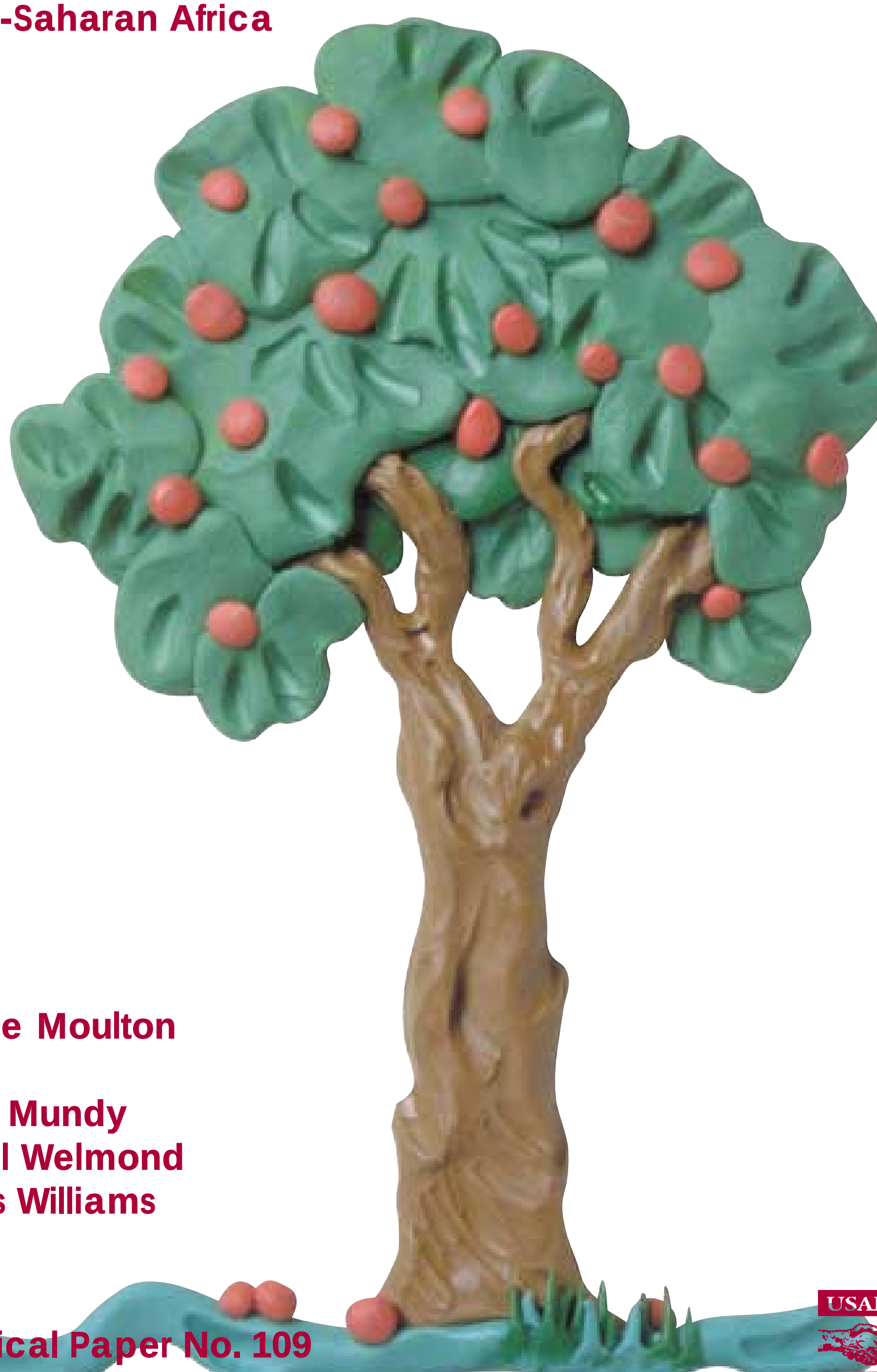
SD Publication Series
Office of Sustainable Development
Bureau for Africa

Paradigm Lost?

The Implementation of Basic Education Reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa



Jeanne Moulton
with
Karen Mundy
Michel Welmond
James Williams

Technical Paper No. 109
May 2001

USAID

Paradigm Lost?

The Implementation of Basic Education Reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa

by Jeanne Moulton
with
Karen Mundy
Michel Welmond
James Williams

May 2001

The opinions in this study are those of the authors, not necessarily of USAID.

Publication services provided by the Academy for Educational Development through the ABEL2 and IEQ2 activities.

Contract nos. HNE-5832-Q-00-4076-00, HNE-Q-00-94-00076-00, HNE-I-00-97-00029-00 DPE-5836-C-00-1042-00.

Contents

Foreword

Paradigm Lost? Helps explain the complexity of the education reform process in Africa. It forces us to critically examine the way we have been working and offers ideas for improving practice. The report raises a number of issues for our continued attention and debate:

The Education For All (EFA) movement: The authors suggest that early plans to provide EFA were unrealistic and impossible to implement. Yet these plans have inspired valuable roadmaps which have helped many countries—and supporters such as the U.S. Congress—focus on providing good quality basic education to increasing numbers of children and adults. What do these different perspectives suggest about the future direction of the EFA movement?

Capacity limitations: The report notes a key constraint to basic education reforms is the lack of African capacity. We believe that funding agency capacity also has been problematic. Over the past decade, USAID has seen how reductions-in-force, attrition, and hiring freezes can affect its own ability to guide large and complex education reform programs.

The guiding model of education reform: While the report maintains that funding agencies have pursued a "factory model" of education reform, we believe that many of us have striven to "nurture" reforms, keeping the EFA vision in mind and adjusting plans to changing circumstances. However, both governments and funding agencies must present plans, budgets, and reports to their constituencies in order to be accountable for public spending. How can we be more flexible and responsive to local needs as we meet these requirements?

Potential for misconstruing report findings: The key conclusions of this report are that implementation of large-scale reforms is more complex and expensive than anticipated; USAID and other funding agencies have relied too heavily on a top-down, linear-style of systemic approach; and to be effective, governments and funding agencies should be more "opportunistic" in their efforts to improve education systems.

These views lead us to fear lest some readers interpret this report as promoting a piecemeal, seemingly less risky and costly approach to reform. We believe this would defeat the purpose of the authors, who with us are proud to see that in countries such as Uganda, systemic reform programs are taking hold in Africa, consolidating and increasing their gains despite tremendous opposing forces. Our hope is that this study will provide lessons for starting and strengthening more and better systemic reform programs, in Africa and worldwide.

We would like to thank the authors for their verve and vision in undertaking this research, our missions for welcoming and cooperating with the authors, and John Engels for editorial assistance.

Julie Owen-Rea and Kay Freeman
Bureau for Africa
Office of Sustainable Development

Executive summary

Purposes of the study

This study focuses on the contributions of the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to the implementation of basic education reform programs in five sub-Saharan African countries. The study has three purposes. The first is to describe the implementation of major basic education reforms in Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi, and Uganda. Second, the study presents an analysis of the implementation process in each of these countries according to a common framework, which includes: the technical *content* of the reform, the *actors* who implemented it, and the economic, political, and cultural *context* that influenced the actors. The final purpose is to summarize the patterns and crosscutting themes that emerge from the case studies.

Since the study primarily targets practitioners of education reform—policymakers, program designers, managers in African education ministries, funding agencies, and other cooperating organizations—it strives to provide sufficient operational detail to support its conclusions and recommendations. While the study is rich in detail, this summary provides the busy or general reader with an overview of its key insights and conclusions.[1]

Readers should consider this report a work in progress as well as an invitation to present other perspectives and experience related to the implementation of basic education reforms in sub-Saharan Africa.

Key principles and conclusions

After considerable review of the literature on education reform implementation programs, the development of an analytical framework, and the analysis (which included a review of project and government documents and interviews with key stakeholders and policymakers) of basic education reform programs in Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi, and Uganda, we suggest that the following lessons, assumptions, and preferences be considered for incorporation into ongoing and future education reforms in sub-Saharan Africa:

[1] Those interested in receiving the entire report may contact John Engels at jengels@aed.org.

1. To be successful, *a full-scale reform requires complementary long-term agreements* between the government and funding agencies. Unless this condition is met, the financial and human resources available to implement a full-scale reform will fall short, and stakeholders will struggle over priorities during the implementation of underfunded comprehensive plans.

2. *The reform process is ongoing,* without a precise beginning or targeted end. Policies and programs should evolve as new information and ideas emerge. Between the extremes of full-scale reform planning prior to implementation on the one hand, and uncoordinated, donor-driven projects on the other, is the option of policy changes and projects that are thoughtfully integrated into the existing system, which adjusts, as needed, to incorporate them.

3. Implementation research studies of programs and projects with social goals have shown that it is *the political dimensions of a reform as well as the technical ones that make or break it.* We need to pay more attention to the dynamics of reform implementation: whether the contents of policies and programs proposed are consistent and feasible, which implementation instruments are most suitable, who the leaders and other actors are, what their attitudes toward reform plans are, and what contextual factors are influencing the content of the reform and the actors.

4. *Policies and programs should be driven by the will and preferences of schools and communities and regional and district officials, not just central planners.* Education ministries benefit from help developing their capacity to identify and support local, innovative solutions to problems. Ministries should work toward creating and managing education systems that respond to and support such local solutions. A corollary to this point is that in a context of resource scarcity and insufficient capacity, tradeoffs are inevitable, whether agreed to up front or during implementation. In both instances, decisionmaking should involve all those concerned rather than just the more powerful.

5. *There is no single solution for every context.* Competition among policies, plans, and programs will produce innovative solutions most likely to endure.

6. *There are at least five kinds of instruments that can serve to implement policies and programs:* inducements, capacity-building, mandates, transfer of authority, and dialogue. Each works well for some purposes and under some conditions.

Thus, implementers must choose the right combination of instruments for each case.

7. Because they bring the resources, funding agencies such as USAID and the World Bank, in fact, are in leadership positions. To deny this is to distort the reality of the implementation process. *The challenge for funding agencies is to recognize the right time to exert their leadership* and the right time to relinquish leadership and support, rather than dominate or quash, local improvements.

8. *Reforms implemented under conditions of political instability, insecurity, and lack of trust among stakeholders are unlikely to succeed.*

9. In the African context, *personal relationships and politics may be just as critical to implementation as are data and agreements.*

Summary of programs and policies implemented

We begin by noting some encouraging education reform successes. In Malawi and Uganda, for example, the practice of shared leadership among funding agencies, ministry officials, and stakeholders at all levels of the education system appeared to be growing stronger. Policy dialogue was used effectively in several instances, notably in Guinea and Uganda. In Ethiopia, decentralization led to better system responsiveness to regional needs. And in Uganda, a comprehensive and sustained teacher training and support system was successfully implemented.

However, despite these success stories, our review of reform programs led us to conclude that because no ministry had the resources to implement all the policies and programs delineated in its plans, each undertook only a few. The ministries in all five countries successfully reallocated more funds to primary education. Yet some countries, in particular, Benin, Guinea, and Malawi, had difficulty translating those budgetary shifts into resources actually available for their programs. All of the ministries took direct measures to redefine the beneficiaries of education: Uganda and Malawi increased access for lower-income families by eliminating school fees; and Benin, Guinea, and Malawi made significant efforts to improve girls' access. Each ministry made progress in implementing new policies and programs in other areas, but with mixed success. Most attempted to train more teachers, but only a few tried to provide additional support to teachers. Most began to revise the curriculum, though the effort has taken more time than planned. All improved the production and delivery of materials. Though all intended to improve planning and management capacity, results were mixed.

At the time of writing this report, ministries were still struggling to create well functioning education management and information systems. All did some restructuring of ministry offices, and all expanded the physical capacity of the system, though school construction programs fell behind schedule. Most made efforts to enhance community participation, at least on a small scale.

Summary of use of implementation instruments

Funding agencies and governments used five sorts of instruments to implement reforms: inducements, capacity building, mandates, transfer of authority, and dialogue. *Inducements* are payments or other economic incentives given to change a policy or practice. *Capacity building* is provision of technical assistance, training, facilities, equipment, supplies, and funding to cover the cost of specific new activities. *Mandates* are government orders to carry out a new policy. *Transfer of authority* refers to governmental restructuring or decentralizing of ministry offices. *Dialogue* is persuasion that takes place between individuals or agencies. In the context of funding agency support, dialogue is often associated with resources.

For almost every reform purpose, funding agencies relied mainly on the tools of inducement and capacity building. Their use of these instruments met with mixed success. Ministry officials used inducements successfully to implement policies of increasing children's access to school. They also used mandates, but mandates were successful only when they were enforced. On the other hand, dialogue seems to have played a critical and increasingly prominent role in implementation. As funding agencies have sought to coordinate initiatives and locate them within the framework of an overarching host government plan, the use of dialogue has increased. Dialogue was much less frequently used to develop priorities among multiple, potentially conflicting policy choices. The tool of transferring authority was not often used; it was not available to funding agencies and was unpopular with ministry officials.

Overall, it appears that ministry and funding agency officials did not give sufficient thought to their choice of tools in implementing various policies and programs. We believe that the use of a combination of tools would have led to greater success.

Summary of how actors influenced implementation

We found that many key actors in a reform—ministry staff, teachers, parents, and funding agencies—tended to express their priorities during the implementation—rather than policy formulation—phase of a reform.

Actors who championed—or resisted—the reforms

Because basic reform goals were so broadly defined, the politics of prioritizing took place during implementation, when leadership roles were defined. Those involved in implementation, whether or not they were involved in formulation, had a major role in determining what would take priority and, to some extent, how those priorities would be implemented. Those who represented funding agencies generally had an important early opportunity to set the agenda, because of the resources they controlled. But sooner or later, ministry or other government officials stepped in, either up-front or behind the scenes, and asserted their own priorities.

Ministry actors

Many ministries lacked sufficient resources to take a leadership role. A more fundamental problem was that government officials lacked needed managerial skills. In most cases, the changes taking place, both in the ministries and in the external environments, made it difficult for individuals to assume leadership roles. In many cases, reform involved ministry officials learning the skills they needed to apply the reform at the same time they were carrying out the day-to-day business of the ministry. Even more critically, ministry officials often worked in institutional climates that discouraged taking the authority to make decisions, delegating responsibility, or trusting the institution to support individual actions.[15] Ministry staff, especially at subnational levels, were often teachers who had been promoted, but had received no preservice training in their responsibilities. Many of those for whom they worked were also untrained. Therefore, good practice depended primarily on individuals with the authority to follow their good instincts.

Funding agency actors

Donor agents, in contrast, working far from headquarters, had more freedom to make decisions and delegate responsibility. They had the equipment to move around, communicate internationally, and produce and distribute documents rapidly. They also could seek resources they lacked from outside the country. Leadership, by default, often fell to them. Even while they were in leadership roles, funding agency officials chafed at their agencies' policies and practices.

USAID, for example, adopted the use of NPA with the attitude that it would develop African capacity by allowing ministries to implement policies with more autonomy; on the other hand, USAID continued to push ministries to comply with its calendar and requirements. Headquarters' need to get a project started and to demonstrate immediate results conflicted with needs on the ground to move slowly, consult local counterparts, and develop personal relationships among technical expatriate project staff and education officials.

USAID staff, contractors, and even ministry partners spent a large portion of their total effort satisfying extensive USAID reporting requirements. These constraints on funding agents negatively affected their government partners. Funding agency practice appeared incoherent to ministry officials. Agencies jockeyed with each other for prominence, and there was little consistency among funding agency agendas and requirements.

Local-level actors

Local level actors, especially teachers, are, in the long run, critical to implementing reform policies and programs. Only some reform measures, however, have reached schools and given teachers more resources. In some instances, teachers have openly resisted reforms through, for example, teachers' unions that have helped them keep at bay policies they oppose. School directors were often asked to enforce policies. Some schools implemented the policies, but many either misunderstood or chose not to implement them.

Summary of how the economic, political, and ideological contexts influenced implementation

The actors and the reforms did not, of course, work in a vacuum. The formulation and implementation of policies and programs were influenced by the political, economic, and ideological contexts. Usually, however, the contexts were in flux. This necessitated making implementation decisions that had not been contemplated in the plans. At times, the plans themselves reflected a misreading of the political or economic environment, which meant that those implementing the plans had to deviate significantly.

Conclusions: What a new reform paradigm might look like

While the case studies do point to many achievements, we conclude, nevertheless, that policymakers may have been relying too heavily on a single model to plan and implement basic education reforms. The systematic implementation of a reform based on a technical, comprehensive plan for giving every child a high-quality basic education does not accurately describe what has taken place in the five case-study countries. Many policies and programs have been successfully implemented, but for the most part in a piecemeal manner, not as comprehensive, coordinated reforms based on technically sound plans developed by the ministry and supported by funding agencies.

A major impediment to the implementation of the reform plans was the lack of adequate resources. Governments and funding agencies established timeframes that were too short and made assumptions about economic growth that were too optimistic. In addition, neither government nor funding agencies took into full account the weak capacity of ministries to implement such ambitious plans. But even if the time, funds, and other resources had been adequate, it is still unlikely the reforms would have been implemented as planned, because the process of implementing social and economic programs is not linear—there is more to the process than a systematic execution of a plan. Nevertheless, in the five case studies, basic education reforms were conceived as plans to be executed as designed, and planners treated reform formulation and reform implementation as separate events.

Indeed, in each of these countries, funding agencies said they were supporting a plan for reform already formulated by government. But, in fact, actual policy formulation came at moments of opportunity during the implementation of that plan. The first such moments were when funding agencies offered budgetary support conditional upon governments' adoption of policies and programs that funding agencies favored, whether or not they matched governments' priorities.

Later on in the implementation phase, major policies were reformulated when a president found it politically prudent to declare free primary education, or when a minister sensed the need to immediately give teachers a bonus instead of developing an inservice training system. Funding agencies introduced other policies and programs during the implementation phase, such as rerouting channels of authority to develop a new teacher support system, or introducing community schools as a means of making education more accessible to girls.

We borrow a metaphor from Larry Cuban to describe the assumptions underlying the reforms in the case-study countries.[2] The reformers were attempting, to some extent, to build *factories*, using blueprints, rather than *farms*, using seeds, fertilizer, soil, and weather. They saw their challenge as building an efficient factory—to "get the right policies." Once reform policies were in place, they hoped the system would function more or less mechanically. What the case studies have shown, however, is that whether the various activities thrived or failed depended on how well "farmers" nurtured each reform during the implementation phase.

What are the implications of this conclusion? We propose a choice between two directions. One is to continue to search for even more comprehensive plans, and to redouble efforts to get government and funding agencies to work together in lockstep. This seems to be the current trend. The other direction is to search for alternatives that would allow for more diversified attempts to reach more limited objectives.

These alternatives might be less centralized and more organic, and so rely less on design at the outset. They would allow more room for politics and negotiation after approval of the initial framework. Such a strategy might foster more choice-driven, learning-governed policies and programs. They might be less rational, from a Western perspective, providing more space for African creativity and innovation and for the development of relationships between those with different kinds of expertise—central and theoretical and local and grounded.

One alternative, for example, might be called the *diffusion-of-innovation model,* which describes how a single policy, program, or practice becomes diffused throughout a system or among many systems.[3] The emphasis would not be on preparing a plan in which all parts fit together but on supporting small-scale successes. This means that promising innovations must be protected, supported, and publicized. The ministry and funding agencies must help them survive in the broader education system, reforming that system as needed to accommodate sound innovations.

The diffusion-of-innovation model comes from the research world, introduced in the 1970s. A similar model, but one that has roots in political philosophy, is that of a "free market of reforms." Some will object that such an approach will take us back to

[2] *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890–1990* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

[3] Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* fourth ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995).

the era of "stove-pipe" projects, when most changes to the education system were introduced piecemeal through funding agency projects in response to particular problems. Such projects were usually not sustainable without funding agency support and evaporated when funding agencies disappeared. However, these case studies have revealed that many of the programs successfully implemented in the past decade were also driven by funding agencies. What makes some of them succeed as reform activities is their integration into the broader basic education system, and its political and economic context.

The diffusion-of-innovation model and the free-market approach work together nicely with systemic reform. Systemic reform does not necessarily have to be comprehensive and extensively programmed at the outset. As some characterized it in Ethiopia, *reform is a process of policy development*. The essence of systemic reform is to be constantly aware of how the components of the system (content, actors, and context) affect each other and work together (or not), and to use this insight to make adjustments conducive to reaching a shared goal.

Synthesis of the five case studies

Introduction and background

Context of the study

Political context
Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have proclaimed it their goal to provide free universal primary schooling to all children and, with the help of foreign assistance, have been trying to implement reforms intended to help them reach that goal. The intensity of reforms in some countries has heightened since the major international funding agencies convened the 1990 *Education for All* meeting in Jomtien, Thailand. There, ministries of education, funding agencies, and other stakeholders agreed to work together to implement plans for reaching that goal.

Research context
Policy implementation research has long been the concern of political science, economics, and management science in the United States and other industrialized countries. More recently, education researchers have surveyed schools to determine the extent to which large scale federal programs such as school desegregation and compensatory education have been implemented. A first wave of implementation studies revealed considerable fallout between policy and practice. A second wave of research focused more on the *process* of implementation, i.e., what played a role in successful implementation of not only large scale federal initiatives but also smaller innovations to improve instruction. The third wave, still underway, is concerned with how to implement the policies and programs associated with effective schools.[4]

Not surprisingly, research on implementation of education policies and reform in developing countries is far behind that in industrialized countries. This relative lack of research has resulted in a lateness in recognizing some of the inherent

[4] For an historical overview of education policy implementation research in the United States, see Allan R. Odden, "The Evolution of Policy Implementation" in Allan R. Odden, ed., *Education Policy Implementation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). For a summary review of the research on effective schools and the pertinence of that literature to developing countries, see Ward Heneveld and Helen Craig, *Schools Count.* World Bank Technical Paper No. 303 (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1996).

contradictions in the model employed in some reform programs. For example, what happens when resources fall short of what it will take to reach the objective of education for all? What are the assumptions and intentions of the various stakeholders—politicians, technical staff, funding agencies, teachers, parents, and others? What choices are made when assumptions clash?

This study presents a conceptual framework for answering these questions in the context of basic education in sub-Saharan Africa. The study is among the first to bring evidence from several cases to examine a model of education reform that calls for a "systemic" reform of education based on a technical, comprehensive plan that unfolds over a timeframe of about ten years.

What need the research fills

Research in the late 1980s and early 1990s on reforming basic education focused on determining what inputs were critical to improving instruction. Studies in a number of countries—some in Africa—concluded that textbooks were the most cost-effective investment.[5] Education planners soon recognized, however, that education reform entailed more than the purchase of textbooks, and indeed, depended heavily on education ministries' adoption of new policies that would not only increase access and improve instruction but also make the system more efficient. Thus, research attention turned to policy formulation. In the course of designing and implementing basic education programs, the staff in the Office of Sustainable Development in USAID's Africa Bureau (AFR/SD) conducted extensive studies on the policy formulation process, which resulted in two publications.[6] At the other end of the reform process, USAID mission staff have made considerable effort to measure the effect of their education support programs—the Results Review and Resource Requests (R4). For several years, missions have received assistance from AFR/SD to refine methods of measuring results, which often entail looking at indicators of interim progress, including progress in policy implementation.

Neither studies of policy formulation nor the results of assistance programs, however, provide a framework for analyzing the implementation process. Through its support to missions, however, AFR/SD has considerable experience working with

[5] See, for example, Bruce Fuller (1991) "What Factors Raise Achievement in the Third World?" *Review of Educational Research* 64 (1): 119-57.
[6] David R. Evans, ed. *Education Policy Formation in Africa: A Comparative Study of Five Countries,* ARTS Technical Paper No.12 (Washington, DC: USAID, 1994); Donors to African Education, *The Process of Education Policy Formation in Africa.* (Paris: Unesco, 1996).

ministries to implement reform programs and has been able to convey important lessons learned.[7] In particular, the Africa Bureau has learned about using conditional budgetary support, or non-project assistance (NPA), as an instrument to implement policy.[8] Likewise, The World Bank has periodically reviewed the implementation of its programs, including education programs, in search of guidance for the future.[9]

But this study is among the first to capture within a conceptual framework some of the lessons on the implementation of reforms as ministry—not donor—programs. Presenting information in this way helps identify patterns and dynamics and can guide the development or modification of implementation activities.

Methodology

The research had three phases. The first phase was to review the literature on implementation research, particularly that which covers education programs and programs in developing countries. From this literature, we created a conceptual framework, including a protocol for data collection.

The second phase was to conduct the case studies. For each case study, we consulted documentation and knowledgeable individuals in the United States through USAID and other agencies. Next we visited each country (except Malawi, where considerable data and analysis were already available) and conducted interviews to fill in gaps on perspectives not addressed in the literature. Although they visited many schools and talked with teachers and head teachers, their purpose was simply to get a sense of what teachers knew about the reform and how they felt about it. Each researcher conducted one or two case studies. Michel Welmond studied Benin and Guinea; James Williams studied Ethiopia; Karen Mundy studied Malawi; and Jeanne Moulton studied Uganda. Although all used the same detailed protocol for the investigations, each pursued slightly different avenues, depending on what the most interesting stories seemed to be and who the available informants were. The third phase was to compare the case studies and ferret out meaningful points of comparison, common features and dynamics, and notable differences in how reforms

[7] Joseph DeStefano, Ash Hartwell, and Karen Tietjen, *Basic Education in Africa: USAID's Approach to Sustainable Reform in the 1990s,* SD Publication Series Technical Paper No. 14 (Washington, DC: USAID, 1995).

[8] Joseph DeStefano and Karen Tietjen, *Budgetary Impact of Non-Project Assistance in the Education Sector: A Review of Benin, Ghana, Guinea, and Malawi,* SD Publication Series Technical Paper No. 16 (Washington, DC: USAID, 1996).

[9] The World Bank monitors implementation in terms of the portion of loan funds that the government has committed and disbursed.

have been implemented. To do this, we looked at the information in terms of the conceptual model; they also invited an experienced education economist to lend an outside perspective to the data.

Comparability of the countries

The five case studies are comparable on many dimensions, but there are important differences. The main point of comparability is that each country began a significant basic education reform effort around 1990, and USAID initiated a large-scale program to support that effort. At about the same time, each country began the transition to a more democratic form of government. The countries also have in common high poverty levels, severely limited public budgets, low levels of adult literacy, and low primary-school enrollment rates. The table below compares the countries on several key development indicators.

	Benin	**Ethiopia**	**Guinea**	**Malawi**	**Uganda**
Democratic elections held	1990	1995	1984	1994	1996
Education reform documents in place	1993	1994	1989	1984	1992
Start of USAID reform support	1991	1994	1990	1991	1992
Start of World Bank reform support	1993	1993	1990	1987	1993
Population (millions)[3]	5	54.8	6.1	9.1	17.5
GDP/capita in US$ (1990)[2]	280	130	440	190	340
Adult literacy rate (1990)[1]	73.6	76.2	–	48.2	43.9
% of government budget for ed.[1]	37	–	29	13.5	22.5
% of education budget for primary ed.[1]	53	–	35	48.1	16.2
Gross primary enrollment rate (1990)[1]	64.7	–	30.2	69.6	65

Sources: (1) USAID (1993), *Overview of A.I.D. Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa.* ARTS Technical Paper No. 1. Washington, DC. Budget figures are for either 1991, 1992, or 1993. (2) World Bank; (3) USAID (1995), *Overview of USAID Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa II,* SD Publication Series Technical Paper No. 13. Washington, DC.

Limitations of the study

This study has important limitations. First, the reforms in the five countries have continued beyond the time this report was written, and some of the problems noted in this report are being addressed. Second, the study is limited mainly to the activities of the World Bank and USAID. In most cases, these agencies contributed the most funding to the reforms and had at least as much influence on their direction as other donors. Third, while the study looks at the reforms from a broad perspective that centers on the education ministry, the case studies are heavily weighted toward the perspective of USAID programs.

The analytical framework

Social policies are not usually implemented in a linear fashion. To understand what affects implementation, it helps to view it both from a top-down perspective, starting with the policy goals and tracing them through their administration to their effect on intended beneficiaries, *and* from a bottom-up perspective, starting with the conditions and perceptions of beneficiaries and tracing them back through the administration and formulation of policies.

We intended our analytical framework to help us study the implementation of a basic education reform, which we define as a coherent set of policies and strategies designed to effect major changes in the education system. These policies and strategies may be implemented through one or more programs. The reforms analyzed here had considerable support from foreign funding agencies, and the representatives of these agencies play a role in implementation, a key factor in the analysis.

The analytic framework has three aspects: the content of the reform measures (or the technical aspect), the actors in implementation (or the political aspect), and the political, social, and economic contexts that impinge on implementation.

The content

How have the content of reform goals and policies and the choice of implementation strategies affected implementation? How clearly stated are the goals and policies? How realistic were they? What instruments were used to implement them? How appropriate were these instruments?

The actors

Who are the key actors throughout the system? What has influenced the behavior of those actors? How have they interacted over key decisions? How have those decisions affected implementation?

The context

How have broader political, social, and economic events and conditions affected implementation? How have changes in the legitimacy or stability of the government been a factor? What changes in the economy have played a role? What social or cultural dynamics have interfered?

Findings

Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi, and Uganda each have a unique story to tell; however, there are strikingly similar patterns and crosscutting themes across the countries. The reform plans adopted by each country comprised comprehensive sets of goals aimed ultimately at providing a high quality basic education to every child. The ministries of education were to take the lead in implementation, and funding agencies were to provide support. This model grew in part out of funding agencies' recognition that earlier modes of assistance through which each funding agency planned and implemented its own projects—largely outside of government operations—did not lead to sustainable improvements in the education system. Funding agencies, therefore, now did the opposite, contributing directly to the treasury on condition that government adopt and implement new comprehensive policies in support of basic education.

This model, however, does not accurately describe *how* the reforms took place. Because priorities were not always clearly stated in reform plans, and because resources were inadequate for achieving the goals, the actual content or agenda of the reforms emerged or was modified during their implementation, and policies and programs were implemented piecemeal. Some pieces were implemented successfully, others less so. Successful implementation of any one piece depended partly on whether the implementation instruments were appropriate and whether the piece converged or conflicted with others. Decisions about which policies and programs to implement and which to modify or postpone were determined primarily by the preferences of key actors. Often, it was the funding agencies that set initial priorities; government officials stepped in later to assert their own priorities. Finally, the political and economic context of the reform and the ideological climate in which ministries and funding agencies worked affected implementation.

How the content influenced implementation

This section looks at the broad *content* of reforms common to the five countries to see how it influenced implementation. We look first at key goals, policies, and programs that comprise the content—redefining beneficiaries, financing reform policies, improving planning and management, restructuring ministry offices, expanding physical capacity, training and supporting teachers, and increasing community participation—and then look at the effectiveness of the instruments used to implement policies and programs.

Reform plans had very broad goals

Each ministry of education published one or more official statements of its reform goals. In each document, the goals were broadly stated and often all encompassing. The first guiding assumption of these documents was that the reform be comprehensive and result in a complete transformation of the primary education system. Ideally, the reforms would ensure that all children would attend and complete the primary level where they would acquire the basic skills they needed to lead healthy and productive lives and, if they desired, to qualify for secondary school. For this to happen, the government would build enough schools to make classrooms accessible to all children, every family would be able to afford the cost of school, and every school would have enough furniture, trained teachers, and instructional materials to impart the curriculum. Special attention would be given to getting disadvantaged children, particularly girls and rural children, through school. And, as the main strategy for reaching these goals, the government would put more funding into education as a whole, more into primary education, and the system would operate more efficiently in retaining and promoting children through each grade.

…based on two underlying beliefs

The funding agencies first developed the argument that reforms should be comprehensive, in part because of the perception that isolated donor projects had not resulted in sustainable systemic improvements in primary education. The World Bank's 1988 policy paper, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa,* recommended that governments include in an education reform package measures of adjustment (diversification of financing, containment of unit costs); revitalization of infrastructure (textbooks and learning materials, academic standards, physical plant and equipment); and expansion (universal primary education). These recommendations were in line with those the lending institutions were making in their sectoral and structural adjustment programs. USAID's 1995 paper, *Basic Education in Africa: USAID's Approach to Sustainable Reform in the 1990s*, also urged governments to adopt a broad approach that would increase access to and participation in basic education; equity; quality of schooling; and managerial, internal, and external efficiency. USAID recommended assistance programs that were systemic and sustainable. The agency's intent was to help build education ministries' capacity to manage a well functioning system once funding agencies terminated their assistance. In the five countries of this study, official ministry documents that declared reform policies and programs reflected the belief that reforms could be planned at a high level of the ministry, that they should be comprehensive, and that they could be implemented. This was the case in Ethiopia and Uganda, where the ministries developed their own reform goals, policies, and programs before funding agencies became involved, as well as in Benin, Guinea, and Malawi, where funding agencies were more involved in initial policy formulations.

A second belief of reform planners was that a rational reform package could be fashioned that would be acceptable to all stakeholders. Because the reform goals were so broadly outlined and all-encompassing, this seemed reasonable. Who, after all, opposes universal access and improved quality? But a closer scrutiny of government and funding agency plans for reform in any country reveals that *reform* meant different things to different people. For some, the main aim was universal enrollment and completion of primary school. For others, reform meant altering the purpose of schooling from an academic and didactic approach to an approach that helps children learn from hands-on experience. Some emphasized that a reform should reorient the purpose of primary school from educating an elite group of civil servants to imparting basic skills to a broader population. Some gave priority to the need for a more equitable distribution of resources among boys and girls and rural and urban schools, with a special effort to reach economically and socially disadvantaged children. Some saw the key to reform as a reallocation of resources from other public and private sectors to primary schooling. Some viewed reform as a rehabilitation of inputs such as teachers, schools, and books. From another perspective, reform of the primary system first required a reorganization of the ministry and the education sector, often including decentralization of authority and financing. Some saw the basis for reform as a restructuring of levels of schooling, extending or otherwise rearranging the number of years at primary, middle, and senior levels. Others focused on the need for community involvement, empowerment, and mobilization. Many believed a reform should accomplish all these changes.

Goals were not always clearly prioritized

Thus, priorities differed widely, even when a document contained all these goals within it. Broadly speaking, these perspectives were not inconsistent, and each had its place in the reform. Yet, the goals were not clearly prioritized, particularly in cases where more than one document defined the reform, or when multiple documents (sometimes authored separately by the government and the funding agencies) defined the reform. In each case, the documents emphasized differing perspectives. Because of these unclear priorities, strategies and instruments for implementing policies and programs tended to be inconsistent, as suggested by the following illustrations from the case studies.

The case of Ethiopia: Ethiopia's reform plan was perhaps the most consistent of the five, because the ministry wrote the plan and did not permit funding agencies to alter its course. Ethiopia's 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP) envisioned a highly accessible, high quality, highly diversified, and highly equitable system influenced by pedagogical theory. The policy was comprehensive, likely having captured most of what needed attention in the education system. It considered all levels of education, both formal and nonformal. The effect is inspirational, and as a result has given impetus to a variety of innovations. However, the document is perhaps too comprehensive: in addition to five general objectives and fifteen specific objectives, the ETP lists sixty-seven additional specific objectives under nine categories. The wide range of objectives illustrates the ambitiousness of the policy: curriculum; educational structure; educational measurement and examination; teachers; languages and education; the linkage of education, training, research, and development; educational support inputs; educational organization and management; and educational finance. As the objectives were not prioritized, it was difficult to know where to begin. As costs had not been estimated, it was difficult to prepare a budget or to examine costs against priorities. In sum, the ETP lacked a strategic dimension.

Although a series of subsequent documents developed strategies and planned implementation of the ETP, they were less authoritative during its implementation. Instead, funding agencies developed their own programs with specific objectives, policies, and activities. USAID's program, for example, designed in the same timeframe as the ETP, comprised a set of five broad objectives, each with sub-objectives. Although the ministry and USAID's broad range of objectives did not conflict, the two sometimes envisioned strategies and programs that were not acceptable to both parties. For example, they both agreed on the ministry's need to increase capacity, which both understood as resources and training. However, USAID wanted the ministry to change the way it managed the system so as to be able to better utilize resources, while the Ethiopians wanted the emphasis on gaining control of the system after years of civil turmoil and neglect. Indeed, many Ethiopians characterized the ETP as more a process of policy development than as a reform per se.

The case of Uganda: Uganda, like Ethiopia, first laid out its reform plans in a White Paper that the ministry developed without funding agency influence. The paper called for a quadrupling of the education budget in the second year of the reform, but did not specify the sources of new funding. When the government turned to funding agencies for support, it opened the doors to adopting additional reform goals and strategies. What came to be known in Uganda as "the reform" became a composite of goals stated in the White Paper and three government agreements with funding agencies (one with USAID, one with the IMF/World Bank, and another with the World Bank). The White Paper, approved by the president's cabinet in 1992, listed over two hundred recommendations for reforming all levels of education. With token reference to the White Paper and based on mutual consultation, the World Bank and USAID defined their own programs, which also covered a broad range of goals. Underlying the White Paper was the assumption that free universal primary education, or UPE, was the main goal. Donor documents, in contrast, were geared toward improving the *quality* of existing schools and reforming the administrative procedures of the ministry and its vast network of teacher training colleges.

The case of Malawi: Unlike the other countries studied, Malawi's reform did not have a clear embarkation point and was not driven by a single plan or set of plans. Written in collaboration with World Bank officials, Malawi's Second National Educational Plan (1985–1995) contained a wide range of goals, including a revision of the instructional program, increased access, improved quality, equity, and efficiency, and a strengthened ministerial capacity to manage the education sector. The plan set forth the government's general goals for the nation's educational development, including fostering loyalty to the republic, creating more culturally relevant curricula, using existing facilities and resources more efficiently, and distributing facilities and resources more equitably. It set targets for increasing gross primary enrollment ratios from 43 to 85 percent. It promised to enhance school quality and efficiency by reducing the incidence of repetition. And it determined to increase annual enrollments in primary teacher training colleges from two thousand to four thousand and introduce a new three-year primary teacher education program. In its 1987 agreement with the World Bank for an education sector credit, the government promised to support a structural reform of the ministry of education to enhance its management, planning, and evaluation capacities and to decentralize some of its activities. It also agreed to limit the number of repeaters in each standard and set targets for the overall reduction of repetition. A World Bank sector credit in 1990 provided additional resources for school construction and teacher training. It required the government to introduce a school registration system to tackle the problem of repetition, provide inducements for parents to enroll children in school, and institute a staged abolishment of primary school fees. Both credit agreements set targets (11 and 15.5 percent of the government budget respectively) for education sector spending.

The case of Benin: The reform in Benin resulted from a complex interaction among four sets of documents that were produced for different purposes. The first was a series of technical reports and recommendations produced through UNESCO's education sector study undertaken between 1989 and 1991. The second was the assessment and recommendations issued by the *Etats Généraux de l'Education* in September 1990. While these papers echoed many of UNESCO's recommendations, the conference report also stated the concerns of other stakeholders in the sector. The third set of documents included the grant agreement signed in late 1991 by the government and USAID and the action plans produced to fulfill the terms of the USAID agreement in 1992. This third set served as the principal vehicle for operationalizing the reform effort. And the fourth set contained the *Statement of Education Policy* the government wrote in 1993 to meet World Bank conditionality for a loan agreement.[10]

Differences in priorities among these documents were still unresolved prior to beginning implementation of the action plans. While USAID—based on results of the UNESCO studies—favored long-term programs that would reform the instructional, managerial, and administrative systems of primary education, the ministry wanted programs that would demonstrate to teachers and parents immediate and highly visible improvements. Intellectuals active in the education sector preferred to rebuild the elitist education system of twenty years earlier when the country's Marxist regime was ruling. Finally, funding agency programs did not converge.

The case of Guinea: Among the five cases, Guinea's reform was developed most collaboratively, with intense communication among the government including the ministry of education, the World Bank, USAID, and the French Cooperation agency. Guinea's reform was called the PASE *(Programme d'Adjustement Sectoriel Educatif)*. In 1988, the ministry created the PASE Interministerial Preparatory Committee (COPASE), which was responsible for drafting a new education policy declaration and coordinating all preliminary activities. Over the next twenty months,

[10] A fifth set of documents is the principal reports presented during the Round Table held in May 1997. While this contains the most comprehensive set of goals and programs to date, synthesizing many of the previous documents, it followed a five-year lag in official statements and thus postdated many actual reform activities.

the COPASE organized meetings with various education stakeholders. In September 1989, the government adopted a policy declaration that delineated the objectives for the sector until the year 2000. Guinea's reform declaration focused on bolstering revenues to primary education, insisting in particular that more money go to instructional materials and that private schooling be promoted. It called for increasing access by raising enrollment rates to 53 percent by the year 2000. This objective would be achieved by building at least two hundred (rising to eight hundred) classrooms a year, decreasing the dropout rate, reducing repetition, and raising enrollments in rural areas. A number of goals were aimed at improving instruction; these included revising the curriculum, reducing the student-teacher ratio, improving the working and living conditions of teachers, providing preservice training, introducing multigrade and double-shift teaching, retraining teachers, and reinforcing inspection capacity. The reform would increase the capacity of teacher training colleges, raise the qualification levels of candidates of teacher training colleges, and modify the teacher-training curriculum. Finally, the reform was to improve the management of the education system by developing the ministry's capacity for coordination and strategic management, creating an effective management information system, reinforcing planning capacity at the regional levels, reorganizing the ministry's structure and administrative procedures, and computerizing personnel and financial management.

The comprehensive plans called for ambitious commitments of resources
In addition to the beliefs that reforms should be comprehensive and acceptable to all stakeholders, another common assumption was that funding agencies' increased budgetary support, together with what the governments could afford, would be adequate. In its 1988 policy framework, the World Bank stated that

> …the tradeoff between improved quality and further expansion of primary education seems stark. The possibility of increasing efficiency in education, however, offers policy makers some hope of achieving gains on both fronts simultaneously, even when budgets are tight. If by increasing the annual flow of certain crucial inputs (such as instructional materials), pupils can be brought up to the same level of competence as before in fewer years than before (or to a much higher level of competence in the same number of years), savings can be made on the use of other, much more costly factors, notably capital costs and teachers salaries.

In its approach to supporting basic education in these countries, USAID argued that the structural adjustments of macroeconomic policy and government institutional capacity had stabilized the economies, and that economic recovery and political stability were enabling governments to effectively rehabilitate their education systems. While economic reform undoubtedly provided a more favorable base for education funding, the full costs were often not calculated. Although the World Bank made detailed financial analyses of its reform plans, those analyses included overly optimistic projections about rising government revenues and growing government efficiency.

The *Education for All* conference had promoted a ten-year time frame for a reform.[3] With a financial boost in capital investments and some changes in budgetary structure and management, Education for All advocates thought funding would be adequate to support the event. In contrast to the ten-year time frame promoted at Jomtien, one careful analysis of what it would cost to support sustainable reforms in Africa concluded that twenty years might have been a more reasonable timeframe for achieving free universal primary education in Africa. This calculation was based largely on technical considerations, and assumed modest economic growth and a tightly structured, efficiently implemented plan.[11] It did not account, however, for political pressures that, as this analysis shows, often caused officials to veer from their plans.

With a financial boost in capital investments and some changes in budgetary structure and management, Education for All advocates thought funding would be adequate to support the event. However, in the aggregate, the governments of these five countries increased spending on primary education only modestly over the period of funding agency's programs. Neither did contributions of funding agencies grow as anticipated at Jomtien.

Ministries and funding agencies made agreements but overlooked tradeoffs
In their attempt to accommodate a broad range of visions and goals, ministries and funding agencies were forced to overlook some of the inevitable tradeoffs between getting more children into school (universal access), setting standards to help children get a reasonably good education (quality), reaching out to excluded groups of children (equity), and improving the management and administration of the

[11] Christopher Colcough with Keith Lewin, *Educating All the Children: Strategies for Primary Schooling in the South* (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, 1993).

system (capacity building). Instead of agreeing up front on priorities, each group of stakeholders tacitly compromised so that it could implement its program. Those who believed that improving quality should take first priority went along with efforts to improve access on the grounds that improving access would also improve equity. Those who believed it was more important that all children have access to school than that the quality of all schools be standardized supported quality goals, because those goals, which were at the top of most funding agency agendas, brought in the foreign resources.

Some of these tradeoffs became clear in Malawi and Uganda, when each government announced universal free primary education policies.[12] Enrollments quickly doubled in both countries, schools were overflowing, and the ministries could not pay enough teachers to maintain even minimally acceptable pupil-teacher ratios. Moreover, with population growth rates of 3.2 percent in Uganda and 2.8 percent in Malawi, the ministry would have to finance a significant school construction program and annual increase in teacher salaries for an indefinite period.

In sum, the reforms assumed that increased and more efficient use of resources would allow education ministries to achieve and sustain systems of universal free primary education with at least minimum standards of quality. Efficiency would result from more rational planning and budgeting by the ministries of finance and education and increased internal efficiency of the school system. But in fact, none of the five governments found this goal affordable. And in general, reform plans did not set clear priorities for programs, planning and budgeting improved more slowly than expected, and ministries could not implement the comprehensive reform programs as they had envisioned.

Specific policies and programs implemented through the reforms

Since priorities among policies and programs were not clearly established, they were determined de facto during implementation. Yet in the end, the policies and programs that constituted the reform in each of the five countries were strikingly similar. There was even some consistency among the countries as to which policies and programs were implemented successfully and which were not. Yet there were also clear differences. An analysis across countries of the implementation of various measures—looking at each in terms of the policy or program goal, the instrument or

[12] Though Uganda's UPE policy restricted tuition waivers to four children per family, the limitation was generally disregarded and only loosely enforced.

strategy selected for implementation, and the results—reveals what the priorities were in each country and what success ministries and funding agencies had in implementing them.

Increasing access for poor children

All five reforms aimed at making education more accessible to three categories of children: those whose families could not pay school fees, those from rural areas, and girls. Perhaps the most dramatic and consequential reform policies were those that redefined the beneficiaries of education from those children whose families could afford relatively substantial school fees to those who chose to send their children to school when they did not have to pay anything. In both Uganda and Malawi, the new democratically elected presidents abruptly declared the abolition of school fees, thus defying ministry plans to eliminate school fees more gradually.

The case of Uganda: In Uganda, the policy was successfully implemented insofar as it was strictly enforced. Within school communities, officials of the president's political party enforced the policy, despite protests from school directors and teachers who suddenly faced a doubling of enrollments without comparable increases in resources. Donor agencies also argued that the abrupt policy change had a negative effect on school policy. But the president overruled the ministry, short-circuiting bureaucratic channels and instituting a direct chain of command to ensure that district offices and schools complied with the mandate and its particulars. These were announced by the president's deputy within the ministry through a flurry of circulars. Except for refraining to collect fees from parents, however, most school directors ignored the circulars and waited for the ministry to sort out the problems that the surge in enrollment caused.

The case of Malawi: Malawi's policy to eliminate school fees was also mandated by a newly elected president. The election of a democratic, multiparty government in 1994 brought with it an immediate declaration of universal, free primary education. As in Uganda, Malawians greeted this declaration enthusiastically, as evidenced by the 170 percent increase in enrollments in the 1994/95 school year. In contrast to Uganda, however, funding agencies also responded enthusiastically, rapidly increasing their support for the expansion of basic education and committing over $130 million to primary education during the next three years. By 1996, however, funding agencies began to question the broader direction and sustainability of the country's education policies. Free primary education upset the more incremental goals of improved quality and efficiency favored by externally led reform agendas.

Funding agencies' questions about the long term sustainability of the government's policies were reflected in an ongoing controversy over a draft *Policy and Investment Framework for Education,* prepared by the ministry of education.

Increasing access for rural children

By virtue of aiming for universal primary education, the reform plans of each of the five countries implied that children living in remote rural areas (where poverty rates are higher) would have access to basic education. None of the plans, however, outlined specific strategies for reaching these children. Bilateral funding agencies often worked toward this goal by targeting resources to rural areas. In Uganda, for example, USAID initiated its Teacher Development and Management System in two rural areas. In Ethiopia, the World Bank required that the building of new schools in its Education VII program be in rural areas that were underserved (though the ministry did not enforce this requirement). Guinea had as a principal policy of its reform increased enrollment in rural areas, which it implemented through its school construction program.

Increasing access for girls

A third policy that redefined the beneficiaries of basic education aimed to increase the number of girls who enter and complete primary school. At first, in most countries, girls' education was high on funding agency, if not ministry, agendas. But most countries eventually accepted these objectives as their own. Malawi, Guinea, Benin and, to a lesser extent, Uganda and Ethiopia successfully implemented policies to improve girls' access to and retention in school.

The case of Malawi: Getting more girls through school became a major part of Malawi's reform in 1991, when USAID designed its assistance program with the improvement of basic education for girls as its primary goal. USAID used three instruments to support a girls' access policy: the development of a gender-appropriate curriculum, a national social mobilization campaign encouraging girls' primary education, and a program of fee waivers for nonrepeating girls in standards 2–8. USAID also conditioned general budgetary support on gender-related policies, such as reversal of a policy that forbade pregnant girls from returning to school.

Each of these strategies was implemented successfully. Financed by USAID, the Gender Unit at the Malawi Institute for Education thrived under the unique leadership of a dynamic local specialist in gender curriculum. The unit became involved not only in curriculum reform but also the creation of a task force on girls' education within the ministry of education and a program of gender sensitivity training for ministry staff, teacher trainers, and inspectors. A social mobilization campaign, funded and directed by USAID, raised popular sensitivity to girls' education and stimulated community efforts to encourage girls' persistence.

Most importantly, the government and the ministry of education quickly adopted the 1992 primary fee-waiver program as their own. Initially, the program was met with skepticism within the ministry, not only because it neglected boys, but because it overlapped a World Bank-sponsored policy that would introduce fee waivers in standards 1–3 over the following three years and another UNDP-sponsored fee waiver program.[13] The program provided not only budgetary support, but also a new source of legitimacy for a political regime whose foundations were rapidly deteriorating.

Fee waivers benefited approximately five hundred thousand girls each year and girls' repetition rates declined. Yet, the real jump in girls' enrollment occurred after the introduction of universal free primary education in 1994/95. In 1995/96, USAID's GABLE II activity introduced secondary school girls' scholarships to replace the primary fee waiver. This policy proved difficult to implement, and its long-term impact was to pressure the government to expand the secondary system.

The case of Guinea: In Guinea, the initial PASE reforms did not focus on girls' education. Nevertheless, both USAID and the World Bank became increasingly committed to policies that would get more girls into school. This cause also found a strong advocate in Guinea's education minister, who created an Equity Committee comprising senior education officials and influential Guinean women. With the full support of this powerful minister, the committee successfully launched a mass media campaign to encourage girls to attend school and created a network of paid local trainers to promote girls' education to villagers. The minister and the Equity Committee also took on as a *cause célèbre* a policy change to allow pregnant girls to attend school. Their lobbying effort succeeded and the policy was adopted.

The case of Uganda: In Uganda, the government itself introduced instruments to raise girls' enrollment. The ministry's 1992 White Paper proposed incentives to schools and the encouragement of more female teachers and administrators. The president's

[13] Joyce M. Wolf, *An Analysis of USAID Programs to Improve Equity in Malawi and Ghana's Education Systems* (Washington, DC: USAID, 1995).

1996 mandate of universal free primary education specified that each family must give priority to girls (the declaration actually limited the number of children who could enter school free to four, at least half of whom had to be girls). Most schools though, appear not to have enforced the details of this policy, instead opening the doors to all who registered. USAID supported the strategy of providing incentives to schools by attaching a condition to its budgetary support that the ministry devise and implement an incentive program. The government did little to implement such a program, however, until 1994, when it had to have something in place to receive the next tranche of USAID's budgetary support. Within the next two years, USAID increased its technical assistance to the program, which after several rounds of adjustments began to operate on a small scale in selected districts around the country. Altogether, neither the incentives program nor the president's mandate led to a proportional increase in girls' enrollment, which was already high relative to other sub-Saharan African countries.

The case of Ethiopia: Gender was an important issue in Ethiopia. With strong leadership from the ministry, gender issues were addressed in several ways. The ministry established a formal unit to work on gender and education, and offices at each level of the system disaggregated statistics by gender. Gender sensitivity was made a consideration in curriculum development, with attention to the images of women and their portrayal in instructional materials. Negotiations between USAID and the government resulted in a 30 percent admission quota for women at the teacher training institutes. USAID put money into improving the physical facilities of teacher training institutes in its focus regions: women's toilets, showers, and dormitories. It also made psychosocial support available for female students: tutorial programs (also open to men); gender sensitization efforts with both male and female teachers and students; attempts to hire female instructors and staff at teacher training institutes; and active outreach and mentoring efforts for women. These efforts appear to have paid off. Female enrollment at the colleges in one region rose from 35 to 40 percent between 1994/95 and 1998/99 and showed a steady increase in the other region.

In Ethiopia's new Education Sector Development Program (ESDP), gender has been mainstreamed into almost all components at both regional and national levels. At regional levels, a gender-focal person coordinates efforts to increase gender equity in the school system. Gender sensitivity manuals for trainers have been developed and distributed. The policies of this program have only begun to be implemented, however, and at the grassroots level gender appears to be accorded lower priority.

Though enrollment rates are increasing in primary schools, girls still enroll at lower rates than do boys, and girls' dropout rates remain higher. School and community-level mechanisms are still needed to increase enrollment and persistence through the primary grades.

The case of Benin: Benin's minister of education declared in 1993 that girls in rural areas would no longer pay school fees. Whether this mandate was effective is questionable, as girls' enrollment rates at the national level rose only from 31 to 35 percent during the next two years. USAID objected to fee waivers for girls on the same grounds that it objected to the elimination of school fees for all children in Uganda and Malawi: it believed the fees were needed to cover expenses of instruction. But the minister determined that he could offset the cost to schools of enrolling girls by supplying school furniture, an action that—not coincidentally—garnered his party support during national elections.

Building country capacity to finance reforms

The World Bank and USAID considered the reallocation of funding to primary education—both as a percentage of total government expenditure and as a percentage of all education expenditure—a keystone of Guinea's reforms and of high priority in Malawi, Benin, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Central to the reallocation policy urged by funding agencies was the objective of getting governments to move their own resources and those of funding agencies to the education sector through the treasury. Funding agencies considered this change fundamental to the concept of systemic reform.

Non-project assistance (NPA) programs are distinguished by a budgetary support component that directs donor funding into the government budget. The grounding premise is that an education ministry's access to additional funds, as part of the government budget, requires the preparation and management of a rational sectoral budget in adherence to government public accounting procedures. Moreover, performance criteria delineated in the government-donor agreement require education ministries to develop procedures for strategic planning, undertake rational budgeting on the basis of planned activities, and monitor use of resources in the sector according to improved budgetary norms.[14]

[14] DeStefano and Tietjen, op. cit., 1996.

Funding agencies expected that these changes would result in sustained annual increases to primary education. To this end, funding agencies contributed sums that amounted to large portions of the annual recurrent expenditures of the ministry of education. The table below shows that the amount of conditional support given to a country by funding agencies varied between US$71.9 and 135.0 million. Rough calculations, based on available financial data comparable between countries, reveals that donor contributions constituted between 14 and 43 percent of ministry current budgets, with the average being about 25 percent. These amounts would seem to be ample incentives to influence government spending policy.

Donor conditional budgetary support for primary education (in US$ millions)

	USAID NPA[1] US$ M (Yrs.)	World Bank loan[2] (US$ M) (Yrs.)	Total support (US$ M)	Current public expenditure on 1° ed. (1995)[3]	Donor support as % of current public exp. over life of program[4]
Benin	56.0 (91–99)	18.1 (94–98)	74.1	30.7	26.8
Ethiopia	29.0 (94–02)	64.3 (87–98)	93.3	73.9	14.0
Guinea	50.0 (90–96)	24.1 (90–94)	74.1	24.8	42.7
Malawi	35.0 (91–98)	36.9 (90–96)	71.9	36.9	24.4
Uganda	83.0 (92–02)	52.0 (93–99)	135.0	80.6[5]	15.5

Sources: (1) *Overview of USAID Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa II,* September 1995; (2) World Bank documents; (3) UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1998; (4) Calculated by straightlining 1995 expenditure over the period of the USAID program; (5) 1994; the 1995 figure presented in USAID annual R4 reports would put this figure at $69.7 million, making donor support 19.4 percent of the average current expenditure.

Indeed, each of the five governments did increase spending to primary education. In most countries, the World Bank and USAID wanted governments to target budget increases at two levels of the system: education at all levels and primary education. The table below shows the size of increases in government budgets to education, and in ministry of education budgets to primary education.

Proportional changes in current education expenditures

	Current education as % of govt. exp.			Primary education as % of education exp.		
	1984/5	**1989/91**	**1994/6**	**1984/5**	**1989/91**	**1994/6**
Benin	36.8	–	21.1	–	–	57.6
Ethiopia	14.3	11.1	16.6	51.5	53.9	46.2[1]
Guinea	17.2	–	–	30.8	32.5	39.3
Malawi	–	11.1	20.8	41.3	48.1	58.5
Uganda	–	15.1	22.8	44.5	–	60.1

Source: *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, 1998. (1) Includes capital expenditures.

The table above indicates that in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda education grew as a portion of government expenditure; in Benin it fell, and in Guinea, there is insufficient data to determine the direction. Expenditure on primary education grew as a proportion of education expenditure at all levels in Guinea, Malawi, and Uganda. It fell in Ethiopia, and data are missing for Benin. Thus, only in Malawi and Uganda did governments actually meet both donor conditions.[15]

Most countries agreed to adopt additional, even more specific, financing reform policies. Benin and Ethiopia aimed to distribute resources more equitably to schools. Uganda and Malawi made plans to shift the balance between public and private financing, and Uganda considerably increased its budget for teachers' salaries. All five governments agreed to raise budgets for nonsalary expenditures. But while finance ministries had no trouble accepting budgetary support or budgeting more money for primary education, moving that money to education ministries, not to mention getting resources to schools, proved difficult in several cases.

The case of Guinea: The Guinean government agreed to annual increases in funding to primary education based on projected government revenue increases that would result from macroeconomic adjustments and consequent additional revenues and savings from more efficient financial management. In fact, 1992 saw a liquidity crunch, which, coupled with the government's slowness in developing administrative capacity, made it impossible for the government to meet the condition. Fearing that inadequate financing of primary education would slow the reform, the funding agencies increased their assistance on an emergency basis and made up the government's shortfall. Thus, the reallocation policy was implemented insofar as primary education continued to receive a larger proportion of the government budget, but the *process* side of the policy failed, as the government did not actually increase its share of the funding.

The process side of the policy failed for another reason, which is that the ministry of finance did not actually move funds to the ministry of education. The ministry of education complained that resources were not flowing to the sector because of

[15] Funding agencies also wanted ministries of education to raise the part of the budget spent on nonsalary expenditures, but there is no data to determine whether this happened. Even the data presented here on changes in education at all levels and in primary education is subject to question. The authors have used the *Unesco Statistical Yearbook* as a source because it includes all five countries. USAID and World Bank data, however, do not always agree with these.

administrative lethargy in the ministry of finance. Budgetary resources allocated to the ministry arrived at the end of the calendar year or not at all. Regional education offices rarely saw their allocated operating budgets, making it difficult for them to make timely purchases for each school year. When PASE II began in 1993, the funding agencies had become disillusioned with their strategy of conditional budgetary support, and returned to financing reform activities (or projects) directly.

The case of Benin: Benin agreed with USAID in 1992 to spend the equivalent of US$5 million of its own funds on primary education reform programs. But this change did not actually help the education sector because, as in Guinea, though the USAID funding went into the national budget, most of it did not support the implementation of the action plans. Channels between the finance and education ministries were clogged, as were channels within the ministry of education.

Among the fifteen action plans that were the ultimate statement of Benin's reform goals, one included increasing equity of access across regions and increasing equitable access to FQL (or "fundamental quality level") schools; another included ensuring the funding to meet and maintain FQL standards. FQL was the policy introduced by USAID to adjust funding and other resource allocations among regions and schools based on periodic actual accounting of existing resources. The FQL planning and managing system was designed in 1994/95 and implemented in 1996/97. Even by 1998, however, funds had not yet been allocated based on FQL standards. Part of the problem lay in the strategy of FQL, which required regional committees to form, collect, and analyze data. Another difficulty was that the strategy assumed that the ministry would actually reallocate funds once the FQL system revealed inequities. In fact, the ministry strongly resisted devolving its funding authority to regions. Finally, ongoing struggles between the ministry and USAID and within each of those organizations blocked implementation. Although USAID had made the ministry's implementation of the FQL policy a condition for the continuing release of budgetary support funds, it failed to halt funding when the ministry refused to comply.

The case of Malawi: In 1987, the Malawian government agreed as a condition of World Bank support to increase education's share of the national budget from 9.7 to 11 percent, and in 1990 it agreed to increase the share to 15.5 percent. In 1991, the government agreed with USAID to increase allocation to the education sector to 18.5 percent and the share of the education budget devoted to primary education to 51 percent over five years. Malawi's strategy for financing reform policies addressed both costs and revenues. Urged on by World Bank research, the government had agreed in its First Education Plan (1973) to stipulate cost sharing (pupils pay school fees set at a rate that most families could afford) as a means of sharing public funding among more children. Over a number of years, this policy was reversed. Fees were abolished in September 1991 for standards 2–4. And though funding agencies initially responded with more funding to the dramatic increase in enrollments, they prodded the government to reconcile enrollment rates with the resources available to provide quality education.

The case of Uganda: In Uganda, the ministry's intent, laid out in its White Paper, was to distribute more evenly the costs of primary schooling between the central government and communities, eliminate school fees gradually, and distribute school facilities, equipment, and materials more equitably. By helping make more public funds available for primary education, the funding agencies supported the goal of improving the balance between public and private financing. The World Bank conditioned its support on the government's reallocation of funds from the military to education and, within the education sector, from higher to primary education. USAID took a different approach. It set the condition that the government first budget more money to teachers' salaries and, in the following year, actually spend that money on salaries. Because the government knew that teachers were badly underpaid, and because increased national security made it easier to reallocate funds from the military, USAID's conditionality was a real incentive to raise salaries. The ministry even exceeded funding agency requirements, eventually raising salaries an impressive tenfold to a decent living wage.

In the 1990s, with support from funding agencies, Uganda raised its budgetary allocation to education, particularly primary education. Like Malawi, however, the balance between private and public costs shifted dramatically in 1997 with the declaration of free universal primary education. This policy considerably reduced the amount of private funds available for schooling and defeated the White Paper's strategy of gradually dropping school fees when the government could afford to maintain schools with certain quality standards, including teacher-pupil and textbook-pupil ratios. The World Bank responded with an additional sector credit to help the government accommodate more students, but this time without conditioning its credit on performance. By the end of 1997, the Bank and the government had agreed to develop and promulgate a policy on the roles and contributions of parents and communities to schools. USAID stipulated a new policy condition that the government give evidence that its “capitation” grants for school supplies were actually reaching schools.

The case of Ethiopia: Although USAID conditioned its budgetary support on the Ethiopian government’s reallocation of more money to primary education—a move the government supported—the financing of education reform took much longer. When the new government came to power in the early 1990s, it decided to decentralize administrative and social services, including education. Though the primary motivation was political, the policy had a profound effect on the financing of decentralized activities, as the central government made block grants, based on population, to regional councils, which allocated funds to education and other sectors. Funding agencies became involved in this move in the late 1990s, when the World Bank began to plan its new education program and succeeded in enlisting most other funding agencies to join the effort. In late 1998, the World Bank negotiated a new comprehensive program with the ministry based on the ETP. The ministry and the World Bank encouraged all funding agencies to participate in the Education Sector Development Program, which the ministry would coordinate. Although some viewed the ESDP as the implementation phase of the ETP, this view discounts the many reform activities that took place between 1994 and 1999.

Funding agencies met with the government over many months to determine which would provide financial and technical support in Ethiopia’s eleven regions. The World Bank agreed to be the funding agency of last resort, providing funding to those regions that lacked the resources to implement programs upon which funding agencies, regional governments, and the ministry of education had agreed. Thus, Ethiopia had finally constructed a financial plan for its complex reform, but it is still too soon to tell whether this plan will facilitate the implementation of priorities.

Improving ministry planning and management capacities

Along with infusing more money into primary education, funding agencies wanted ministries to improve their capacity to manage the money as well as the flow of people, goods, and services within the system, including teachers, books, furniture, equipment, and supplies. In addition, a key goal of the reform in all five countries was to manage information about student enrollments and progress through the system. Of these three management tasks—money, goods and services, and information—the most systematic and concrete strategies were developed for the management of information. The reform in most countries had as a key component the development or improvement of a comprehensive educational management information system, or EMIS. Building an EMIS, however, proved difficult. The difficulties stemmed partly from shortages of staff with the technical skills required, the difficulty of collecting data from remote parts of the country, and the lack of an organizational culture of relying on analysis of statistical information for policymaking. Like policymakers anywhere, ministry officials responded more to internal political pressures than to statistical data developed for their use by outsiders. They seemed to view the EMIS more as a funding agency need than a tool for their own use. In some cases, the EMIS appeared to be used by funding agencies to force ministries to make certain policies and funding reallocations. While funding agencies were keen to see information produced about trends in enrollments, costs, and so on, ministry officials generally declined to use this information to make policy decisions or to regulate the system. Thus, they had little incentive to develop or use an EMIS.

The case of Benin: In Benin, UNESCO, USAID, and the French Cooperation agency badly wanted an EMIS. In its reform planning, the UNESCO study deplored the lack of communication among different parts of the education system and the absence of information needed for even routine decisionmaking. The capacity to track resources, people, and results was virtually absent. USAID knew that a well functioning EMIS was crucial for implementing the FQL schools action plan. Without regularly collected data, it would be impossible to test the viability of FQL standards, determine the gap between schools and FQL standards, establish priority areas, or even identify school upgrading programs. Because USAID placed so much importance on information generation, most of its initial technical assistance focused on planning and management information systems. It also made the implementation of an EMIS a condition of budgetary support.

Yet the struggle over how to collect and analyze data persisted. Technical consultants brought out by USAID advocated decentralization and the establishment of information *systems*. While some ministry technicians agreed with this concept, others viewed the purpose of the plan as equipment modernization through the purchase of computers. Moreover, having control over *information* about the education system was important to the minister in his effort to gain control of the system itself. Others also recognized that control of the information system would place them in a powerful position. The reluctance of the EMIS action plan staff in the ministry to allow any aspect of the collection or analysis of education to escape their authority was evidence of this problem. In addition, ministry officials responsible for the EMIS action plan had an opportunity to control the use of substantial funds and equipment that accompanied it. The minister who took office in 1994 was less concerned about controlling information, however, and USAID was able to make some progress with a decentralized system. The struggles that persisted with establishing the FQL system, however, also implicated the EMIS. For undetermined reasons, ministry staff resisted making information public, and thus resisted building a system to produce that information.

The case of Malawi: Malawi made a number of attempts to introduce information systems. In 1992, as a condition of USAID support, the ministry introduced a primary pupil registration system, the goal of which was to expand the existing system of tracking enrollment and repetition by school to a system that tracked individual pupils. This would provide information on absenteeism, dropouts, and so on, which could inform strategies for raising the system's efficiency. But after the initial phase of data collection and analysis, the burden of collecting, transporting, and storing data on each pupil proved too cumbersome and costly. Parallel with that effort was an initiative sponsored by UNESCO between 1989 and 1993 to revise the data collection forms and develop a comprehensive information system. In 1996, the government decided to discontinue the registration system and agreed with USAID to launch a new EMIS effort. USAID offered to assist with training and procurement of new computer systems. After failing to persuade the ministry to use a sophisticated statistical sampling model for age/grade data, USAID helped the ministry's planning unit to develop a simple school questionnaire. This was successfully executed in the 1994/95 school year, but a computer crash necessitated the recollection of data. In the meantime, other funding agencies began their own EMIS initiatives, none of which was coordinated by the ministry. Among them, funding agencies provided at least a dozen years of technical assistance to planning. Yet ministry officials made little demand for data, and the technical capacity in planning, though much improved from funding agency training and support, continued to hobble data collection, entry, and analysis.

The case of Uganda: In Uganda, building the capacity of the planning department to manage an EMIS was part of the World Bank's program. The ministry agreed with the Bank to hire and train seven or so individuals, but did not do so for over four years. The planning department remained understaffed and undertrained. It was only when UPE came into effect, and the parliament and funding agencies began asking for data on enrollments, costs, and resources, that the ministry employed a consultant to recruit and train staff and to begin to produce data. Even then, given the highly political character of UPE, policymakers did not guide the planning department with policy questions that data could answer. For data on its education system, the ministry relied on two head counts (conducted in 1994 and 1997) of teachers and pupils.

The case of Guinea: Guinea's education policy declaration included a number of goals related to improving management of the education sector: developing the ministry's capacity to coordinate and manage strategically, creating an effective EMIS, and strengthening planning capacity at the regional level. In PASE I, funding agencies provided technical assistance to train members of the technical committee in financial management, planning, and the development of an EMIS. During the early years of the reform, training of administrative staff and injections of equipment and material did appear to improve the ministry's capacity to manage finances and information. But after PASE I when the funding agencies lost interest in improving the budgetary process, the ministry's capacity weakened. A 1998 USAID review of that capacity concluded that there were few lasting improvements, and the much improved management of the information system would probably not survive once funding agencies pulled out their technical assistance.

Restructuring ministry functions and offices

While restructuring ministry offices can be viewed as an instrument for effecting other reform goals, ministry and funding agency reform plans sometimes treated it as a goal in itself, without a clear rationale for how a restructuring would help implement reform programs. Three kinds of restructuring occurred: official reorganization of ministry offices, restructuring of functions that affected channels of authority and communication, and decentralization of authority. The ministries of Malawi and Benin officially reorganized around new functions. In Uganda, Benin, and Guinea, funding agency initiatives forced adjustments to channels of authority within existing ministry structures. And in Ethiopia and Uganda, the administration of primary education was decentralized as a result of broader government decentralization programs.

The case of Malawi: Malawi's ministry created a new teacher development unit and restructured the offices of planning and finance around new budgetary processes. It also created special units to handle funding agency programs: the Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC) unit for USAID's program and the Education Development Management unit to oversee funding agency activities. Malawi also made plans to turn over key functions to regional education offices: payment of salaries, budgeting for and purchasing of goods and services, discipline of students and teachers, staff postings, and facilities maintenance. The initial call for decentralization came in the First Education Plan (1985–95). Steps toward implementation included a study by Price Waterhouse, and specific proposals for turning regions into cost centers and giving them much more responsibility for their own budgeting and financial management. But large problems in accounting persisted at regional and district levels, and many of the administrative functions were only partially transferred. In 1995, the draft policy investment framework again called for decentralization of the offices of planning, human resource management and development, and school supervision and inspection, though it provided no clear implementation guidelines, and resources were too limited to allow its enactment.

The case of Uganda: Although not foreseen in its White Paper, Uganda's reform centered on the development of a teacher development and management system. The successful implementation of that system was due in part to some restructuring of authority. Formerly, primary teachers' colleges were supported by the ministry and subject to standards and procedures set by the Institute of Teacher Education at Kyambogo (ITEK). They did not interact systematically with either schools or district education offices. With the inauguration of the TDMS, core colleges replaced ITEK as critical nodes of interaction in a strengthened network of schools, colleges, and district offices. In effect, authority for implementing new teacher training and support policies and activities was diverted to a new TDMS office within the central ministry and selected teacher training colleges. The TDMS had its own budget, heavily funded by the World Bank and USAID, and its own channels of disbursement. Over time, USAID worked with the government to restructure other central ministry offices (as of 1998, a plan had been approved but not implemented) so that they were coherent with the TDMS. In addition, district education offices were brought into the system at the district level, beginning with informal cooperation and care on the part of teacher training colleges to get formal approval from the district for activities that lay within their jurisdiction. Thus, the TDMS system empowered some people who did not have to work entirely within existing ministry channels.

USAID and the World Bank urged the creation of a new reform management group at the national level. The ministry created the National Primary Education Reform Program Management Committee (NPERPMC), composed of the directors of each department implicated by reform activities and representatives of the ministries of finance and public service. NPERPMC was effective as a means of bringing midlevel managers together to share information and monitor progress, but it did not serve to restructure channels of authority. It suffered from the constant turnover of its chair, the permanent secretary: between 1991 and 1998 the minister replaced his permanent secretary at least annually. The committee was thus unable to affect policy or management decisions at high levels.

There was some doubt, however, that the TDMS and NPERPMC ever gained full legitimacy within the ministry. Ministry officials charged with implementing the president's UPE mandate in 1997 ignored both the TDMS and NPERPMC, and the ministry officials who drafted a sector investment program in 1997/98 did not treat either organization as a full-fledged component of the ministry. In 1998, the ministry replaced NPERPMC with a new committee in which funding agencies played a much more active role.

Uganda's basic education reform also coincided with the government's efforts to decentralize social services, including education, to the districts. The effect of decentralization on the TDMS was mixed, strengthening support where districts were well managed and supportive of the ministry's agenda and weakening it where they were not.

The case of Benin: As in Uganda, the Ministry of Education in Benin created a new management structure around fifteen action plans developed to execute policies and programs. The ministry wanted to administer the implementation of the action plans within its established structure, even though that structure was weak (a number of action plans were designed to strengthen it). The ministry appointed a coordinator of action plans, who delegated to "executive directors" one or more action plans. For example, action plans related to improving instruction were assigned to the director of primary education. Finally, each action plan was assigned to a "pilot," who was responsible for organizing the implementation of the specific tasks. Pilots were technicians in the ministry. Every action they executed needed approval by their executive director. Pilots were to meet together under the guidance of either their executive director or the action plan coordinator on a regular basis to recalibrate action plans and recoordinate activities. In 1992, most action plans were expected to have a two to three year life span. But by mid-1997, the number of action plans had proven unmanageable, with no more than one-third of any action plan implemented. In addition, each delay created further delays because of the interdependency of the action plans. Coordinating and recalibrating action plans became a full time activity, and the continual stop and go of action plans demoralized many of the pilots and executive directors. Some abandoned their responsibilities out of despair.

Decentralizing

The case of Ethiopia: Like Uganda's reform, Ethiopia's was greatly affected by the decision of the newly elected democratic government in 1991 to decentralize many government functions, including social services and education. The primary purpose of decentralization in Ethiopia was political—to give ethnic groups more autonomy and voice in managing their own affairs. Technical considerations, such as the effects on schools of local governance and management, were secondary. Thus, the implementation of a decentralization policy had to accommodate the implementation of a new education policy, and vice versa.

By 1998, regional bureaus had completed some impressive tasks such as rewriting curricula and producing textbooks in local languages; and the new administrative relationship between regional education bureaus and regional councils had begun to cement. Regional councils were receiving block grants to distribute among social services. However, management at some regional bureaus remained weak, and their capacity developed at different paces around the country. Some received significant assistance from foreign technical agents: the regions of Tigray and the Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Region (SNNPR) grew stronger with considerable support from USAID. Some regions, such as Amhara, inherited substantial expertise under decentralization, while others, such as Oromia, commanded attention because of their size. Some regions, such as Afar, however, remain far behind.

The case of Guinea: Without specifying exactly why or how, Guinea's first education policy declaration included a goal of restructuring the ministry. Indeed, the ministry did undergo reorganization to satisfy various funding agencies, but none of the changes was permanent. Ministry officials and funding agencies worked together to create several new units to oversee and implement reform activities. The ministry established a PASE monitoring committee composed of representatives from a number of government ministries; the committee met quarterly to discuss progress toward objectives and ensure consistency between the PASE and the World Bank's structural adjustment program. The technical secretariat, composed of a national coordinator and two expatriate technical assistants, was responsible for the overall implementation of different program areas. It oversaw the establishment of action plans for each program component and monitored their implementation. A steering committee consisting of the national directors and division heads of the education ministry met on a monthly basis to discuss coordinating the implementation of different actions. The technical secretariat kept a firm hand on the implementation of the PASE. It had sufficient technical and material resources to ensure a sustained monitoring and coordinating capacity. It also had special links with funding agencies that in many ways protected it from the political constraints within the rest of the ministry of education.

After 1994, however, with a change in ministers and other officials, the legitimacy of these committees began to wane, and they had to compete with other institutions for funding agency attention and resources. For several years, under new ministers, monitoring committee and steering committee meetings came to a halt. In the same time period, responsibilities among longstanding institutions within the ministry were reshuffled. The *Institut National de Pédagogie* (INP) was reconstituted in 1994 as the *Institut National de Recherche Appliqué en Pédagogie* (INRAP). The ministry transferred INRAP's mandate to formulate and implement pedagogical policy to the Direction of Elementary Education, and it gave to regional education inspectorates the authority to implement such policies. INRAP retained responsibility for providing pedagogical support services to the educational sector. Although INRAP had a bad reputation among funding agencies, around 1996 it began to attract funding after the decline in collaboration between the ministry and funding agencies.

Expanding physical capacity

Insofar as increasing children's access to schooling was a high priority of the various reforms, building new schools was also an important goal. In each of the five countries, ministries undertook large school construction programs, financed by loans from the World Bank and carried out by contractors. In most cases these programs fell behind schedule. In Ethiopia, construction was delayed by the civil war that erupted at the end of the 1980s, just as the World Bank's seventh education project was being launched. But in Ethiopia as well as in Uganda and Malawi, construction fell behind for other reasons. In Ethiopia, bids had to be restructured in order to attract contractors, and shortages of engineering and other technical staff in the ministry slowed down contracting and supervision. In Uganda, badly managed centralized procurement and distribution processes slowed the construction of new facilities at teacher training colleges and selected schools. In Malawi, construction fell behind due to inflated assumptions about the level of community commitment. In most countries, ministries expected communities to contribute labor and sometimes even materials, which was difficult to coordinate with ministry action. In Uganda, community volunteers sometimes outpaced contractors, resulting in schools without iron-sheet roofs, which were supposed to be supplied by the ministry. In others, structures with roofs stood without walls, as communities could not organize the labor to do their share of the building.

Revising the curriculum and improving production and delivery of materials
Each country's reforms included numerous goals related to improving curricula and instructional materials. Some ministries were more effective than others in implementing these changes; Ethiopia, Guinea, and Benin struggled; Uganda implemented a new textbook procurement and distribution policy; and Malawi revised its curriculum and developed new textbooks.

The case of Malawi: Revision of curricula and textbooks was among Malawi's greatest achievements. Revision of primary curriculum was one of the key goals of Malawi's second education plan (1985–95). By 1987, the ministry had begun to plan the revision of its basic education curriculum to include a focus on community-based learning, literacy, numeracy, production skills, and to reduce the number of primary subjects to thirteen from seventeen. The ministry fostered broad consultation within and beyond the government on curriculum goals, and then formed subject committees.

By 1991 the revision was well underway: a new syllabus for standards 1–8 was complete and being tested, and approval of textbooks was under international tender. With support from the World Bank, Canada, and Germany, the ministry developed sixty-three titles for the primary level, and produced, printed, and distributed textbooks in math, English, Chichewa, and social studies. By 1996, texts were in schools for standards 1–6 and, by 1998, plans to have textbooks in schools for standards 7–8 were in place. A 1997 report revealed that the standards for student-textbook ratios were being met. The GAC unit, sponsored by USAID, provided supplementary materials for standards 1–2, for which textbooks had already been completed before the unit was formed, and contributed to the development of curricula and textbooks at the other grade levels.

The case of Uganda: Prior to 1995, a government parastatal operated textbook purchasing and delivery. In 1995, the World Bank questioned a ten-year contract with a major British publisher, which the ministry then declared illegal. The Bank recommended privatization of all distribution of materials, and requested a detailed plan for textbook development and distribution. By 1997 procurement and distribution had been privatized, and the ministry was largely successful in getting books out to schools.

While efforts at textbook reforms were largely successful, curriculum reform was not. Revising the curriculum was the province of the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC). As a condition of its loan, the government agreed with the World Bank to strengthen the capacity of this body and help it produce a new curriculum. But it was not until 1996, when USAID provided some technical assistance, that a curriculum was drafted. And in late 1997, before the ministry had approved the curriculum, it was mysteriously published and for sale, resulting in the immediate dismissal of the commissioner responsible for its development.

The ministry successfully reformed its procurement and distribution of textbooks. This reform was supported by conditional budgetary support from USAID for instituting a process for the continuous supply of textbooks to schools. Enacting textbook reform took some persistence, as several groups of stakeholders tried to block attempts to change procurement procedures. The White Paper called for the ministry to create its own publishing house to write, edit, and print textbooks, and some ministry officials supported this strategy. British publishers who had held a profitable monopoly contract with the ministry for textbooks and a few ministry officials who benefited from this arrangement wanted to maintain the status quo. Finally, the World Bank, which had been financing textbook purchases, had some reservations about seeing its own program dismantled. USAID helped the ministry bring together these stakeholders to agree upon how to reform an operation that had obvious flaws—schools were not getting books. Through public dialogue, each party put aside self interest to work toward the best solution for schools. They agreed to liberalize the textbook market and procure books from private publishers, foreign and local. Working from a list of texts approved by the ministry and a precise budget for books, each school would select its own books. The ministry would then consolidate orders, make the purchases, and deliver books to schools (through the Uganda National Examinations Board, which regularly delivered testing materials to schools). Even when an agreed-upon plan was in place, someone had to make it work. An official in the ministry's instructional materials unit played a strong leadership role in managing the complex set of activities required to implement the new system. His efforts resulted in a textbook market that included not only British publishers but also others in East Africa, including several in Uganda.

The case of Ethiopia: Before the direction of primary schools was devolved to the regions in 1994, textbooks in Ethiopia were developed at the Institute for Curriculum Research and Development (ICRD) and published at the Educational Materials Production and Distribution Agency (EMPDA). With decentralization, the development of primary school curricula and textbooks became the responsibility of regional educational bureaus. Thus, the ministry's goal of reforming curricula and textbooks required a major shift in operations. Not the least of these was preparation—for the first time ever in most cases—of primary school curricula in thirteen or more languages spoken by the population. In addition, the ministry agreed to follow the World Bank's urging to liberalize the textbook market. This resulted in an abrupt severing of the textbook development and publishing functions, which had previously operated hand in glove. Between 1994 and 1998 the decentralized ministry struggled with these changes. Regions like Tigray, which were fortunate to have technical assistance from USAID, began to develop the capacity to write curricula and textbooks. Other regions, like poor and remote Gambella, could do hardly more than translate existing textbooks into one or two local languages. World Bank funds intended to strengthen the capacity of the ICRD and EMPDA to produce textbooks went instead to purchase paper for the production of new primary school textbooks developed in the regions. Thus, like other ministry functions that were devolved to the regions, reforms in curricula and textbooks varied across regions in their implementation. Overall, however, the ministry made substantial progress in revising curricula and reforming the development and production of instructional materials, though distribution lagged somewhat.

The case of Guinea: In Guinea, where funding agencies tacitly agreed on how the funding agencies would divide responsibilities for implementation, the French Cooperation agency took on the curriculum. The French had begun their assistance in this area in 1987, before the PASE, at a time when the government had decided to shift the language of instruction from national languages to French and to revise the curriculum. Thus, it was not until the late 1990s that, once again, the French began helping the ministry revise the curriculum. The effort was slow going, as INRAP lacked the staff to do the work and the ministry's expectations were unclear. As late as 1999, the objectives for revising the curriculum were hazy, and USAID, as well as the French, expected to be involved in curriculum-related activities.

The implementation of reforms to the system of textbook procurement and delivery was much more visible in Guinea, though not much more successful. The ministry's policy objectives were to get textbooks to more children and to lower the cost of distribution. This would require keeping better track of distribution and sales. Over the years, the ministry tried several distribution strategies. In 1990, it contracted with a private company to sell the books outside of urban areas. But a flawed contract left the ministry without clear records of how much it was owed by the distributor. The second attempt involved packaging the books at INRAP and delivering them through regional offices to school directors, who would then sell them to students. Again, however, a significant amount of the proceeds from the sale of four hundred thousand books was never accounted for, and the ministry was not able to verify that books had actually arrived at schools. In 1994, the ministry created a network of private distributors to sell over eight hundred thousand books financed by USAID and the French. Although the control of proceeds and the inventory of unsold books were still problems, the operation was considered more successful than its predecessors, and the ministry had indeed developed an intact private distribution network. In 1997, the African Development Bank and the World Bank purchased over 1.5 million books and contracted with private transporters to take them directly to schools. Though the books were supposed to be delivered to parent or other local associations, in many cases school or other government officials signed for them. Again, poor records and communication resulted in the loss of many books to local and even foreign black markets.

In short, the funding agencies that financed the purchase of books decided how to distribute them, and little was learned as one faulty plan after another was implemented. Some explain this by pointing to the large sums of money entailed in textbook distribution and the struggle among government offices to control this lucrative enterprise. Reluctant to trust government officials, funding agencies kept a firm hand on operations, thus depriving the government of the opportunity to reform its procedures.

The case of Benin: In Benin, the implementation of the new curriculum was stalled at least three years, because resources were not available or key decisions were not made on time within the school-year cycle to get the curriculum to schools. Funding agencies in Benin were less interested in the curriculum than in getting the government to budget and spend more money on nonsalary expenditures such as textbooks, teacher training, and school equipment and supplies. But because the funding agencies had little control over how the ministry spent its money, and because ministry officials favored other purchases, classrooms saw little improvement in the way of instructional materials.

Training and supporting teachers

Teacher recruitment, deployment, training, and support are key to improving the instructional system, and they require careful planning and maintenance of other systems: personnel and preservice and inservice training colleges. In addition, teacher salaries represent by far the largest cost of primary education, so their support has a heavy effect on government finance. To meet rising enrollments, each of the five countries needed more and better trained teachers. The relative importance given to this need depended largely on funding agency priorities, because of the high cost. Thus, teacher policies and programs varied considerably among the countries. In Uganda and Guinea, funding agencies provided incentives to change teacher support policies. Teacher support was at the heart of Uganda's reform, thanks to USAID's support for a policy that would raise teachers' salaries and provide inservice training and support. In Guinea, USAID supported a new policy on teacher redeployment. In all five countries, funding agencies bolstered teacher training systems, but with mixed success. Uganda instituted an impressive teacher development and management system with USAID and World Bank support. The World Bank also supported a series of intensive teacher training programs in Malawi. In Benin and Guinea, the agreed-upon need by the ministry and funding agencies for more trained teachers foundered during implementation on disputes over strategies to meet that need. In Ethiopia, primary school teacher training became the responsibility of regions; USAID supported teacher training colleges in two regions, other funding agencies supported training in other regions, and the government supported various other training efforts.

The case of Benin: In Benin during the 1990s, for reasons the ministry could not explain, primary school enrollments rose steadily, and the shortage of teachers was acute. In 1996, given IMF-imposed civil service recruitment ceilings, the government agreed with the World Bank to hire contract teachers, because the government could not afford to bring more into the civil service. In 1997, the ministry trained and hired three thousand contract teachers. These teachers received five weeks of USAID-funded training and were paid less than half what civil service teachers made.

When reform plans were being formulated, there was a broad consensus in Benin that teachers required additional training and support services. Most agreed that the quality of instruction was low because most junior-grade teachers had never benefited from preservice training, and most teachers had not been inspected or provided with inservice training or support for years. Under the previous regime, the ministry had established pedagogical units throughout the country. Teachers of two to three schools would meet once or twice a month to discuss issues and share advice. The ministry of education assigned some teachers the role of pedagogical counselors, acting as go-betweens for schools and district inspectors and advising teachers and school directors. UNESCO advised that these units and teachers become the basic building blocks of a pedagogical support network.

The teacher training action plan of the reform proposed how to create and sustain such a network by redefining the roles of the different actors and creating a national council to establish annual training objectives. All actors in the network would receive the training necessary to carry out their new responsibilities. The last phase would establish a cycle of training development, monitoring, evaluation, and retraining.

USAID agreed to finance training for newly recruited contract teachers, rehabilitate a number of teacher training colleges, and support the implementation of the inservice training action plan. But few of these tasks were implemented. Instead, the ministry launched many other activities in the name of this action plan, using the resources allocated for its implementation. From the end of 1993 through 1995, the ministry conducted an ambitious program to help teachers who held assistant teacher status pass the written exam required to become full teachers.

Why did the ministry divert resources from a pedagogical support network to teacher certification? A teacher who passes the teacher certification examination receives a pay raise and reaches a stepping stone to greater status within the teaching corps and the general community. Thus, the primary objective of the training programs was not to increase the competencies of teachers as much as it was to "valorize" them and direct financial support to them. Another factor was that the person responsible for overseeing this work had not participated in its formulation, was critical of its content, and focused only on responding to his minister's directives. With the change of administration, the new person named had been much involved in all phases of the development of the action plan and was a firm advocate of the network. But the appointment of a new primary education director, who knew little about the action plan, hobbled his effort.

The case of Guinea: Like Benin, Guinea desperately needed more teachers and eventually hired contract teachers to meet its need without obligating the civil service to violate its IMF agreement by raising the wage bill. But Guinea began with another strategy. One of the most concerted efforts of the PASE was to redeploy teachers—to send undertrained and surplus secondary school teachers back to primary schools, put administrative staff back into the classroom, and move teachers from well-stocked schools to those with a teacher shortage. In 1992, the ministry put together a high-powered task force that conducted extensive studies of where teachers were needed, where they could be found, and what redeployment would cost. Top-level ministry officials, including the minister, supported the plan and established task forces to oversee its implementation. The World Bank and USAID, which had made such redeployment a condition of further disbursements, supported the policy and plan. Knowing that they would meet resistance from teachers, ministry officials made an effort to explain their actions and gain cooperation. They conducted an elaborate campaign through the mass media and helped local leaders convince communities of the positive aspects of the program. The minister also approached the teachers' unions. Finally, the ministry created incentives for teachers to move. They developed a new salary scale that rewarded most teachers and provided additional amenities for those asked to go to rural areas.

In spite of some glitches (including the failure to move anyone out of administrative posts), over eighteen hundred teachers moved to primary schools, and the redeployment became a resounding success. Nevertheless, as enrollments continued to increase, the redeployment did not solve the problem of the growing need for teachers in subsequent years. In fact, the upward adjustments to the salary scale made it even more difficult for the ministry to afford adding new teachers to the civil service ranks. In 1995, the ministry looked for another way to get more teachers into classrooms. It hired about four hundred contract teachers, financed by a European Union fund given to the government for nonsalary expenditures in the social sectors. In 1997, using the same source of funds, the ministry contracted an additional two thousand teachers. But a crisis erupted when hundreds of contract teachers marched on the ministry to claim unpaid wages. The teachers were mollified with a partial payment, but the minister lost his job as a result. Problems with pay continued throughout the year. The ministry paid some teachers in a lump sum at the end of the year, while others were compensated by the communities they served. Hiring contract teachers was clearly not a long-term solution to implementing the ministry's goal of putting a teacher in every classroom.

The case of Uganda: In Uganda, the most extensive and complex implementation effort was the creation of a system for teacher and school support. Created in 1993, the TDMS provided technical support to teachers. This included inservice training to untrained teachers, refresher courses for all teachers, and management training for head teachers. The system consisted of a growing number of primary teachers colleges, designated as *core PTCs.* The PTCs established outreach programs, for which new positions were established at the college. Each core PTC sent its outreach staff to work with tutors, hired by the PTC and posted at selected schools, called *coordinating center schools.* Each coordinating center school had a resource room where teachers could find examples of instructional materials, many of which were made by teachers. On a regular basis, tutors convened teachers at the resource center for inservice training and refresher courses.

Development of the TDMS began in two catchment areas, moved to four more in the project's second phase, and another four in the third phase. By 1998, the TDMS was rooted in eighteen catchment areas. Ten PTCs had launched outreach programs, providing inservice training to about seven thousand uncertified teachers, refresher courses to about twenty-two thousand teachers, and management training to nearly nine thousand head teachers.

Implementation of the TDMS was directed by USAID and required relatively little participation from central ministry offices. The most significant efforts required by these offices were to post outreach staff to PTCs and, in some cases, secure land for construction of new colleges. For other activities, including writing a new teacher-training curriculum and accompanying training modules, the ministry pulled Ugandan staff from their posts and seconded them to the USAID project.

USAID envisioned that nationwide implementation of the TDMS would require at least two other integration efforts and expansion to eighteen colleges. To complete integration of the TDMS into the primary education system, USAID expected the ministry to integrate its preservice and inservice training curricula, and reduce the number of teacher training colleges and rationalize their locations so that they adequately served all district education offices. In 1997, a U.S. consultant began to work with ministry officials to develop a national teacher education plan, which attempted to resolve, among other issues, the contentious decision of which twenty or so of the nearly seventy teacher training colleges the TDMS would bolster. That plan had not been implemented by the end of 1997.

Technical support to teachers was complemented by financial support. The government raised teachers' salaries significantly, and while USAID provided the impetus and the leadership, the government went far beyond even USAID's expectation. USAID gave the government budgetary support on the condition that government budgeted an increase in teachers' salaries the first year and actually spent that money on salaries the second year. To accomplish this, the ministry of finance had to allocate funds for salaries, the ministry of public service had to agree to raise the rates at which teachers were paid, and the ministry of education had to disburse the money and get paychecks into the hands of teachers.

Even with the combined will of the three ministries, some daunting hurdles remained. First, a new staff establishment formula had to be agreed upon. To this end, USAID convened two workshops at which all stakeholders put their concerns on the table and negotiated a plan. Next, all district offices had to identify which teachers were not on the payroll and which individuals on the payroll were not actually teaching. Working with these officials, USAID organized a head count in May 1994. Sending the message through radio, newspaper, and ministry circulars, ministry officials ordered every teacher and student to report to his or her school on the given day and be registered. This orchestrated effort led to a cleanup of the payroll of the ministry of public service, and the ministry of education found it had roughly four thousand fewer teachers to pay. This helped the government free up funds to raise salaries. While USAID had asked that salaries be raised to a "living wage" level within ten years, the government achieved the target within four years. Thus, implementation of a teacher training and support system and of increased salaries for teachers were success stories in Uganda.

The case of Malawi: The Malawian ministry of education and funding agencies, between 1988 and 1994, planned a gradual improvement of the primary teacher training program and the production of trained teachers. The ministry's 1985–95 plan called for the creation of a three-year teacher training program, which would include a nine-month practicum and a doubling of residency places for primary teacher trainees to around 4,000. The World Bank's second sector credit would help finance teacher training, and USAID provided budgetary assistance on the condition that the ministry make better use of teachers' colleges. A Bank-funded, one-year preservice training program, the Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Program (MASTEP), addressed the need for more and better trained teachers. Implementation of the program went slowly, due to logistical problems related to the hiring of trainers, preparation of materials, and field supervision.

After the introduction of free primary education in 1994, however, Malawi's need for trained teachers grew radically. Between July and September 1994, the ministry hired twenty-two thousand primary teachers, nearly doubling the teaching force, and gave them a two-week crash course. Almost immediately after the declaration of free primary education, the World Bank announced it would provide a fast-disbursing

$22.5 million "emergency" primary education project, whose components included, among other things, financing of a new Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Program (MIITEP) aimed at untrained teachers. New teachers, many with minimal qualifications, were hired and trained in a six-week course. Although the intent was that district-level ministry staff would supervise these teachers in the classroom for one year before certifying them, little supervision took place. The supervisors were not adequately prepared for the job and lacked transportation to visit schools. Other major contributions to primary level education included $12.6 million from the German government and $44.7 million from Britain to support, among other things, the MIITEP program and teacher development centers. But the program had been heavily financed by funding agencies, and there was no plan for how the ministry would sustain it after 2000, when the support would end.

The case of Ethiopia: Ethiopia's new education policy set out to address deficiencies in teacher training through a series of policy objectives that sought to improve teachers' professionalism and skills and to train them to teach new curricula in new ways in a variety of languages. Implementation of these new policies was mixed, as technical and supervisory support for teachers (who are asked to teach in radically different ways) varied across the country.

Ethiopia's decentralization program gave regional education bureaus virtually complete authority over teacher training institutes in their jurisdictions. Teacher training, which trained teachers for grades 1–6 of primary school, was provided by both teacher training institutes (TTIs) and colleges (TTCs). The former became one-year certificate programs designed to prepare teachers for the first primary cycle (grades 1–4). Policy changes enabled TTIs to prepare their own entrance examinations and apply their own entrance criteria. The ministry's responsibility was to issue recruitment guidelines, which regions would adapt to meet their needs. Regions were to work with zonal and woreda education offices to implement the guidelines. TTCs were to train teachers for the second cycle. Nearly every region retained at least one TTI, but not all had a TTC. While government declared these reforms largely independently of funding agencies, financial support for teacher training in each region depended largely on funding agencies.

Increasing community participation

In the early 1990s, community schools and community participation in schooling actually moved to the forefront of funding agencies' reform agendas. In 1994 in Ethiopia, USAID introduced a sizable community participation component as part of its reform support program. In Benin and Malawi, USAID added community school activities in later phases of the programs. The initial USAID Uganda program design also included a community mobilization school grants program, though much smaller than the one in Ethiopia.

The case of Ethiopia: The World Bank's plan for its seventh education loan (1988) to Ethiopia expressed the intent to involve community members in the construction of schools, but little, if anything, happened. In its 1994 ETP, the ministry stipulated community participation in the management and administration of schools through school committees. In support of this policy, USAID introduced pilot programs in Tigray and the SNNPR, with the goal of involving communities in a much broader range of school activities. These included school management and monitoring of staff performance as well as construction and maintenance of physical activities. USAID offered technical assistance and funding for an incentives grants program to schools. By late 1998, activities in both regions were showing success in involving communities in schools, though in Tigray community support was mostly limited to providing materials and labor for construction. Eventually, a border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea dampened these activities.

In SNNPR, the project flourished. With sanction from the regional education bureau (REB), CSAP school development agents (SDAs) worked with school committees to identify and prioritize school problems. Communities raised resources, which the CSAP supplemented when schools met progressively rigorous sets of criteria. CSAP's records and an evaluation conducted by USAID suggest that the project had successfully achieved many of its objectives. As of August 1998, CSAP was working in one hundred sixty-two out of approximately twenty-four hundred schools in the SNNPR. The first stage incentive had been awarded to one hundred schools, with thirty schools having fulfilled second stage criteria. School committees were becoming good "problem solvers," more systematic in their organization, better at raising funds, and more systematic in spending and accounting for money.

A number of communities reported heightened interest in matters of school quality. School committees found ways to encourage girls to stay in school. As a result, girls' enrollments and retention rates increased much more rapidly in CSAP schools than in others. In addition, average community contributions, measured in terms of in-kind material contributions, in-kind labor contributions, and direct financial contributions always exceeded and sometimes even quintupled the amount provided by the grant.

The case of Malawi: Policy and practices related to community participation in schools in Malawi have been highly variable. Malawi's policy on the involvement of local communities in schools via school committees was formulated in 1962 and amended in 1972. Before democracy, these committees could levy school maintenance fees, and therefore had substantial involvement in the financial management of school resources. But the transition to democracy in 1994 brought about a paradoxical popular response to these committees and other forms of community self-help. In its election campaigns, the opposition party gained considerable support by openly criticizing the government for the coercive use of "self-help" in community development. As in Uganda, the declaration of free primary education in 1994 further undermined popular commitment to school committees, as parents believed and expected that the government would now take over the full cost of primary education, and school maintenance would fall to district and central government. Commitment to self-help was further eroded by the rapid expansion of funding agency support of food-for-work school construction projects. Government efforts to reinvigorate school committees met with an additional problem: the work of such committees overlapped with a second government initiative to develop parent-teacher associations. Confusion arose over which of these two structures should collect local resources or be responsible for building maintenance.

In 1994, USAID took the notion of community participation a step further, funding a two-year community-based schools pilot project through Save the Children; UNICEF and NORAD provided further funding to spread the model. The pilot project aimed to help the ministry learn how it might provide better, cheaper, more efficient schools by eliminating such disincentives as distance to school, shortages of female teachers, lack of teachers from within the community, inappropriate schedules, and so on. The project aimed to distribute the costs of construction and maintenance more directly to parents. To allow these innovations, the government agreed to relax school building regulations, permit the hiring of teachers with only a primary certificate, and truncate the curriculum.

Although students in community schools appeared to perform better than those in government schools, questions arose about ongoing finance and levels of community participation. Initially, their efficiency and success seemed to depend on levels of management, supervision, and resources provided by Save the Children, none of which were easily replicable by the government itself. A USAID-funded study concluded that the community school model had done little to change the education system-community school relationship. In general, parents and communities were eager to participate, but their role was defined primarily in the areas of finance and management rather than improving the quality of instruction. By 1998, the implementers, however, had learned some lessons. Initially externally derived and funded, the model had had limited acknowledgment from the ministry. Over time, the community schools project strengthened dialogue with the central ministry and district education offices, resulting in increased attention to sustainability and to the generalizing of learning.

The case of Uganda: In Uganda, the relationship between communities and schools took some twists and turns in the 1990s. During and after the civil war of the 1980s, when the primary school system had all but broken down, schools relied completely on community support. Rising enrollments during that period reflect strong community backing. With the advent of the reform in the early 1990s, the government stepped in with more teachers, books, and other help. USAID initiated an activity called "community mobilization," which aimed to enhance the role of parents and others in improving school quality. The program included a module on the importance of educating girls. In 1994, USAID had planned to help the ministry manage the program at the national level, but by early 1995, had changed its strategy. It asked the ministry to assign a senior specialist in the office of teacher education and a staff member responsible for mobilization (as well as school management) at each of the ten colleges then being served. Each college, in turn, identified a volunteer community mobilizer at every school in its catchment area. By late 1997, these volunteers were being trained by the college community mobilizers.

In 1997, however, with the sudden advent of UPE, the ministry ordered parents not to contribute financially to primary schools, and many parents took this as an opportunity to end all support. The misguided enforcement of UPE policies by local politicians in some areas exacerbated the problem. High-level ministry officials neglected to coordinate their intent and their message with local officials, causing confusion and stalling many areas. Sometimes, however, resourceful officials used the opportunity to take initiative in setting constructive policies.

Decreasing repetition and improving efficiency

The case of Malawi: Internal efficiency, or the reduction of primary school repeaters and dropouts, was among the goals of the reform plans in all five countries. Only in Malawi, however, were policies formulated to improve efficiency directly. Children in Malawi (like those in many other African countries) were taking too many years to complete primary school. In early grades, they failed to progress from one standard to the next, and at standard 8 they failed the school leaving exam. The World Bank saw this inefficiency as a waste of resources. Thus, with its initial sector credit, the Bank negotiated with the ministry to introduce a new policy limiting repetition in Standard 8 to one time and to 5 percent of enrollment in all other classes. The government formally announced the policy in a 1990 circular, advising schools to enroll children at age 6 and help them complete by age 13. Up to this point, the ministry had neither targets nor sanctions for schools with high repetition rates. The ministry also declared a policy for selection of students at the secondary level. Seventy-five percent of incoming students were to be selected from among those who had not repeated standard 8; 20 percent from one-time repeaters, and 5 percent from multiple repeaters. To implement this policy, the ministry needed to track individual students, and thus instituted a primary pupil registration system. USAID supported the new policy by conditioning budgetary support on the reduction of repetition to 75 percent of 1988/89 levels by 1995/96. A consultant to USAID recommended in 1992 tighter use of government regulation accompanied by a closer monitoring system. By 1996 there were signs that the new repetition policy was receiving weak government support—circulars outlining the policy failed to reach schools and at the school level the ministry skirted enforcement. Parents and teachers continued to believe that repeating a grade was good for many students, as it gave learners a better chance to prepare for and pass exams, and so ignored the policy.

Summary of programs and policies implemented

So far this study has discussed the policies and programs implemented in each of the five countries. Because no ministry had nearly enough resources to implement all the policies and programs delineated in its reform plans, each undertook only a few, and successful implementation was even more limited. The ministries in all five countries successfully reallocated more funds to primary education. Yet some countries (especially Benin, Guinea, and Malawi) had difficulty translating those budgetary shifts into funds actually available for their programs. All of the ministries took direct measures to redefine the beneficiaries of education: Uganda and Malawi increased access for lower-income families by eliminating school fees; Benin, Guinea, and Malawi made significant efforts to improve girls' access. Each ministry made some progress in implementing new policies and programs in other areas, but with mixed success. Most attempted to train more teachers, but only a few tried to provide more ongoing support to teachers. Most began to revise the curriculum, though this effort has proceeded slowly. All improved the production and delivery of materials. Though all intended to improve planning and management capacity, few made gains in this area. None of the ministries had a well functioning EMIS or the ability to produce timely information about the school system. All did some restructuring of ministry offices, and all expanded the physical capacity of the system, though school construction programs fell behind schedule. Most made some effort to enhance community participation. One introduced pilot community schools and policies to directly reduce repetition.

The use of implementation instruments

We have reviewed the major reform goals and policies addressed in the reforms of our study. We turn now to look at how five different instruments, or tools, were used to implement those goals and policies. This analysis reveals patterns among ministries and funding agencies in what strategies they chose to reach their goals. The analysis also reveals which instruments served their purpose well and under what conditions. We have delineated five types of implementation instruments:[16]

- *Inducements*—payments or other economic incentives to change a policy or practice. Some governments gave economic incentives to families to send their children to school. The World Bank and USAID induced governments to adopt certain policies through conditional budgetary support.

- *Capacity building*—provision of technical assistance, training, facilities, equipment, supplies, and funding to cover the cost of specific new activities. This has been, traditionally, the instrument most often used by funding agencies to effect policy and program implementation.

- *Mandates*—orders to carry out a new policy. Only government agents have the authority to mandate system-wide policy change. Mandates usually

[16] Four of these were described by Lorraine M. McDonnell and Richard F. Elmore in "Getting the Job Done: Alternative Policy Instruments," in Allan R. Odden, ed., *Education Policy Implementation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).

require some kind of enforcement mechanism. Some mandates may require technical support for field implementers.

- *Transfer of authority*—restructuring or decentralizing ministry offices. Like mandates, funding agencies do not have this instrument as an option, though they can encourage and support governments to undertake such actions.

- *Dialogue*—persuasion that takes place between individuals or in the form of a national convention or campaign. Both ministry and funding agency officials can initiate and actively engage in dialogue with each other and with other stakeholders. In the context of funding agency support, dialogue is often associated with resources.

How were these instruments used for various purposes in the five countries of our study, and what were the effects of their use?

Inducements

Perhaps the most effective implementation tool, used to raise enrollments, was the abolition of school fees for all children in Malawi and Uganda and for girls in Benin. Lowering the cost of schooling to families provided them an economic and symbolic incentive that raised enrollments dramatically. Other instruments employed to encourage more children (in this case, girls) to enter school, such as social mobilization campaigns, paled in comparison to the aggregate force of abolishing school fees, but they may have contributed to enrollment of more difficult to reach groups of children.

At the funding agency level, USAID and the World Bank used the inducement instrument—non-project assistance—to encourage governments to move more funding into primary education. The inducement strategy had mixed success. In Uganda, USAID's NPA helped the government raise teachers' salaries. The government favored such a policy, and with the leverage of financial support was able to go far beyond what USAID stipulated in the salary increases it instituted over the years. NPA was less effective in other instances. In Benin, USAID hesitated for many years to enforce the conditions it placed on budgetary support, and over a period of a few years, the ministry decided it had little to lose by ignoring the policy agenda it had agreed to. In Guinea, conditional budgetary support eventually proved to be ineffective when the government could not come up with the revenues it had projected to increase support to primary education. In addition, the U.S.

ambassador halted NPA to show disapproval of the government's conduct in elections. In Malawi, USAID created over forty conditions for budgetary support, many of which the ministry had neither the capacity nor the will to meet. Eventually, USAID ceased to use NPA as an implementation tool in Benin, Malawi, and Guinea. In addition to the problems cited here, USAID had difficulty accounting to the U.S. Congress for how the funds were spent. These problems gave NPA a bad reputation in some quarters. The World Bank eventually moved away from the use of conditioned budgetary support toward the use of sector credits for some of these same reasons.

Capacity building

Capacity building was effectively a funding agency tool because governments generally lacked the resources to do more than maintain a minimal basic education system. In the five countries under study here, bilateral funding agencies, including USAID and the British, French, and other assistance agencies, relied heavily on capacity building as their implementation instrument. USAID used technical assistance and training most successfully in Uganda to build a teacher development and management system, in Malawi to mount a gender-appropriate curriculum unit and a social mobilization campaign, and in Ethiopia to assist two regions in curriculum development, teacher training, school management training, management and budgeting, and community support to schools. The World Bank used technical assistance to a much lesser extent.

In addition to providing technical assistance, USAID helped build capacity through the provision of training, equipment, materials, and supplies. USAID and the World Bank used all of these resources to complement technical assistance and to provide ministries with civil works and capital goods they could not otherwise afford. Without training, equipment, materials, and supplies, most reform efforts would have been stymied from the start. However, some of these resources were wasted. Most notably, hours of training and banks of computers in planning departments often failed to lead to the consistent use of information in decisionmaking. Thousands of textbooks disappeared, and vehicles went into disrepair or were confiscated. While ministry capacity was enhanced in many concrete ways, in none of the five countries did funding agencies succeed in meeting their targets for the development of an enduring capacity of ministry offices to formulate and manage reform programs envisioned by reform planners.

Considering the effort funding agencies put into helping ministries build their capacity to manage the basic education system, why did progress fall so short of expectations? Funding agencies wanted to see ministries dramatically improve their systems for managing and utilizing resources. Ministries, in contrast, focused on getting more resources. What funding agencies saw as long-term capital investments ministries viewed as windfalls. While disappointing from USAID's standpoint, this perception was not unreasonable: a high ranking government official, after all, did not know how long he or she would be in office, and there was incentive to use resources right away in a visible manner for political gain. Moreover, funding agencies often shift priorities and amounts of funding. Thus, neither ministries nor funding agencies provided adequate incentives for good management and capacity building. In spite of its relative importance as a funding agency instrument of implementation, capacity-building efforts proved ineffective in many instances.

Mandates

Ministries used mandates in a number of instances to implement policies, but mandates were successful only when accompanied by some form of incentive and/or enforcement mechanism. The government of Uganda successfully mandated universal primary education because, by lowering the cost of schooling, it provided economic incentives to parents that coincided with parents' own desires to send their children to school. From the perspective of schools and teachers, on the other hand, the mandates were not wholeheartedly welcomed, because they deprived schools of an important source of funds—fees paid by parents. As the president considered the policy high priority, he took steps to enforce it. Local politicians in his party made sure that schools did not charge fees or put parents to work in order for their children to attend school. The president also appointed a political friend within the ministry to see that the mandate was carried out.

The government of Malawi, in order to meet a condition of budgetary support from USAID, mandated several policies that the funding agency favored, including limitations on grade-level repetition and more favorable treatment of schoolgirls who became pregnant. Yet the ministry took no special measures to enforce these policy mandates, and an in-depth study of events in Malawi revealed that the mandates had little effect at the school level except where they coincided with what school officials wanted to do anyway.[17]

[17] Wolf, op. cit.

Transfer of authority

Authority was transferred through both decentralization and restructuring of ministry functions or offices. Ethiopia successfully decentralized authority for the administration of primary education to regional and district offices. Decentralization resulted in better system responsiveness to regional needs and forced the central ministry of education to redefine its role vis-a-vis primary education. In Benin, USAID urged the ministry to decentralize authority and funding in terms of its Fundamental Quality Levels program, but central offices were unwilling to release the funds.

Benin, Guinea, and Malawi reorganized their ministries, but only in Guinea did the restructuring serve to implement reform programs. During the first phase of the reform, the ministry created several new units to oversee and manage reform activities. Some provided political guidance, while others were technical. Restructuring was an effective instrument—as long as it lasted. In 1996, after about six years of reform activities, a political crisis forced out several ministers, including the minister of education, who had provided strong leadership to the new units. The leadership vacuum weakened them to some extent. A crisis within the ministry one year later led to a second restructuring of the ministry, and though the reform committees remained intact, their strength was further eroded.

Uganda and Malawi had not, by 1998, used transfer of authority as an implementation tool. Uganda's ministry of education failed to implement a reorganization plan, but the TDMS effectively worked around the ministry by giving authority to teacher training colleges rather than central or district offices. In Malawi, funding agencies began a pilot community schools program with the hope that the ministry might eventually restructure some operations to accommodate those schools, but that was slow to happen.

Dialogue on the issues

The effective use of dialogue as an implementation instrument was more difficult to discern than the use of other instruments, because it takes place informally and often behind closed doors. Nevertheless, there is evidence that funding agencies used this tool effectively in several instances. Most notably, ministry staff and funding agencies in Guinea worked closely during both the formulation and early implementation phases of the PASE, leading to impressive achievements. Ministry and funding agency officials in Uganda met frequently with stakeholders on the issue of how to get more and better textbooks into classrooms. The result of the dialogue was the liberalization of the textbook market, an outcome that could not have occurred if public discussion of the issue had not been thoughtfully structured. In Malawi, a well attended event on girls' education provided an impetus to public support for new policies and programs that a few women in the country wanted to promote and USAID wanted to support. Dialogue was used successfully for other purposes as well. In Guinea, ministry officials implementing the PASE held mass media campaigns and local village meetings to implement a redeployment of teachers and to persuade more girls to enter school. In Uganda, USAID fostered dialogue among key officials in the ministries of education, finance, and civil service to move toward agreement on how to raise teachers' salaries.

In several cases, funding agencies and governments became more adept over time at using dialogue. In the early 1990s, when Ethiopia was negotiating its BESO project with USAID, government and donor officials failed to engage sufficiently with regional education officials in dialogue over the latter's needs and expectations. During implementation of the program, USAID recognized the need for a concerted effort to negotiate directly with regional officials. In the late 1990s, when the ministry began planning a large-scale Education Sector Development Plan, it held extensive meetings with regional administrative and education officials as well as with funding agencies. These meetings were necessary, because government's decentralization of services had seriously taken hold by then, and no programs could be implemented without the full participation of regional officials. In Malawi, USAID's negotiations during the early 1990s often took place with only a small number of government officials—probably a legacy of the concentration of authority under the predemocratic regime. Sometimes, as in the case of the community schools project, this prevented pilot efforts from gaining acceptance within the ministry. In later years, government included a much broader group of stakeholders in its planning with funding agencies.

Sometimes, however, dialogue was unsuccessful as an implementation tool. In Benin, the dialogue among the education elite that went on for years during the reform policy formulation phase faltered when the ministry took over the fifteen action plans. USAID was frustrated in its attempts to reach agreement with the ministry on which policies and programs to implement and how. In Uganda, funding agencies could not engage the government in dialogue about the president's UPE mandate. In some instances, dialogue could have been an effective tool, but it was underused. We shall look at this phenomenon in the next section on actors.

Summary of the use of implementation instruments

Funding agencies and governments used five sorts of instruments—or tools—to implement reforms: inducements, capacity building, mandates, transfer of authority, and dialogue. While discussion of implementation instruments cannot be completely disentangled from discussion of the actors who used—or did not use—those instruments, assessing the use of instruments helps to illuminate similarities and differences in the ways in which reform measures have been implemented. For almost every reform purpose, funding agencies relied mainly on the tools of inducement and capacity building. Their use of these instruments met with mixed success. Ministry officials used inducements successfully to implement policies of increasing children's access to school. They also used mandates, but mandates were successful only when they were enforced. Dialogue seems to have played a critical and increasingly prominent role in implementation. As funding agencies have sought to coordinate initiatives and locate them within the framework of an overarching host government plan, the use of dialogue increased. Dialogue was much less frequently used to develop priorities among multiple, potentially conflicting policy choices. The tool of transferring authority was not often used; it was not available to funding agencies and was unpopular with ministry officials.

Overall, ministry and funding agency officials did not give sufficient thought to their choice of tools in implementing various policies and programs. Funding agencies fell back on conventional uses of capacity building and the more novel use of inducement, and ministries relied primarily on mandates. While these tools were not always effective for every purpose, we did learn that a combination of tools was more likely to lead to success.

How the actors influenced implementation

Having analyzed the technical aspects of implementation—the content of the reform plans—we now move to the political realm and look at the actors who used these implementation instruments and explore their interactions.

Implementing public policy in most African countries is a process of resolving competing political priorities. Grindle has argued that this may be more true in Africa and other developing parts of the world than in industrialized countries.[18] Political parties and interest groups that aggregate public opinion and feed it into the

[18] Merilee Serrill Grindle, ed. *Politics and Policy Implementation in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

policy formation process in industrialized countries are weaker in developing countries. Political and administrative leaders often see popular participation as illegitimate or inefficient, even though government policies have widespread and profound influence on the economic and social aspects of life. Thus, while individuals have little chance to influence policy formation, they feel its effects and search for ways to influence events during its implementation at the local level. They impose their will on those empowered to distribute benefits, who, in turn, exercise their power by being responsive directly to their constituents, even while sometimes diverting the resources under their control away from the policy goals.[19]

In the five countries in this study, the participation in policy formulation of teachers, parents, and midlevel ministry officials was generally limited to brief conferences or blitz information sessions. During the policy *formulation* phase, even high-level ministry officials appear to have been reticent to push their interests, political or otherwise, in challenging funding agencies, which held substantial discretionary resources and had definite, though broad, agendas. Thus, the various actors in a reform—ministry staff, teachers, parents, and funding agencies—tended to express their priorities during the *implementation* phase.

In this section, we look at how the actors redefined the reform agenda as it was implemented. Who took on leadership roles? How and why? How did those who were not in leadership positions support or frustrate reform activities?

Actors who championed—or resisted—reforms

Because basic reform goals were so broadly defined, the politics of prioritizing took place during implementation, when leadership roles were defined. Those involved in implementation, whether or not they were involved in formulation, had a major role in determining what would take priority and, to some extent, how those priorities would be implemented. Those who represented funding agencies generally had an important early opportunity to set the agenda, because of the resources they controlled. But sooner or later, ministry or other government officials stepped in, either up-front or behind the scenes, and asserted their own priorities.

Donor agents clearly took the lead in implementing the agenda in Uganda, where USAID had a strong presence within the ministry. USAID spearheaded the implementation of the TDMS as the first order of business on the agenda. Much of

[19] Ibid.

the education agenda in Malawi was led by funding agencies. In Ethiopia, though the government kept a firm hand on reform activities at the central level, a large USAID contingent took the first steps to initiate a range of activities in two regions. In Benin, USAID had fewer technical assistants on the ground than it did in either Uganda or Ethiopia, and the agency was reluctant to push the ministry to implement action plans. In Guinea, funding agencies formed a strong partnership with ministry officials in early years of the reform, but in its second phase, various funding agencies took over leadership of defined activities.

How did ministries respond to funding agency initiatives? In Malawi and Uganda, ministry leaders were content for several years to let the funding agencies lead. In Malawi, agencies within and beyond the education sector followed USAID's lead in the successful development of a social mobilization campaign, and the ministry official appointed to head the new Gender Awareness Committee did an exemplary job. Planning officials worked hard to comply with USAID's many requirements for disbursement of NPA. In Uganda, midlevel officials agreed with USAID to establish the National Primary Education Reform Program Management Committee (NPERPMC) to coordinate reform efforts and advise the minister. Teacher training college administrators and lecturers in pilot districts worked hard to implement the new program. District-level officials and ministry technicians in Kampala, whose offices were affected by USAID activities, also did their part.

In Benin and Ethiopia, however, resistance was almost immediate. USAID's highest priority in Benin was to implement the fifteen action plans, particularly the FQL action plan that called for decentralization of authority and resources to lower levels of the system. Ministry officials held tenaciously to their budgets and to their authority to decide how funds flowed through the system. On other matters too, the ministry ignored USAID's advice, eliminating, for example, school fees for girls, though USAID argued that the ministry could not afford to lose the revenue. It used funds programmed for systemic teacher training reform to give easily earned certification and bonuses to teachers. In these cases, ministry officials had either not prevailed or simply kept quiet during the policy formulation phase, and waited until the implementation phase to assert their priorities. The minister himself believed his actions were, from a technical standpoint, best for the reform agenda. And there was the political necessity of providing visible goods and services to the people during an election period.

In Ethiopia, resistance came less from the central ministry, where officials had negotiated and agreed on policies and priorities with USAID, than from the regional level, where officials had had little say about these matters. When the central office decided to reduce the budgets of regional offices by the amount of foreign technical assistance they were receiving—largely in the form of personnel and associated expenses, the regional offices felt they had been cheated out of money they could control in exchange for goods and services they could not control. They refused to cooperate with parts of the program until USAID initiated a renegotiation of technical assistance with officials currently in office. Even so, in central ministry offices there was resistance for several years to the attempts of a policy analyst to introduce new programs. More headway was made when a second policy analyst, who was more responsive to the ministry's interests, began work. At both central and regional levels, expatriate technical advisors faced difficulties until they had established strong working relationships with their counterparts. In some cases, these relationships were never established, and advisors left.

Resistance to funding agency priorities (those of both USAID and the World Bank) in Malawi and Uganda came only later, and not from the ministries but from the presidents of the countries. Facing the first democratic elections in many years, political candidates in both countries were almost forced to promise free primary education, and, when elected, honored their promises. In Malawi, the World Bank and other funding agencies were quick to respond to the doubling of enrollments with more financing. USAID, which had already indicated its agreement to such a policy by urging the government to eliminate school fees for many girls, also adjusted its program. In Uganda, the World Bank quickly responded with additional funding, but USAID was reluctant to support to the UPE policy until the government addressed the problem of financing it.

Within a year of the presidential mandate for free primary education, funding agencies in Malawi and in Uganda had begun to reconcile their differences with the ministries over policy matters by engaging in a large scale process of reformulating policies and priorities. Government officials had asserted leadership in the reform, and funding agents were ready to share leadership. Stakeholders in each country sat down to develop a sector investment plan—the label given to a reform that considers policies and programs in view of available long term funding. Malawi began in 1995, Uganda in 1997. By mid-1998 neither had developed a plan acceptable to both government and funding agencies. But the practice of shared leadership for reform appeared to be growing stronger.

Ethiopia began in the late 1990s to develop a sector investment plan in which all funding agencies cooperate with the ministry. Ethiopia's plan emerged not from conflict between government and funding agencies over policies, as in Malawi and Uganda, but from the institution of decentralized education services and the complexity that decentralization added to reform efforts. Funding agencies recognized the need to coordinate efforts in the face of this complexity, and the minister was willing to take the lead in a coordinated effort.

In terms of the dynamic of leadership among ministry and funding agency officials, Guinea stands out among the five cases. Guinea formulated and began implementation of its reform with strong leadership by the minister and good cooperation among the ministry and the three key funding agencies, the World Bank, USAID, and the French Cooperation agency. After several years, however, with the departure of the minister, collaboration among these parties virtually ceased, and what had been a coordinated reform effort became a collection of discrete activities. Ministry officials seemed to have little understanding of the rationale for most projects, and funding agencies were not well informed of what others were doing. In some ways, the dynamic of reform in Guinea has been the reverse of that in Ethiopia. While Ethiopia has steadily developed a more concerted reform effort under the minister's leadership, Guinea's reform suffered during the years following the departure of a strong minister as leader.

Leadership issues of some sort were pervasive at every level of education systems undergoing reform. Often, whether or not a policy or program was implemented depended on how well those who considered it important related to those who were in a position to act. This was apparent, for instance, in Ethiopia, where the personalities and characteristics of key players, particularly in potentially sensitive or powerful positions, were extremely important. Personality was cited by many as one of the important factors distinguishing more and less successful expatriate technical advisors in USAID's BESO project. Almost all expatriate advisors found that much of their initial work involved developing good relationships with counterparts in the ministry. Once advisors established good working relationships with their Ethiopian counterparts, their technical qualifications became important. The regional education bureaus found some expatriate advisors useful enough to extend for an additional two years, but asked other advisors to leave. In sum, political considerations and personalities weighed as heavily—or more so—than technical considerations in determining what policies and programs were implemented, and how. We look now at some of the forces behind the political positions of various sets of actors.

Ministry actors

Why have ministry officials not played more of a leadership role in the reforms? One response is that they depend on funding agency financing and therefore let funding agencies take the lead. But that response is only partly accurate. It is true that in Uganda, Ethiopia, and Malawi, where USAID technical assistance had a strong presence, the agency managed the implementation of its own programs. But the World Bank, which provided minimal in-country technical assistance, expected the ministry to manage the implementation of loan-funded programs. Many ministries lacked sufficient resources to take a leadership role—staff, computers, and photocopy machines. A more fundamental problem was that government officials—in the ministry of education and in other ministries—often lacked needed managerial skills. In most cases, the changes taking place in both the ministries themselves as well in the external environments, made it very difficult for individuals to assume a leadership role. In Ethiopia, for example, virtually all functions related to primary education were transferred to the regional bureaus, entailing, necessarily, a great deal of learning on the part of new managers. In many cases, reform involved ministry officials learning the skills they needed to carry out the reform at the same time they were carrying out the day-to-day business of the ministry. Even more critically, ministry officials often worked in institutional climates that discouraged taking the authority to make decisions, delegating responsibility, or trusting the institution to support individual actions.[20] Ministry staff, especially at subnational levels, were often teachers who had been promoted, but had received no preservice training in their responsibilities. Many of those for whom they worked were also untrained. Therefore, good practice depended on individuals with good instincts and the authority to follow their instincts.

Sometimes only the minister made decisions of any significance. Without seeking the input of his staff, he gave orders impossible to carry out and did not encourage counterproposals. Officials who overstepped permissible bounds of initiative or who refused to carry out an order risked dismissal. Since few civil servants had the financial freedom to risk being fired or to pursue work opportunities elsewhere, they carefully avoided these mistakes. The wise bureaucrat, we were told several times, is better off doing nothing than risking the wrong decision, even a small one.

[20] Though time and opportunity to study the bureaucratic climate in the five case countries was limited, the authors obtained evidence that explains why leadership was weak in education ministries, and have presented this evidence in general terms, choosing to avoid singling out any individual.

In countries where ministry officials were less constrained by threats of dismissal, they found themselves overwhelmed with inconsequential tasks. Even the smallest decisions required myriad clearances and approvals, so paperwork consumed much time. In addition, officials spent hours trying to line up a vehicle for a trip out of the office. The scarcity of copy machines and telephones made even simple tasks take a long time. Donor agents, in contrast, working far from headquarters, had more freedom from supervision to make decisions and delegate responsibility. They had the equipment to move around, to communicate internationally, and to produce and distribute documents rapidly. If they lacked resources, they often had the means to seek them from outside the country. Leadership, by default, often fell to them.

Funding agency actors

Even while they were in leadership roles, funding agency officials chafed at their own agencies' policies and practices. USAID, for example, adopted NPA with the attitude that it would develop African capacity by allowing ministries to implement policies with more autonomy; on the other hand, USAID continued to push ministries to comply with its calendar and requirements. Headquarters' need to get projects started and to demonstrate results conflicted with needs on the ground to move slowly, consult local counterparts, and develop personal relationships among technical expatriate project staff and education officials. USAID staff, contractors, and even ministry partners spent a large portion of their efforts satisfying USAID reporting requirements.

These constraints on funding agents were not without effect on their government partners. Funding agencies appeared incoherent to ministry officials. They jockeyed with each other for prominence, and there was generally little consistency among funding agency agendas, and funding agencies sometimes competed for a ministry's acceptance of the policies they were advocating. Agencies required ministries to follow their procedures and they were not consistent in their requirements. Ministries thus had difficulty responding. For example, the World Bank asked the government to manage competitive bidding, while USAID insisted on selecting vendors. Agency procedures for monitoring and evaluation varied as well.

Local-level actors

Local level actors, especially teachers, are, in the long run, critical to implementing reform policies and programs. Only some reform measures, however, have reached schools and given teachers more resources. In Uganda, teachers' salaries have been substantially increased. Teachers in the districts where the TDMS was implemented have received inservice training and refresher courses, and many have received more books for students. In Guinea, many teachers received salary increases, and those who moved to rural schools received other amenities such as housing. In Ethiopia, new teachers are attending improved training colleges, some head teachers received management training, and many schools received new textbooks. In Malawi, teachers have a new curriculum and textbooks, and some have received better training. In Benin, teachers have enjoyed bonuses for several years, and many schools have new furniture. Whether these resources have helped teachers improve their teaching practices, however, has been difficult to determine.

In some instances, teachers have openly resisted reforms. In Benin, teachers have powerful unions that have helped them keep at bay policies they oppose. It is often more the threat of what teachers *might* do than their actual resistance that keeps the ministry from proposing some policies. In Guinea, teachers' unions are less well established, but they showed their muscle when the ministry failed to pay contract teachers on time.

School directors were often asked to enforce policies. In Uganda and Malawi, they had to enforce policies that made their work more difficult, such as accept more students without being given additional resources to teach them. In Malawi, the ministry asked school directors to enforce several policies that resulted from USAID's conditional budgetary supporte, e.g., introducing practices to reduce repetition rates. Some schools implemented these policies, but most either misunderstood or chose not to implement them.[21] School directors in Malawi and Uganda were asked to appoint school committees. Our informal sampling of schools, along with a more systematic study in Malawi,[22] indicates that most schools appointed committees, but many committees have been slow to begin functioning.

How the economic, political, and ideological contexts influenced implementation

The actors and the reform plans they implemented did not, of course, work in a vacuum. The formulation of policies and programs, and every decision made on how to implement them, was influenced by the political, economic, and ideological context in which events took place. Usually, however, the context was constantly

[21] Joy Wolf, Grace Lang, L.L. Bekett Mount, and Diane VanBelle-Prouty, *Where Policy Hits the Ground: Implementation Processes in Malawi and Namibia* (Washington, DC: USAID, 1999).
[22] Ibid.

undergoing change, which necessitated making implementation decisions that had been not contemplated during the planning phases. At times, the plans themselves reflected a critical misreading of the political or economic environment, which meant that those implementing the plans had to deviate significantly.[23]

Economic context

This report has already discussed the inability of the reform plans to determine accurately how policies and programs would be funded—a failure to acknowledge the reality of the economic context. None of the governments could have realistically projected sufficient revenue growth to allow the ministry of education to provide a quality basic education for all children within the five-to-ten-year framework of a funding agency-supported reform. Yet all plans implicitly assumed such growth.

What trends in the economic environment did each country actually experience? What effect did those changes have on the implementation of the reforms? The most dramatic effect of macroeconomic failure was in Guinea, where the government had tightly linked expected increases in the funding of primary education to projected revenue growth and more efficient management of government resources. In fact, a deficit in the treasury, brought about by the lack of internal resources of the national budget, prevented the government from contributing its share of financing on schedule. This event, repeated for several years, was a key factor in funding agencies' decision to abandon a strategy of comprehensive, government-led reform and to retreat to projects they could manage more closely.

Uganda, in contrast, experienced strong economic growth between 1992 and 1999. The rise in GDP averaged 5.8 percent between 1987 and 1994 and reached 10 percent in 1996. This growth allowed the ministry to raise teachers' salaries for several years beginning in 1993. It also, no doubt, encouraged the president to declare the UPE policy in 1996 and allowed the ministry of education to make capitation grants to schools in 1997. Despite increased revenues, however, the ministry did not believe it had sufficient funds to hire more teachers when UPE was announced, and it turned to funding agencies for support.

Between the extremes of Guinea and Uganda, Benin, Ethiopia, and Malawi undertook reforms in an economic context that saw mild ups and downs in annual

[23] We spent relatively less time looking at context issues, because these have been analyzed by others. See, for example, DeStefano, Hartwell, and Tietjen, 1995, op. cit.

government revenues.[24] Benin, which was bankrupt when reform planning began, saw some increase after 1990. Malawi's economy suffered when South Africa ushered in a post-apartheid government and drew away foreign capital. Since mid-1998, Ethiopia diverted funding to cover the expenses of its war with Eritrea.

Political context

Shortly before or during the course of its basic education reform, each country in this study held its first democratic election following years of authoritarian rule. Benin elected President Soglo in 1990, following the nation's sharp break with its Marxist past. Guinea elected President Conté in 1993, following more than a decade of strict socialism, which waned only two years prior to the election. President Banda of Malawi was defeated in 1994 after thirty years of autocratic rule. After many years of civil war and the toppling of a military government, Ethiopia held an election in 1995. In Uganda, President Museveni, who had run the country since his military victory over opponents in 1986, was elected by popular vote in 1996. The democratization process had a profound effect on the education reforms in four of the countries. Most obvious was the pressure on presidential candidates in Malawi and Uganda to promise free primary education. In Uganda, the president had also to contend with newly elected members of Parliament who were dissatisfied with huge increases in enrollment that were unmatched by increases in teachers and other resources. Politics also extended to the district level, where local politicians saw their power grow as a result of decentralized services and budgets. In some districts, UPE became a local political issue, as members of the president's party asserted themselves as enforcers of his policy without sufficiently understanding its implication for school directors and their management.

Ethiopia's decentralization was an explicit policy goal of the party that won the civil war, oversaw the drafting of a new constitution, and won the subsequent election. Ministers of education, who hold their positions only at the will of the prime minister, have been very active in campaign politics. In Benin, both ministers of education campaigned fiercely. One even created his own political party, and both used education ministry resources to woo voters. In most countries, many but not all local and national level politicians used some of their share of the ministry's budget for political purposes, thus diminishing the resources available to schools. Guinea's

[24] World Bank data show the following average annual percentage growth in GDP per capita between 1987 and 1997: Uganda, 3.3 percent; Guinea, 1.6 percent; Ethiopia, 0.5 percent; Malawi, 0.5 percent; and Benin, 0.2 percent. These rates were probably higher for Ethiopia and Uganda in the later years of that ten-year period.

minister in 1994 managed to keep teachers out of political activities during election time. In 1998, however, the situation was more like that of Benin, and teachers and administrators took the time to pay their political dues.

Ideological context

Samoff has written persuasively that sectoral assessments—analyses conducted primarily by international funding agencies—had consistently recurring themes and recommendations, despite critical differences among the many countries in which they were conducted.[25] Similarly, this study has revealed consistencies among reform goals and implementation experiences. Much of this consistency is due to the strong influence of the thinking of international funding agencies. In 1990, the agenda of international agencies was presented in full force at the Education for All conference in Jomtien, Thailand, and the legacy of that conference and related activities was a powerful force in planning and implementing basic education reforms. Indeed, ministry officials in the five countries of this study implemented their reforms in an ideological context dominated by the assumptions, attitudes, and priorities of the international development community. Representatives of international agencies, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and bilateral agencies of North America, Western Europe, and Japan, were continually sharing information at conferences, through documents, and in collaboration on country-specific programs. Thus, reform plans were biased toward policies of equitable distribution of resources, rational planning and management, and improving internal efficiency of schools. In addition, the plans placed high value on other funding agency priorities, especially classrooms, textbooks, and trained teachers. In mid-decade, the international community became keenly interested in increasing community support to schools, and pressured ministries in Malawi, Benin, and Ethiopia to introduce or enhance programs of that kind. A similar trend developed to promote dialogue among stakeholders within a country as well as between ministries and funding agencies. Other interests sometimes hijacked such dialogue—inherently fragile given the unequal power relationships among partners.

Governments were also subject to shifting ideologies among funding agencies concerning which policy instruments were appropriate. In the early reform years (around 1990), USAID made NPA (a type of inducement) a central tool of all new education programs in Africa. When use of NPA led to problems in some programs, USAID withdrew it completely from those countries. Similarly, in later years the

[25] Joel Samoff, "Defining What Is and What Is Not an Issue: An Analysis of Assistance Agency Africa Education Sector Studies," presented at the Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society (Anaheim, CA, March 1990).

World Bank shifted away from sector adjustment programs, which had been a mainstay of education programs early in the decade. Ministries of education appear to have had little, if any, voice in funding agencies' formulation of policies in this critical dimension of support strategies.

Conclusions: What a new reform paradigm might look like

After considerable review of the literature on education reform implementation programs, the development of an analytical framework, and the analysis of basic education reform programs in Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi, and Uganda, we suggest that the following lessons, assumptions, and preferences be considered for incorporation into ongoing and future education reforms in sub-Saharan Africa:

1. To be successful, *a full-scale reform requires complementary long-term agreements* between the government and funding agencies. Unless this condition is met, the financial and human resources available to implement a full-scale reform will fall short, and stakeholders will struggle over priorities during the implementation of underfunded comprehensive plans.

2. *The reform process is ongoing,* without a precise beginning or targeted end. Policies and programs should evolve as new information and ideas emerge. Between the extremes of full-scale reform planning prior to implementation on the one hand, and uncoordinated, donor-driven projects on the other, is the option of policy changes and projects that are thoughtfully integrated into the existing system, which adjusts, as needed, to incorporate them.

3. Implementation research studies of programs and projects with social goals have shown that it is *the political dimensions of a reform as well as the technical ones that make or break it.* We need to pay more attention to the dynamics of reform implementation: whether the contents of policies and programs proposed are consistent and feasible, which implementation instruments are most suitable, who the leaders and other actors are, what their attitudes toward reform plans are, and what contextual factors are influencing the content of the reform and the actors.

4. *Policies and programs should be driven by the will and preferences of schools and communities and regional and district officials, not just central planners.*

Education ministries benefit from help developing their capacity to identify and support local, innovative solutions to problems. Ministries should work toward creating and managing education systems that respond to and support such local solutions. A corollary to this point is that in a context of resource scarcity and insufficient capacity, tradeoffs are inevitable, whether agreed to up front or during implementation. In both instances, decisionmaking should involve all those concerned rather than just the more powerful.

5. *There is no single solution for every context.* Competition among policies, plans, and programs will produce innovative solutions most likely to endure.

6. *There are at least five kinds of instruments that can serve to implement policies and programs:* inducements, capacity-building, mandates, transfer of authority, and dialogue. Each works well for some purposes and under some conditions. Thus, implementers must choose the right combination of instruments for each case.

7. Because they bring the resources, funding agencies such as USAID and the World Bank, in fact, are in leadership positions. To deny this is to distort the reality of the implementation process. *The challenge for funding agencies is to recognize the right time to exert their leadership* and the right time to relinquish leadership and support, rather than dominate or quash, local improvements.

8. *Reforms implemented under conditions of political instability, insecurity, and lack of trust among stakeholders are unlikely to succeed.*

9. In the African context, *personal relationships and politics may be just as critical to implementation as are data and agreements.*

We note some outstanding examples of education reform successes. In Malawi and Uganda, for example, the practice of shared leadership among funding agencies, ministry officials, and stakeholders at all levels of the education system appeared to be growing stronger. In Ethiopia, decentralization led to better system responsiveness to regional needs and forced the central ministry of education to redefine its role vis-a-vis primary education. And in Uganda, the implementation of a teacher training and support system and of increased salaries for teachers were big successes.

Despite these successes, the conclusion of this analysis is that policymakers may have been relying too heavily on a single model of reform to plan and implement basic education reforms. The systematic implementation of a reform based on a technical, comprehensive plan for giving every child a high quality basic education does not accurately describe what has taken place in the five case-study countries. However, many policies and programs have been successfully implemented, but in a piecemeal manner, not as comprehensive, coordinated reforms based on technically sound plans developed by the ministry and supported by funding agencies.

A major impediment to the implementation of the reform plans was inadequate resources. Governments and funding agencies established timeframes that were too short and made assumptions about economic growth that were too optimistic. And neither government nor funding agencies took into full account the weak capacity of ministries to implement such ambitious plans.

But even if the time, funds, and other resources had been adequate, it is still unlikely the reforms would have been implemented as planned, because the process of implementing social and economic programs is not linear—there is more to the process than a systematic execution of a plan. Nevertheless, in the five case studies, basic education reforms were conceived as plans to be executed as designed and planners tended to treat reform formulation and reform implementation as separate events. In Uganda, Benin, and Ethiopia, the reforms followed radical changes in government and were designed by new governments ready to break with their predecessors. In Uganda, the formulation phase ended in 1992 when the White Paper was approved and agreements signed between government and funding agencies. In Benin, it ended in 1991 when the government and USAID signed off on the action plans. In Ethiopia, the reform was introduced in 1994, when the government issued a new education and training policy. Later that year, the government signed an agreement with USAID. Guinea's reform was outlined for the first time in the EPD of 1989 and the second time in the declaration of 1993. Only in Malawi was the demarcation line less clear, because the government, in close collaboration with the World Bank, issued plans just every ten years. USAID, however, claimed to be supporting the government's own "reform" when it initiated programmatic support in 1991.

In sum, in each of these countries, funding agencies said they were supporting a plan for reform already formulated by government. But, in fact, actual policy formulation came at moments of opportunity during implementation. The first such moments were when funding agencies offered budgetary support conditional upon governments' adoption of policies and programs that funding agencies favored. Later on in the implementation phase, major policies were reformulated when a president found it politically prudent to declare free primary education, or when a minister sensed the need to immediately give teachers a bonus instead of developing an inservice training system. Funding agencies introduced other policies and programs during the implementation phase, such as rerouting channels of authority to develop a new teacher support system, or introducing community schools as a means of making education more accessible to girls.

We borrow a metaphor from Larry Cuban to describe the assumptions underlying the initially planned reforms in the case-study countries.[26] The reformers were, to some extent, attempting to build *factories*, using blueprints, rather than *farms*, using seeds, fertilizer, soil, and weather. They saw their challenge as building an efficient factory—to "get the right policies." Once reform policies were in place, they hoped the system would function more or less mechanically. What the case studies have shown, however, is that whether the various activities thrived or failed depended on how well "farmers" nurtured each reform during the implementation phase.

What are the implications of this conclusion? We propose a choice between two directions. One is to continue to search for even more comprehensive plans, and to redouble efforts to get government and funding agencies to work together in lockstep. This seems to be the current trend. The other direction is to search for alternatives that would allow for more diversified attempts to reach more limited objectives. They might be less centralized, relying less on design at the outset, and be more organic. They would allow more room for politics and negotiation after the initial framework has been approved. Instead of designing an entire improved system, such an approach might experiment with more organic processes for learning how to "grow" an improved education system. Such a strategy might foster more decentralized, choice-driven policies and programs. They might be less rational, from a Western perspective, providing more space for African creativity and innovation and for the development of relationships between those with different kinds of expertise—central and theoretical and local and grounded.

One alternative, for example, might be called the *diffusion-of-innovation paradigm*, which describes how a single policy, program, or practice becomes diffused

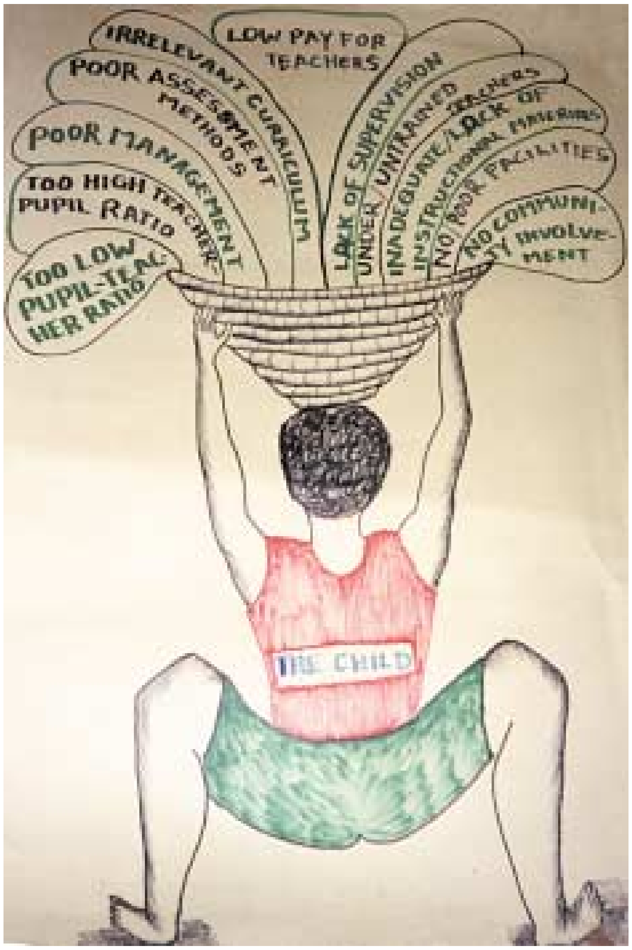
[26] Cuban, op. cit.

throughout a system or among many systems.[27] The emphasis would not be on preparing a plan in which all parts fit together but on supporting small-scale successes. This means that promising innovations would be protected, supported, and publicized. The ministry and funding agencies would help them survive in the broader education system, reforming that system as needed to accommodate sound innovations.

The diffusion-of-innovation paradigm comes from the research world, introduced in the 1970s. A similar paradigm, but one that has roots in political philosophy, is that of a "free market of reforms." Some will object that such an approach will take us back to the era of "stovepipe" projects, when most changes to the education system were introduced piecemeal through funding agency projects in response to particular problems. Such projects were usually not sustainable without funding agency support and evaporated when funding agencies disappeared. However, these case studies have revealed that many of the programs successfully implemented in the past decade were also driven by funding agencies, and what makes some of them succeed as reform activities is their integration into the broader basic education system.

The diffusion-of-innovation model and the free-market approach can inform and strengthen the current understanding of systemic reform. Systemic reform does not necessarily have to be comprehensive and extensively programmed at the outset. As some characterized it in Ethiopia, *reform is a process of policy development*. The essence of systemic reform is to be aware of how the components of an education system and different models for improving it affect each other, and to use this insight to make adjustments.

[27] Rogers, op. cit.



For further information or additional copies, contact:

U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Africa
Office of Sustainable Development
Division of Human Resources and Democracy
Washington, D.C. 20523-0089

Africa Bureau Information Center
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 1425
Washington, DC 20004-1703
E-mail: abic@rrs.cdie.org