and prepare for disasters or conflict. Knowledge on how to respond to an emergency and continue education, whatever the circumstances, needs to be shared. The Guidebook provides practical guidance – for ministry of education

staff, as well as personnel from NGOs, UN organizations and donor agencies – on the broad themes of access and inclusion; teachers and learners; curriculum and learning; and management capacity. Each chapter puts forward strategies as well as tools and resources that have proven useful in different emergency contexts.

This revised edition has benefited from the collaboration of many education specialists worldwide. New additions to the publication include chapters on Prevention of conflict and preparedness for disaster and Technology. Chapters on Ethnicity/political affiliation/religion, Children with disabilities, Learning spaces and school facilities, Open and distance learning, Early childhood development, and Co-ordination and communication have also been updated to reflect recent developments in the provision of education in emergencies. Described by Eric Eversmann (Save the Children), as 'comprehensive' and 'an essential reference', this publication contributes to IIEP's endeavours to share existing knowledge and experience gained in this field. See next page on how to get the Guidebook. ■

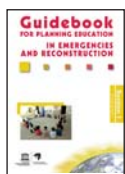
¹ Retrieved online: 1 August 2010 from <http://ochadms.unog.ch>

IIEP Publications

All IIEP publications can be downloaded free of charge at:
www.iiep.unesco.org/information-services/publications

Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction

Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction
Revised edition, 2010, 5 booklets & CD-ROM. Also published in Spanish



The *Guidebook* aims to support educators in providing education in areas affected by conflicts or disasters. Published for the first time in 2006, this interactive revised version can be downloaded free of charge from IIEP's website.

Price: print edition & CD-ROM – €20; CD-ROM – €12
Read more on the revised version of the Guidebook on

page 15 of this Newsletter.

Management Reform for EFA

Renforcer le partenariat école-communauté : Bénin, Niger et Sénégal

by Candy Lugaz & Anton De Grauwe with Cheikh Diakhaté, Justin M. Dongbehounde & Ibo Issa, 2010, 168 pp.



This study proposes strategies to foster school-community partnerships and further implicate the various actors involved in schools and communities to improve school management. It is based on field research undertaken in three West African countries, in collaboration with ministries of education, research institutes and Plan International. Price: €12

IIEP Research Paper

Directions in Educational Planning: Report of an IIEP Symposium

by Mark Bray & N.V. Varghese, 2010, 78 pp.



This report presents developments in educational planning in the past, changes in the present, and lessons for the future. Themes addressed include links and contrasts between macro- and micro-planning; inter-connections between education, poverty reduction and development; and, issues related to domestic and international financing of education.

Fundamentals of Educational Planning

Methods of Grouping Learners at School

by Vincent Dupriez, *Fundamentals of Educational Planning* No. 93, 2010, 103 pp.



How can the impact of class composition on students' learning be evaluated? This book addresses how classrooms should be formed in a school; the criteria to be used for dividing students up between schools and classes; and, when tracking/streaming and ability grouping is appropriate in a school system. It also considers the question of equal opportunity, and the influences of students on classmates – the so-called 'peer effect'. Price: €15

Policies and Strategies for Secondary Education

Recent Trends in Technical Education in Latin America

edited by Claudia Jacinto, 2010, 206 pp.



This publication examines recent transformations with regards to the links between academic secondary education (ASE), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and job preparation skills in Latin America. It analyses changes in approaches, obstacles and advances, as well as major challenges. Price: €12

IIEP Buenos Aires www.iiep-buenosaires.org.ar

Alianzas para la Mejora Educativa. Estado y Sociedad Civil en Escuelas del Bicentenario

by Silvina Gvirtz & Ángela Inés Oría, IIEP-BA & AIQUE Educación, 2010, 168 pp.



This study presents the findings of *Escuelas del Bicentenario*, a project in Argentina to improve the quality of schools in a context of poverty. It describes experiences and challenges encountered during the last four years in 132 schools from six regions; examines the interaction between different actors in the education sector; and, proposes to develop cooperation with the state to guarantee the right to education.

Review of an IIEP publication

Confronting the Shadow Education System: What Government Policies for What Private Tutoring?

by Mark Bray, 2009, 135 pp., IIEP/UNESCO Publishing. Price: €20



'Confronting the Shadow Education System is an important work which, together with Bray's previous volumes on the subject, will be recognized as a key foundational resource for both policy-makers and researchers who deal with private tutoring. The book takes a geographically diverse and politically even-handed view of the topic, and Bray acknowledges that in countries around the world, tutoring has both advantages and drawbacks. He ultimately recommends that researchers and governments think carefully about shadow education in order to create regulation that will maximize the advantages of private tutoring while minimizing its drawbacks.'

International Journal of Lifelong Education, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2010

Reviewer: Kristina Gandrud

To order IIEP publications: info@iiep.unesco.org