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Overview and Analysis of the Case Studies- Lessons for Education Policy Formation

Item Type	article;
Authors	Sack, R.;Shaw, C.P.;Evans, David R.
Publisher	Association for the Development of African Education
Download date	2025-03-25 19:03:43
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/7808



Association for the Development of African Education

Formulating Education Policy: Lessons and Experiences from sub-Saharan Africa

Six Case Studies and Reflections from
the DAE Biennial Meetings
(October 1995 – Tours, France)

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Extensive financial and administrative support was provided from USAID for the preparation of the African case studies and from the DAE for the organization of the authors' workshops. Financial support for the 1995 DAE Biennial Meetings was provided out of DAE Core Funds, to which the following organizations are contributing members: Canadian International Development Agency; Danish International Development Agency; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Finnish International Development Agency; French Ministry of Cooperation; International Development Research Centre; International Institute for Educational Planning; Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; Overseas Development Administration; Rockefeller Foundation; Swedish International Development Authority; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; United Nations Children's Fund; United States Agency for International Development; and, the World Bank.

Cover design :
watercolor by Hélène Déry
from pottery drawings on soapstone (Kenya)

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Association for the Development of African Education (DAE)
c/o UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning
7-9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, Paris 75116, France

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OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDIES—LESSONS FOR EDUCATION POLICY FORMATION

by David R. Evans, Richard Sack and Christopher P. Shaw

INTRODUCTION

Successful education reform in Africa is dependent on the quality of the underlying education policy. DAE's work has been guided by this awareness since its inception, and it emerged as a powerful lesson from consultations on implementation at the previous Biennial meeting, held in Angers, France in October 1993. Beginning in 1990, DAE sponsored a series of case studies on education policy formation in five countries in Africa.² These studies formed the basis for a series of technical review meetings and ultimately a decision to undertake a second set of case studies, this time written solely by authors from the concerned countries. Together, these efforts have produced ten cases from sub-Saharan Africa which constitute a substantial knowledge base. The cumulative African experience in education policy formation, reflected in these cases and in this summary analysis, provide the background for the discussions at DAE's Biennial Plenary.

Box 1. Case studies on Education Policy Formation

In the past five years, DAE, with the support and collaboration of USAID, has sponsored case studies on Education Policy Formation in ten African countries. The cases are:

BENIN*	BOTSWANA
GHANA*	GUINEA*
MALI	MAURITIUS*
MOZAMBIQUE*	SENEGAL
TANZANIA	UGANDA*

*Cases reported in full in this publication and commissioned for the Tours Biennial Meeting

The DAE Biennial meeting in Angers in 1993 recognized the importance of having in place "long-term education sector development strategies" which presume a clearly articulated and fully supported education policy framework for the country. During that meeting and subsequently, Ministers of Education and funding agencies alike increasingly became concerned with the "how to" questions of education policy formation. In addressing these questions two facts emerged: (i) recognition that a number of African countries had a history of education policy formulation from which lessons could be learned. That realization led to the case studies which formed the basis of the discussions at the 1995 DAE Biennial; (ii) education policy formation was of sufficient importance and immediacy to be a suitable theme for the 1995 Tours Biennial meeting. As a result, it appeared that lessons and methodological guidelines can be extracted from the case studies which would assist all African countries in creating or improving their national education policy structure.

The importance of countries having a sound sector policy which articulates a plan and priorities for the education sector was reinforced by the comments of the keynote speaker at Tours, Mr. Per Grimstad, Director-General of NORAD. He reported on his agency's new approach to development which emphasizes partnership rather than dependency. This requires both NORAD and African governments to enter into responsible business relationships for the financing of development activities. Each partner has contractually defined responsibilities and is accountable for them to the other partner. Projects are defined

and implemented by the government, not NORAD which, however, wants to see that the project is based on sector policy which has approval from the Ministry of Finance and widespread support within the sector. According to Mr. Grimstad, this approach is an alternative designed to overcome the weaknesses of past development relationships.

One of the central lessons to emerge from the case studies is the diversity of experience in African countries. Past discussions about policy formation have focussed almost exclusively on the *content* of policy, such as EFA, efficiency, or girls' access—while the *processes* of policy formation have been little analyzed or discussed. With the worldwide movement towards more active involvement of civil society in governance and policy, along with decentralization, governments are seeking to learn lessons from each another about policy processes as well as content. Approaches to education policy formation vary widely between countries depending on their colonial history and hence their inherited patterns of interaction between civil society and the state. Equally clear is the existence of windows of opportunity which depend on both internal political and economic conditions and on external patterns of relationships with the funding agencies and international economic forces. Running through all the cases are two central themes: the need for publicly stated education policies which are understood and supported by both government and civil society, and the importance of participation by the diverse parts of society that will be affected by the policies.

This paper will first take a brief excursion into how social scientists have viewed the processes of policy making, then—in order to facilitate discussion of the case studies and the diversity of experience expressed at meeting in Tours—present a set of elements which are part of many policy formation experiences. Subsequent sections of this paper will examine a series of issues which emerged from the analysis of African national experiences. The final section will summarize the dialogue and findings of the Biennial meeting in Tours.

SYSTEMATIC, ANALYTICAL VIEWS OF POLICY MAKING _____

The social science literature on policy formation shows **two distinct views**: the earlier, more traditional literature tends to characterize the process as **a set of stages or steps** which follow a logical order, while the more recent literature suggests that policy making is **a messy, fluid process** which cannot be reduced to a simple linear model. The more traditional models are helpful in portraying a confusing reality in an ordered way. This facilitates thinking about the components of a policy process. However, recent field-based research, as well as the case studies sponsored by DAE, illustrate that reality is more complex, less clearly ordered, and seldom reflects a simple application of technical rationality in decision making.

Policy making as discrete steps and stages

The more traditional descriptions of policy formation contain some version of a “policy cycle”—a set of stages beginning with problem identification and ending with an evaluation of implemented programs that can lead to a revised set of issues that feeds into a new cycle. A typical example of a policy cycle—graphically shown in **Box 2**—would contain the following stages:

(a) **Identification of policy problems; setting the policy agenda.**

Policy problems originate from a variety of sources: some are *technical/professional*—such as planners seeking to rationalize school locations or educators concerned about content of the curriculum; others are more *political*—such as parents worried about the ability of their children

to gain access to higher levels of education or teacher unions frustrated by their terms of service; and some come from *external sources*—such as when funding agencies advocate policies like improved access of girls to basic education. When pressures are strong enough, the issue becomes a policy problem to which the government must respond and the problem becomes part of the policy agenda. However, there is a difference between identifying issues, which can come from many different sources, and getting them onto the policy agenda. This requires visibility for the issue *and* significant levels of interest from powerful forces in the government, in civil society, or from the funding agencies.

(b) **Formulation and assessment of policy options.**

Once issues are identified and have become part of the policy agenda, the rational planning approach indicates that alternative solutions should be drawn up and evaluated. All too often, this step is incomplete and only one policy response is investigated and prepared in detail, thus reducing the options. However, when this stage is undertaken rigorously, several technically sound, economically feasible, and politically practical options are set forth and compared. Making judgements about the desirability of the various trade-offs involved in different options is the responsibility of the political and educational leadership of the country.

(c) **Adoption of particular policy options.**

This stage requires a decision-making process for the selection of policy options to be implemented. Various approaches are used to formalize these decisions. In Anglophone Africa, where there is a history of education commissions, governments often take the most recent policy commission report and respond with a White Paper indicating which recommendations will be accepted either in part or in full. In Francophone countries, there is a practice of *Etats Généraux* that provide recommendations to be selectively implemented by Ministries of Education or sent to parliament for action.

(d) **Implementation of policies.**

This includes the translation of policy options into specific strategies for carrying out the policy. Strategies in turn are converted into plans with actions, time lines, and resources. The choice of strategies is subject to local conditions and a variety of constraints, including resource availability and managerial capacity. Since policies interact with local realities and are adjusted accordingly, this is actually an ongoing part of the policy formation process. Indeed, policy as implemented and experienced is the final definition of what a policy actually is. How education programs are actually implemented was the subject of the 1993 meeting in Angers, France.³

(e) **Evaluation of policy impact.**

Evaluation of policies has two components: first, collecting information to measure the effect, if any, the policy has had on education; and, second, when the desired impact did not occur, assessing the causes of the “deviant” results. Assessing the impact of a change requires baseline data, established prior to policy implementation; it also requires a capacity to collect information which will provide an appropriate indicators of policy impact.

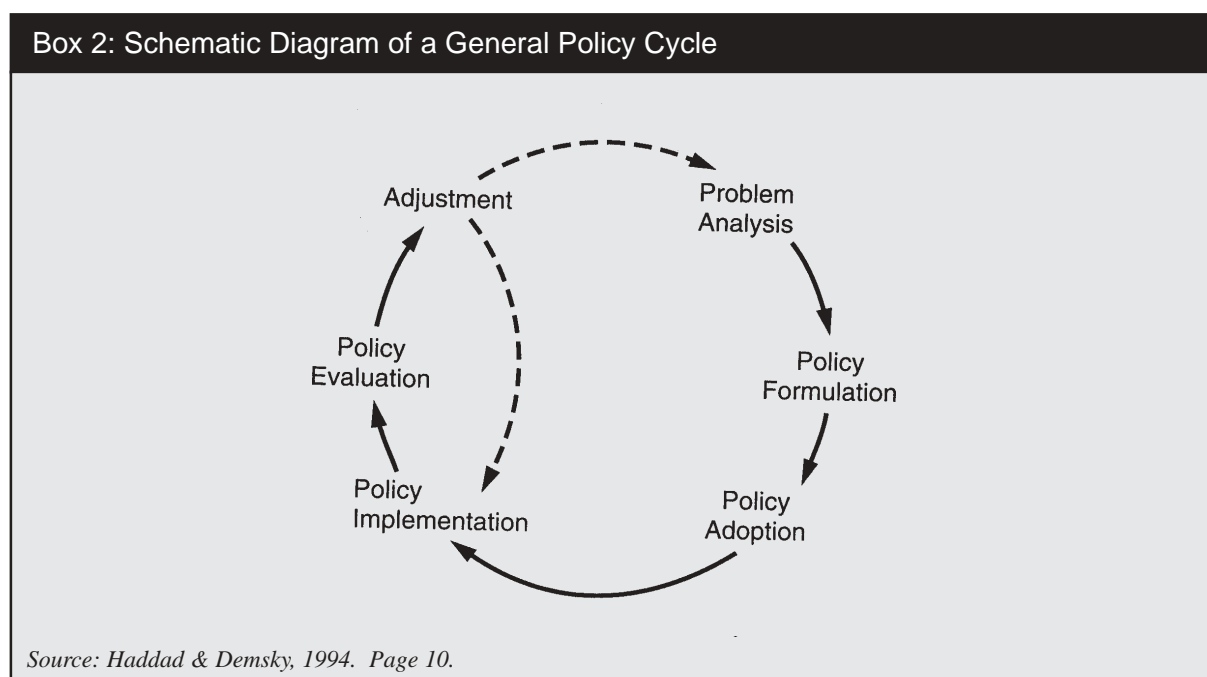
(f) **Adjustment and beginning of new policy cycle.**

This step is essentially identical to the first stage discussed in this section—identification of policy issues. If policies are found to be less effective than expected, then a judgement has to be made whether this is enough of a problem to be kept on the policy agenda. If it is, then assessment of the causes of the problem is needed. Lack of effectiveness can come from two general sources:

- inadequate capacity to implement the policy effectively, or
- problems with the policy itself.

Funding agencies have traditionally assumed that lack of implementation capacity is the problem and sought to provide assistance in the form of projects to increase that capacity. While lack of capacity is often a contributing factor, assessment of the policy itself may also be needed.

The “steps and stages” approach can be reconciled with the “fluid process” view by emphasizing the unpredictability of the process. Instead of seeing these stages as rigidly sequential, each one can be viewed as a challenge to be faced at some point in the process of policy formation and implementation.⁴ Nonetheless, thinking of the policy process as a logical sequence of steps can help to make sense of the challenge, even though it does not provide fully applicable guidelines for policymakers working in real



world settings. Since—as the case studies demonstrate—environmental characteristics strongly influence every stage of the process, at any given point a country can be addressing a particular stage or even several stages at once, without necessarily having dealt with “previous stages.”

In his presentation at Tours, Mr. Wadi Haddad, Deputy Secretary of the World Bank, argued that the “policy cycle” (see **Box 2**) was an oversimplification for analytic purposes. In reality no country goes through such a circle, rather it goes through many loops. His research showed that the most successful policy processes started with policy actors functioning in an organization and proceeding step by step—planning being an incremental process—adding small changes to existing policies. Policy reforms which tried to be holistic or were too dependent on individual actors were much more likely to fail, according to his research.⁵

Policy making as a fluid process: evidence from field studies

In practice, the elements of the policy cycle do not take place as a series of discrete steps, but are experienced as a continuously interactive process. At all stages, affected stakeholders seek to make changes which address their concerns. In this sense, the formulation of policy options is not something

which happens only at the beginning of the cycle, but is continuous, with important inputs being made even after the adoption of a particular policy option. Thus even well into the implementation stage, powerful actors can and will seek to influence the translation of policies into regulations and actions. Policy leaders often underestimate the importance of the large numbers of mid-level bureaucrats and school-level educators who will influence the form which policies take in practice. Failure to involve these cadres in the policy process at an early stage may increase their resistance during implementation. Under some circumstances, these actors can block or reverse policies when they reach local levels. A good example is found in countries where new textbooks which have been delivered to schools are not being used by the teachers, who feel more comfortable teaching as they have always done without texts. The old adage about education is still valid—when the door to the classroom is closed, the teacher controls what takes place.

Most studies of policy making and the processes by which it occurs are confined to the North American context and have been done by mainly political scientists, sociologists and economists. Even those studies that concentrate on developing countries make abundant reference to, and tend to draw their conceptual frameworks from, the North American work.⁶

One analytical point in common to most treatments of policy making is the distinction and interplay between information and technical analysis, on the one hand, and politics and power, on the other hand. As Lindblom and Woodhouse put it

Thus, a deep conflict runs through common attitudes toward policy making. People want policy to be informed and well analyzed, perhaps even correct or scientific; yet they also want policy making to be democratic and hence necessarily an exercise of power.⁷

When it comes to education policy making in Africa, an analysis of the previous set of case studies points out that

Policy recommendations for education reform therefore have two components, technical and political. Even modest changes in education, desirable from a technical perspective, can lead to substantial unrest and even violence if they are perceived to threaten the access to benefits of various groups in society. Change in education requires public consensus and political acceptability to a degree not needed in other sectors.⁸

According to this perspective, there is no “*One Way*” to view the policy process. A couple of the most prominent students of policy-making and related processes (concentrating mainly on North America) conclude that

Deliberate, orderly steps therefore are not an accurate portrayal of how the policy process actually works. Policy making is, instead, a complexly interactive process without beginning or end. To make sense of it certainly requires attention to conventional governmental-political topics such as elections, elected functionaries, bureaucrats, and interest groups. But equally or more important are the deeper forces structuring and often distorting governmental behavior: business influence, inequality and impaired capacities for probing social problems. These intertwine in fascinating and disturbing ways in contemporary policy making.⁹

In other words, given the large number and variety of factors and forces involved in policy making, “pure rationality” should not be expected. This is more art than science. As Porter and Hicks put it, “the policy process is fluid, even messy, but still largely understandable.”¹⁰

Indeed, the Nobel prize recipient Herbert Simon argues that

The capacity of the human mind for formulating and solving complex problems is very small compared with the size of the problems whose solution is required for objectively rational behavior in the real world—or even for a reasonable approximation to such objective rationality.¹¹

The message here is that a certain modesty is in order when one embarks on the complex and perilous task of policy formation.

This modesty also covers the applicability of concepts and lessons derived from the North American context—characterized by a long tradition of decentralization and democratic openness—to developing countries where governments tend to be more centralized and where the policy elites tend to play a more predominant role in policy formation. Nonetheless, the concepts and analytical orientations gained from the former are a useful starting point for looking at the processes of policy formation in other political, social, economic and cultural contexts.

OVERVIEW OF THE SIX AFRICAN CASE STUDIES

The case studies on which this paper is based take a systematic, analytical and critical look at the **processes** of educational policy formation in six African countries. These studies are written by actors involved in, or close to, the events and processes that are the subject of their papers. Each case is different, with the differences covering several dimensions:

- (a) Although each case study focuses on at least one policy “event”, the nature and form of that event vary. All, however, include some form of, more or less, formal document.
- (b) The authors’ academic backgrounds and perspectives vary. Some have social science training others are educationists; some have extensive policy experience, others are more academic; and, of course, their relationships to the politics of their respective educational systems vary.
- (c) Coverage of implementation varies. Most of the case studies deal with the longer-term process of policy *formation*, which includes the *formulation* (i.e., articulation and drafting) of a policy document. The focus on policy *formation* means that feedback from implementation into the on-going articulation of policy becomes part of the overall process.

Each case study is anchored to an policy *formulation* “event” (generally, a policy paper or declaration, with the exception of Mozambique). In the policy formation process, documents are formulated and become a matter of record and reference. Such documents—be they laws, government statements, declarations, Commission reports, or White Papers—serve a function: they focus attention and become a touchstone against which implementors can be held accountable. In varying forms, this occurs in both open, industrial democracies—where appointed implementors are accountable to elected officials¹²—and in more closed and/or less developed countries—where national education systems are dependent on, and accountable to, external financing for their development and, even, survival.

Characterizing the cases: a descriptive overview

The table in **Annex 1** provides an overview of the case studies by country and “topic”. The “topics”, which are the major conceptual themes that emerge from the case studies, include both descriptive and more analytical categories. Identification of these categories is derived from both the scholarly literature on policy formation and from the case studies themselves. What follows is a synopsis of the country case studies that follow in the subsequent chapters.

BENIN

In 1990 Benin was the first of the new wave of African democracies, emerging from seventeen years of a “militaro-marxist” regime that brought on its own demise through financial insolvency. The regime became progressively incapable of paying civil service salaries and student scholarships. For a combination of reasons, the *école nouvelle* that was decreed in 1975 did not succeed in its objectives of adapting schooling to socio-economic realities of the country.¹³ One of the first demands made of the new democratic regime was to hold a broad forum on education (the *Etats Généraux de l'Education*) which advocated priority for quality education in order to reconstruct the country’s intellectual elites. Beyond the *Etats Généraux*, however, education remained the business of the Ministry of Education (MoE): the elected legislature paid little attention to the sector, the press and other media devoted only periodic attention, and local communities did not become particularly activist.

Shortly before the birth of the new regime, an extensive policy analysis project was started by UNESCO with UNDP support that produced an integrated set of studies designed to provide the knowledge base required for sustainable policies. These studies were begun before the end of the old regime and with no more justification than that something would have to be done and, therefore, extensive policy analysis would be useful. Their practical impact was unpredictable: (i) the studies were used by those attending the *Etats Généraux de l'Education* and provided factual reference points to passionate debates often dominated by interest-group politics; (ii) they provided input into the production of an official policy statement; (iii) they were used as justification by one funding agency for a major financial involvement in the education sector (that funding agency’s initial motivation being to support democracy, without prior commitment to any particular sector); and (iv) they became a common and unavoidable point of reference to all concerned with the sector. However, most of the information generated by these studies was not widely diffused beyond MoE down to the local levels of the education system. An important secondary outcome of this policy analysis project was its capacity building effect among staff of MoE and other ministries who worked on the studies along with international experts. Many of these staff have subsequently been promoted to higher level positions in their ministries.

A number of the suggested reforms are currently being implemented with financing from one agency, in particular. One intended consequence of the policy analysis project was to promote donor coordination. Since MoE never took the lead in this area, funding agencies largely pursued their own inclinations. Nonetheless, by their existence and comprehensiveness, the policy studies did have a coordinating effect.

The major message that emerges from the Benin case study is that a strong body of sector studies, in which nationals from the Ministry played a major role, can have a number of positive consequences, many of which can not be foreseen when the work was initially planned and undertaken.

GHANA

In 1983, the populist military regime that took power in 1981, veered away from its policies of self-reliance and undertook extensive adjustment programs with support from the IMF and the World Bank. Due to a combination of underfinancing, a teacher exodus, lack of statistics, and declines in enrollment, the education system was pronounced “clinically dead” in the mid 1980s. In 1987 a wide-ranging education reform was promulgated. Initial reform actions concerned the post-primary level as per proposals formulated in 1974 and piloted on a very limited scale in the late 1970s. However, given the felt need for immediate action, the reform proposals of the mid-1980s were announced abruptly, and developed in the absence of policy analysis by a very limited number of people.¹⁴

The reforms were very well financed by several international agencies and implemented in a climate of institutional instability within the sector. Results have been disappointing, with all indicators suggesting that little learning is happening in the schools, even after seven years of reform implementation. Enrollments increased, but barely enough to keep up with population growth, and retention rates declined. More positively, the institutional base for planning and policy formation based on good statistical information was created.

The major message that emerges from this study is that, although strong, authoritarian leadership can be quite effective in getting a reform off the ground, it is not sufficient to make it work and provide tangible results. Lack of a solid knowledge base, no consultation during the preparatory period, an authoritarian approach to reform implementation, and failure to improve learning outcomes all resulted in a thorough reevaluation of the reform six years after its inception. This evaluation provided the basis of a new cycle of policy reforms.

GUINEA

In a context of adjustment financed by several funding agencies (French, USAID, IMF, World Bank, and others), a policy declaration was approved in 1989 that provided the basis for a multi-agency financed education sector adjustment program. The document was designed as a guidepost for future directions: it is precise about sector objectives and priorities, but silent on how they will be attained. This was done in order to allow adaptation to a variety of situations, recognizing (i) the advantages of a succinct and readable policy document, (ii) the need to allow maximum flexibility for future implementors who will be working under unpredictable conditions. National and expatriate experts played a major role, as did frank and open discussions between government, the funding agencies and teacher unions over a sustained period. Although at times quite argumentative, these discussions played a constructive role.

Implementation was characterized by (i) a large degree of participation within MoE that was organized around several working groups, (ii) structured donor coordination under the auspices of MoE, (iii) stability of the MoE team of higher-level staff implicated in the policy formulation phase, and (iv) strong and highly effective leadership from the Minister who remained in office for about seven years (until 1996) that covered the formulation of the policy statement and its implementation. Staff stability has contributed to the professionalization of MoE teams and, therefore, the quality of implementation. Actual results went beyond the targets set in the policy document.

The major messages from this case study are the importance of: (i) strong, collegial and continuous leadership; (ii) a policy document that allows for flexibility and is not overly detailed; (iii) the continuity and stability of a team that is involved in both the policy formulation and implementation phases; and (iv) ministerial leadership in the process of donor coordination. All of these factors contributed to the successful implementation of Guinea's educational adjustment program.

MAURITIUS

The Master Plan (MP) was elaborated 7-8 years after the minister had (upon taking office in 1983) decided not to apply agreed adjustment measures to the education sector. Mauritius is a very small country, a democracy, and at the time of the MP, its economy was strong and growing. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education was characterized by a high degree of stability (the same minister was in office from 1983 to 1995) under strong leadership.

The need for the MP came from a diagnosis of the education system's shortcomings, perhaps foremost of which was that the economic and social changes of the 1980s were not accompanied by corresponding changes in the education system. In the late 1980s, the future of the Mauritian economy was seen to depend on skill-intensive activities and a well-educated labor force. Also, the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, plus a meeting of funding agencies on human resource development, provided impetus for developing the MP. Although work on the Plan was initiated locally, international funding agencies played an important role. Most notably, they provided technical expertise and perspectives that were lacking in-country. In some areas, national counterparts were not available, so some of this expertise was not sustained locally.

Consultation was extensive during the preparatory phases of the MP and the continual search for consensus (a basic cultural value in Mauritius) often took precedence over pedagogic and social considerations. This is related to the fact that the Plan took more than twice as much time to prepare as was originally assumed. A coordinator was appointed in order to orchestrate both the consultative and technical aspects of MP preparation. Although advisor to the minister since 1983 and well integrated into the ministry, the coordinator was not from within the MoE career stream. He was an economist who, previously, had worked in the Ministry of Finance.

This case study also demonstrates the beneficial effects of donor coordination in a context where the country takes charge. In this case, a detailed Master Plan was the necessary condition for "taking charge", as it became an unavoidable reference point for all concerned. Strong ministerial leadership and a consensus were major aspects of this process.

MOZAMBIQUE

This case is different than the others in that it traces the post-independence history of education policies to the present time when all agree that new beginnings are needed. In sharp contrast with the other countries discussed here, post-independence Mozambique opted for an education system that was not based on that of its former colonial master. However, it is presently agreed that that system is not adequate for current needs. The time is ripe, therefore, for formulation of a new education policy.

Several factors play important roles in the policy making process. For one, the poor state of Mozambique's infrastructure (roads and telecommunications) inhibits effective consultations. Another factor is the predominant role of donors in the financing of the State. The agenda for sector studies appears to be largely set by the funding agencies. However, Government is beginning to provide more input into this process and, recently, has taken the lead in donor coordination.

UGANDA

When the new regime took power in 1986 after a long guerrilla war the country was in a state of economic collapse, political turmoil and social decline. As a result, a new philosophy of fundamental change through participatory democracy, liberalization, modernization, unity and accelerated development was introduced. However, policies of self-reliance gave way to externally financed adjustment programs in 1988. In the education sector there was a long tradition—dating back to 1928—of review commissions at regular ten-year intervals. The process of policy formation went through two phases: an Education Policy Review Commission (1987-89) and a White Paper (WP) Committee which undertook the work of policy formation in 1989.

A prominent aspect of the Ugandan case is the search for ever-increasing legitimacy for education policies through deeper consultation and participation which are important values of Government's ideology. The work of both the Commission and the WP Committee was characterized by public consultations. The former held public meetings and solicited a total of 496 memoranda and resource papers and was, by far, the widest consultation on education ever in Uganda. However, the consultations concentrated on urban elites and key community stakeholders were not consulted. Because of this, the Commission was seen by many as being part of the old system. Although its report made important recommendations for change, in many cases teachers, lower officials and others who participated in the process did so under the culture of fear of the dominant bureaucrats, politicians and the economic elite. The WP process aimed at correcting this situation. Under strong and active ministerial leadership with the active support of the President himself, a bottom-up, consensus building process was undertaken, along with analysis of the Commission's report and public responses to it.

Funding agencies had their own agendas which did not fit well with the slower WP process of policy formation. This was facilitated by the absence of a government master plan. It was in this context that funding agencies produced studies and projects outside of the WP framework. This was somewhat justified by the inertia of government bureaucrats and the weaknesses of government's internal operations.

LESSONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES: ANALYSIS AND EXPERIENCE¹⁵ _____

Drawing from the case studies, as well as from participant contributions at the Tours Biennial Meeting, this section concentrates on the major lessons that emerge and that may have broad applicability. Each sub-heading is in the form of a question, immediately followed by the major points that emerge from the subsequent paragraphs.

The context: what conditions trigger an education policy review?

- Crisis and/or change motivated by political and economic factors often precipitate policy reviews.
- Education reforms can reinforce the legitimacy of new governments.
- The political and institutional contexts are crucial factors.

For many countries the first key issue is simple: "When should a national process of education policy review be initiated and how does one get started?" The first step in the process involves assessing the context. The case studies point to the fact that national reviews of education are often triggered by some combination of crisis and/or change motivated by political and economic factors:

- after a new, often revolutionary and/or newly democratic, government has come to power—as in Benin, Mali and Uganda;
- at the end of a period of conflict or war—as in Mozambique and Uganda;
- when public dissatisfaction with the condition of education reaches a level where it can no longer be ignored—as in Benin, Ghana and Guinea;
- when macroeconomic adjustment, often linked with reliance on external development financing, obliges government to reorient its financing and budgetary strategies and practices—as in Benin, Mauritius, Ghana and Guinea.

Other factors can also motivate the decision for a policy review. In Mauritius, the decision was motivated by the growing awareness that the current educational system was not able to produce the kinds of graduates needed by the crucial export economy of the island. In rare cases, like Botswana, the policy process has been institutionalized in a manner which promotes systematic consultation on policy issues at all levels of society.

Governments have different motivations for undertaking a national review of education policy. For many governments, education is a critical institution for socialization into values and beliefs. Also, successful delivery of educational services is central to a regime's legitimacy and, therefore its capacity for effective governance. If, for example, access is limited, dropout rates high and educational quality poor, people will be dissatisfied with the government. New governments need to establish credibility that they can function effectively—and education provides one of the most visible ways of demonstrating their competence.

These days, there is the tendency to summarize the political context by the level of democratization. Although somewhat reductionist, this can be a useful approach, especially since the making and implementation of education policy does involve a broad spectrum of the population. With the exception of Mauritius—whose entire post-colonial history is characterized by fully democratic government—all the countries studied here have undergone varying degrees of transition towards more democratic and open forms of government and political expression, as well as economic liberalism. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Benin and Ghana case studies find that educational activism (a broad-based forum in Benin shortly after the advent of the democratic regime; a wide-ranging reform in Ghana, shortly after abandoning self-reliance for IMF-led adjustment) served the Governments' legitimation needs. Actually, this is an old story in the annals of educational reform.¹⁶ Actual reform in Benin since its forum has been relatively minor, whereas the structure of Ghana's education system has been largely overhauled. As for results in terms of learning, however, the jury is still out on the Ghanaian case.

The context in terms of predispositions to open to public dialogue on education varies. Some of the variables which may indicate receptivity to dialogue in a country would include:

- the degree of decentralization of decision-making and control over resources;
- the extent to which political leaders are accountable; the existence of accountability mechanisms, elections or other checks such as a parliamentary question process;
- the existence of a free press and non-government radio in the country;
- the ideology of the ruling party—is it explicit about encouraging participation in governance?
- the presence of a country-wide participatory structure—is it within a political party or across parties?
- a history of public dialogue about the education policy process—are there accepted procedures which are familiar because of their past use?
- government receptivity to input from civil society, and openness of public officials to other perspectives; and
- the existence of capable non-governmental agencies with a history of undertaking policy analysis and publicizing their findings.

Whatever the current degree of receptivity to dialogue, the policy making process will have to take place within that context. However, strong leadership in education can result in innovations which have no historical precedents in that context. Several of the Francophone cases describe fairly radical changes as the result of new governments.

An excellent example of the education policy challenge facing a new government was presented at the Tours Conference by Professor Bengu, the Minister of Education of South Africa. He stressed two major political imperatives for the process of policy making in education: the need (i) to ensure consensus around national education policy, and (ii) to locate the resulting policies within the framework set out by the interim constitution. The central position of the education struggle in the years before the end of apartheid led to a need for demonstrable signs of progress in education soon after the new government took power. For them, timing and opportunity were two vital factors in initiating policy development, particularly as they faced the challenge of balancing tensions between preservation of minority privileges and transformation of the system to meet the needs of the majority.

Countries in severe economic difficulty will likely be under strong pressure from the funding agencies to undertake structural reforms, including a rationalization and strengthening of basic social services like education. As the case studies make clear, funding agencies have often played a significant role in initiating or supporting policy formulation. Funding agencies have supported data collection for policy analysis, helped organize meetings where policy alternatives are discussed, and provided both local and international technical assistance for various steps in the policy cycle. Not infrequently funding agencies have made the existence of a coherent policy framework a pre-condition for further investment in the education sector, thereby exerting pressure on governments to undertake a full review of education policy.

A counter-example of this is Mauritius, which was in the middle of its adjustment phase, with requirements for reduced spending in education, when the then newly appointed Minister of Education disassociated his ministry from the adjustment measures. His reasons were as political as they were educational. Subsequent events suggest that his refusal to apply adjustment measures to the education system harmed neither the education system nor the macroeconomic climate. To the contrary, it could be argued that by maintaining the reliability of the education system and its capacity to deliver uninterrupted services to the population—instead of focusing on the elimination of inefficiencies with potentially disruptive consequences—the Mauritian policy contributed to the enabling environment that preceded that country's strong economic growth.¹⁷

Discussions on several panels at Tours stressed the “normality” of unstable conditions in Africa. Many presenters felt that policy making nearly always took place in a context of uncertainty, tension, and sometimes overt conflict. Minister Chombo of Zimbabwe felt that there seemed to be one crisis after another: “There has never been a stable situation when we could sit down, assess how well we were doing and reflect on how we should plan for the future. We also didn't have sufficient resources to be doing planning, implementation, and evaluation at the same time.” Minister Nhavoto of Mozambique reminded listeners that his country had been in a state of guerilla war for almost thirty years with a resulting 93% illiteracy rate, and very few primary secondary schools able to function. Planning under these circumstances requires national mobilization to rebuild educational systems and begin the process of restoring the human infrastructure for development.

What structures or methods can be used for policy review?

- Expert and representative teams are often formed to establish a diagnosis and guide the process.
- Social, political and historical contexts are determinant: in general, commissions or national conferences are central.

When conditions are favorable for initiating a national review of education policy, what procedures have been used by African countries? The case studies show two clear patterns which, not surprisingly, grow out of the colonial heritage of the countries. In all cases, work has been initiated by teams composed of MoE staff and external (expatriate and/or national) experts. These teams are charged with establishing a diagnosis of the prevailing situation (including benchmarks) of carrying out a process of policy review and formulation. The process involves, in varying proportions: identifying issues in the education sector, assessing a variety of suggested solutions, and producing a coherent set of policy recommendations which, after review by the government, can become the basis of reform and development for the nation's educational system. The characteristics of the process are very much conditioned by the national context and the historical precedents for policy making.

In the Anglophone cases—Botswana, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, and Mauritius as well—the process is quite explicit and is based on an historical pattern which goes back well before independence. Periodically, government appoints a National Education Policy Review Commission which is a temporary, independent group charged by government with the task of looking at education, soliciting inputs from a range of people interested in the sector, and formulating a coherent set of policy recommendations. The Commission is typically chaired by a distinguished national educator and includes representatives of all the major stakeholders in education in the country. Many commissions have working groups for specific sub-sectors like primary education or teacher training, each of which draws professionals from the appropriate ministries and from society. The final commission report is presented to government and often made available to the general public as well. Government then responds with a White Paper indicating which recommendations it is accepting in part or in whole. The process is well understood in these countries and it is regarded as a legitimate method—inherited from Britain—for the government and civil society to work together in drafting education policy.

Not surprisingly, given the differences in colonial heritage, the Francophone cases—Benin, Guinea, Mali, Senegal—reflect a rather different approach to policy formulation. In these countries, the emphasis is on consulting national and international experts. The consultation of civil society takes place through a formally convened national debate on education policy matters. The cases reflect a varied pattern of irregularly convened *Etats Généraux*, or National Seminars on Education, often preceded by preparatory activities. These are large national meetings, often comprised of several hundred people who get together for two or three days or more (ten days in Benin) to debate issues in education. There may or may not be any formal document or pronouncement resulting from such gatherings. The outcomes are viewed by government as advisory and there is usually no formal response on the part of the government. The Ministry of Education chooses what to do with the information and advice it has received during the meetings. Occasionally, the gathering is a way to inform participants and to mobilize support for a policy which the government is on the point of implementing. Teachers and their unions tend to be over-represented in comparison to parents and employers. The process tends to become more politicized than in the Anglophone countries.

Both of these patterns offer models which, with suitable adaptation to local circumstances, may be helpful to other countries with similar historical contexts. Different approaches are found in Mauritius and Mozambique which reflect their own cultural, political and historical contexts. Mauritius exemplifies a country with a diverse cultural composition which has evolved a politics of consensus in the context of relatively high economic development. Mozambique reflects a country emerging from decades of civil war that is resource poor and lacks a tradition of participation by civil society in education policy formation. In all cases, the importance of the historically generated patterns of consultation and expectations of the role of government cannot be over-emphasized; they set the context within which any policy process must operate.

What knowledge base is needed?

- Baseline, monitoring and evaluation information are essential.
- In general, production of information is a good investment; its utility goes far beyond the context of immediate problem-solving.
- The usefulness of the information is closely linked to how well it is known and understood by all concerned.

By and large, the knowledge base can take two different forms:

- (a) Baseline information (data) that is a starting point for the work of policy makers. Collection of this information is often called policy or sector analysis. Collection of such information can involve the Ministry of Finance and can, if needed, be conducted outside of the Ministry of Education.
- (b) Continually collected information designed to assess the progress of policy implementation. This is generally known as monitoring and evaluation and is useful in order to ensure that organizations such as Ministries of Education behave as “learning institutions”, in a position to learn from on-going and recent experience.

All of the case studies refer to a knowledge base of the first type, where the information was produced for the specific purposes of the policy formation process.

Four case studies illustrate different approaches to the relationships between policy formation and the knowledge base:

- (a) In Benin, a thorough sector analysis was carried out under the direction of working committees with external support from UNDP and UNESCO. Large amounts of information and analytical knowledge were produced, some of which had little immediate impact on policy in a context of weak leadership from the minister and uneven funding agency implication.
- (b) In Ghana funding agencies were heavily implicated in support of a reform that was authoritarily decreed with little analytical support. Information concerning very poor learning results became available well into implementation that caused a reassessment of the approaches taken.
- (c) In Mauritius there was a combination of locally produced policy analysis on pedagogical issues that was useful and work produced by foreign experts that was not fully integrated into the policy formation processes for lack of national capacities of appropriation (lack of counterparts).

- (d) In Uganda a series of 16 pre-investment studies, mostly carried out by two-person teams of a national specialist and an international consultant, were commissioned on topics such as: teacher supply and demand, science and technical education, textbooks and instructional materials, the financing of primary education, and an enrollment projection model. During the same period the planning unit undertook a national school census using a revised and expanded instrument.

In Benin, the knowledge base was constituted before government and funding agencies had specified their needs. The pertinence of the information became clear only when the government entered into the initial phases of the policy formation process with the *Etats Généraux*. This is consistent with the point of view that policy makers are often unable to predict future information needs.¹⁸ Indeed, this view of the usefulness of policy analysis to policy formation suggests that the library (where information is stocked and used on demand, at the appropriate times) is the appropriate analogy, rather than the problem solving metaphor which is more commonly employed. The problem solving perspective imposes a narrow definition for the utility of information to policy analysis. At issue, rather, is informed interpretation, grounded in a mass of readily available information (such as could be found in a library).

If papers were written only when it was clear that they would be used for problem solving, then the information would not be available for use by the time the policy makers wanted it.... The uncertainty and unpredictability of the context make it nearly impossible for the production of information to conform to the expectations promoted by the problem solving perspective.¹⁹

None of the cases presents a model for the development of a knowledge base designed to serve policy formation, assuming such a model exists, and no consistent pattern can be found in the studies. Two very different cases are, nonetheless, illustrative:

- (a) In Benin, the studies and information collection were designed and undertaken before any need for them became apparent and before educational reform became part of the national agenda. Although perhaps not used to the fullest of their potential, the studies proved useful for a subsequent consultative forum and policy statement, as well as for attracting a major funding agency to the education sector. Furthermore, in an absence of organized coordination between funding agencies, these studies had a “coordinating effect” in that they became an unavoidable point of reference for all—national and foreign—working in the education sector.
- (b) In Ghana, extensive reform was undertaken in the absence of policy analysis and related studies. About 7-8 years later their need became painfully evident. It is impossible to estimate the “cost” of having proceeded with the reform in the absence of a detailed knowledge base. However, the need for clear baseline data, monitoring information, as well as more analytical studies became clear in 1991-93 when student testing showed that little-to-no learning was taking place in the schools despite massive investments.

In the countries studied, the knowledge base constituted a combination of statistics and some studies, generally including one on the costs and financing of education. In none of these cases, however, did the knowledge base appear to be a determining factor. At best, it appears to have been a necessary, but not sufficient, input into the policy making process. One is tempted to conclude, therefore, that: (i) the costs of a lack of information can be high; (ii) the costs of producing, even over-producing, information may turn out to be an excellent investment; and (iii) production of information is a necessary, but far from sufficient, input into the policy formation processes.

The usefulness of the knowledge base is also related to its assimilation, appropriation and dissemination. In this respect, it has a capacity building function. Benin and Mauritius are illustrative. In Benin, the policy analysis studies were conducted by expatriate experts working closely with nationals. Their participation in the studies had a learning-by-doing effect which was subsequently recognized in the form of promotions to key technical positions within MoE and other ministries (Finance and Planning). In Mauritius, on the other hand, national counterparts were not in a position to assimilate the technical work of foreign experts which, therefore, never became appropriated and part and parcel of a continuous process of policy formation.

How is a coherent and sustainable policy framework assembled?

- Priorities need to be established and choices made between policy options.
- One should distinguish between treating the symptoms and tackling the root causes of persistent issues.

Once issues have been identified, the analysis shifts to understanding the causes and looking for ways to address the issues. Many problems in education are symptoms produced by complex combinations of factors, and cannot be fixed with simple, single-factor solutions. For instance, the all too common problems of dropouts and repeaters are often cited as policy targets, with little thought about how to change classroom activities and the behavior of the pupils. Extensive research in many settings has demonstrated that dropouts, particularly of girls, are caused by multiple non-school factors—family economics, perceptions of the utility of schooling, cultural gender norms—most of which are not readily influenced by government policy or action. The problem of repeaters is often addressed by administrative fiat—rules prohibiting repetition or limiting the number of times a pupil can repeat. This approach ignores the real causes of the problem, which may be poor teaching, low nutrition, lack of textbooks, or even the inadequacy of the teachers' assessment skills. So, the task of seeking possible solutions to problems requires access to existing research on a regional and international level, as well as research and knowledge rooted in local cultural and historical conditions.

Another example is would be the reality test of financial feasibility and sustainability. Although securing adequate resources for the education sector was an issue in all the cases studied, the nature of the problem could vary radically. In Benin, on the one hand, the education sector historically garnered over 30% of the government budget with decreasingly satisfactory results. Here the policy options focused on improving the efficient use of available resources. In Guinea, on the other hand, the education sector was clearly underfinanced and policy aimed at increasing resources. In both cases, however, analytical tools (financial simulation models) were used to develop policy options and assess the long-term financial impact of proposed educational measures such as teacher recruitment and other personnel policies and qualitative inputs designed to reduce repetition and drop-out rates.

Policy formation ultimately requires making choices between policy options. Selecting an option for a specific problem relies on the evaluation of the pros and cons of the options. Two sets of criteria come into play: (i) technical judgements based on available information, research knowledge, educational practice, and an assessment of financial capability; and (ii) judgements based on an understanding of the local context—political, economic, cultural and social. Once a series of choices has been made, there still remains the difficult task of assembling the choices into a coherent and feasible overall framework of policies.

In those settings where an education commission is appointed, the commission produces a detailed report summarizing its overall policy structure. However, most commission reports have serious shortcomings when viewed as coherent policy statements. Because the process is widely consultative and the combined membership of the commission and its working groups can be quite large, the report usually reflects a series of compromises when choices have to be made. The result is commonly a long list of policy objectives—often more than 200, sometimes referred to as a “wish list.” The document accurately reflects the desired goals a nation has for its educational system and is valuable for that reason. Therefore, a subsequent process is needed to make hard choices to set priorities for implementation in the light of resource constraints. A first step in that direction comes in the form of a White Paper which sets forth the government’s position on the recommendations of the commission. Even the White Paper usually deals primarily with the general acceptability of the policies, not specifically with their economic or administrative feasibility.

In settings where national seminars are used for policy discussion, a different means is used to produce an overall policy framework for the country. National meetings and preparatory committees produce the components for an overall policy, but the task remains with the government to produce a written statement. In some cases there may be no complete statement, but rather a series of decrees and actions implementing parts of the recommended policies. In the case of Senegal, after the *Etats Généraux* of 1981 a National Commission was appointed to translate the resolutions produced into implementable educational policies and practices. Yet, their final report was submitted to the president of Republic three years later. Guinea provides an interesting example which illustrates the linkage between the amount of support which generated for policies and the level of specificity which is appropriate. This is described in **Box 3**.

Box 3: Building Support for Policies

The example of Guinea’s *Programme d’ajustement de secteur de l’éducation* (PASE) is especially interesting as it followed neither Commission/White Paper approach nor that of *Etats Généraux*. Instead, through a series of internal workshops, the education ministry—working with other key ministers—undertook a problem identification and diagnostic exercise. External funding agencies assisted the diagnostic and analytic work by staffing and participating in the on-the-job training of sector staff through these workshops, which led to a shared consensus on the main problems and their respective priorities.

The Ministry of Education then formed a small internal commission to prepare a sector policy declaration that laid out in clear terms the government’s goals and priorities. It was deliberately kept short and focussed and did not spell out in detail all the specific operational objectives or strategies (in contrast with Mauritius, where wide consultation in the design phase led to very detailed “Master Plan”). The sector declaration was submitted to the Council of Ministers for official government approval, which was both rapid and unanimous. Thus, the Ministry of Education had—with its own staff—prepared a broad, but short, policy declaration which was endorsed by government, and supported by its own staff and that of the central ministries.

At this point, the real work in building support for the policies of the PASE began. Implementation of the policy statement required a further stage in which broad goals were translated into a series of specific action plans and prepared by the regional and national authorities responsible for their implementation. At this stage, the question was no longer “what should be done?” but rather “how should ‘x’ be done?”. The whole sectoral ministry was mobilized and consultations inside the sector and throughout the country were widespread. Each year for the period 1990-1994, action plans were prepared by the education managers throughout the country. To ensure wide support and understanding of the PASE, the national workshops that prepared each annual action plan took place in a different location of the country. The minister and senior ministry staff undertook regular visits to the regions and wide use was made of the media (press and radio). A special newsletter on the PASE and its progress was produced and widely circulated. The annual participative planning exercise laid out clear operational goals for each region, it identified bottlenecks and delays, and contributed to a real sense of purpose and national ownership in the program. The results of the PASE over the last five years speak for themselves, as the gross enrollment ratio rose from 28% in the late 1980s to 40% in 1993.

How much consultation and participation are necessary?

- Ownership or appropriation through consultation and participation are necessary conditions for successful policy implementation. How much, can only be decided locally.
- A wide spectrum of stakeholders should be part of the process.

To be effective, education policy formation must be seen as a social and political process as much as it is a task of technical analysis. Both are necessary, but the latter has tended to take priority, particularly with the funding agencies. After decades of reasoning that the “best” policies were those that made the most sense technically, the development community has come to realize the overarching importance of national/local appropriation for effective policy implementation.²⁰ Without data and technical analysis, policy will remain vague and will reflect the entrenched interests of the status quo. Without active social and political participation in the policy formation processes, the outcomes can be policies which are not implemented and, even, generate active public opposition.

The goal of the policy formation process is not simply the production of a policy document. The most important goal is to create a social learning process so that key participants in education, including parents and students, come to understand the nature of the problems faced, the resource constraints which exist, and the kinds of tradeoffs which will be needed to achieve the desired educational outcomes. This idea was reinforced at the conference by Mr. Ash Hartwell, USAID policy analyst, who suggested: “We are not building a road, we are raising a family, and that means that you had best consult everybody in the family, including the relatives. Policy isn’t a solution to a problem but a continuous process of growth and nurturance.” When carried out effectively such a process can produce general awareness of the problems, neutralize potential opposition, and mobilize support for the difficult policy choices which are inevitable in developing contexts. The importance of participation was also stressed by the keynote speaker at Tours, Mr. Timothy Thahane, former World Bank Secretary and Vice President and presently Deputy Governor of the South Africa Reserve Bank, who concluded his speech by noting that the processes of economic and political liberalization “...require broad-based participation and their sustainability depends on the internalization and institutionalization of that participation.”

The six case studies all demonstrate—but in different fashions—the importance of strategies for appropriation through participation and consultation. The case studies show that participation and consultation are not the same. Consultation can often take the form of a campaign to explain policies made in an authoritarian manner. Participation, on the other hand, mobilizes those most directly concerned with the policies (teachers, educational administrators and parents).

What parts of government and society need to participate in the policy process? There are many stakeholders who are critical to successful education policy making (which includes implementation): officials in the education bureaucracy, both central and local; officials in other ministries, particularly finance and planning, civil service and often local government; legislators and representatives of groups from civil society such as religious bodies for schools, relevant unions and political organizations; and parents, employers and chambers of commerce. Which stakeholders are particularly important depends on the local context. Not all groups have to participate equally at all stages of the policy process. Some will be more important when identification of issues is being considered, others will be essential as technical solutions are discussed, and still others have the power to block implementation strategies unless they are consulted at that stage. The answer to the question of “who should participate?” depends on the stage of the policy process, the nature of the specific policy being considered, and the local context.

The local context also influences the amount and kind of consultation that is appropriate. It can be useful to ask two key questions:

- What groups benefit from the current distribution of educational services in society? and,
- Who would lose and who would gain if specific policy changes were made?

Reflecting on these groups and their power to either support or hinder proposed changes will provide a good beginning in thinking about who should participate in the process of diagnosis, analysis, and formulation of policies for education. What organizations, religious groups, ethnic associations, or regional groups exist which have a strong interest in education? How are teachers organized? What means do parents and students have of expressing their concerns about education as it is now, or changes which are being proposed? What do employers want from the education system? Finally, it is always essential to ask what groups have the power to block implementation of particular policies, and how such groups can be transformed into supporters of new policies.

One short-term “cost” of high levels of participation is the time it takes to complete the process. This is demonstrated in Uganda and Mauritius where extensive participation delayed the formulation of sector policies well beyond initial estimates. In Uganda and Mozambique this resulted in impatience by the external financing agencies whose timing was not compatible with that of those Governments. In Uganda, the agencies implemented their projects before the policy formulation process was officially completed. Ghana used an explanatory campaign to market policies that were formulated and initially implemented in a rather authoritarian manner. This was deemed necessary in order to take advantage of a “window of opportunity” that policy makers sensed would not last. However, improved learning results were not forthcoming—even five years after initial implementation—and a second policy phase took a more participatory tack. In Guinea, staff from the education ministry and other ministries participated along with union representatives. Parents, however, were largely absent from this process. The success of the Guinean reforms are partly a result of the nature of the consultations and the leadership qualities of the minister.²¹

How important are leadership, institutional stability and coordination?

- Strong and stable leadership along with institutional stability are crucial for successful and sustained policy formation and implementation.
- Effective donor coordination requires the active leadership of national authorities; funding agencies, themselves, are learning that this is necessary for the success of their programs and investments.

Strong leadership, institutional stability, and ministerial staff continuity are essential for initiating and sustaining a participatory process, as well as for enabling and empowering ministries to take the active and lead role in the coordination of funding agencies. Ministerial (i.e., political) stability and staff continuity in Guinea, Mauritius and Uganda were closely associated with those countries’ ability to formulate their respective policy documents *and* develop their institutional capacities for implementation. Although very different in terms of their respective economic contexts, ministerial and staff stability were crucial factors in enabling Guinea and Mauritius to bring their policies to fruition and implementation. The policies undertaken by these two countries were, in many respects, the most ambitious and complex of the six case studies—ambitious in terms of the nature of the policies tackled as well as their abilities

Box 4: Using Forceful Leadership for Educational Innovation

In 1986 Ghana's military regime decided to undertake a significant reform of the educational system, which had deteriorated so badly that some educators had pronounced it "clinically dead." The government, in keeping with its military, revolutionary style, chose to implement the reform by directive, announcing both the content and timing of the reforms with little prior consultation. The leadership believed that achieving significant reform of education was essential to the social transformation of society and that the regime's political legitimacy depended on succeeding where preceding governments had failed. The content of the reforms were rooted in recommendations of a Commission report presented 13 years earlier.

A small cadre of professional educators who were firmly committed to the reforms was assembled in the Ministry of Education to carry out the implementation. The agency that had dealt with all personnel and professional matters in education in Ghana was abolished, thus removing the protective cover of education officials. Officials at all levels were expected to act as military officers, carrying out orders without discussion. Those who objected or raised concerns were disciplined—sometimes by dismissal, creating an atmosphere of resentment and fear in which problems were likely to go unreported. The government organized a national forum, convened a seminar with district representatives, and used the media for an information campaign about the rationale and structure of the reforms. There was little tolerance for dissenting views; the goal was rapid and effective implementation of the reform as announced.

This approach produced a fairly radical structural reform in a short time period, reducing the number of years in school and implementing a new curriculum. The first cohort from the new system graduated from secondary school at the end of 1993, but did very poorly on the examination. Reforms at the tertiary level were also implemented, some of which were very unpopular with the elites who benefitted from the existing system. On the positive side, the use of strong, centralized leadership pushed through a needed set of reforms despite the inevitable opposition of those who lost privileges. On the negative side, the reforms produced very low quality results in the first groups and created an atmosphere of tension and disillusionment among many of the educators who were needed to run the system.

In a currently more open political environment, Ghana is now re-examining the reforms, holding extensive consultations with a variety of stakeholders, and is embarking on a new cycle of policy formation in education.

to attract external financing. The nature of the leadership exercised by the ministers, combined with their relative stability and staff continuity played a significant role in the outcomes of those countries' policy efforts.

Implementation of policies requires strong leadership to provide an unwavering vision of the goal and reliable support as administrative units confront unanticipated problems and resistance from those who oppose aspects of the plan. Implementation of any significant reform in education, as reflected in a set of new policies, requires not just a single leader, but a group of leaders, preferably organized into some sort of management council or committee. Both Guinea and Ghana have instituted oversight committees to monitor progress in the reform. Institutionalizing such a committee, at least for the period of the reform process, helps to insulate the reform from changes in personnel or over-dependence on the personality and power of any single individual leader. Implementation may also mean reconciling unrealistic "political promises" made by political leaders with technical and resource constraints.

Continuity in leadership is one point often overlooked by African countries and funding agencies alike. One of the major constraints to effective management of education in sub-Saharan Africa is rapid rotation of the political leadership of the Ministry of Education. Indeed, one minister remarked that the post of education ministers has a lot in common with an electrical fuse: when the system gets too hot, the

fuse is replaced! The case for strong and stable leadership of a sector is clear. Education is a system that takes anywhere between six and sixteen years to produce its graduates; rapid change of the sector leadership can only handicap education development. This feeling was echoed by the comments of Christopher Shaw of DAE, who stressed that “Policy formulation requires strong leadership and continuity.... it is the one industry where we keep changing the managing director every one or two years. It’s not surprising that the industry is not terribly efficient.” Two of the case studies demonstrate that continuity through strong and stable leadership is an essential component for implementing the full set of education reforms throughout the system. It is no surprise that many of those countries that have successfully implemented far reaching reforms of their education systems (Mauritius and Guinea, to name but two) have benefitted from stable and strong sector leadership.

Related to the issue of leadership, is a ministry’s ability and willingness to take the lead in the area of “donor” coordination. The question of “donor” coordination has been often raised but barely treated in a systematic manner.²² One major conclusion can be drawn from the case studies: the only effective and sustainable approach to donor coordination is when it is done under the active stewardship of national authorities such as the minister of education. This was the case in Guinea and Mauritius, although in Guinea coordination became more difficult as the process went from policy formulation to implementation. In Benin, where funding agencies expressed real willingness to support that country’s newly democratic political structures, there was little coordination for want of a strong and clear ministerial position on the matter.

What is the relationship between policy formation and capacity building?

- Effective appropriation or ownership can occur only if capacity building is an integral part of the policy formation processes.
- Partnerships can effectively promote capacity building.

“Capacity building” has become one of the major themes of the day, and for good reason. It has even become the rage in private industry where it is now recognized that the best firms—the most productive—are “learning organizations” in a mode of continual learning.²³ Clearly, this should also be the case for education ministries which have huge managerial and financial responsibilities that engage the future of a country and all its people. Several approaches to capacity building are illustrated in the case studies, including decentralization and the involvement of national experts in a host of policy analysis studies on a learning-by-doing basis. In Mauritius, where technical assistance was needed for work required for the Master Plan, there was little longer-term capacity building for lack of a clear strategy of implicating qualified nationals in the work of the expatriate experts. In this case, the ministry did not have the requisite technicians who could appropriate the work of the experts. Although the technical work (forecast modeling) was useful for the Master Plan, it was not internalized by the Mauritian ministry, for lack of experienced staff.

Benin is a special case here in that it was the site of a large, internationally financed policy analysis project that intensively involved numerous ministerial staff (including staff from planning and finance ministries) in diagnostic sector studies that gave way to investment-oriented action plans. Although the policy options proposed by the studies were only moderately followed by the ministry, which was characterized by rather ambiguous leadership, the results of the studies, as well as the know-how required to carry them out, became very much integrated into the culture of the education ministry. A

disproportionate number of the ministry staff who worked on those studies have been subsequently promoted to positions of responsibility—a fact that augers well for the longer-range capacity building effects of that experience.

Mr. Ingemar Gustafsson, Deputy Director at Swedish Sida and DAE Chairperson, addressed the question of the growing importance of partnerships for capacity building. This is exemplified by the dialogue between funding agencies and African governments that is facilitated by the DAE. Furthermore, the meaning of partnership has evolved with the recognition that donor coordination can only be effectively done by the country. Funding agencies now better understand that they must play a supporting role which assists African governments by promoting capacity building, which he sees as basically a “learning process and the use of knowledge.” With this kind of partnership, the activities of the funding agencies should promote the national integrity of the policy formation process. Where necessary, they should adapt agency priorities and procedures to facilitate that process.

How does analysis pave the way for policy choices?

- Technically sound policy proposals need to be prioritized and confront the opinion of the relevant constituencies.
- Assessment of the financial feasibility of recommended policies is a must.

Even after a relatively coherent statement of policies has been produced in the form of a commission report or statements from a national seminar, most countries are a long way from a clear set of policy decisions which can be used by governments and funding agencies as a basis for making budgetary and investment decisions. Such reports reflect some winnowing of policy options, but they are valuable primarily because their recommendations are statements of collectively shared values and goals, such as: universal primary education by the year 2000, vocationalization of the curriculum, or substantially increased access to secondary education. Sometimes issues are deliberately left unclear, indicating that the process was unable to reconcile conflicts over key issues. A good example of the latter is often found in language policy, where recommendations are frequently vague or contain a variety of options left to political leaders to deal with.

In Anglophone countries, the next step is often a government White Paper, usually produced by a small committee of educational professionals from the Ministry of Education, in consultation, perhaps, with a few key stakeholders. Historically, most White Papers are short comments on the major recommendations of the commission, approving or rejecting some recommendations and amending others. The result is a somewhat refined list of goals, usually without a time line or any detailed attempt to test the economic feasibility of those recommendations that have been accepted. The White Paper is still essentially a political document, indicating the government’s position on the issues. In countries which use other mechanisms, there may or may not be a public document stating the government’s position other than what was produced by a national meeting (see **Box 5**).

Policy formation also requires assessment of the financial feasibility of recommended policies. Nearly all African countries face severe resource constraints which make many policy targets unreachable in the medium term—particularly goals like universal primary education or substantial increases in the salaries of teachers. Determining just how fast a policy goal can be reached is a challenging task, requiring fairly sophisticated data and modeling capacity to estimate the financial implications of various options.

Box 5: An Innovative White Paper Process

Uganda's most recent Education Commission engaged in extensive consultation during the process of reviewing national education policy. They held hearings in different parts of the country, received hundreds of written submissions on different policy issues, and traveled to neighboring countries to learn from their experience. Yet, some of the leaders of the national political party felt that the process had been limited to the same elite group which had been in control of the country since independence. They felt that a broader range of participation was essential to build a new Uganda.

They chose to use the White Paper process, normally a quick technical review, to reopen and widen the debate on education policy issues. In the end the process lasted almost three years as the White Paper went through three drafts before being debated in parliament. Several innovations were used. First, the White Paper was a complete re-write of the Commission's Report which meant that it was long, and that it stood on its own as a complete document. Second, the draft policies were discussed at length in many contexts. Early in the process a one month meeting of all senior officials in the Ministry of Education took place outside the capital city. Then, after copies of the draft had been submitted to the political councils at the district level, a national consultative conference for all district and national education officials was held. This was followed by a consultative conference with representatives of various women's organizations, and finally by an extended debate in parliament.

This unusual White Paper process also reflects the tensions between the established educational leadership (of what had been a good educational system in the 1960s) and the revolutionary political leadership of the new government. The membership of the original Commission was dominated by well-respected senior educators from before the revolution. The revolutionary government used the White Paper process to insure that its ideological goals were met and that the resulting document had the full support of its political organizations. A further consequence of the lengthy White Paper process was the preempting of the government process by funding agencies who went ahead with the implementation of selected reforms. The result was a *de facto* setting of priorities for certain educational activities by initiative of the funding agencies.

While progress has been made in this area, there are no sure answers. Both funding agencies and government need to recognize that reconciliation of policy goals and financial capability will be a process of successive approximation. Nevertheless, estimates should be made and incorporated into the dialogue.

How is a legal basis for implementing the policy created?

- ▶ Passing laws is likely to bring new stakeholders into a debate that may, thereby, become increasingly political.
- ▶ The greater the understanding and support for the policies generated during the formation process, the better the chances of success.
- ▶ Strong leadership is needed.

The procedures for converting policy statements into legally approved instruments are specific to each country. To move from policy proposals to implementation require one or more of the following: approval by cabinet, issuing government circulars, promulgation of presidential decrees, or passage of enabling legislation by parliament. At each step of the process, further dialogue and refinement will take place. Sometimes policies previously approved are rejected, or options which were rejected earlier in the process are revived, or controversial policies are sent back for more study. Depending on the context, these steps will bring other stakeholders into the debate, or provide new opportunities for both advocates

Box 6: Dealing with Controversial Issues—National Language Policy

Policy regarding the language of instruction in schools is a matter of some controversy in Mauritius, a small island state which has no indigenous group and is highly multi-ethnic—Indian, African, European and Chinese. Language policy was raised as an issue in the working group for the Master Plan, but it generated strong opposition from those who felt that the issue had been discussed at length for decades with no resolution, and that no resolution was likely in the education plan either. Current policy has most children studying three languages in school, none of them the Creole vernacular, with the consequence that a very large part of the primary curriculum is devoted to language learning. National culture in Mauritius values compromise and consensus. This took precedence over the technical and pedagogical aspects of the debate. The Master Plan, in the end, did not discuss language policy, but recommended a study on the teaching of languages in primary schools. Subsequently, a Parliamentary Select Committee proposed that performance in Asian languages on the primary school examination count toward the ranking of pupils used to determine entry into secondary education. This proposal produced strong reactions that broke along communal lines with opposition centered in the African and European communities. Failure of the Master Plan to address the issue was a conscious, pragmatic decision which recognized the potential harm that could result.

The Ugandan Education Commission of 1987 was charged with making a recommendation on language policy in the schools, but the commission felt the issue was highly political and should not have been in their terms of reference. Ultimately, they recommended that local languages and Swahili be taught in the schools as subjects, and referred the matter for further study. During the long period when the Commission report was being digested by government, a fierce debate took place outside of public view between those in the National Resistance Movement (NRM) who felt strongly about the use of Swahili as one component in the construction of a new Uganda, and professional educators concerned about the proficiency in English needed for the higher levels of education and other effects on learning. The White Paper, when it was finally issued, devoted a long section to the importance of Swahili as an essential component of NRM strategy to unify the country and promote development. Their revised recommendations went much further: Swahili and English were to be taught as compulsory subjects to all children throughout both the primary and the secondary cycle of education. In addition they recommended a series of promotional and developmental activities all aimed at hastening the day when Swahili would be both a national language and the medium of instruction. In the end, the White Paper passes the decision to the Constitutional Commission for final resolution, but makes very clear what outcome it supports. Ultimately the cabinet, recognizing that the language issue was politically volatile and potentially damaging, referred it to committee for further study.

and opponents of policies to use their power to obtain modifications favorable to them. If legislative action is needed, public debate may provide opportunities for new constituencies to make their inputs into the process. In each new venue, different criteria are used to judge the tradeoffs between costs and benefits of a policy, and may result in changes in the policy. Policies which were supported primarily on technical grounds will get evaluated on the basis of a social or political calculus. The issue of language policy provides a good example in many countries of the tradeoffs between the ideological goals of a national movement trying to create a new national consensus, and the political constraints imposed by the potential for instability inherent in such a volatile policy issue (see **Box 6**).

Moving the policy process forward through legal channels requires strong leadership within the government. The Minister of Education, or in some cases a strong, well-placed civil servant such as the Permanent Secretary or group of senior civil servants, needs to take the initiative by pushing the process along, getting the policy statement on the agenda and moving it toward formal approval. Delays in this process are often caused by conflict surrounding unresolved issues, or opposition to part of the policy by a key official who either was not consulted earlier, or who is representing a constituency with vested interests. Completing the policy approval process may require mobilization of outside support to put pressure on the government for action. The greater the understanding and support generated during the formation process, the better are the chances are of favorable action.

What are strategies for building a supportive climate for implementation?

- A social learning process is needed that builds understanding of the issues and support for policies; mass media can be useful for this.
- Stakeholder involvement and expression can have long-term benefits and improve the probability of successful policy implementation.
- It is best to plant the seeds of stakeholder involvement early in the policy formation process.

The case studies provide support for the idea that stakeholder expression—although it can sometimes be embarrassing for government—creates, in the longer-run, a climate in which better education policies can be formulated and implemented. As the Delors Commission Report puts it:

The main parties contributing to the success of educational reforms are, first of all, the local community, including parents, school heads and teachers; secondly, the public authorities; and thirdly, the international community. Many past failures have been due to the insufficient involvement of one or more of these partners. Attempts to impose educational reforms from top down, or from outside, have obviously failed. The countries where the process has been relatively successful are those that obtained a determined commitment from local communities, parents and teachers, backed up by continuing dialogue and various forms of outside financial, technical or professional assistance. It is obvious that the local community plays a paramount role in any successful reform strategy.²⁴

How much dialogue is possible and its content depends on the social and political context in which it is occurring. This points to a dual task throughout the policy formation process: (i) assessing and choosing from among policy options on a technical basis, and (ii) promoting a social learning process which builds understanding of the issues and support for solutions. Setting the stage for implementation of education policies is an unusual challenge because of the number and diversity of people who must agree and cooperate in order for implementation to be effective. The seeds of that collaboration are best planted early in the process, in many different constituencies, and nursed continually throughout the process. The many strategies discussed in the case studies form a repertoire of options from which each country can choose.

The methods used to build support for implementation will depend on what structures are available in a specific context. In a society with a revolutionary government which has built a network of local and regional structures, such as the National Resistance Councils in Uganda, the ten-house cell system in Tanzania, or the system of local councils in Botswana, policies can be disseminated and discussed at all levels and the results filtered back up to national level leaders. In countries which have developed a decentralized administrative structure for education, discussion can be organized using the education bureaucracy. Many countries use national meetings, convened around either general reviews of education policy, or around more specific issues such as the terms of teacher service or curriculum reform. When such consultation takes place early in the process, it provides an opportunity to listen to peoples' perceptions of the problems and to get their reactions to possible policy options. Later in the process, emphasis will shift toward building a consensus on the nature of problems and on the way in which specific policy options can contribute to their solution.

Education policy documents in many African countries are long, complex statements written in academic English or French. Their form and length make them expensive to reproduce and difficult to read—particularly in societies which traditionally communicate more in oral than in written form. Often they are beyond the comprehension of most citizens. As a result, these documents are available and used primarily by the most senior government officials, and by funding agencies and their staffs. One country tried to promote dialogue around the issues by printing and distributing copies of the White Paper to the party structure in all districts of the country. But the document was nearly 300 pages long and written in academic English. In reality only a fraction of those who might have read it could understand it, and fewer still would actually take the time to do so. If real dialogue and understanding is desired, then a simplified and clear statement of the main policy recommendations, written in local languages when applicable, needs to be made available.

The public media—radio and newsprint particularly—are often under-utilized in the process of building understanding and support for changes in education policies. While education is a constant topic in the media in most countries—focussing on speeches of education officials, school strikes, or complaints about specific problems—rarely have governments consciously made use of the media to promote a dialogue around educational issues. The greater the number of people who need to cooperate for successful policy change, the greater is the need for extensive consultation, dissemination of information, and building of support. Sometimes governments are afraid to provide information to the public in fear of the possible response, but attempting to implement changes by fiat can produce even more disruptive reactions.

Box 7: Using Media for Policy Consultation

In the early 1980s Botswana embarked on an expansion of the basic education cycle to nine years by creating separate junior secondary schools. By 1988, significant opposition and widespread misunderstanding of the value of the system had arisen. In response to this public concern, the Ministry of Education initiated an innovative approach to policy dialogue called “consultative conferences.” They decided to use video tape as a way to bring the voices of parents, pupils and communities to the national leaders, and to let the local people listen directly to discussions among the leadership. The purpose of the process was to develop a *common perspective* on the problem which the nation was facing.

Using four policy issues—the problem of school leavers, the curriculum, the role of the community, and the need for education changes—a short video tape was made about each issue. Interviews with key stakeholders like chiefs, teachers, members of the kgotla (a local council), pupils and parents were videotaped. A tightly edited ten-minute tape was produced containing representative sample opinions. Interviews in Setswana had English subtitles, and vice-versa. Each video introduced the issue with powerful visual images. The school leaver video used images of a long line of school leavers standing in front of the employment bureau in Gaborone as a backdrop for the opening titles. Then students in the line, officials, and community leaders were interviewed on how they felt.

The videos were used in a series of four consultative conferences. The first conference was for the national leadership and was opened by the Minister who reminded participants of Botswana’s long-standing tradition of grassroots policy dialogue rooted in the traditional kgotla. The conference format consisted of small groups who watched a video, listened to a panel of respondents and then held open discussion. The videos provided a forceful grounding in reality, compelling the discussion to confront the local realities and limiting escape into general platitudes. The outcome of the conference was a fifth video tape of selected discussions and the responses of national leaders. The five tapes were then used in a similar manner in a series of three regional conferences in the country.

Where state-society relationships are open enough, a country will benefit by having a variety of non-governmental organizations which are capable of undertaking policy analysis and carrying on public discussion of issues. Promotion of public policy dialogue as part of the social learning process can be furthered through the activities of: research organizations loosely linked to the university; more narrowly based interest groups; or organizations of concerned citizens having multiple voices able to raise and debate issues along with the government. In Mozambique policy formation on higher education was initiated by a council of university officials who began meeting and drafted a proposal for consideration by government. In other countries there has been a growth of NGOs, some of which have the capacity to articulate problems of the less-fortunate and to raise educational issues in the media. In his keynote speech, Mr. Thahane highlighted the importance of building an environment that encourages the involvement of all parts of society in the support of basic education. He said, “The private sector should be encouraged to provide higher levels of education and training to complement the public sector. We must look at education as a national endeavor. The business community has a responsibility—all of us have a responsibility because of the external benefits that flow from and an education system and from an educated individual.”

How and why implementation is an integral part of policy formation?

- Implementation is policy in practice.
- The only way to feed the lessons of implementation into the formation process is by rigorous assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

Perhaps the single most challenging step in the policy formation process is to take a list of policy priorities and convert them first into strategies and then into a detailed implementation (or action) plan. While implementation may not, at first glance, seem to be part of policy formation, in reality it may be the most critical part of the process—it determines the form policy takes in reality and how it is experienced in the schools. Some authors argue that implementation should be seen as a series of policy experiments; others would argue that it is part of a continuous, interactive process of policy refinement. Either way, implementation is policy in practice—and actions speak louder than words.

Issues in the implementation of education projects was the theme of the 1993 DAE task force meeting held in Angers, France, where it was pointed out that implementation consists of:

- Operationalization of policy into a detailed plan with a time line and resources;
- Assigning responsibility for implementation to specific people and units;
- Supervision, coordination, and support for the implementation units;
- Monitoring of implementation progress;
- Identification of problems and corrective measures as needed; and
- Periodic review of the adequacy of both policies and implementation.²⁵

Leadership style, sensitivity to political realities, technical competencies, clear priorities, local capacity, and participation are all important for effective implementation.

Technical and administrative capacity to produce detailed, costed plans and schedules is crucial for effective implementation. Creating effective plans requires:

- Personnel with the experience and skills to convert prose statements into plans;
- Timely access to a national knowledge base which allows them to estimate the size of the task; and
- Cost data to create realistic budgets.

Monitoring progress of implementation—and, therefore, the effectiveness of policy— means defining useful performance and outcome indicators and finding cost-effective ways of collecting relevant information. Some of the needed information can come from the annual education statistics exercises. Other data may have to be specially collected, probably by using small samples of schools, to provide feedback on progress. The committee charged with overseeing the implementation can use the data to review both implementation strategies and the content of the policies themselves. Constant adjustment and refinement will be taking place during the implementation. Instituting some sort of formal evaluation periodically is also desirable—to the extent that implementation relies on external funding, the funding agency will probably require evaluations and will fund them.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on African experience, as reported in the case studies and by participants at the Tours conference, and on the social science literature on policy formation, this paper has set out a number of central issues. These issues reflect the challenges faced by all African countries as they address the need for a coherent set of national educational policies. The discussions at the Tours conference, using the case studies and the working paper as inputs, developed a more complete understanding of the challenges of educational policy formation. The results of the conference are summarized in two sets of messages which are presented below.

The case studies suggested that the policy formation process:

- Requires a good knowledge base;
- Depends on strong, stable leadership;
- Is most effective when it is consultative and participatory;
- Must include setting realistic priorities and forging compromises between competing goals;
- Requires effective funding and government-wide collaboration;
- Should generate a social learning process and marketing of the national education vision; and
- Is continuous and interactive—even at the stage of implementation.

Using the case studies *and* the experiences of participants at the Tours Biennial (as developed in small discussion groups), the following points/lessons emerge as the **defining issues** for effective policy formation. They are:

- (a) The context for national policy reviews is:
 - often initiated by revolutions or major changes of government;
 - driven by internal conditions; and
 - driven by permanent policy review bodies in mature systems,

- (b) Strong and consistent leadership is essential that:
 - delegates authority and trusts subordinates;
 - explains goals and reasons and uses public media;
 - works openly with all through transparent processes; and
 - promotes stability of technical staff to provide continuity.
- (c) Political and technical rationales are present and that:
 - political participation is first priority;
 - technical work supports and informs political dialogue; and
 - political will is essential to overcome resistance of vested interests.
- (d) Broad participation of stakeholders is crucial, including:
 - government, parliament, political parties;
 - students, parents, teachers; and
 - active organizations in civil society.
- (e) Policy formation should be a social learning process implying that:
 - consensus and widespread understanding are major goals;
 - reasons for changes need to be clear to all;
 - those sacrificing immediate benefits understand resulting societal benefits; and
 - the Ministry of Education becomes a learning institution.
- (f) Concerning the roles played by Government and funding agencies in policy formation:
 - Government must be the leading player;
 - Cohesive, prioritized, viable plans empower the government; and
 - Funding agencies can learn to be supportive partners in the policy process.

These points reflected a general consensus of the Conference participants. The conference produced an enhanced awareness of the value of national educational policy and a realization that there is expertise and experience within Africa that could be drawn upon in the future. This yielded a shared understanding between funding agencies and governments of their respective roles in formulating educational policy. The feelings of the participants were summed up in the words of Mme, Diallo Aïcha Bah, former Minister of Education from Guinea and presently Director of Basic Education at UNESCO, who stated that “Tours will stay in our memories for a long time because it has marked an important evolution in the relationship between partners in education in Africa. Let us not forget that the concept underlying our Association for the Development of African Education is full of meaning, and that both sides must take on the consequences and obligations.”

ENDNOTES

1. The original version of this paper, prepared by Evans and Shaw, was presented as background documentation to the Tours Biennial Meeting. This is an edited and extended version of the original paper. It incorporates the major points made by participants at the Tours meeting, a more extensive analytical overview of the processes of education policy formation and a relevant bibliography for those who wish to pursue the topic further. Earlier drafts have been reviewed by member organizations of the DAE, by the DAE Secretariat and other external reviewers. Karen Tietjen and Ash Hartwell of USAID have provided extensive and useful inputs to this version.
2. Evans, 1994.

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3. Donors to African Education, 1994a.
4. Research from the late 1970s (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984) already showed that policy formulation and implementation are not distinct processes but, rather, compose a cycle that repeats itself throughout the life of a program.
5. Haddad, 1995. In particular, see pages 19-39.
6. Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; White, 1990; Porter & Hicks, 1994; Grindle & Thomas, 1991; Feldman, 1989; Haddad, 1994; Evans 1994.
7. Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993, p. 7.
8. Evans, 1994. p. 6.
9. Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993, pp. 11-12.
10. Porter & Hicks, 1994, p. 22.
11. Simon, 1957, p. 198.
12. Or, to use the terminology of Lindblom & Woodhouse, bureaucrats and elected functionaries, respectively.
13. A number of countries promoted similar schemes. The viability of such approaches is discussed in Sack, 1994.
14. In the words of one interviewee cited in the Ghana paper (p. 19, para. 2.4.10): by “six dedicated very passionate people who believed they had something good to offer the country and they went all out to implement their vision.”
15. In addition to the six case studies reported here, this section will also refer, at times, to case studies reported in Evans, 1994. See Box 1 for the ten countries studied.
16. See, for example, Weiler, 1983; Sack, 1981.
17. See J. Samoff & S. Sumra, “From Planning to Marketing: Making Education and Training Policy in Tanzania” in Samoff, 1974.
18. See Feldman, 1989. In this book, as well as others cited here, the case is made that uncertainty and unpredictability are major characteristics of the policy making process.
19. Feldman, 1989, pp. 93-95.
20. “Ownership” is the word-of-the-day to express this. The World Bank’s “Wappenhans Report” on the quality of the Bank’s portfolio brought this issue to the fore within that institution.
21. See Condé, 1995. Staff redeployment—a difficult and perilous issue at best—was one of the major aspects of the Guinean reform. The exercise was largely successful and led to increased enrollments with the same number of staff.
22. Sack, 1995.
23. See Senge, 1990.
24. Delors, et. al., 1996. p. 29.
25. Donors to African Education, 1994a.

Annex 1: Overview of Country Papers

TOPIC	BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Policy event/ instrument	- Etats Généraux de l'Education. -Policy Declaration	Full cycle of education reform, from conception implementation evaluation	• Policy declaration - Education sector Adjustment Program	Master Plan (MP) for Education	Development & redesign of post-independence education system & policies	• Commission: 1987-89 - White Paper (WP): 1989-94
Period covered	1989 - 1993	1985 - present	1989 - 1993	1990-91	2 phases: 1975-87; 1987- present	1989 - present
Economic context	• State bankruptcy in 1989 • Two adjustment programs over this period	- Shift in policy from self-reliance to extensive cooperation with IMF & World Bank • Adjustment	Adjustment since 1984 with World Bank/IMF support	• Adjustment in early 1980s followed by strong growth in late 1980s leading to increased needs for education. • Education expenditures increased against pressures of international organizations	• Extremely difficult situation. - +/-70% of Government financing from donors. • Poorest country in Africa • IMF/World Bank adjustment programs	- Almost total economic collapse in 1986 - Shift in policy from self-reliance to cooperation with IMF & World Bank • Adjustment as of 1988
Socio-political context	New democratic context plus popular concern for education - government use of education fora for additional legitimation.	- Populist regime promoted education reforms as it undertook adjustment programs. - Government of action, not of consultation	Military regime until 1993	Democratic government since independence (1968) with free elections & constitutional guarantees.	Under same leadership, country recently became a multi-party democracy.	• Country recently emerged from long period of chaos & decline. - Vibrant media & new social organizations
Educational context	• <i>Ecole nouvelle</i> of marxist regime largely discredited - Enrollments down, costs high & quality low	- Education system "clinically dead"	• Very low enrollment rate. • Little investment. - High inequalities, • Very low primary pupil unit-cost.	- High enrollments • Literate population • Excessive drop-outs alter grade 6 - Inadequate science teaching •	Existing system perceived to be extremely unsatisfactory, rigid & poor quality	- Long-standing demands for reform. • Long tradition of education reviews & policy making at 10 car intervals.

TOPIC	BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Knowledge base	Numerous studies covering entire sector that, largely, set scene and became unavoidable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning exercises (1987-91). • Assessment testing (1992-94). • No research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies undertaken between 1984-88 by World Bank/Unesco plus by nationals • 11 studies during period of policy preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies identifying factors leading to poor performance. • Poor & unsustainable national utilization of studies produced by international experts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agency driven • New Govt. taking initiative. • National ownership of some studies is disputed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of other countries' systems. • A culture of thorough analysis (many commissions of inquiry) • Poor data • Pre-investment & sector studies. • Funding agencies preponderant
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister aloof from technical matters. • Minister forms own party for 1995 legislative elections & solicits support from MoE staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly authoritarian from above. • Political leadership highly committed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister demonstrated commitment by actively participating in most matters, went to the field, worked closely with people in various roles, solved problems, and had a thorough understanding of technical issues. • Stability of minister (since 6/89) and staff enhanced both's leadership capacities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activist minister deeply involved in all aspects: masters the details; chairs weekly staff meetings; set clear objectives & stuck to them with persistence; consults extensively with all actors; has relaxed & open style. • Minister has excellent relations with Prime Minister. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current minister takes lead role; previous introduced fewer innovations • Current minister has deep knowledge of, & long experience in, education sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, participatory leadership from President & all officials. • Dynamic & flexible minister. • Effective Government leadership is outgrowth of popularly supported guerrilla war followed by 9 years of stability.
Continuity (ministerial & higher-level staff) & Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three ministers since 1989. • Ministerial changes accompanied by extensive staff changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 ministers & 6 directors-general over period • Numerous institutional changes & a fair degree of institutional instability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister in office since 1989. • High degree of staff continuity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister in office from 1983-95. • Highly stable: MoE leadership and related para-statal in post for long periods 	Three ministers since 1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister in office since 1989; stability since then, little before.

TOPIC	BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Capacity building	National experts involved in studies have been promoted to important positions in education and planning ministries, thereby also promoting continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, budgeting & monitoring unit established • Decentralization • Increased responsibilities for communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable teams that acquired professional competencies. • Experts worked with, and trained, Mol: professionals. 	National counterparts to foreign technical assistance was unavailable in some areas. This led to inadequate use of technical expertise provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An on-going process Technical assistance required for knowledge transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & implementation units strengthened • Decentralization to Districts. • National experts involved in sector studies and policy processes. • Education managers trained
Compromises & priority setting	Political & educational consultations - compromises & consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little compromise in beginning. • Priority setting established from above. • Accommodation with critics at later stages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies & group discussions determined compromises & priorities 	Process guided by culturally embedded need for consensus, which can take Precedence over pedagogic matters		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient negotiations with funding agencies. • Extended dialogue participation
Timing & lime-related factors	Time pressures not ail important issue.	Reforms promulgated rapidly to lake advantage of perceived "window of opportunity".		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP took much longer that foreseen, but this was reasonable & preferable. • Funding agencies respected MP time constraints 	Funding agency timing not compatible with that of Government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agencies' Government's timing out of synch. • Funding agencies initiate projects before end of process.

TOPIC		BENIN	GHANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	UGANDA
Participation, consultation, coordination, & marketing	With in MOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial <i>cabinet</i> plays preponderant role. Initially, fairly intensive. Diffusion outside of major centers difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little-to-no prior consultation. Dissent not tolerated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation & consent within MoE during formulation phase. Autonomous <i>Comité de pilotage</i> for implementation met 42 times over .3 years. Ateliers de rentrée. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of objectives was work of very few people Much of Plan drafted by local technicians Seminars with teachers, managers, principals, students others. 	Initial post-independence system conceived by a group of professionals on the basis of a foreign model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High levels of participation by professionals. Senior staff involved in consultative processes. Continual guidance by MOE management & involvement in approval process
	Within Gov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively weak, given absence of functioning committees. USAID adjustment financing only marginally improved MoE/Min Finance coordination. 	Discussions within inner circle of military govern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several ministries participated. <i>Comité</i> de, suivi met 14, times over 3 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National seminar held alter publication of first complete draft; attended by school of officials PTAs, unions, employers, NGOs, ++; led to revisions. Council of Ministers was responsible for broad policy and decisions on major issues & was generally supportive of education development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several ministers participated Council of Ministers, then Parliament, involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet initiated process & approved document Officials from other ministries participated. Parliamentary debate on final document followed by legislation.
	<i>With civil & political society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively weak: education received some press attention and rather little attention from Parliament. Education Law never passed 	Explanatory campaign to market the reform followed major decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unions closely associated with elaboration of policy document (which called for staff reduction). Parents not consulted for lack of organized structure. No broader consultations, but "open discussions". Policy document widely disseminated. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some consultation in the cities, little in the rural areas Poor infrastructure hinders communications outside capital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on consensus at all levels of politics. First phase: widest consultation on education ever, but still limited to urban elite. Second phase (WP): bottom-up, consensus building approach, led by President, Broad consultation through national local leaders. Problems in circulating reports.

TOPIC	BENIN	(:MANA	GUINEA	MAURITIUS	MOZAMBIQUE	MANDA
Funding agencies: Coordination roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little direct coordination: each agency's internal constraints take precedence over effective coordination. • Government refuses to take lead role. • Unesco/UNDP financing of policy studies have coordinating effect. • USAID put in place large project for basic education, based on policy studies. • World Bank initiates sector adjustment process, winds up financing investment project. 	Generous financing for reform from several agencies (WB, USAID, ODA,).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies participated in all phases of policy document. • Weekly meetings at the initiative of MoE during implementation, monthly later. • Annual program review meetings. - Agency coordination was more difficult during implementation than during policy formulation. • MoE played lead role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agencies played prominent role - Data identification & use was their major contribution, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies' orle is preponderant - Coordination is intensive and coordinated through formal mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major policy segments developed outside of WP process, with funding agency influence dominant. - Agencies show little interest in govt. priorities (UPE & vocational education). • Lack of MoE action made it necessary for funding agencies, to be guided by their own agendas. - Local & MoF officials unprepared to negotiate with funding agencies & coordinate their projects.
Policy outcomes	Policy statement adopted to satisfaction of some agencies and not others (who wanted more detail).	Policies adopted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process led to tangible results that resulted in rapid development of the education system over a relatively short time. • Results in 199? exceeded 1989 objectives. 	MP accepted by Government & agreed by agencies	Evaluation of initial post-independence system currently underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consensus on contentious issues • Shift of emphasis from access to quality as result of agency influence. - Early signs of improved learners' performance & overall standards.
Implementation experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experimental programs to promote girls' enrollments. - Ministry reorganization underway, although timidly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial critics within Ministrv were fired and later reintegrated. • Enrolment rates not keeping up with population growth. • No improvements in student learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machinery established for MP implementation • Action plans prepared & implementing agencies, identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current situation is one of "policy ferment" • On the verge of new policy directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partially driven by funding agencies' preferences, • Early implementation limited to policies supported by funding agencies

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Funding agencies: Coordination & roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little direct coordination: each agency's internal constraints take precedence over effective coordination. • Government refuses to take lead role. • Unesco/UNDP financing of policy studies have coordinating effect. • USAID put in place large project for basic education, based on policy studies. • World Bank initiates sector adjustment process, winds up financing investment project. 	Generous financing for reform from several agencies (WB, USAID, ODA,).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies participated in all phases of policy document. • Weekly meetings at the initiative of MoE during implementation, monthly later. • Annual program review meetings. - Agency coordination was more difficult during implementation than during policy formulation. • MoE played lead role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agencies played prominent role - Data identification & use was their major contribution, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies' role is preponderant - Coordination is intensive and coordinated through formal mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major policy segments developed outside of WP process, with funding agency influence dominant. - Agencies show little interest in govt. priorities (UPE & vocational education). • Lack of MoE action made it necessary for funding agencies, to be guided by their own agendas. - Local & MoF officials unprepared to negotiate with funding agencies & coordinate their projects.
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