

See also

**The District
Education Office**

Pages 4-5

**School
performance
review**

Page 6

**Guiding
communities: the
path of Niger**

Page 7

**The use and
usefulness of
school grants**

Pages 8-9

**Municipalization
of education in
Latin America**

Pages 10-11

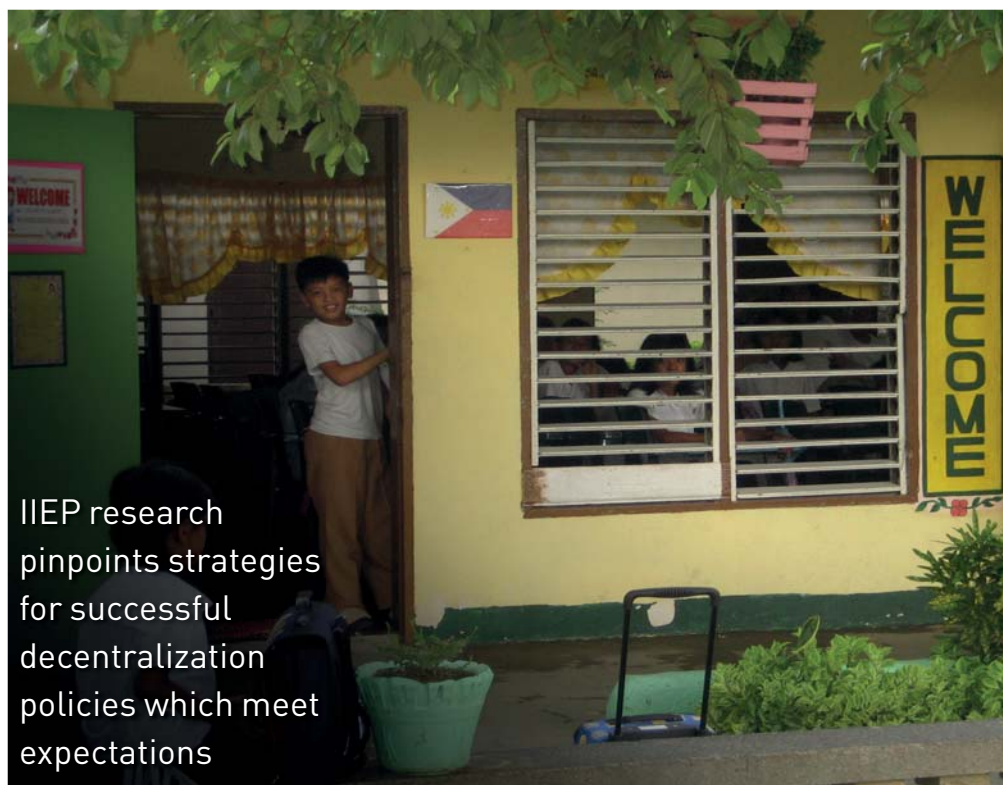
**The education
committees in
India**

Page 12

IIEP Publications

Page 16

Strengthening local actors



IIEP research
pinpoints strategies
for successful
decentralization
policies which meet
expectations

Anton de Grauwe and Candy Lugaz ▲ IIEP
a.de-grauwe@iiep.unesco.org ; c.lugaz@iiep.unesco.org

Policies for decentralization are very popular and among the most conspicuous features of public management reform in many countries. This is mainly because the advantages attributed to decentralization (greater administrative efficiency, more participatory decision-making, and more relevant policies and strategies) address the concerns of different interest groups. However, the policies in question have

seldom been implemented through pressure from local interests or consultation. Surprisingly perhaps, since local actors such as district officials, supervisors, principals or teachers should be those who gain most from them. Yet IIEP research over the last ten years has demonstrated the limited benefits of decentralization for local interests, and identified many challenges to its successful implementation.

The challenges at issue

Several articles in this issue of the *Newsletter* reflect research into the opinions and actions of local staff, in particular in developing countries. While situations differ between and within countries, certain findings emerge: for example, local education offices are unable to help lead educational development in their district; municipalities with responsibilities for education all too rarely exercise them effectively; despite securing greater financial autonomy through the receipt of grants, schools have seldom used it to innovate; many school heads feel overburdened and abandoned rather than empowered. The findings are not wholly negative. In some countries the experience is more encouraging, and helpful in defining principles relevant to effective decentralization. But why is its local implementation problematic in the first place?

Among several reasons for this, three are of special importance. First, the development of a policy for decentralization has not always been based on careful prior consideration of how to balance the responsibilities and assets of all those locally involved. For instance, district education offices may be asked to perform key tasks such as monitoring policy implementation, developing strategic plans, and supporting schools. But in many countries, they may not have the resources required. Though their staffing levels may be appropriate, staff members may lack the necessary professional background and skills, while offices themselves may have little autonomy in the fields of human resources and financial management.

A second barrier to successful decentralization is the local distribution of power. Those to whom authority is decentralized may want to use it to promote selectively local or even private



interests. If they have a local monopoly of power, control mechanisms at this level are largely ineffectual.

A third restrictive factor may be the lack of a common vision regarding the nature and aims of any policy for decentralization. Central policy-makers view it as a means of improving efficiency and thus reducing their administrative workload, while local actors hope that it will facilitate their work and give them more autonomy. Failure to fulfil all such contrasting expectations leads to frustration and weakens commitment to the policy.

What are the solutions?

IIEP research and the progress achieved in some countries suggest that certain key factors are instrumental in improving implementation of decentralization. First, it is essential to develop a common vision by involving local interests more effectively in policy-making, in terms of both consultation and hands-on participation. Secondly, any policy for decentralization means linking more carefully the remit and assets of central and local actors. Greater thought should be given to distributing them better and to strengthening or mobilizing existing assets. Take the case of school heads. Their many assets (sound teaching experience, closeness to teaching staff, and credibility within the local community) could enable

them to supervise and support their teachers more effectively. However, in several countries they lack the status and authority to do so, instead having to perform numerous administrative tasks for which they are poorly prepared. In many countries, real professionalization of the corps of school heads is now vital.

Thirdly, those who have gone unheard in society should be given their voice, not least of all to prevent decentralization from aggravating inequality, and to strengthen the social accountability of those actively involved in local and school affairs.

Finally, the effectiveness of action undertaken by local actors, their difficulties and their successes should be regularly monitored. The data collected should be used as a basis for further support or for rethinking and revising policy as necessary. Indeed, no policy should be regarded as sacrosanct. Decentralization is not an end in itself but a form of management which – when well implemented – can help to achieve improvements in quality, greater fairness or stronger participation. ■

Strengthening local actors	1
editorial: Fostering grassroots participation	3
The District Education Office	4
Looking at comprehensive data on Decentralization policies? Visit the IIEP Clearinghouse.	5
School performance review	6
Guiding communities: the path of Niger	7
The use and usefulness of school grants	8
Municipalization of education in Latin America	10
How the role of head teachers is changing with decentralization – experience from Latin America	11
The education committees in India	12
Gender equality in education: looking beyond parity	13
The schooling of adolescents in Latin America	13
Welcome to the 47th ATP session	14
Upcoming activities	15
Meeting education policy challenges in a changing Arab region	15
IIEP Publications	16

Fostering grassroots participation

The participative approach has been at the heart of IIEP since its inception. It is imbedded in the Institute's support to countries in designing educational policies and formulating plans. IIEP's wide experience has shown that involving all actors of an education system – including local civil communities and local administration levels – is a key to success. Drawing on the Institute's recent research and experience and that of its partners, this issue of the Newsletter draws important lessons on how to strengthen the role of local actors in improving delivery of educational services.

Participation creates ownership of plans, thus increasing the chances that their implementation will meet with success. Through participation, actors gain experience and develop skills. Hence, it is also a sure means for developing capacity. IIEP has always insisted that it is the responsibility of countries to produce their own sector plans: it is the Institute's role to accompany them in the planning process and to build the confidence of education officers at central and decentralized levels.

IIEP has also consistently advocated for the participation of local actors and community members in the planning process. These actors have a better ground-level view of matters and can provide political and material support. They are also the source of valuable information and the feedback needed for proper monitoring and evaluation (M&E) – which has gained in importance as more focus is put on cost-effectiveness and results-based management. The importance of regular M&E is also being stressed in the fight against corruption in education. The challenge has always been to secure input from the local level promptly and at low cost in the monitoring process.

Advances in communication technology, and the growing interest in public-private partnerships, offer a great promise in this regard. A fascinating example is the recent partnership between Google and the World Bank, coupling Google Map Maker's global mapping platform with the new, internet-related concept of 'crowdsourcing'. Initial successes in this area have led to the launch of important new projects that aim at increasing transparency and effectiveness through the engagement of civil society in closely monitoring development programmes and services (two interesting examples are the Open Aid Partnership and, in the Philippines, Check my School).

Innovative technologies (such as mapping) coupled with readily available communication tools (such as mobile devices) can be powerful tools for strategic planning. Two of IIEP's strategic orientations, recently endorsed by its Governing Board, are better integration of ICT in programmes and the forging of stronger partnerships with public and private partners. And what better way to start the year 2012 than by launching such a project in Africa. Following discussions held at the end of 2011, IIEP is proud to partner with Microsoft and Orange Device Group, to support countries in collecting data on education systems using mobile media. This innovative initiative should facilitate the gathering and analysis of data on education systems and pupils in a number of African countries, as well as helping to increase participation of local actors and the community in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. ■



Printed on recycled paper

The IIEP Newsletter is published three times a year in English, French and Spanish, and twice a year in Russian.

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
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Educational Planning



The District Education Office

Achieving a more strategic local role

Candy Lugaz ▲ IIEP
c.lugaz@iiep.unesco.org

In the context of decentralization, the role of the District Education Office (DEO) is changing. Where formerly it was a “reactive” administrative unit implementing tasks defined by others, it now has to think strategically, take the initiative, and shape decisions if implementation of decentralization is to succeed.

A pivotal position at local level

Depending on the particular decentralization policy, the DEO is an administrative unit of either the ministry of education or the district administrative authority. In both cases, it is a key technical arm of one or the other body, responsible for monitoring the implementation of education policies and improving educational quality in the district.

In the past, DEOs have discharged their responsibilities mainly by supervising and educationally supporting schools and teachers, as well as by collecting and analysing relevant key data. They have regularly reported on the

educational situation in their district to their upper administrative or political echelons.

However, with the transfer of responsibilities from central to district level, this traditional role has taken a new turn in two ways. First, the transfer has strengthened the pivotal position of DEOs in their district. While they are partly the link between the ministry and schools, they also link the district administrative authorities to both levels. One way of bringing all these parties together is to prepare a district educational plan. Secondly, while the traditional functions of DEOs have become more important with the transfer of responsibilities, new responsibilities have also appeared. Communication, networking, training, and the provision of regular support to local players are now among their essential tasks.

Successful implementation of policies for decentralization thus means redefining the remit of DEOs and adapting their resources accordingly. Yet in-depth field research by IIEP and its partners in several African and Asian countries in the past decade suggests that, despite this changing context, little has been done to reform DEOs and strengthen their effectiveness.

Challenges threatening DEO effectiveness

As is clear from field research and especially interviews with staff at DEOs, several challenges today limit their professional effectiveness.

First, their legal framework is inadequate. While legislation for decentralization highlights the responsibilities of parents, communities, schools, and local elected authorities, there has been little concern for the changing mandate of DEOs, with a focus on their traditional role.

Secondly, DEO posts and their requirements are not clearly defined. In many countries, the staff consist mainly of former teachers and head teachers appointed by the central authorities with little DEO involvement in the process. Those employed seldom receive thorough training for their work.

Thirdly, there is little DEO staff performance evaluation. A DEO sometimes performs only routine tasks which, like its overall effectiveness, are poorly monitored.

Finally, DEOs have little freedom to manage their budget and resources as they wish, which suggests a lack of trust in their ability to do so. This prevents them from strategically planning their activities. Their workload is also excessive since, in most countries, they have to carry out a vast range of tasks without the required resources and capacity.

Transforming DEOs into strategic partners

Several strategies could strengthen the effectiveness of DEOs in the event of decentralization, transforming them into strategic local partners. The following is a checklist of essential aims:

- recognize and clearly define in law the new mandate of DEOs, in accordance with their resources, assets, and capacity;
- adapt the internal structure and organization of DEOs to this mandate;
- professionalize their staff, by developing clear recruitment requirements (formal qualifications and professional experience) and providing regular capacity development programmes, especially in strategic planning, human and financial resources management, negotiation, communication, and networking;
- provide them autonomy in the use of their financial, material, and human resources;
- promote the regular exchange of experience between them;
- strengthen their communication

with central and local authorities;

- develop accountability frameworks and mechanisms to assess their effectiveness.

A policy seminar in Uganda in 2010 discussed these and other strategies with senior policy-makers in education ministries, researchers, and development partners. They are now the subject of a book published by IIEP (see page 16 of this Newsletter): Anton De Grauwe and Candy Lugaz (2011), *Strengthening local actors: the path to decentralizing education - Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda*, 158 pp. ■

Looking for comprehensive data on the implementation of decentralization policies? Visit the IIEP clearinghouse.

Jeff Ruff, Harris school, University of Chicago
jruff@uchicago.edu

Decentralization in education is a hot topic and a lot has been written about it. What may be more surprising is that rather few of these books and articles examine in depth how decentralization policies are implemented, how local actors use their increased autonomy and what difficulties they experience. Many documents remain theoretical or participate in a somewhat ideological debate about the values and disadvantages of decentralization. These are important but their use for policy-makers and practitioners who are defining and implementing policies is somewhat limited.

IIEP has gathered in one place the most recent and detailed research that exists on the implementation of decentralization policies. The **IIEP clearinghouse on the implementation of decentralization policies** is uniquely dedicated to compiling case studies, comparative analyses, and other reports that offer practical insight into the challenges, opportunities, and best practices associated with implementing decentralization reforms. It currently includes over 150 documents from a variety of academic and professional disciplines, and from both developed and developing nations. Tales of success and failure, and of nations rich and poor, are all present.

The clearinghouse can serve many different audiences. Academics seeking to connect theory with practice will find case studies on the implementation of every model of decentralization in a variety of economic, political, and social contexts. Meanwhile, practitioners seeking best practices and lessons learned will find documents detailing the on-the-ground realities of reforms.

Each document in the Clearinghouse is accompanied by a brief summary and by a link to a website from which it can be downloaded.

The clearinghouse will be continually updated as new reports are published. Visit it at www.iiep.unesco.org/chdec/



School performance review

A whole-district approach to school improvement in sub-Saharan Africa

Stephen Blunden ▲ Chief executive officer, Link Community Development

After several years of delivery focusing on the impact of district education offices on school performance, the NGO Link Community Development (LCD) found a series of common factors in its partner districts¹. While responsible for school support, they lacked quality information to inform prioritization. Where information was available, it was not broadly used to inform decision-making. Centre-based planning dominated and the potential of district/school planning was often ignored in practice. Schools had no clear picture of how they performed against the best schools in their district and existing information about school performance was not widely shared with schools themselves. Finally, parents had only limited information about the quality of education provided by their school.

¹ The Ministry of Education in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda.

² www.hmie.gov.uk

³ www.fife-education.org.uk

Principles of school performance review

To address these challenges, LCD redeveloped its approach to “whole district development” to include “school performance review” (SPR).

SPR involves the measurement of every school’s performance against an identified “achieved standard” in the district. District officials visit every school and measure performance against a range of indicators. Dialogue at each step is vital. School performance reports are shared with all schools in one district, as well as at school level with parents and the community. This contributes to inform demand-side knowledge about an attainable “standard”, the extent to which the school is achieving it, and plans to improve its performance.

As the project developed, learning was shared between countries: district officials from Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda visited South Africa, an Ethiopian team visited Ghana, and LCD staff engaged with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)² and Fife’s Department of Education³ in Scotland.

Encouraging results

An external evaluation by the Netherlands Department of Foreign Affairs commented on LCD’s approach in Masindi District, Uganda, which was one of the first districts to use SPR: “Project schools perform approximately 45%-55% better than comparable schools. Key elements of the project’s success are the training of district officers and school management and the regular monitoring and inspection of schools based on a detailed format” (IOB, 2008).

The approach has been demonstrated to scale in Limpopo Province, South Africa, in which around 1,000 schools have engaged with SPR. In Uganda, 17 districts have done so. Currently, the Ministry of Education in Malawi and the Department of Basic Education in South Africa have both asked LCD to facilitate a “whole district” demonstration of SPR. ■



©Kailou Dodo

Supporting communities: the path of Niger

The school-community partnership is successfully improving quality education

Kailou Dodo ▲ Assistant to the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Education and Literacy in Niger and former IIEP trainee 2011

Partnerships between schools and their communities are now regarded as an essential means of contributing to the quality of education. School management committees have been set up in recent years in many countries, with a range of responsibilities in running and administering schools. But such partnerships cannot be taken for granted. Strategies for developing and guiding committees are vital for them to work effectively.

The experience of Niger is highly instructive. School management committees were set up in each school from 2003 onwards. They consist of representatives of school staff, pupils and their parents, representatives of the local authority, the Association de Mères éducatrices,¹ and NGOs. Symbols of the partnership between a school and its community, the committees have been developed specifically to

contribute to the improvement of the learning environment of pupils and the development of schools.

Implementation of the strategy

There have been three facets to implementation of the support.

1- Gradual implementation: this has occurred in stages with an initial test phase covering 240 schools in 2002–03, then an extension in 2003–04 and finally implementation throughout the entire country in 2004–05.

2- School and community staff capacity-building: the Ministry of Education (MoE), with the support of the Japanese Cooperation Agency, has seen that the players are regularly kept fully aware of and trained to assume their new responsibilities. The committees have received guidance concerning the conduct of their meetings, as well as the preparation and monitoring of school action plans.

3- Backup from organizations and players at different levels: the distinctive nature of the experience in Niger lies in the empowerment of players at all levels of the system in order to support this partnership. At the local, regional, and central levels, entities supporting the school management committees (communal federations of the committees, observers, focal points, and committee promotion units) thus act in collaboration with the geographically decentralized area offices of the MoE.

Impact and challenges

An evaluation study of the functioning of the committees by the Ministry of Education in 2005 testified to the success of the project: It resulted in better management of school textbooks, improved involvement on the part of pupils, and fewer repetitions and drop-outs.

Yet challenges linked to the modest participation of some members and a lack of ability to mobilize resources still have to be overcome. They are a reminder that the success of the school-community partnership is measured over time and requires a sustained long-term contribution by all concerned. ■

¹ Association of Mothers as Tutors.



The use and usefulness of school grants

What are the benefits of grant policies and what are their limits?

How are they allocated to schools and how could they be improved?

Anton de Grauwe ▲ IIEP; Akihiro Fushimi ▲ Manager, Programme-Donor Matching Unit at UNICEF ; and Martin Prew ▲ Director of the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD)

In many developing countries, a significant reform is under way. Schools which formerly had very little say in financial management now receive grants directly from the central authorities. Up to a point, schools can use them as they wish. Grants are expected to serve several purposes, of which the most important is broadening school access for children. In some of the countries concerned parental contributions to schools are now prohibited, so the grants tend to replace them. Educational management theories assume that grants will have other advantages resulting in less bureaucracy, fewer leakages in the distribution of funds, and more appropriate and selective use of funds by schools for their self-improvement, as well as a greater impact if more money

reaches disadvantaged schools. Finally, grants may influence school–community relations and enhance school autonomy and capacity.

Assessing the impact of grants

Against this background and in collaboration with UNICEF, the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), and national ministries and research centres, IIEP organized research on the design and implementation of school grant policies, and how grants are used by schools. The research sought to uncover the realities of such “popular” educational policies by examining how they were perceived, interpreted, and put into practice by school-level stakeholders in different contexts. It involved detailed case studies of about 60 schools in five countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, and Uganda) and the collection of quantitative data on all schools in a few sampled districts in each country (except Lesotho). While this extensive material is now the focus of close comparative study, it is hard and perhaps unwise to draw any general conclusions from it, because policies are so varied and local context and personal characteristics so significant, especially in research involving several countries.

The policies implemented in these five countries are certainly not the same. In some cases, grants correspond to small sums expected to cover only minor maintenance and operational expenditure. In others they may be larger, enabling schools to use them more freely and flexibly, particularly to improve quality. Such differences have to be borne in mind when assessing the impact of grants.

Grants help to broaden access

While not entirely replacing fees or parental contributions, grants have definitely provided for greater access. As parents continue to make contributory payments in almost all schools, fee-free education is something of a myth. Though officially prohibited, such payments are tolerated, partly because they compensate for inadequate grant sums and delays in their

transfer. But children who cannot pay these fees are not automatically barred from school and have benefited from this policy.

However, concerns over equity persist, particularly as some pupil contributions cover extra tuition or even school meals. Extra tuition is organized by the teachers and pupils unable to pay for it are deprived of this additional, yet crucial learning opportunity. In some countries, pupils who do not pay for school meals cannot benefit from them.

The uncertain impact on quality and achievement

Grants have not overcome problems of school administrative inefficiency. When schools receive them, they tend to spend them fast and efficiently in accordance with their needs and priorities. However in several countries grants are lower than expected, regularly paid late, and sometimes fail to arrive at all. The main reason for this seems to be that governments lack financial room for manoeuvre at different levels, possibly revealing that education is a low priority. However, some countries manage to transfer full grants regularly to all schools. Where they cover basic teaching items, such as textbooks, they are widely believed to impact positively on school quality and student achievement. School staff reportedly do not complain about late or non-existent grants, as this source of funding is regarded as a government “gift” rather than a rightful “contribution”, so no one is held accountable for shortcomings.

Grants only enable schools to spend more freely and selectively up to a point. This is for two reasons. First, the amounts are generally so small that they cover only urgent expenditure on items such as utilities and stationery. Secondly, their use is governed by precise restrictive regulations which give schools little leeway. Where

schools receive bigger amounts and budget lines are more broadly defined, they welcome the greater freedom this brings. Yet most respondents did not seek increased school financial autonomy. School heads were among the many who claimed that restrictions prevented the misuse of funds, and limited potential conflict over priorities within the school and community alike. While grants may not give schools much scope for independent policy-making, they have strengthened the position of school heads.

Respondents disagreed about the impact of grants on parental involvement. Teachers in particular claimed that many parents refuse to support schools because of the fee-free policy. Others were more positive, claiming that the relationship is friendlier as parents are no longer goaded into paying school fees. Indeed, the wider group of parents now involved in school affairs is not limited solely to those who can afford to pay them.

Towards successful grant policies

Grants in each country are based on the number of pupils/students at a particular school and not on any special characteristics associated with either it or them. While, as some respondents pointed out, this might theoretically widen inequalities, others voiced concerns linked to more “needs-based” grants. Among them were the possible manipulation of indicators (such as the number of orphans), confusion over grant amounts based on more complex calculations, and the possibility that additional funds might not be used for the benefit of disadvantaged students. These respondents felt that schools should get special funds for such students, over and above the grants.

The impact of grant policies on schools and their students remains

a complex issue. Yet research has identified strategies to improve their chances of success. These will be discussed with senior policy-makers in education ministries, researchers, and development partners at a policy seminar to be held in Addis-Ababa in March 2012. They will also be the subject of a forthcoming publication. ■



Municipalization of education in Latin America

In Brazil, the role of central government is vital to strengthening municipal capacity

Laura Fumagalli and Violeta Ruiz ▲ IIEP Buenos Aires
lfumagalli@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar;
vruiiz@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar

Since the end of the 1980s, municipal responsibility for the provision of schooling has become part of a broader process to decentralize the management of education systems in Latin America.

However, the methods adopted in each country vary. Although a process of decentralization from central government towards the regions is clearly apparent, local government has not always been involved in educational policy-making. In Chile, a country with a unitary form of political organization, decentralization has resulted in the participation of local authorities. This is not so in Argentina with its federally organized state. Decentralization from the central government has occurred only as far as the regional states. In Brazil, which also has a federal structure, local authorities have

been granted constitutionally recognized responsibilities in the field of education since 1988.

In the view of those who promote the municipalization of education, it has led to greater educational democratization. This is thought to have resulted from the involvement of local bodies and interests in providing and controlling education, together with more efficient management of resources.

Municipalization and inequity

Social and economic inequality is an acute problem in Latin America, and Brazil is no exception. Critics of efforts to municipalize education, in which inequality is already present, claim that the process increases segmented provision as it fails to reduce such inequality, and makes systems harder to govern because the duties of different levels of government overlap.

This particular controversy aside, social and economic inequality is also a feature of the varied economic and technical capacity of local districts to cope with the tasks arising from decentralization.

In Brazil there are more than 5,000 districts of differing technical and economic capacity. Participation at federal level and that of the states is necessary, in order to provide support and resources to the districts most in need.

Strengthening municipal capacity

The Ministry of Education in Brazil has started several programmes to strengthen municipal capability, and offer support to municipal leaders in the management of teaching systems and education policies. They include the Programme of Support for Municipal Education Leaders, jointly developed by the Ministry and the National Union of Municipal Education Leaders.

Moreover, the Ministry has developed a series of training and technical aid projects to strengthen the education management skills of these leaders. The training includes a course in educational planning and management, which is undergoing development and

designed for technical teams from the state and municipal education secretaries. This initiative is being conducted jointly by the Ministry, the National Council of State Education Secretaries (CONSED), and the National Union of Municipal Education Leaders (UNDIME), in cooperation with the UNESCO Brasilia Office (UBO) and IIEP Buenos Aires. The proposal is for ongoing distance training aimed at giving technical teams the skills to enhance the quality of education, by improving technical efficiency in the planning and management of education policies.

As regards technical assistance, the UBO and IIEP Buenos Aires are developing a process to evaluate the municipal school network in the Sao José dos Campos district. This will be used to design a new continuous educational evaluation and information system.

In general, the foregoing projects and programmes demonstrate that, while decentralization broadens the margins of participation in educational policy-making in local government, considerable support from central government remains crucial in achieving fairer education, given the social and economic inequalities that persist. ■



©UNESCO/Ana Claudia Nahas

How the role of head teachers is changing with decentralization – experience from Latin America

Paula Scaliter – IIEP Buenos Aires
p.scaliter@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar

Reforms for decentralization in Latin America leading to more school autonomy seek to gear school needs and conditions to improving the quality of education. However, there is no direct link between quality and the level of autonomy. Strategies accompanying the development of greater autonomy are instrumental in this process. IIEP research has highlighted the key role here of head teachers.

In this context, IIEP Buenos Aires has secured a central position in the region since 2000, through the joint introduction of training programmes, with national and state education ministers, to professionalize the role of head teachers. The initiative is focusing on the new requirements of schools in a decentralized system. Positively assessed by a wide variety of participants, these classroom-based and virtual programmes have achieved the following:

- strengthened the skills of head teachers as educational leaders: this has involved the development of learning communities with their teachers, and regular communication with them to identify student learning strategies by establishing equitable teaching areas and adapting the curriculum to the needs of their students;
- diversified their profile, as they should be able to manage resources, negotiate with students, teachers, parents, and supervisors, network with external partners such as local elected representatives, NGOs and associations, and anticipate problematic situations;
- supported head teachers so that they transform their school into an innovative environment for training and teaching; the school should become a place in which its members both act and reflect.



The education committees in India

Overcoming challenges to improve their role in strengthening quality education for all

Prof. Avinash K Singh ▲ Head of Department of Foundations of Education, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA)

Since the mid-1980s, education committees have been set up in every state in India. In spite of their different names – village education committees, school development management committees, parent/teacher associations and so forth – they all serve the same purpose. This is to help implement the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) project in schools, a key strategy for opening up quality elementary education to all pupils, through the participation of parents and communities in daily school management and activities.

Twenty-five years later, what conclusions can be drawn from this experience? In preparing the Right to Education Act (RTE),¹ a study was conducted by the National University of Educational Planning

and Administration (NUEPA), in order to assess the performance of schools and identify strategies to enhance their effectiveness.²

Structural and functional challenges

The study findings emphasize a number of challenges linked to the structure, composition, and role of education committees. Although consisting largely of parents, they are mostly male dominated. Overall, the active participation of committee members in meetings is low, and limited to committee officers (the president, vice-president, and secretaries). According to most members interviewed, their main task is “to enroll all the children in the school”, but they are less aware of what they might do to mobilize resources for it. While committee members regularly visit schools to monitor teacher and student attendance, they pay little attention to how children are taught, learn, and perform. Overall, capacity building among members appears problematic. Over 63% of those surveyed admitted that they had no training or guidance to carry out their tasks effectively. This is probably attributable to the short training programmes (lasting less than 2 days), and the fact that they are not practice-oriented and few members attend them. Committee contacts with higher level education authorities remain mainly administrative and top-down, resulting in neither exchanges of experience nor regular two-way communication. In most cases, relations with Panchayat bodies (village councils) are weak and ill-defined.

The study concludes with several recommendations designed to face these challenges and strengthen the effectiveness of committees so that they can be instrumental in the local development of quality education for all. They were recently renamed “school management committees” under the RTE Act, which is perhaps a first symbolic step in the right direction. ■

¹ The RTE Act, passed by the Indian parliament on 4 August 2009, describes the modalities of the provision of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India

² The study, conducted in 14 provinces in 2009 and 2010, was based on an analysis of policy documents and on interviews carried out with Committee members, schools’ staff, parents, and other actors involved in their development. It covered about 1000 schools located in 42 rural and urban districts.

Gender equality in education: looking beyond parity

Mioko Saito and Lyndsay Bird ▲ IIEP
m.saito@iiep.unesco.org, l.bird@iiep.unesco.org

On 3 and 4 October 2011 and in collaboration with a wide range of partners, IIEP brought together during its annual Policy Forum over 100 high-level participants, including six ministers of education (from Burundi, Cambodia, Congo, Gabon, Kenya, and Mozambique) to discuss ways of promoting gender equality in education. Despite commitments to international goals related to gender, much of the currently available data on gender equality in education has focused primarily on gender parity. The theme

of the Forum, therefore, was “looking beyond parity”.

Opened by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova and drawing on “hard” research evidence, the Forum examined the root causes of inequality between the school performance of girls and boys (in relation to classroom teaching, the school environment, and local context). Participants also considered the quality of education, progress achieved in reducing the gender gap, and obstacles standing in the way of women’s ability to achieve senior leadership positions in the public sector and, more specifically, in education.

Participants emphasized how

individuals should reflect upon their own immediate actions and look holistically at what quality and equality mean. At all levels, people must work together to empower a generation to promote gender equality and break down barriers to it. Doing so not just in schools and institutions, but in wider societies and cultures is a UNESCO priority.

Speeches, presentations, videos, and photos are available on the dedicated website: <http://genderpolicyforum.wordpress.com>. An online forum on gender equality in education is shortly to be included on the IIEP website (see how to register on p. 15 of this *Newsletter*). ■

The schooling of adolescents in Latin America

Cultural, pedagogical, and educational policy challenges

Margarita Poggi ▲ IIEP Buenos Aires
mpoggi@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in the schooling of adolescents in Latin America. Decision-makers, planners, and managers have been compelled to respond to the increasing demand for education at secondary level. Yet not only are there more students in secondary schools, but they are different from those of past decades. Indeed, these newcomers are cast in a very distinctive social and cultural mould. Current policy challenges have changed, focusing now on retention, efficiency, quality, and equity.

These ideas were developed by education specialists at the International Forum organized by the IIEP office in Buenos Aires in mid-September 2011. Over 500 people attended the Forum, including government officials, school head teachers, secondary school teachers, and education specialists and researchers from all Latin American countries. Education ministers from Argentina and Paraguay reviewed and assessed their national policy strategies for ensuring that secondary education could meet the new demands of children, adolescents and society in a way that was both timely, and appropriate.

In meetings and debate, participants identified and distinguished long-

standing and more recent issues in secondary education in Latin America today. Some of them are structural and typical of the complex inter-generational relationship. However, structural and cultural changes in society now present new challenges to the school system.

Further information in Spanish about the Forum is available at: www.iipe-buenosaires.org.ar/seminarios ■

Welcome to the 47th ATP session



© IIEP

Natalie Frederic ▲ IIEP
n.frederic@iiep.unesco.org

News of former IIEP trainees

Career changes

Laura Isabel Athie Juarez (Mexico), 2006/07, became UNICEF national sub-coordinator in Mexico.

Juliana Burton (Argentina), 1999, was appointed National Director for International Cooperation at the Argentine Ministry of Education.

Glebelho Lazare Sika (Côte d'Ivoire), 2003/04, obtained a doctorate in economics of education at the University of Bourgogne in Dijon, with high honours.

Mohammad Shakir Habibyar (Afghanistan), 2010/11, was appointed Assistant to the Minister of Education.

Abdourahamane Daouda (Niger), 2007/08, was appointed Director of Studies and Programming at the Ministry of Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages.

Marie Lydia Raharimalala Toto (Madagascar), 2007/08, was appointed National Director of the FAWE antenna in Madagascar.

Boureima Daouda (Niger), 2008/09, was appointed Director of Basic Education to the Ministry of Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages

For further information

on former IIEP trainees, subscribe to the IIEP Alumni Network by writing to:
alumni-anciens@iiep.unesco.org

On 3 October 2011, IIEP welcomed 35 participants from 23 countries to its Advanced Training Programme (ATP). Africa is home to 14 of these countries, while two are in the region of Asia and the Pacific, four in that of Latin America and the Caribbean, two are Arab States and one is in Europe.

Participants were first welcomed by IIEP Director Khalil Mahshi, who gave a lecture on changes in educational planning and challenges facing it, offering both a historical analysis of this field and a glance towards the future.

The Orientation Seminar, organized on 6–7 October at the premises of the French National Commission for UNESCO in Paris, gave participants a first opportunity to exchange information and views on educational planning and management in a comparative perspective. Group discussions dealt in particular with the current organization and practices of planning and management in the education sector of the different systems represented in the ATP.

During the Seminar, the participants were also provided with an overview of the structure and content of the ATP. IIEP wishes all participants in the 47th ATP session a very successful academic year in Paris! ■

Agenda of training activities

Education Sector planning in Asia

With support from JP Morgan Global Philanthropy and in partnership with the University of Hong Kong, IIEP will launch the distance/blended education programme on education sector planning in April 2012. The third edition of this programme is designed to strengthen the capacity of institutions in selected Asian countries (Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam) to prepare education policies and plans and monitor their implementation. Contact: educationsectorplanning@iiep.unesco.org

Advanced training programme 2012-2013

The deadline for submission of applications for the 48th session of the 2012-13 Advanced Training Programme is 17 February 2012. More information on www.iiep.unesco.org

Specialized Courses Programme 2012

From 20 February to 13 April, IIEP is offering eight bilingual (French/English) intensive and specialized training courses in key areas of educational planning and management. Contact: tepuvt@iiep.unesco.org

Regional Training Course in Buenos Aires

From January to March 2012, there is a call for applications for the 15th Regional Training Course on Education Policy and Planning to be held between August and November 2012 in Buenos Aires (Argentina). Contact: cursoaregional@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar

Upcoming activities

December 2011 – March 2012

A series of two-week **capacity development workshops** for around 400 Afghan provincial and district educational planners, as part of the project on sustainable capacity development for education sector planning.

Multiple provinces, Afghanistan

Contact: d.gay@iiep.unesco.org

March 2012

14 – 16 March

Policy seminar on improving school financing: the use and usefulness of school grants, organized by IIEP and UNICEF and hosted by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education

Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia

Contact: c.lugaz@iiep.unesco.org

26 March – 11 May

Distance course on Reforming school supervision for quality improvement (In French)

Contact: inspectionscolaire@iiep.unesco.org

26 March - 06 April

e-Forum on Gender equality in education (In English)

Contact: eforum@iiep.unesco.org

April 2012

16 April – 15 June

Distance course on Projections and simulation models

(In English)

Contact: projection@iiep.unesco.org

30 April – 22 June

Distance course on Financial management and budgeting for education (In French)

Contact: edbudget@iiep.unesco.org

May 2012

14 – 15 May

Building skills for work and life: third international congress on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) Shanghai, China

June 2012

13 – 14 June

Meeting of the **International Working Group on Education**

(IWGE) focused on issues related to Learning outcomes

Washington DC, USA

Contact: nv.varghese@iiep.unesco.org

Meeting education policy challenges in a changing Arab region

Fostering cross-national cooperation in training and education system assessments

Education is a fundamental priority, a human right which enables people to access and exercise other fundamental rights, empowering them and providing them with social and technical skills. At present in the Arab world, these matters have a special resonance. But successful development depends largely on a country's capacity to devise relevant policies, implement plans, and manage limited resources efficiently. In the last two years, UNESCO has conducted an analysis of educational needs in the Arab countries, which confirms that governments should strengthen their national capacities for education policy, planning, and management, in particular by enhancing the skills of their planners.

In order to help managers and policy-makers in the Arab world tackle their challenging tasks, the UNESCO Office in Beirut organized a regional policy seminar in El Jadida (Morocco) on 5–6 December 2011, with support from IIEP, the UNESCO Office in Rabat, and the Morocco National Commission for UNESCO.

Around 50 senior policy-makers from education ministries discussed various topics and shared experience in improving education systems. Participants agreed to implement two regional initiatives, namely a regional network of training centres in educational planning and management (EPM) and a regional initiative for monitoring the quality of education.

Implementing a regional training network

The establishment of a regional network of training centres capable of designing and delivering action for capacity development will ensure continuity and regional self-sufficiency in developing national capacity in educational policy, planning, and management. Three national institutions have been chosen to deliver programmes in EPM in the entire region: the Regional Centre for Educational Planning (RCEP) in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates; the National Centre for Human Resources Development (NCHRD) in Amman, Jordan; and the Centre d'Orientation et de Planification de l'Éducation (COPE) in Rabat, Morocco. In the coming years, these centres should annually train some 40 officials in the Arab region.

Monitoring the quality of education

The Doha Declaration of the Ministers of Education in the Arab States (September 2010) recognizes the lack of national capacity and the crucial importance of monitoring educational quality in running assessment surveys. In response to such a need, the UNESCO Beirut Office developed a regional initiative to promote and enhance high-quality national mechanisms for assessing educational quality and developing regional benchmarking frameworks for quality. This will run from 2011 to 2015 and, with support from universities in the region, will develop a broad framework of indicators for monitoring education quality and enhance the capacity of educational analysts and planners as regards evidence-based policy-making. ■

IIEP Publications

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

IIEP Policy Forum Report

Directions in Educational Planning: International experiences and perspectives

Mark Bray & N. V. Varghese (Eds), 2011, 310 pp., IIEP/UNESCO



The nature of educational planning has evolved significantly during the past few decades. For many years, it relied on grand models focusing on macro-planning. Today, the field is increasingly defined by decentralized approaches, non-government funding, and cross-national forces in the context of globalization. In 2008, IIEP organized a symposium to discuss the changing context and content of educational planning, reflecting on continuities and changes in the past and looking ahead to the future. This publication is based on selected papers presented at the symposium. Price: €12

Fundamentals of Educational Planning

Trade in Higher Education: The role of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

Fundamentals of Educational Planning No. 95
Jandhyala B.G. Tilak, 2011, 154 pp., IIEP/UNESCO



Today, trade in education has become an important framework under which cross-border mobility of students, institutions, programmes and teachers takes place. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has systematized and formalized the conditions for trade in services including education. This book provides a detailed analysis of various dimensions of the GATS and its implications for the development of higher education, especially in developing countries. Price: €15

Quality Education for All

Smaller, Quicker, Cheaper: Improving learning assessments for developing countries

Daniel A. Wagner, 2011, 192 pp. ISBN 978-92-803-1361-1, IIEP/Global Partnership for Education



This book provides a review of learning assessments, their status in terms of the empirical knowledge base and new ideas for improving their effectiveness, particularly for those children most in need. It argues that SCQ learning assessments have the potential to enhance educational accountability, increase transparency, and support a greater engagement of stakeholders with an interest in improving learning. Price: €12

New Trends in Higher Education

In Search of the Triple Helix: Academia-industry-government interaction in China, Poland, and the Republic of Korea

Michaela Martin (Ed.), 2011, 268 pp.



Academia-industry partnerships have moved high on the policy agenda of many countries. Governments have a strong role to play in the development and support of national innovation systems, of which academia-industry partnerships are a crucial element. This publication explores the roles and modes of government intervention in three countries which form contrasting cases along the state-market continuum. It identifies three major approaches used for the support of academia-industry partnerships – orchestration, planning, and substitution. Price: €12

Price: €12

Selection of IIEP publications related to decentralization & local actors

Strengthening Local Actors: The path to decentralizing education, Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda

Anton De Grauwe & Candy Lugaz; with Tiberius Barasa, Pulane J. Lefoka, Mathabo Tsepa, Samuel Kayabwe & Wilson Asimwe, 2011, 164 pp.



Many countries have taken the path of decentralization, for different motives but with the common objective of a more effective education system and improved quality. In order to better understand the challenges and identify strategies for successful implementation of this policy at local level, IIEP has undertaken a research project in three countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. This book analyses the main lessons learned, with specific attention given to the commonalities and differences observed. Price: €12

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

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

Schooling and Decentralization: Patterns and policy implications in Francophone West Africa

Candy Lugaz & Anton De Grauwe, 2010, 153 pp. Also published in French (2006)



This study is based on extensive field research in four West African countries (Benin, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal). It demonstrates the challenges encountered at the local level as well as innovative initiatives being undertaken which help identify principles of good practice. One central principle is that decentralization does not imply that the state is abandoning control but should give more support with a stronger focus on equity. Price: €12

Decentralization of Education: Why, when, what and how?

Fundamentals of Educational Planning No. 64
N. McGinn & T. Welsh, 1999, 98 pp., IIEP/UNESCO



This book provides policy-makers with tools for approaching the debate on decentralization. It examines how authority for decision-making in public education systems can be decentralized and what effects this can have, providing an analysis of key questions and their implications. It concludes with a discussion of the necessary political circumstances required for any successful moves towards decentralization. Price: €15

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