

ZJER

ZIMBABWE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Volume I Number 1 March 1989 ISSN 1013-3445

SPECIAL ISSUE: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND POLICY

The World Bank Report

*Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
Policies for Adjustment,
Revitalization and Expansion*

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~~Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research~~

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**EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA:
The World Bank Report as a Research
Project**

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ABSTRACT

This article considers the adequacy of the research base underlying recommendations in the Bank Report and the context within which this project was undertaken. It argues that the Report must be viewed in the broader context of the Bank's macro-economic structural adjustment policies and considers the extent to which several of the Report's major policy recommendations are prefigured in the Bank's Initiating Briefing of 1985.

Overall, the effort is to be complimented for the breadth of the study, the openness of its presentation, and its ability to question positions that the Bank had espoused in the past. In some areas, notably recommendations regarding the impact of books and distance education materials, the research base presented in the Report seems insufficient. The study is also faulted for the limited use of African scholars. Finally, this article considers the extent to which events in the continent may be outpacing the research project. For example, the informal "privatization" of education within the formal system and the possibility that reforms in educational finance, coupled with a perceived decline in the private returns to education, may move in the direction of threatening past progress toward universal primary education.

The World Bank Report that was published in early 1988 brought to completion a process that had started almost three years before, in March 1985. Over the next several years, it can be safely anticipated that there will be a great deal of discussion on the Report. Some of this is inevitable simply because it is a production of the World Bank, and because its views on education are likely to be increasingly important at a time when the economic crisis in Africa has made it necessary for many countries to agree to negotiations with the Bank and the IMF about the conditions for structural adjustment. So, although the Report is about the education sector, it must be remembered that this is not an isolated policy paper on education in Africa, but is part of a much wider macro-economic analysis of Africa. The timing is also important, for this paper on education policy has appeared after a large number of its target countries have agreed to conditions of structural adjustment. This has meant different things in different countries, but it has frequently involved massive devaluations of local currencies, reductions in the role of the state in public enterprises, encouragement of private sector initiatives, and liberalization of imports. This paper will therefore properly attract attention because it will be seen as the educational counterpart of macro-economic structural adjustment policies. Indeed, the very subtitle of the Report -- "Policies for adjustment, revitalization, and expansion" -- reinforces the possible connection between the national and sectoral dimensions of the Bank policy.

But another reason that this Report will generate discussion is that it will prove extraordinarily valuable. Vice-chancellors, leaders of teacher unions and academics may not approve of some of the things said about universities, teacher salaries, and the outcomes of education research, but they and many other groups in the education community will be tempted to draw on some of the data assembled in the paper -- in the 40 pages of statistical tables, the 10 pages of technical notes, or in the 140 references in the bibliography. There have been very few attempts in the two and a half decades of Independence in Africa to look across the largest portion of the continent and to make judgments about the state of education. This particular volume does not pretend to be a history of education in post-Independence

Africa, nor to be a sociology of African education, and certainly it does not aspire to be a treatise on African curricula, nor on teachers or technologies in African schools. However, the sheer lack of authoritative material referring to the 1980s on many of the day to day issues of education in Africa will mean that this World Bank Report will find itself on the reading lists of courses for graduate teachers, for educational planners, and it may even become a reference point for courses on African educational history, and sociology, in rather the way that the Phelps-Stokes Commissions to Africa, some 55 years earlier, laid down the terms of the debates about African education for almost a decade thereafter.

It is precisely because this Report will prove invaluable to so many different actors concerned with the development of African education (from bilateral donors to hard-pressed research students looking for data) that it does itself require to be examined as a research-based enterprise. In this present brief paper, accordingly, we shall look at some of the sources for its principal insights. We shall also touch on some research areas that do not seem sufficiently to have influenced the thinking of the Bank, and especially the new relations between education and unemployment. But we shall start with a number of comments on the process of research that underpinned the paper.

THE BANK REPORT AS A RESEARCH PROJECT

In its routine work of project development, the Bank carries out a great deal of research which is country-specific. As much of this is narrowly related to project preparation and justification, it seldom enters the public domain outside the Bank in the way that the Bank's formal research studies would do. But doubtless the best of these project-related studies and reports enter the awareness of those working in what used to be called the Education and Training Department of the Bank which was responsible for the sub-Saharan paper. In a similar fashion, this Department would become aware of the general direction in which the regional divisions of the Bank concerned with Africa were moving with their projects in education. When therefore the

task of developing a policy paper was given to the Department, there was already a great deal of relevant material available in formal research projects, in project-related studies, and, as important as anything, the recent experience of the Bank in African projects. However, cutting across all this educational material, there would also be some consciousness of the Bank's macro-economic policy measures in Africa, and their implications for the social sectors such as health and education.

Of course, ultimately policy papers are drafted by individuals, however much they may subsequently be adjusted and changed by the comments of the many parties to which the text was submitted. Unlike the Bank's earlier education sector policy papers which were effectively anonymous, *Education in sub-Saharan Africa* admits to specific individual responsibilities for the overall preparation of the report, for drafts of specific chapters, and for immediate supervisory work. This increased openness of attribution for parts of the Report makes it possible to identify the source of a number of the salient ideas in the text. But beyond this relatively straightforward detective work, it is worth noting that the bibliography of the Report refers to no less than 11 studies that were specially commissioned for the project. And of these, 6 are available in a discussion paper or working paper series. So again it would be possible to follow through some of the threads from the commissioned papers, into the main text or into the appendices.

The general themes of these commissioned papers are themselves instructive for they indicate areas where those responsible for the Report felt that they would need up-to-date research, information or policy options:

- Languages in Africa
- Education in Africa: preliminary issues
- Females as beneficiaries of Bank operations
- The monetary and non-monetary returns to education in Africa

- Issues related to higher education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)
- Education and economic growth in SSA
- External aid to education in SSA
- Distance education: an economic and educational assessment
- The quality of elementary education in Africa
- Internal efficiency and the African school

The majority of these titles had already been identified as important at the time when the 'Initiating Brief' for the policy paper was written in July 1985. It may therefore be worth examining in a little more detail the initiating brief. In an important sense it set out the skeleton of the argument which the authors wished to develop. Its ten pages (which were discussed with a number of African researchers in the autumn of 1985) might illustrate to what extent the policy paper of 1988 was a confirmation of the issues and arguments thought to be central in the initiating brief. It might also indicate whether the commissioned papers were expected to break new ground, synthesise research findings across Africa, or reinforce the principles guiding the initiating brief. Some examples may make clearer the links between the initial proposal and what followed two and a half years later.

THE CASE FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

The first issue mentioned in the initial proposal is the case for increased investment in education. The justification was the consistently high rates of return for education (especially primary). It was also argued that there were very considerable non-monetary benefits of education, including in food production, children's

health, and lower fertility, as well as in improved participation in government processes and in management capacity. The initiating brief also felt there was likely to be value in taking the long view in looking at the relations between education and economic growth. With so many positive relationships available in the research linking education with development, the Bank expected to argue the case for allocating more resources to education: 'This paper will bring together existing evidence that would document underinvestment in education in sub-Saharan Africa' (World Bank Report, p. 3). But in arguing for further investment, it was already quite clear that this would not always imply further government outlays. The latter were widely overstretched in Africa. Further investment would need to be largely from alternative, private funding sources.

What was anticipated in 1985 was almost exactly what turned up in the 1988 policy study, and in particular in Recommendation 1. This called education an 'economic sector' that called for greater investment. The unusually favourable rates of return were emphasised, as was the consequent encouragement of both public and private expenditures. In the text itself (World Bank Report, ch. 2) the research evidence is assembled that has for many years supported Bank investments, especially in primary education. I have personally for quite some time been a little sceptical of what I have termed 'the semi-automatic consequences of education' for other areas of behaviour, such as the arguments about so many years of education influencing farmer productivity. Their weakness particularly seemed to reside in a fundamental lack of concern with anything more subtle than counting the years of schooling and relating these to other measurable items. Especially lacking seemed to be any interest in the *quality* of the education that was allegedly having such powerful effects. It was therefore refreshing to hear an important note of caution about the automatic consequences of greater educational investment:

These benefits include higher incomes and lower fertility. The research evidence to this effect is compelling. A caveat, however, is in order. ...To the extent that the quality of education has declined recently and is allowed to deteriorate further, new investments in the quantity of education may not yield returns commensurate with those in the past. (World Bank Report, p. 7)

This is a very important qualification. It is an acknowledgement that if there is a primary school effect, it cannot be relied upon to operate quite regardless of the poverty and disarray of primary schooling. This is a particularly valuable comment in the African setting, since it could lead to researchers (including the Bank) paying much more attention to the longer term consequences of very poor quality schools.

There is a second welcome example of tentativeness in the review of the investment-in-education literature, and that concerns the much quoted superior returns to primary education. Without rehearsing the arguments for and against rate of return studies, this particular policy paper has thrown up evidence (from Kenya) that draws a large question mark around the traditional confidence in primary rate of returns. Again there is a commendable frankness in the Bank's admitting 'that the substantial difference (nine percentage points) observed in the past between primary and secondary education may have completely disappeared, which would reflect the declining scarcity value of primary education' (World Bank Report, p. 22). Like the semi-automatic consequences argument, the primary rate of return assumptions have long seemed counter-intuitive to observers of primary school realities.

In summary, therefore, the correlation between what the initiating brief expected to show and what turned up in the policy study was very close, but in reviewing and in commissioning relevant research, some significant qualifications of earlier assumptions were acknowledged.

THE CASE FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

If the first message (and recommendation) emphasises quantitative expansion, this is in fact inseparable from a concern with improved efficiency, and with the quality of education in Africa. The initiating brief had announced that 'one of the fundamental trade-offs in education... is the choice between *more* and *better* education,' and it had thought that it might be able to review the research evidence on 'relative rates of return to investments in expansion of education...and qualitative improvement.' The brief's working assumption was that faced with what appeared like a massive deterioration in the basic conditions of schools, it would pay to shift resources to increase the quantity of purchased school inputs per student, rather than further increases to the number of students.

The final policy paper in fact does some very useful clarification of the various contexts in which quality considerations may interrelate with quantitative measures. Fortunately nothing so complex was attempted as relative rates of return to quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement; and, equally, nothing as naive as a guideline for choosing between more and better is suggested. Perhaps appropriately, the paper focuses most on that set of countries where allegedly the situation in education has deteriorated to a point where it no longer makes sense to talk of a trade-off between quality and quantity. Where there are really no learning materials in schools, virtually no learning can take place. Hence the Bank's first priority for improving *quality* turns out to be an assertion about the need for a minimum *quantity* of textbooks and instructional materials. This duly gets translated into the second major policy recommendation of the whole report -- that 'the provision of a minimum package of textbooks and instructional materials is usually the most pressing need,' and that the other more expensive recurrent costs such as teachers' salaries will be much less effective if it is not in place (World Bank Report, p. 46).

The suggestion about textbooks is accompanied by many other measures for improving quality, such as class size, teacher training, teacher morale, school buildings, language policy, and the nutrition and health of young children. But there is no doubt that books and supplies come across as 'the safest investment in educational quality.' Like the first recommendation about greater investment in education, this too is driven by research with which the Bank has been closely associated. The results of this are initially set forth rather starkly: 'There is strong evidence that increasing the provision of instructional materials, especially textbooks, is the most cost-effective way of raising the quality of primary education;' but it becomes clear that texts cannot be useful in isolation. The temptation to treat textbooks like emergency food aid has been resisted, though an impression may still be given to some readers -- especially those who concentrate on the executive summary and the recommendations -- that textbooks have a semi-automatic effect on test scores and school quality.

The existing research by the bank on textbooks and student achievement was obviously important in emphasizing their potential in sub-Saharan Africa, but the decision in favour of textbooks as a crucial policy variable must also reflect the increasing role of textbook components in Bank education projects, especially since 1976 (Searle, 1985. Education and Training Department [EDT], Paper No.1). What is less clear is whether there were any status reports on the absence of texts and other supplies carried out as part of the policy paper. One of the most powerful images created in the paper is that of schools in which virtually no learning can be expected to occur, because the absence of crucial inputs (texts and materials) has been so complete. But which are the 'countries in which educational standards have deteriorated the most,' and in which consequently a minimum package of textbooks will be crucial for any revitalisation? These are nowhere identified, but they can perhaps be deduced from the table (A-17) which outlines the changes in public recurrent expenditure per primary pupil between 1970 and 1983 (World Bank Report, p. 141). Against a general pattern of a decline in US dollars from 67 to 48 over the period, some countries declined much more dramatically (e.g. Ghana and Uganda, from 66 to 16 and 8

respectively), or were never so high as 67 in the first place (e.g. Malawi from 26 to 13).

The reason for wanting to know the countries where supplies of textbooks and other materials have dwindled away to virtually nothing is that this might have helped to put into some kind of context the other data on declining educational quality with which the Report is concerned. Malawi, for example, is the country whose secondary school students are identified as doing so much worse in reading and science than the much younger students in most other IEA countries.¹ But is it also one of those which has had a long running drought of primary school texts? Similarly, one unidentified Francophone African country did extremely poorly in a primary maths test from France, scoring no better than chance, even in some 'reasonably good' schools in the capital city (World Bank Report, p. 33). Does this also reflect a textbook famine? Presumably not, if the researchers thought the schools reasonably good.

Given the state of the educational statistics in sub-Saharan Africa, it would have been difficult without substantial fieldwork to put together data on the low quality of student achievement, the declining public expenditure on primary schools, and the progressive absence of texts and supplies. But the strength of the recommendation about textbooks is such that it would have been appropriate to have had some more specific and more current evidence of the textbook drought in some of the worst hit countries. For instance, one of the key references to textbook availability and student learning in this Bank paper is to a piece of research on Uganda for which the data were collected in 1972, before the crisis had even begun to bite. Certainly, the Bank has learnt a great deal operationally about textbook projects

1 The International Association for the Assessment of Educational Achievement (IEA) has coordinated a series of cross-national studies of student achievement since the mid-1960s

in the intervening years, but it would be intriguing to know whether research has been carried out in any of the most critically affected African countries in recent years. Arguably, research on the impact of textbooks on student achievement must be difficult, if not logically impossible, to carry out in classrooms or school systems that really don't have any. We shall argue later that we know very little about intervening in conditions of survival schooling, since the economics of scarcity have so altered the very nature of teaching and learning, and not only the textbook dimension.

One final note on the textbook dimension of educational quality may be worth making. In the previous Bank policy paper on education in 1980, textbooks were also identified as the 'most consistently positive determinant of educational achievement,' but it was also admitted that, next to providing trained teachers, 'textbooks remain the most costly item required for a minimal standard of education' (World Bank, 1980. Education Sector policy paper, p. 35). Eight years later, in Recommendation 2 of the sub-Saharan report, supplies of books and materials are judged to be particularly critical but 'relatively inexpensive to rectify' at the primary level (World Bank Report, p. 46).

EXPANSION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION VIA DISTANCE TECHNIQUES

It was also anticipated in the initiating brief that at the secondary and higher education levels alternative, cost-saving technologies would be required if enrolments were going to increase several fold. Again, as at the primary level, this was by no means the only policy suggestion, but in the final recommendations of the paper, distance education emerges as the vehicle for delivering quantum increases in secondary enrolment. It is argued that only such radical changes in teaching and learning will be able to keep pace with the social and political pressure to expand education. In fact the bulk of Recommendation 3, which is concerned with secondary schooling, is dedicated to the

promotion of distance education methods, 'for dramatically lowering costs' and allowing 'the extension of educational services even to very small communities' (World Bank Report, p. 61).

What research evidence is this very powerful suggestion built upon? One of the most immediate sources is the study specially commissioned for the occasion: *Distance education: an economic and educational assessment of its potential for Africa*. (EDT, 1986, no 43) It is perhaps surprising in view of the strength of the support for distance education initiatives, both in the main text of the Bank Report and in the summary, that the commissioned paper on the subject is rather tentative:

The hard evidence on the cost effectiveness of distance education in Africa is thinner than we would like At secondary level projects have been modest and have suffered by being starved of resources At primary level only a single project ... points clearly forward. (World Bank Report, p. 36)

Equally it is difficult to understand the publicity given to the Malawi Correspondence College and its study centres in the Bank Report. From figures available elsewhere in this document, it might appear that one reason why Malawi students attend the study centres is the very restricted access to ordinary secondary education. Apparently only 4 percent of the age group attend secondary schools in Malawi. In this situation, students are prepared to take advantage of the study centres with their makeshift premises and undertrained teachers, as there is no alternative. The evidence would suggest that the study centres are as much examples of very low quality community secondary schools as they are of distance education institutions. Whatever the actual status and success of these centres, it may be that their attraction to an institution like the Bank is that they point to the possibility of combining good quality correspondence materials with less trained (and hence less expensive) teachers. The question must be, however, to what extent in these very critical times, correspondence institutions have managed to isolate them-

selves from the wider problems associated with textbooks and supplies in Africa, not to mention the mailing and additional management demands of some 19 000 students.

SUMMARY COMMENTS ON POLICY PAPER AND RESEARCH

In this first section of this article we have looked at the relationship between the initiating brief and the final product, and we have noticed some of the ways in which the Bank paper's authors have drawn on existing and newly commissioned research. We have only had the space to look at a few examples of the research base for policy measures. But there are plentiful illustrations of the intention to base recommendations upon research findings. Some of the common phrases scattered through the text are:

'Substantial evidence from research supports the proposition that ...'

'The increasing body of evidence on the payoff...indicates that...'

'Current research suggests that...'

'The economic evidence ... is of three sorts...'

'Direct and or hard evidence is not available....'

'Although substantiation depends more on anecdotal than empirical evidence....' (World Bank Report)

We have noted that there is a relative openness and tentativeness about some of the implications of this research. In other cases, research is drawn upon which continues to be quite controversial. Again, there is at least one instance of where a project has been very positively evaluated, but no longer actually exists. It is in fact particularly problematic to highlight examples of good practice as is done with the boxes scattered through the pages of the report. It would be difficult enough to insure that these represented some consensus about the example in the country from which they are drawn. But an ad-

ditional complication is that the boxed illustrations are frequently derived from external agency initiative, whether projects or evaluations. Indeed, this external origin of several of the illustrations is really part of a larger issue for African researchers, and that is that by far the greatest portion of the research base for this African paper is dependent on external research workers. Much of this research has been directly commissioned at some point by the Bank, and much has really been in-house research in the Bank, which perhaps helps to account for the lack of references to research undertaken by African scholars.

The important consideration is probably not so much the very small number of African scholars amongst the 140 references, for there are also very large numbers of European and North American research projects that are not referred to. The more pertinent issue is whether there are coherent bodies of African research that are seen to be relevant to the debates and proposals which the Bank report has thrown into the arena. This is not the same thing as expecting there to be a whole corpus of research on topics identical to the concerns of the Bank. But what can be anticipated is a body of research which can engage with the political, philosophical and economic assumptions of the Bank paper, without having undertaken identical work on rates of return or on non-monetary returns to education. It also seems likely that the Bank paper will act as a starting point for a great deal of new research, and this will be encouraged by the very explicitness of the paper about its research base.

Rather than continuing to examine the way in which the particular major recommendations actually emerged (we have only looked at three of the seven major recommendations), it may be more valuable in this concluding section to look much more broadly at the spirit and logic of the Bank paper.

EDUCATION AND ADJUSTMENT TO EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The logic of the Bank Report resides in the trilogy that is its subtitle: adjustment, revitalisation, and expansion. Thus far we have looked at the rationale for expansion, and also some of the concerns for the revitalisation of school quality. But in the logic of the Report, both these elements are really dependent upon the first, the adjustment and re-ordering of the financial base of education. Both revitalisation and expansion imply further resources, but as public budgets for education are already overstretched, adjustment has to mean a reform of educational financing. This is nowhere more clearly stated than in what follows: 'Thus, in the context of ongoing austerity in Africa, resolute movement toward adjustment is a necessary condition for implementing forward-looking policies on the other two dimensions' (World Bank Report, p. 2).

In a context where at least some of the funds for revitalisation and expansion are expected to come from external donors, then there is indeed a basic conditionality embedded in the subtitle. Our concern here is not principally with the terms of the relationship, but more with how the adjustment measures proposed by the Bank are likely to relate to wider patterns of adjustment between school systems and their external environments which have been underway for several years. We are talking therefore of a double adjustment affecting African school systems. One is the very specific adjustment discussed by the Bank. The other is the much more complex, existing adjustment of school systems to the changing employment and income realities of Africa. We shall start with the latter.

In a number of countries the state has already effectively retreated from the aspiration to deliver universal provision of social services such as health and education. Such services are increasingly being provided through the informal economy, especially in rural areas. The pattern differs from service to service and from state to state, but in the severer cases the state can no longer afford salaries for primary school teachers that will last more than a fraction of the month. Hence, teachers in large

numbers are obliged to acquire further income outside school, either through trade, or commonly through 'privatising' their skills and knowledge as teachers. In at least one country, public school teachers renegotiate directly with parents private fees for homework by number of subjects required. Informally levied tuition fees are in fact providing the second salaries of teachers and head-teachers in state schools. In the economics of scarcity, any educational service -- from worksheets, to textbooks, to externally donated food -- is likely to be sold rather than provided.

How widespread this kind of adjustment to inflation has become in other African countries is not known, but even this example may be useful for illustrating the tension between some of the Bank's careful discussion of measures for improving quality or containing costs on the one hand and the new traditions of financing education that have emerged in some situations. The economic and pedagogical implications of a whole series of options are discussed in the Bank's analysis of primary education, and these cover many possibilities, including more intensive use of teachers, double shift systems, reductions in teacher training, increases in class size, and many more (World Bank Report, p. 40-53). But most of these are based on an assumption that the teacher can be expected to work full-time on the state salary; the discussion then revolves primarily round the best mix of school variables. If, however, an adjustment of a much more dramatic sort has already taken place in the remuneration of teachers -- so that teachers cannot expect to survive on their state salaries -- then the Bank's adjustment plans must somehow take account of these earlier, and much more far-reaching adjustments.

Again, without implying that the crisis in the state funding of education in a single country will become the model for others, there is no doubt that the search for alternative sources of financing in the one country examined has led to the exclusion of the poor from many of the private educational opportunities offered by the public sector. The search for 'cost recovery' from parents has led to informal school fees in the 'better' schools of anywhere from 10 to 50 times government's approved fee levels, as well as a series of irregular demands for building materials on an ex-

orbitant scale. It is worth noting that the Bank's concerns with cost recovery and diversification of sources of funding are more with the secondary and tertiary levels, on the grounds that fee paying at primary schools might prevent the poorest children getting any education at all (World Bank Report, p. 53). Yet in this particular African country many of the primary schools are being 'run like private trade', to use the headline of one local newspaper.

One of the problems about developments of this sort is that there appears to be very little research available, either to inform or influence policy. For example, we simply do not know whether significant numbers of poor parents keep large numbers of primary age children in school (despite an element of school fees) because of the much greater lure of relatively low cost government secondary schools, and virtually fee-free tertiary education. Nor do we know if the still high aspirations of many poor parents and pupils would be severed once cheap secondary and higher education had been replaced by various types of cost recovery regimes.

One has a sense that the end of the 1980s in Africa will see the dismantling of the traditions of fee-free university education from Khartoum southwards and westwards across Africa. It may also see the dismantling of low cost, high status boarding institutions at the secondary level, and the charging of 'realistic' fees. Of course, there will be schemes for the protection of the bright poor, but these will prove extremely difficult to administer, except at the very local level. The paradox in all this is that it may well be carried out across the continent without there being available much rigorous research knowledge on the participation of low income families in African higher education. Certainly, the Bank had argued in its initiating brief that 'the equity effects of increased cost recovery would probably be beneficial since it is the well-to-do who now receive the bulk of the subsidies given.' And this had translated itself in the final text into a view that in higher education, 'the system ensures that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer' (World Bank Report, p. 77).

Doubtless the children of second, or third generation educated parents have been increasing in African higher education. But it would still be important for the African research community to have figures on what proportions of first generation educated students there are in different tertiary institutions on the continent. Even if research were to show that this latter group has been decreasing, my own view would be that currently the *perception* that university education is free or very cheap has had a very powerful effect on retaining the children of poorer families in the basic education cycle. It may still not be too late to do some important research on the aspirational consequences of cheap higher education for mass participation at lower levels of the system.

This brings us to the final point of this section about adjustment and the external environment, and that is *the issue of the employment consequences of being in school*. We have heard a good deal in the Bank paper about the non-salary benefits of being in primary school, but for a number of years there can have been few parents that believed primary education alone would be sufficient to get their children jobs. All around them there was evidence to the contrary: that children with only primary schooling simply continued to work in agriculture, or in the urban or rural informal economy. In fact popular participation in universal primary education campaigns, or in building self-help secondary schools were predicated on increasing children's chances of getting further education and ultimately 'a real job' in the formal economy.

Now that wider macro-economic adjustment policies along with governments' own measures are actually affecting the formal sector itself (with cutbacks and redundancies), it may be that poorer parents in particular will begin to question their faith in schooling for jobs. Indeed, across Africa governments are mounting advocacy campaigns about education (even higher education) no longer guaranteeing jobs. What effect these adjustment policies and associated government measures will have on popular perceptions of schooling can only be guessed at. Unfortunately we still know remarkably little about the transitions from elite primary

schooling to mass primary regimes, and we know even less about the mechanisms that have been reinforcing attendance in non-compulsory systems like those in Africa.

But we suspect that once secondary and higher education have their current subsidies decimated, and processes of cost-sharing attached to them, primary education will appear to the mass of poorer parents as effectively terminal, and as quite delinked from opportunities for self-improvement. In such terminal primary regimes, the problems for planners will not only be those discussed in the Bank paper, such as textbooks and poor quality. The issue for many parents might be whether they will even enrol their children, once the traditional lure of further education and formal employment has become financially an impossibility. We have said earlier that the inner logic of the three elements in the subtitle of the report implied conditionality. But there was also the assumption that expansion of basic education might *follow* adjustment measures: 'For many countries, the most important long-term investment... will be to renew, after adjustment and revitalization measures have begun to take hold, national progress toward universal primary education' (World Bank Report, p. 98). We shall have to see. But it seems just possible that UPE will be harder effectively to promote after adjustment than before.



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