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ABEL 2

Advancing Basic
Education and Literacy
Phase 2

Education Reform Support (ERS): From Projects to Sustainable Reform

Executive Summary
First Draft

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Conducted by

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Education Reform Support (ERS): From Projects to Sustainable Reform

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ABEL II Project

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b

Contents

Tables

Boxes

Figures

Annexes

1. Introduction

This extended executive summary provides an overview of the series **Education Reform Support**. This series represents an effort to systematize much of what is known about how donor agencies can use explicit, planned projects or activities, together with host country institutions, to foster local processes of education reform in a manner that is sustainable and endogenous. Even in a summary as long as this one, however, it is impossible to tackle all the issues with nuance and subtlety. Our style here is unavoidably telegraphic, so the reader is urged to remember that though this is a stand-alone document, it is but a summary of a book-length series of documents. As is customary in such summaries, we have eschewed the use of bibliographic references. The original references can be found in the papers constituting this series.

This Summary includes four sections beyond this one: 2) background and justification, where we contextualize our suggestions within current development thinking, 3) how to make ERS happen, operationally, 4) what are the available "tools and techniques," and 5) how to define fundable and "projectizable" activities.

2. Background and justification

2.1. A politico-economic perspective

Effective localized innovation is common but fails to spread

There is an irony to education reform. Pockets of good education practice (e.g. enlightened and effective classroom management, novel curricula, innovative instructional technologies, many of them cost-effective) can be found almost anywhere, signifying that good education is not a matter of arcane knowledge. Be it the result of maverick teachers, the elite status of the parents, enlightened principals, and/or informed communities, localized pockets of effective educational innovation can be found throughout the developing world, sometimes in poor material circumstances. Yet the rate of usage of the available knowledge, and the rate of spread of effective practices, is depressingly low. As a result, these innovations exist on a very small scale—the number of schools affected by these reformist innovations is minuscule relative to the total number of schools. Moreover, these innovations often have a short half-life. Either the maverick teacher leaves the system, the enlightened principal gets burned out, or the informed community simply loses interest after finding no echo of support in the bureaucracy. Donors frequently assume that the problem is one of information or knowledge: local systems do not *know* about the innovations or do not know how to make them work administratively. Others are of the opinion that funding is a limitation, but most of the evidence suggests that most African countries could do a great deal more with the funding they already have.

Most donor projects are, therefore, in one sense or another, "demonstration" projects that are supposed to yield palpable information about good pedagogical practice. Yet the "information" assumption on which almost all this activity is based is contradicted by the following facts: 1) one often finds effective practice in areas that are far from the world's information centers (reasonably effective schools—for the environment—are often run by principals who have not read the latest donor manuals and are very far from the capital), 2) pilot projects frequently actually regress, and 3) one can often find quite effective schools just a few city blocks away from rather dysfunctional ones, and everyone knows about this. In any case, donor-initiated innovation continues to be equally vexed by the problems of *going to scale* and *sustainability*. Donors sometimes claim to have surmounted the problem of going to scale. Big money will, after all, affect a lot of change—for a time.

Some key questions

The problems of going to scale and sustainability thus evoke two sets of questions. The first centers around the consideration of "why." Why is it that innovation does not go to scale? Why can it not it be sustained? The second flows from the issue of "what." What exactly is it one should want to go to scale? What exactly is it that one would ideally want to be sustained?

Education and interest groups

The *status quo* in education is a well-guarded dynamic. Education in most countries is a billion-dollar industry from which many interest groups are reaping enormous political-economic benefits. Accordingly, any threat to an interest group's beneficial station within the status quo will evoke a response aimed either at safeguarding or advancing that interest group's relative position within the political economy. Some interest groups impose costs on their system in a very diffuse manner, but reap benefits in a very concentrated manner, and these groups have a disproportionate effect on the conduct of policy. Against this backdrop, it is easy to see why educational innovations can exist on a small scale: they are not a threat to the *status quo*. It is also easy to see why small scale innovations have a very difficult time when one tries to take them to scale: they *become* a threat to certain elements in the *status quo*. Furthermore, the mechanisms that in other systems tend to guarantee the automatic spread of innovation (e.g., informed competition, clear output metrics, accountability to clients, good information policy regarding production processes, community overview), would be, in the education sector, *themselves* a threat to the *status quo*. Thus, without system-wide reform initiatives aimed at changing the political economy surrounding education and educational innovation, *and keeping it altered*, substantial slippage toward the original political economic arrangement will, over time, take place.

It is process and environment that need to go to scale, not only innovations as such

Equally important to consider is what exactly should go to scale and be sustained. Many efforts to replicate success stories meet with modest success at best, because the wrong thing is being replicated. Success stories are success stories because: I) the reform addressed a well-understood local need, ii) there was a local demand for the reform, iii) the reform was endogenous, iv) it was championed by one or more "messiahs," and v) there was widespread ownership of the reform. By attempting to replicate the reform itself (i.e., take it to scale), one is violating the very conditions that make innovations successful. Instead of replicating the reform itself, it is the conditions that give rise to the reform in the first place that need to be replicated. What is needed are the tools, techniques, structures, mechanisms, and institutions that can help generate demand for reforms, facilitate an informed deliberation over the substance and character of reform, and safeguard learning-driven change.

2.2. Focus on the donors and lenders

Uncertainty in donor agencies

Many international donor agencies appear, these days, to be in a constant process of self-questioning and reorganization. Some of the staff in the agencies bear the changes with resignation and often even with good humor, but many of the best are weary, and some, having been downsized, are not even on the scene so as to have the privilege of sharing their humor or weariness with outside observers. While the process responds in part to internal pressures of a purely managerial nature, it is also surely, in part, an attempt to respond to serious technical and philosophical questions regarding the role and *modus operandi* of these agencies. We are not concerned here with the more internal, managerial aspects of these reorganizational crises, instead, we are interested in the technical aspects, and we are interested in helping develop responses to the questioning.

Bases of critique

The questioning of the donor agencies has political and hence public-budgetary expression. Some of the critique emanates from what might be called a left-populist perspective, which decries the role of donor agencies in supporting non-democratic regimes, either of a traditional oligarchic or thuggocratic nature, or of a more modern bureaucratic-planning nature. This form of critique is more familiar, and has, in the past, been the most biting one, particularly on the World Bank, but earlier (particularly when it was part and parcel of the Cold War confrontations) on USAID as well. More recently a "right" critique, which sees donor agencies as extensions of the developed countries' welfare state, has begun to have telling effects, particularly on USAID but also on the Banks. This critique decries the statist cast of donor interventions, and calls for more free-market approaches.[1]

Yet, even more recently, many commentators on international development have begun to see a sort of convergence between the "left" and "right" critiques, in terms of the need to create space for localized popular participation, for civil society, *and* markets; and the realization that societies with inefficient property rights structures are often

[1]Many readers may be surprised at the notion that there is a "right" critique of donor agencies, which might signal a selective bias in the critiques the donors are battered with. Much of the recent "left-populist" critique of donors focuses on structural adjustment (non-project activities), while the "right" critique focuses on the fact that most *projects* embody a "bureaucratic-planning" perspective and may foster an expansion of the (bureaucratic) state.

also societies that do not respect human rights. This coincides with the growing realization amongst many development practitioners that the "market vs. state" polarity is perhaps not the soundest way to cast the development problem. The growing convergence between these points of view has increased the power of both, and has found echo inside the donor agencies, where many thoughtful staffers fully realize the dangers of statism, of oligarchic or bureaucratic group-think, of the minimization of market forces and participatory processes, and admit that their agencies may have contributed to these trends, but do not clearly see ways to go beyond the usual, often apparently incompatible, remedies (e.g., structural adjustment programs that attempt to give more free rein to market forces are not always popular with the advocates of human rights and democracy).

Weaknesses in traditional projects

The problem is compounded by the realization that the traditional mechanisms used for fostering development, namely capital and technology transfers organized around distinct "projects," has not been as successful as one might have hoped, particularly when used to deal with complex issues of sector-wide improvement, and even more particularly in social sector issues such as education reform, "integrated rural development," and other complex interventions. (We have cast this same issue in politico-economic terms above.) It is surely the frustration of well-meaning interventionists with the inability of interventions to go to scale that also accounts for the uneasiness in the donor agencies we have noted above (though the relationship is indirect). If the role of the donor agencies is not to transfer capital and technology, since perhaps this can be done more efficiently by the capital and technology markets, then what is their role? Innovative thinkers in the donor agencies say the new role has something to do with supporting processes of reform, with technical assistance, with providing for more informed options. This can happen in the context of, and can even be abetted by pilot projects, particularly if the latter embody "reformist" points of view (such as emphasis on governance, information, accountability) yet it clearly goes beyond such traditional projects. But how?

The realization that "projects" are not satisfactory is not independent of the broader philosophical-political critique, in that, for example, "projects" generally have a central-planning and bureaucratic flavor, since five-year plans and other such instruments generally were also given expression around the same kinds of quantity-oriented, investment-driven "projects," and the bureaucrats who collaborated with the donor agencies designing donor projects were the same ones who were designing five-year plans. In fact, donor suasion and condition, rather than direct socialist inspiration, was one of the key forces behind the implantation of much of the very statist, bureaucratic planning and project-oriented thinking that both left and right and, today, donors themselves, criticize. (It is not coincidental that planning ministries are largely devoted to the programming of external capital budget funds.) But, at a sectoral level, particularly in the social sectors, the alternatives are not yet clear: systematic, reproducible approaches to supporting non-project and "non-planning" approaches are not on the shelf. At a macro level the alternatives appear clearer, even if the ideological and political contradictions noted above have not been entirely solved. Perhaps they cannot be entirely solved. At the sectoral level even this limited clarity has not yet emerged.

Similar realization in counterparts

At the same time, the agenda is made even more complex by events in the developing world, where, in the education sector, the limits to an obsession with physical and quantitative expansion have become clearer, where local intellectuals question the legitimacy of the state as the sole supplier and funder of education, and where education policy-makers have begun to realize the relative uselessness of "pedagogical engineering" approaches based on production models of the educational process.

3. Education Reform Support

Based on all of the above, it appears that new approaches are needed for fostering education development. With reference to the accompanying diagram (see figure 1, below), we would argue that, at least from the point of view of the donors' responsibilities, the aim should be 1) to enhance system-wide reform, and 2) to develop a "new" type of education project that embodies what might loosely be called a "modernization" or "reformist" agenda: accountability; client orientation; targeted financing; competitive access to public funding for education provision; moving decision-making down (or, indeed, up) to where local information acquisition costs, economies of scale, and certain requirements of homogeneity and equity all balance each other; information-based management and finance; voice and exit control mechanisms; etc. As a shorthand, one might call such projects IFG projects (for "information, finance, and governance").

Both the development of system-wide reform and of IFG projects embodying those reform principles require greater country receptivity to reform ideas, which, in effect, means that the right groups within countries must come to own the necessary ideas. This, in turn, requires 1) much more learning from existing purposeful pilots and from the plethora of ongoing natural experiments that have never gone to scale, and 2) better methods for policy dialogue and, more broadly, policy communications. Finally, the "primitive inputs" into this process, from the point of view of an external donor agent, are a) the vision of the donor's leadership, b) the internal receptivity within the donor agency (because many mid-level staff may not, in fact, be convinced that the traditional band-aid or "pedagogical engineering" donor-project approach is flawed), and c) techniques for the support of reform, which includes techniques for learning from experiments as well as techniques for policy analysis and policy communication. The dynamic of this process is depicted in the accompanying diagram (figure 1).

From our observations of several donors, it would appear that, of the three "primitive inputs" just discussed, the first (awareness and pressure from donor leadership) is largely assured (though sometimes hazy and inaccurate in its formulation), the second

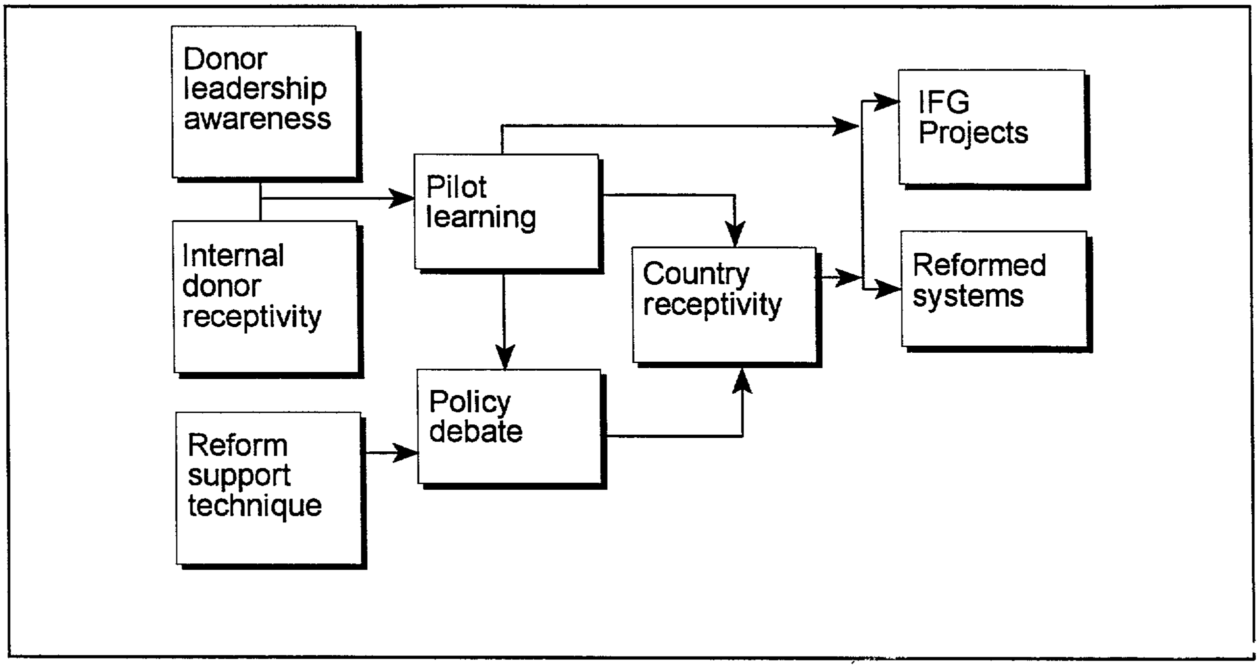

Figure 1. Conditions for successful reform and "reformist" projects

(internal donor staff receptivity) is improving, but the third (knowledge of reform support techniques) is still lacking.

Having noticed this lack, we set out to systematize what is known about education reform support, or what could be generalized from reform support in other sectors to education. The goal was to be able to offer this knowledge as a system or integrated approach that can be replicated.

We are calling our approach Education Reform Support (ERS). ERS is an approach that aims to integrate traditional public policy analysis (using information and analytical techniques) with public policy dialogue, advocacy, awareness and political "salesmanship" (using communication techniques). Education Reform Support seeks to invoke these mechanisms as a means to improve the process of policy decision-making in the education sector. We define an "improved policy-making process" as one which is 1) much richer in the use of information and analysis; 2) competitive and transparent, in the sense that groups proposing certain policies must "prove" the worthiness of the policies they propose using information, and in a competitive marketplace of ideas that has as few barriers to entry as possible. In short, a process that is as deliberative, accountable, democratic, transparent, and information-rich as is reasonable to push for.

The ERS approach consists of 1) an operational framework for "getting things done," and strategic maneuvering, 2) a set of analytical and policy-dialectical tools that are the substance of that maneuvering, and 3) a set of suggestions for the design of (typically) donor-funded activities in ERS. The ultimate aim, of course, is to build the national institutional capacity to apply this approach, helping establish and nurture a permanent reform support infrastructure. The rest of this Summary describes the approach we are proposing. This Summary therefore also describes the accompanying series of papers where we justify and explain the ERS approach.

4. Making It Happen

What does it take to *effectively* set up a process of Education Reform Support? To put it simply: it takes a set of actors who know *what* to do, and *how* to do it, from both a philosophical and an operational point of view, and have the right tools, techniques, and funding at their disposal. Note that we would not suggest that this "makes" reform happen, and that hence donors can "make" reform. Our argument is more modest. Reform is up to countries. What outsiders can "make" happen is only the process of effective support and encouragement of those reforms. The rest of this Summary covers those three areas: a) what and how to "make happen," b) what are some of the tools and techniques available, and c) how to organize fundable, "projectizable" activities.

As noted immediately above, "making it happen" requires knowing *what* should happen, and, more operationally, some idea as to *how* to make it happen. In this section we therefore summarize the elements of ERS that cover these issues.[2]

What needs to happen: an operational framework

To effectively support local reform efforts, the following types of institutional developments need to take place. These developments are not entirely up to the donor. or to the donor project, but the donor may have to initiate them.

- Develop a reform support infrastructure and a core group within it.
- Develop within the core group the ability to manage the process strategically.
- Develop an awareness of the changes that need to take place so that innovation can spread: how to "clear the space" for innovation, legally, institutionally, and politically.
- Foster, document, and market pedagogical or other schooling innovations that "fill the space" that has been cleared.

[2]For more discussion, see **Education Reform Support: Making It Happen**, and **Education Reform Support: Increasing Stakeholder Participation.**

How to make it happen: seven steps

Listing what needs to happen is fairly easy, and is obviously congruent with the politico-economic and strategic points of view already obvious in all of the foregoing. How to make all this happen, however, is another matter. In what follows we detail a set of steps that have been found to work in many situations. We list them in chronological order, with the understanding that the chronological order will often need to be violated, as many of these operations need to happen simultaneously, and, since many mistakes will be made, the process will have to iterate over the same steps several times, while other aspects of the process continue. Again, we highlight the importance of understanding the spirit and "theory" of what one is trying to do, and we warn against wooden interpretations of "the system."

1. Assessment of education issues and political economy

If the activity was designed systematically and in-depth, *and* if those implementing it are the same as those who designed it, *and* if not too much time has elapsed between initial design and initiation of the activity, this step can be somewhat minimized. In any other case, a rather in-depth assessment should be carried out. Note that we insist, almost *ad nauseam,* that, unlike in routine "input provision" projects, a reform support project needs to be strategically managed, which means that constant reassessment is needed. This is a difficult thing for us researchers, "projecteers," bureaucrats, and semi-academics to come to really accept. Thus, except in limited cases just noted, the sort of assessment we discuss below (section 5) needs to be undertaken in some depth by the team in place. Those carrying out the assessment should be thoroughly familiar not just with education issues but with political-economic issues.[3] We know of few, if any, donor activities of significant size that have explicitly carried out a politico-economic assessment as we recommend. However, the methodology has been tested in smaller scale in Guinea and Mali, both to help prepare activities with some ERS components, as a test of the methodology as such. The exercise was found to be very useful, because it uncovered precisely the kinds of relationships between process issues and substantive issues, between actors and between actors and issues, that we have argued are key to understanding the political-economic dynamic, and how to begin to think of locating support activities. It became clear, for example, that Mali has a much stronger civil society and NGO community, even to the extent of having policy research/advocacy think-tanks fairly similar to what one finds in Latin America or in African countries with more developed civil societies, such as Kenya. This process thus suggested that, at least in this sense, Mali might be a better investment risk, and suggested who might be reasonable "partners" in this investment. It also suggested which issues to focus on, and which techniques to try to bring to bear.

2. Start developing (or assisting if it already exists) a reform support infrastructure

The very notion of reform "support" implies that something is doing the supporting. Reforms of public sectors do not generally happen of their own accord. In most countries where governance is a problem, this support will have to come from a network of affiliated institutions that may well include some government offices (hopefully more than just the Ministry of Education), but may also need to include

[3] See Education **Reform Support: Strategic Development and Project Design.**

think-tanks, foundations, NGOs, etc., in civil society. The network needs to be more than a loose affiliation; it needs to be thought of as a true infrastructure of support for the reform process, and it needs to be self-conscious about that role. The task here then is to begin at first to informally link and network, then to begin to jointly and singly strategically plan how the reform is to be supported.[4] Different institutions will need to do different technical and political-communications tasks, and this specialization needs to be part of the strategic planning. Which institutions to link and network is an important issue. The selection depends on the technical and communications tasks at hand (data and information management, technical analysis, communications and marketing). We have made extensive suggestions about how to go about choosing institutions to network depending on the tasks at hand, relative competencies, etc.[5]

Operationally, it is important to realize that this infrastructure most definitely *need not be in place* before one can begin working. Unlike the infrastructure for building a house, the infrastructure for reform support will best emerge as the process unfolds, since the *kind* of infrastructure one needs will typically not be known to those building it until the whole process begins to unfold. Strategic adaptation and learning, and hence funding flexibility, are key. This may be disconcerting to some, but it is also liberating to know that, particularly if one has the bureaucratic freedom to start fairly small, one does not have to "get it right" from the start. Furthermore, in many countries such infrastructures already exist, and certain elements of it can be "borrowed." In Ecuador, an ERS process started with one awareness-and-advocacy NGO, but proceeded to network with associations of private schools, donor project implementation units, the teachers' union, newspaper editorialists, etc. Even a very small scale activity such as this one reached out to other institutions, in a network fashion, where exchanges of information, services, and favors could take place. In fact, networking into a reform support infrastructure actually began *with* the carrying out of technical discussion activities. In South Africa, strong networks already existed, and a donor-supported ERS-like effort could develop its own infrastructure by networking with existing institutions, using and strengthening the aspects of the network that were needed as a support infrastructure.

3. Develop core group

The reform support infrastructure will typically be too big and unwieldy to really work with very closely. A more executive body, which may consist of representatives of various institutions, but at an executive or high-technical level, will also be needed. This will be the core coalition, and will assist in channeling funds, will represent the institutions receiving most of the technical assistance, and will be the group in charge of spreading knowledge of the process and enthusiasm for the reformist efforts (both

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[4]Specific guidance on how to conduct strategic planning for education reform units is contained in a ERS syllabus which is part of this series.

[5]This is contained in the documents on **Education Reform Support: Tools and Techniques** and in **Education Reform Support: Strategic Development and Project Design.**

the substance and the process), to their own constituents as well as to their principals at a more political level. Thus, the core group spreads ideas, enthusiasm, training and funding opportunities, outwards towards the institutions in the overall reform support infrastructure, and more generally within high-level political and economic circles. It is conceivable that the core group might constitute itself into a kind of NGO or supra-NGO with operational support from donors. It is also possible that one might choose a single NGO to *be* the core group. Finally, we should note that it is not necessary that there be a single, monopolistic, core group. There are really no tight recipes. Nevertheless, we have found that the members of this core group, either individually or with the backing of their close institutional allies, should have the following key characteristics, particularly if this group is in fact a single institution.

- At least a few of them should be extremely well-connected, such as having the ear of Ministers, the highest executive if possible, candidates to the highest executive position, the highest religious, military, labor union leadership, etc.
- Power of public convocation. Individual connectedness is not enough. Power to organize meetings to which important people will attend is also key.
- A political perception of at least being willing to discuss and consider the public interest, rather than narrow partisan or guild interests. If representing guild and partisan interests, must at least be willing to discuss these issues in terms of public policy discussion, and to allow the public interest to be used as a metric.
- Technical ability, or at least openness to learn, and realization of the importance of analysis and communications.

The importance of core groups in reforms has been widely noted in sectors other than education, but it has not been consciously used as part of donor-supported strategies in many countries. In Mali, at present, several groups could be poised to become a useful core group, but none is quite "there" yet. For example, a Groupe Pivot coordinates NGO activities, but is more of a coordinating than a policy research/advocacy counterpart. A policy group, set up by government, exists, but has little if any involvement from elements in civil society, is very recent, and has no history of institutionalized policy research/advocacy. In Haiti, an attempt was made to set up a core group to steer the development of a national reform plan, but the context was too politicized in a partisan sense, too little transparent strategic planning and serious process-management was used, and the group was disbanded and lost donor support before it could really finish its work.

4. Develop, use, and train in specific technical tools

The development of specific technical tools, be they databases, projection and cost models, "issues" presentations using computer graphics, as well as the training of counterparts in their development and use, is the next step. This accomplishes several goals.

First, by offering the tools and the training to various parties, and involving them in the co-design as much as possible, one solidifies the network, one builds the reform support infrastructure. It is only by using the infrastructure that one develops it.

Networks coalesce and solidify via intense use, not via careful design and formal agreement, and the most neutral form of initial use is a somewhat technical one.

Second, by using tools such as projection and analysis models, particularly if key elements of the support infrastructure "co-own" them, and particularly if one "uses" them and creates them at the same time in a public process, one can begin to generate public discussion of serious issues, such as projected salary explosions due to careless design of the teacher salary structure, discussion of the utility of teacher certification based on "effective schools" studies, etc. The more groups feel that they co-own the tools that are used to drive and illustrate the discussion, the more seriously they will take the results. For example, when certain groups object to certain conclusions, one can invite them to modify the model or provide better data, one can share the diskettes with them, publicly. If they do not have the training to modify a spreadsheet model, one can offer it to them. It is difficult for a group to publicly oppose analytical conclusions when they have been invited to criticize the very analysis that leads to them, and when they are even offered the training with which to criticize. Naturally, this requires self-confidence on the part of the core group or the donors, and confidence in the correctness of the analysis. Third, the process will demonstrate-by-doing how one begins to inject information into process of dialogue that are competitive and public. It will demonstrate how the invitation to further analyze the results can be both cooperative and competitive, and can therefore ratchet up the level of the discussion. In short, this step, together with the previous two, is absolutely essential.

Note that at first the tools can be used to simply generate awareness and information about what is wrong with the system, and, as the process evolves, can then begin to be used to generate specific policy options for discussion, and eventually can begin to generate the "salesmanship" of options around which a core consensus may have developed.

Finally, note that it is a waste of precious time to await the development of the research, the EMIS, the projection tools, etc., before initiating processes of discussion and demand creation. This waiting ("the EMIS is not yielding good data yet") is a natural academic or technical reaction, but it must be fought. It is also a frequent bureaucratic maneuver to avoid beginning to face tough issues, and in those cases it must be fought doubly hard. Almost all countries have more data than are being effectively used, and all that is required to make effective use is a little technical imagination and honesty. Meaningful discussion can thus start, in most countries, right away. This discussion, if properly orchestrated (public and participatory but guided, "competitive" but friendly, etc.) will generate demand for more data and better tools, whose development will have already started, but whose completion is not necessary for a process of serious policy dialogue to start.

South Africa provides a case in point where it was the development of a computer modeling tool, with fairly simple but complete data, that fed a process of dialogue, which in turn led to more informed discussion, more contestation of the base data, and the development of NGOs with more interest in systematic database management for research and advocacy purposes. The use of the tool also evoked the competitive development of similar tools, by other parties, all making demands on the same types of data. Demand evoked the organization and potentiation of the supply of information, which in many cases existed but was unused and not organized for policy debate purposes. All of the model's databases and spreadsheets were shared, rather early in the process, with any interested party, since the purpose was the sharing of the process of inquiry, not the development of ultimate truth.

In South Africa, during the transition from apartheid, USAID offered technical assistance to groups in the democratic opposition to help inform elements within this opposition, both to support their internal discussions and their discussions with other parties in the transition. The assistance initially took the form of providing for the use of computer-based tools to support strategic debate and policy-making, seminars on innovations in cost-effectiveness in education systems, and, finally, support of consensus-building around basic system goals and their budgetary feasibility in a new South Africa. The work was coordinated by a local, recently-formed NGO whose emphasis was the brokering of information for public debate. The atmosphere was one of intense and increasingly open political competition, in a quickly democratizing situation. Since the whites-only public sector was managed in a technocratically-intensive manner in which competition over resources was quantified and data-based, the same logic now extended to the broader, and now much more competitive, policy debate. Thus, data and analysis immediately became an important currency in the new debate. They were injected into this debate via dozens, perhaps hundreds, of one-on-one meetings, workshops, seminars, etc., many of which were sponsored by the donor assistance under discussion, but with many others also taking place anyway.

This experience provides an interesting case study in the role of competitive politics in driving demand for analysis and data. The assistance provided to the NGO sector perhaps managed to surprise the existing government. It seems that no one, including the government at the time, had actually put together the basic but complete data on what a new, re-constructed South African education system might look like, and what various options for quantitative targets, in terms of internal efficiency targets, unified service ratios, contribution of the private sector, etc., might imply for the total education budget. Thus, the opposition came up with the first systematic estimates of the budgetary implications and the needed and feasible planning targets, even though it was not a methodologically difficult thing to do—it simply had not been done, largely because the demand-based logic of numerically-driven public debate had not suggested it. In *this* case, the effect of the assistance was a quick ratcheting of the debate, so that the government then quickly sought to create its own analytical tools which, naturally, since the methodologies for these tools are well known and understood, and the base data was more or less the same, came to similar conclusions as the work done with and for opposition groups. The effect was that this input contributed to both raising the technical level of the debate and, since one now knew more precisely where agreement and disagreement lay, to move forward the debate.

We conclude from this experience that in a situation where policy actors are poised to compete with each other for control of the right to use budgetary resources, on a clear and relatively rational basis, donor inputs in the area of analysis and information are absorbed as quickly as they can be produced; and that donors can most effectively contribute when the work is coordinated by an entrepreneurial NGO or Core Group whose function might be, among others, the brokerage of public information.

Box 1. South Africa: the role of information in competitive public policy processes

5. Create demand

The larger reform support infrastructure, the core group, and the tools and techniques can all be used to generate on-going demand for two things. First, ongoing demand for reforms, and for reforms of a certain type, based on an awareness of what is wrong and what policy options are open for fixing it, and their tradeoffs. Second, perhaps more importantly, one should generate an ongoing demand for the *style* of policy intervention one is exemplifying: open, based on solid information, and healthily competitive. Demand creation essentially means playing with the degree of openness, the degree of competitiveness in policy formulation, and the use of information and analysis as an important competitive metric, all orchestrated so as to ratchet up demand for the type of policy intervention donors advocate. The donor's exemplary role in the process is useful. The donor can even assist competing groups in the formulation of their policy positions, and require that certain standards of evidence be used in meetings that the donor funds. To the extent that these forces can be played with, and the level of the debate can be ratcheted upwards, the process also affords serious learning opportunities for many of those involved, and can *then* also feed on the fact that people begin to find it useful and enjoyable. Note that this is not the same as saying that if one simply pushes out the supply side of information and analysis, people will come to appreciate it and use it. Supply will not create its own demand. But injecting supply into a relatively competitive and open process, while simultaneously increasing both the competitiveness and openness of the process, and helping change the evidentiary rules, will in fact create demand. It is not clear that this will work in all situations, however, since a crucial aspect is the openness and competitiveness of the policy discussion. (It is clear, however, that in some cases it can work even if the openness and competition takes place in the interior of the state. Thus, it may be possible in "modernizing" authoritarian situations, but is almost certain to fail in traditional authoritarianisms.)

In Haiti, in spite of the aforementioned problems, one aspect of the process that worked rather well was the holding of a series of learning and discussion events, hosted by the core group, which involved and pulled in a reform support infrastructure. This was used to generate and disseminate knowledge via a participatory sector assessment. In El Salvador, after a very charged and conflictive social situation, a participatory sector assessment was successfully used to begin a process of knowledge-building and conciliation. It was quite evident that, from the point of view of those who participated, the process was successful, because it generated an ongoing demand for continuation, even among very busy people with high opportunity costs. In both countries donors could have capitalized on the momentum, but the correct mechanism has been hard to find, partly due to the absence of systematic knowledge about how to do it, and partly because of lack of donor realization of the importance of these processes.

6. Hold seminars, symposia, workshops

The venues for solidifying the reform support infrastructure and the core group, for providing the technical assistance, and for holding actual substantive policy discussions are, of course, workshops, seminars, symposia, etc. However, these types of meetings have different purposes at different stages of the process, and their use must be carefully strategized.

- One-on-one, or one-on-few, seminars and meetings are useful early in the process in setting up the networks.
- Smaller, technical seminars are useful in imparting technical knowledge and sharing the "tools and techniques" fairly early on.
- Bigger workshops can be used to disseminate results of initial tools and generate awareness, and, later, to begin to discuss policy options, around which one can generate some discussion and test where the controversies are.
- Further smaller-group training and discussion can take place on the basis of what has been discovered are some of the issues. This should require one-on-one discussion to reassure stakeholders that their opinions are being taken into account, and their inputs being incorporated into the design of the technical tools. More technical training can actually empower various key stakeholders to more closely examine and criticize assumptions, and thus reassure themselves that their points are being taken care of, and that, even then, the conclusions hold.
- On the basis of more workshops, in an iterative fashion, one can narrow in on several policy recommendations.
- Larger symposia can be used to begin to broadcast the narrow set of options or even recommendations, and to legitimate them, but should ideally not be used to seek technical input.

In many of these seminars opposed interest groups should be asked to present papers, but one should insist on a certain minimum technical standard, and one could conceivably even give the same kind of assistance to various competing groups in meeting those same standards.

All these types of meetings and symposia have been used in furthering reformist attempts, but usually in a somewhat confused manner. For example, there has often been a tendency, as in the case of Benin, to use large meetings at the outset of the process, and, in a sense, to confuse the functions of executive-like and research-like bodies with those of legislative-like bodies. In other cases, large meetings are not used to communicate the results of deliberative and open processes, but to convey and disseminate single options developed through closed processes highly subject to group-think errors. This has been particularly common in French-speaking Africa, and in cases where the socialist-inspired nature of the government makes it "obvious" that the government is acting in the best interest of the people by promising to provide "the people" with universal coverage of basic needs. In such cases it appears to be presumed that policies can simply be "announced." In the case of Swaziland, instead, a process of informed deliberation, using extensive database querying and modeling, and holding small group meetings, only eventually large-group meetings in more parliamentary-like settings. In other countries, such as Botswana, or South Africa, a national commission may hold dozens if not hundreds of smaller meetings, eventually leading to widely-vetted policy changes, without necessarily resulting in large parliamentary-like meetings, other than of course in the legislature itself to the degree that legal change is needed to embody the policy reform. These apparently more successful experiences suggests that the order sketched above might be the most useful.

Note, however, that in few if any cases, at least in Africa, has a successful, more or less permanent, reform support infrastructure capable of involving both state and civil society, apparently emerged yet.

Education Reform Support (ERS) was introduced to Swaziland at a time when public spending on education was consuming over 30% of the national budget, the education system as a whole was plagued with enormous internal and external inefficiencies, and policy making was largely by default: "fire fighting" was the modus operandi of the MOE with policy being largely the accretion of solutions to crises.

ERS activities initially unfolded around the development of a reform support tool (with a cost and enrollment projection model as its basis), *Imfundvo*. By approaching the development of the tool in a highly consultative fashion, the dialogue that the tool was itself being developed to initiate had already begun. Stakeholders expressed what they wanted the tool to be able to do, and they began to express themselves about the issues in the context of analytical categories as suggested by the tool. And as the tool was being developed, stakeholders became aware of I) the role models could play in dealing with certain issues, and ii) that the education problems needed to be approached from a systems perspective. In the process, *Imfundvo* became largely a Swazi tool.

The tool was more widely used in a series of workshops, with various purposes. The first was to facilitate stakeholders' and opinion-makers' learning regarding the systemic features of the education system. The second was to inform them of the implications, largely financial, of projecting current characteristics of the system into the future. The third was to get stakeholders talking about reform and to align the talk such that a coherent set of activities could follow. The smaller workshops were followed by a National Education Symposium. This three-day long affair to which over 400 stakeholders including parliamentarians, were invited served to heighten people's awareness of the problems and issues. *Imfundvo* was used to generate the analyses that informed and bound the discussions that took place during the symposium. Additional reform support tools (i.e. computer graphics presentations, pamphlets) were also developed. Coming out of the National Education Symposium was a clear mandate to address the gross inefficiencies that plagued the system.

The ERS experience in Swaziland yields a set of lessons learned. First, it is critically important for technical assistance to be flexible: the process is unpredictable and event-driven. Very little of what occurred in Swaziland was planned, but everything involved well thought-out strategic reaction. The second lesson learned is that reform takes time. At the personal and institutional levels, it involves learning whole new paradigms. The third lesson learned from the Swazi experience thus far is the need to understand the difference between and interplay of two types of actions: a) acts to clear legal and political space for innovations, and b) action to fill that new space with classroom-level pilot experiences which can then be replicated and sustained, because the policy space has cleared. Finally, there is the lesson of facilitation. None of what took place in Swaziland would have taken place without a set of technically competent actors in place to help make it happen, using good tools, networking, and stakeholder-polling and consultation.

Box 2. Swaziland: using meetings, workshops, symposia to start ERS gradually

7. Develop capability to draft policy and legislation; go on to management and implementation

As enough consensus develops, the infrastructure should have the technical skill to actually draft policy statements or legislation, as well as to put together, manage, and seek funding for pilot projects that embody the tenets of the reform (e.g., "modernized" projects that emphasize information, system learning, governance, accountability, the fostering of local power, etc.). While actual project and reform management and implementation are vital steps in the process, our methodology does not include the managerial and implementation aspects. A literature on education policy implementation exists, and a literature on reform implementation more generically is emerging. Thus, important as the implementation issues obviously are, in the interest of keeping our approach focused, we only note the link between decision and implementation, point out that there is a literature on the latter subject, and point out that the same skills that are needed in supporting reforms are also needed in supporting implementation, but they need to be applied rather differently.

We have covered a lot of ground already. So far, we have introduced our approach, and we have made suggestions for how it can be operationalized, how one can get things going. We have made reference, already, to the use of most of the analytical and persuasive armamentarium of public policy analysis and communications, but without focusing on the tools as such. We now turn towards a discussion of the tools and techniques that can be brought to bear.

5. Tools and Techniques

ERS as both technical tools and as institutional process

As defined above, Education Reform Support is a process of using and transferring both technical and institutional abilities. To fully describe it, then, means a) explaining the set of technical and institutional abilities as part of an almost mechanical "toolkit," as well as b) explaining the processes whereby the tools are strategically put to work in a dynamic, constantly changing institutional context. Above we focused on institutional processes. In this section we focus directly on the "tools and techniques." Education Reform Support uses the standard techniques and frameworks of decision support and the public policy sciences. Given the specific nature of the problems in the public sector of developing countries, and most particularly in the education sector, we have added "institutional development" and "networking" as techniques to be extended and developed. The accompanying box shows a list of most of the "techniques"

Data and information
- EMIS for accountability and dialogue
- Survey and census use for analysis and public discussion

Analytical approaches
- Internal efficiency analysis
- External efficiency
- Budgeting and financial analysis
- Analysis of financial transfers and school funding
- Simulation, projection, and planning models
- Analysis of salary scales and cost implications
- Analysis of governance options

Communications
- Approaches: advocacy, dialogue, advertising
- Facilitation of discussion and negotiation, resolution and momentum
- Strategizing communications
- Communication techniques

Institutional development for analysis, communications, and advocacy
- Networking and coalition building
- Funding of public interest or advocacy groups
- Strategic planning for public sector and NGOs in policy development and policy advocacy
- "Institutional environment" issues

Box 3. Tools and Techniques for Education Reform Support

involved in ERS. This is a fairly standard list. Many references exist on the standard items in this standard list, documented even down to the manual and textbook level. Thus, standard methodologies exist for EMIS, analytical tools such as cost analysis and enrollment projections, etc. We will therefore not discuss this further.[6]

However, several aspects of the ERS approach go beyond the standard list, by contextualizing the list in an understanding of the process of policy change, and the role of information in that process. We would suggest that most activities supporting policy analysis in the developing world have focused too exclusively on such lists, leading to "supply-driven" attempts to improve the use of knowledge and information in the education sector. Most of these have achieved low levels of demand for analysis, and

[6]It is discussed further in **Education Reform Support: Tools and Techniques**, and some of the standard references are cited, though there too the discussion is kept short because this is such a well-known area.

hence low sustainability of the analytical, information, and communications systems developed. Our proposal distinguishes itself in several respects, based on various lessons learned:

1. **Distinguish informational and analytical tools used for reform support from those used for routine management and decision support. Policy reform support is not "decision support."**
2. **Supply-oriented technical assistance in information management, analysis, or communications tends to be unsustainable.**
3. **Tools and techniques must be applied systematically, and this requires a demand-focused approach.**
4. **Information and information systems should not be oriented only at educational management based on "production function" models, but should be part of an accountability response.**
5. **Analysis must go beyond planning, budgeting, and quality studies.**
6. **Negotiation, persuasion, and dialogue skills are amongst the most sorely lacking.**
7. **Dialogue and negotiation are functional, not just "nice."**
8. **Policy dialogue, policy advocacy, and social marketing are not "all the same" and have very specific uses in a strategy of dialogue, persuasion, and negotiation.**
9. **Institutional and networking skills are the glue holding all aspects of ERS together**

1. Distinguishing between reform support and routine analysis

Most social science and public policy analysis assumes "normal" policy support. Most donor-provided technical assistance is oriented at the management of "well-governed" systems. Almost no *specific* technical assistance is provided for reform processes aimed at arriving at "good governance;" it is assumed that the needed skills are the same in both situations, and are applied in the same way. Very few handbooks detailing what to do about supporting reform processes exist. Our ERS systematization is based on an acknowledgment that a) the skills needed may be similar but the mix is different, b) they must be integrated in different ways, and that c) they are applied to different problems in the reform process vs the management of a "well-governed" system. The larger ERS documentation provides extensive suggestions regarding these differences and the types of assistance that are appropriate. In that sense, this ERS series represents both a theory-like body of justification, as well as a manual for the application of technical skills to reform processes. To our knowledge the distinction we are proposing here has not been consciously used by donors, except perhaps in a few projects. An example from the family planning area would be USAID's RAPID project, which specifically develops tools whose function is not routine-analytical, but supportive of policy reform. In South Africa and Swaziland, education sector models were developed whose purpose was explicitly not one of "planning" the education sector, but simply getting stakeholders to acknowledge the main parameters of the problems confronting the country.

In Malawi, USAID has been providing technical assistance and training to counterpart institutions to foster dialogue on population issues and to strengthen political support for policies and programs. Over the past two years, the political change to a multi-party system has given way to a population policy environment characterized by open debate among a multitude of new stakeholders and players. A key approach to the assistance has been to strengthen the capacity of local institutions to develop policy tools and messages targeted to the new leadership. Key collaborating institutions include the National Family Welfare Council of Malawi (NFWCM), a parastatal within the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Community Development and Social Welfare, and the Population and Human Resource Development Unit within the Ministry of Health and Population (MOH&P).

Focused efforts to build political commitment recently have paid off. In November, the NFWCM and MOH&P hosted a 3-day workshop funded by UNFPA for Parliamentarians. Objectives of the workshop were to create awareness of, and elicit support for, population, family planning and reproductive health programs; to formulate strategies and recommendations for implementing the National Population Policy; and to strengthen the role of Parliamentarians in mobilizing community participation in population programs. The workshop featured two computer graphics presentations, one featuring results from the Demographic and Health Survey on demand for family planning services, and the other based on modeling results demonstrating likely impacts of population growth and potential savings to the government from investments in population programs. The presentations were developed in an entirely collaborative manner between the donor-provided technical assistants and the counterparts, and were given by the counterparts. They were prepared using policy mapping techniques as well, and involving key stakeholders. In January 1996, as a direct result of the workshop, Parliament established for the first time in history a separate line item in the GOM budget for population activities. Previous efforts in the same country had not had the same results.

Lessons learned are that: a) a democratic transition makes it possible to discuss issues that previously might have been inappropriate or a waste of time; b) the use of proficient tools can help, but is not enough; c) the interviews and stakeholder interest-polling on which the presentations were based was just as important as good analysis and sophisticated presentational technique; d) counterpart involvement and counterpart demand for what they see as a high-stakes and interesting game, rather than another donor imposition, is vital; and e) the process can take a long time, is unpredictable, is event-driven, and success might come in little bursts rather than in a predictable, cumulative fashion.

Box 4. Malawi: explicit use of technical tools for reform support rather than "analysis" or "plannnig."

2. Supply-oriented information and analysis improvements are often unsustainable

Most donor provision of tools and techniques assume existence of effective demand for good decisions, and provide technical skills, hardware, software, assistance in developing surveys and censuses, etc. It is under this assumption that donors have put hundreds of millions of dollars into EMIS systems, for example. We agree that good information and good EMIS is crucial to good decision-making. However, over the last few decades, the majority of data-and-analysis efforts that ignored the demand side achieved sustainability only as a random event, or achieved much lower sustainability than would have been possible had the effort effectively "worked" the demand side. Our ERS documentation presents extensive suggestions for creating demand. We note that demand creation has almost nothing to do with the supply of technical input, and a lot to do with the process of dialogue creation and process control, and competitive, open, public or intra-bureaucratic debate. (This is the case in most societies; there are notable and important exceptions.) We have seen no EMIS projects developed with specific attention paid to the demand side, or to how the effort's output links to public policy debate. We have noted that in a few cases the EMIS development has responded to a "need to know" spurred by public policy debate, but these have been smallish efforts by NGOs, not large donor-funded EMIS projects. On the other hand, many donor projects, while having some impact on the ability to output information, and even some limited impact on usage, generally have had much less impact than one might have hoped because of the lack of any real demand for the data. This problem has been encountered in Egypt, Pakistan, and Mali, just to name three cases. It was encountered in other sectors (e.g., agriculture), in dozens of countries. In countries where some external accountability pressure seems to have existed, even if the pressure was not exactly public and "democratic" (e.g., from NGOs or a legislature), EMIS, or at least some type of data-based decision-making seems to have taken root better, such as in Indonesia or Chile.

3. Systematization is key, and yet is dependent on demand

Applying the set of technical skills (data, analysis, communications, networking) contained in the list above effectively requires that they be applied *systematically*. That is, they must be applied as a system, but, more importantly, they must be applied *by* a system (be it a network of bureaucratic agents within or between Ministries, a tightly-knit policy unit, or a network of dedicated institutions). An intuitive understanding of how we see various typical policy sciences and management techniques integrating as a system, in order to effectively support reform, can be seen in table 1, below. All of the traditional techniques are placed in an "integrated" context. No claim is made that our definition of the domain of the traditional techniques is the only valid one; it is simply the one with which, we believe, most well-informed analysts and staffers in the donor commnity, would think about. In the table, the columns refer to classical policy analysis or decision support categories (the "data, analysis, dialogue" paradigm). The concepts within the columns are specific techniques within those categories, organized, *roughly*, along the metric shown in the left-most column of the table, which is a "size of audience" axis. Note that the specific positioning of the various techniques with the columns is not in rows that carry meaning from one column to the next, except that they arranged roughly according to the "size of audience" axis.

An obvious step in systematizing how one applies these techniques in an integrated way is to be aware of where they fit in the kind of spectrum we have just shown. This concept of integration underlies any systematic application. But, in fact, the only *practical* way to apply these functions *as* a system may be to have them applied *by* a system. A system may consist of an EMIS arm, an analysis arm, a communications and presentations arm, and a negotiations and networking arm. Yet, to really make such groups work as systems means going beyond the supply capacity of each group, and towards effective demand from each group or part of the system upon the others. That, in turn, is derived from effective *external* demand. As we noted above, most donor efforts concentrate on supply, with the result that not only do they not achieve sustainability, but frequently they do not even achieve systematization,

Table 1. Location of EMIS, policy dialogue, advocacy, policy analysis, and social marketing in the ERS tools spectrum

1 Data (Data, information; gathering and management)	2 Analysis (Research)	3 Communications		
		Type		Size of audience
		a Bi-directional	b Uni-directional	
Case studies	Simulations; Statistical and econometric analysis; Budgeting; Planning; Qualitat. research; Common sense research	Policy dialogue; "boardroom" techniques; negotiation	Advocacy and policy marketing	Few
Focus groups		Focus groups	Policy advocacy Policy dialogue	
Socio-econ. surveys	Traditional policy analysis			↕
EMIS and school statistics	EMIS Projects		Social marketing	
"Consumer" and attitude surveys	Market research		Social advertising, mass education campaigns	Many

because informational flows are uni-directional, and hence are frequently not even effective in the short run. (Some are, because demand is an important, but neither strictly necessary nor sufficient, condition. For example, truly enormous amounts of money will frequently "buy" usage, or the appearance of usage, for a period, even if there is no real underlying demand.) We know of no case in developing country education sectors where the three key components (data, analysis, communications) have been successfully integrated in a largish donor project, particularly in the public sector. A relatively successful non-education example would be the Fundación Economía y Desarrollo in the Dominican Republic, which developed databases, both numerical and conceptual, applied solid analysis and commentary, and then developing intensely graphical communications campaigns which are used in newspapers and on television., and did it all systematically and persistently.

As we mention elsewhere, another crucial component of making sure there are effective demand signals being transmitted with the system (which is what makes it a system) is to have better communication between the unit's directorship and technical levels, or between the "outside" or "policy" levels and the "inside" or "technical" levels in the institutions or networks or institutions. Some exercises carried out in Kenya were specifically aimed at promoting this.

Family planning policy advocates have been adept at the use of "boardroom" techniques in the marketing of reforms and programmatic change. Recently, they have also begun to train local counterparts in the use of tools with high information-throughput, such as computer graphics presentations. The computer-graphic aspect is only secondary; the useful lessons have to do with the use of any information-intensive means of communicating policy options and policy suggestions. Some of the counterparts in this process have been local advocacy, research, or service NGOs, as well as public sector units. One such workshop was held in Kenya. The policy advocacy workshop involved 2 government agencies and 3 NGOs and was innovative in that it involved both the directors of these organizations and a technical counterpart. Goals behind the design were:

- Active participation by both directors and technical persons
- Willingness of directors to involve themselves paired with one of their technical staffers
- Nomination of serious, talented, knowledgeable technical participants
- Ongoing use of techniques after the workshop
- Development of stronger ties among these five organizations in promotion of sustainability

The workshop spanned three weeks but had only five days of formal sessions. On the other days, trainers visited the participants in their own offices to work with them on their presentations. The letters of invitation and the design of the workshop strived to acknowledge the directors' busy schedules while emphasizing the critical importance of their role in developing any policy presentations. The workshop design required their participation only for the mornings of the first and last days of the workshop. The further participation of the directors was limited to two one-hour meetings to guide and direct the work of the technical staffer, scheduled at the director's convenience—due to their busy schedules—and in their own offices. By including a number of high-profile organizations, friendly competition served to motivate. On the final day, each organization made its presentation at the workshop. Several of the directors in particular were clearly concerned that their organization produce a quality product and not be outdone by and/or embarrassed in front of the others. If the workshop had included only one or two organizations, the competitive spirit would have played a lesser role, resulting in reduced performance. The funding donors also attended the final session.

An explicit and stated workshop objective was to build a working relationship between the director and the technical person. It is clear from a good deal of research and practical experience that when directors know how to express demands to policy dialogue or policy support units, these units become more relevant and sustainable. At the same time, it is important for technicians to understand the policy uses of what they generate if they are to effectively meet their director's demand. Since the workshop product would be a policy presentation created jointly by the director and the technical person, directors were highly motivated to nominate capable technical partners. It was stated in the agenda and on the first day of the workshop that each organization would show its presentation to the group on the final day and that either the director or the technical person could make the presentation, thus further emphasizing the sense of teamwork and joint responsibility.

Many of the lessons learned from this workshop are generalizable to other sectors: 1) The workshop is more likely to have a sustained impact if it can stimulate the "demand" side, which means that one must involve the management and policy-makers, as well as technical counterparts; 2) yet, to do so successfully, one cannot lump managers and technical people together and treat them as equals—rather, managers should be involved in the more visionary aspects of the workshop, and with a limited requirement on their time. 3) One can encourage friendly competition by involving several organizations in the workshop and by holding a final wrap-up session in which each organization displays its workshop product. 4) One should relate the workshop as closely as possible to the ongoing work of the participants, by a) asking participants to choose a topic that's urgent for them, and b) using a Swiss cheese schedule, in which formal group sessions were interleaved with one-on-one sessions with participants in their own offices.

Box 5. Kenya: integrating the policy level and the technical level in creating demand for policy support services

4. Information is not only a technico-bureaucratic issue; it is key to the basic public accountability response

Most information systems have been oriented at bureaucratic management, based on a production process "model" of education, rather than a decentralized accountability *cum* measurement model that assumes the knowledge exists but is difficult to model bureaucratically. (That is one of the reasons most EMIS focuses on inputs. The still operant assumption behind EMIS design seems to be: if we know and control the process, and we measure the inputs, then we can guarantee outputs.) To be effective both in supporting reform as well as in managing reformed or modernizing systems, information has to be used to foster an output-accountability response to *all* relevant stakeholders. This not only creates demand for the information system, but is probably the only way to effectively manage loosely coupled bureaucracies. Yet it is a radical departure from most current styles of management, and most extant proposals for data usage. Furthermore, the data skills needed in the reform process, vs. the management of reformed or "well-governed" systems, are very different. The former requires a "motivational" and comparative usage, the former a more analytical and statistical usage. The data to be used are quite different as well All this is fully documented in this series and related bibliography. While courses, training, and technical assistance in "traditionally understood" EMIS abound, there has been very little thinking about, and almost no training is available, in how to use EMIS to improve accountability and to tap into the implementation energies of communities and the private sector. Note that the purpose here is not the self-serving one of "creating" demand for information systems so as to generate bureaucratic sustainability; the point is that creating this demand is part and parcel of creating a serious, information-based accountability response: one is not possible without the other.

A syllabus in the ERS series is specifically oriented at helping fill this gap. Very few countries use information for accountability purposes. Even in the cases where the data exist that could drive an accountability response, as in Chile, data have until very recently been seen as largely a matter of bureaucratic engineering. Yet in some situations, such as Mali, where data are gathered for other purposes, the private sector does use data for a classical private accountability response. Schools to whom this is an advantage print flyers where they advertise the fact that the ratio of average grade to fee cost in their schools is high. In Haiti a Minister of Education attempted to publish average school grades, but the effort did not last. In most countries, and even in donor circles, there is fear that such data might be "misunderstood" by the public, though there is little discussion about possible Ministerial responsibility in educating the public in how to read such data. Teachers' unions everywhere tend to fear these kinds of proposals, because they fear that such schemes are one step away from naive merit-pay schemes and, to judge by the proposals one does often hear, there is some sense in this fear, because some of the discussion of possible merit pay is naive in the extreme, and does rely on measurement of the kind that is needed for a better accountability response.

5. Analysis must go beyond "planning and budgeting" and beyond "school quality" studies

The analysis of data is key to supporting rationalized decision-making. The usual analytical armamentarium is well-known, and courses are available. Yet policy "analysis," either in the reform process or in the routine management of even supposedly well-managed systems, is almost entirely limited to planning models and budgeting or, at the classroom level, most work is limited to multivariate or qualitative "effectiveness" studies. In most developing countries there are few of the capabilities needed to go beyond these types of analyses. The *serious* analysis of external efficiency, of distributional incidence and equity, of user fees and willingness to pay, of targeting and funding schema, of formulae for fiscal transfers, of salary scales and certification schemes and their incentive effects, is almost everywhere absent. Similarly, analysis on the borderline of economics, public policy, and public administration, e.g., in the design of alternative governance options, is almost everywhere missing. Finally, the ability to do qualitative analyses of good classroom management, and of the structural and managerial limitations to it, is also absent. It is practically impossible to sustain the necessary kinds of dialogue about these issues when there is almost no local capacity to *analyze* the issues. The crafting of effective (non-zero-sum) compromise, during dialogue, requires technical imagination, or at least the technical knowledge needed to understand the standard "stock" of solutions that are *on* the envelope. And the capacity must always be local, because the negotiation process is endogenous and event-driven, and will not await the arrival of the next technical expert.

6. Dialogue and negotiation skills: the most lacking

Most education sector experts in developing countries are not accustomed to public dialogue or negotiation, using hard information, and on a "competitive" arena. As countries democratize and as "participation" becomes more legitimate and less dangerous, "buzzwords" come to take on real life. As social groups begin to try to exercise buzzwords such as "participation," they cease to be only buzzwords. Unfortunately, there is little skill in these areas, which leads to many problems. One is the danger of paralysis and cacophony, as competing groups express themselves, without anyone having a clear idea as to what constitutes good evidence, or how to and measure progress towards resolution. Another is the danger of simply polling ignorance, as would happen if one simply asked people how the system should be improved. Frequently, those most sorely lacking in these skills are some of the social groups (parents, more enlightened bureaucrats and social analysis, certain editorialists, certain business groups, etc.) advocating anything close to what we, as donors, would recommend as socially optimal. The ERS series contains suggestions for how to overcome these problems. Some of the suggestions are well-specified and have some history in developing countries (e.g., social marketing and related techniques). Others are a bit more fuzzy and are more suggestive (e.g., tools such as deliberative polling).

7. Why dialogue and consensus matter

The importance of conviction, marketing, consensus, etc., whether or not one holds democracy and participation dear for their own sake, arises from the nature of education reform as opposed to other types of reform. Some reforms can be more or less imposed by an effective state. People may protest, may demonstrate, and so forth, but in the end they may not have much choice, and whether they cooperate or not does not matter from the limited point of view of whether the reforms can be made to stick. Imposing reforms in this manner may not be ethically palatable to some of us, but at least one can say that, for *some* reforms, this kind of imposition is not particularly inefficient. These types of reforms might include, for example, abolishing price controls and liberating prices, or removing certain subsidies, particularly in authoritarian situations—in general, reforms that imply a reduction in the direct interventionist role of government tend to be more "self-implementing."

However, for many reforms in the social sectors, the implementation energy of thousands, if not millions, of independent agents is needed if the reform is to be more than words on paper, and this implementation energy must in some sense rely on state oversight, because, after all, education has important public good components and public funding is being used. Furthermore, effective implementation requires the use of very nuanced, subtle, localized information, and people will not willingly deploy the effort needed to either gather the information or act upon it, unless the transactions involved are somehow voluntary transactions. They must go along with the reform, either because they helped design it in a process of dialogue and consensus, because they were at least extensively polled, or because they have resigned themselves to the fact that they cannot fight it, because the weight of public evidence that the reform is in the public interest is too large. In any case, dialogue, people-level information, or persuasion of some kind is required before the reforms can be effectively implemented. This is, in fact, what makes the problem so difficult, yet so interesting, since effective persuasion requires some kind of guided dialogue, rather than ex-post "salesmanship."

In short, dialogue and consensus are the bureaucratic equivalent, in implementation-intensive reforms, of free entry and market information in the operation of markets. And making sure that the dialogue and consensus are guided, so that they go somewhere rather than leading to paralysis, is equivalent to developing the social and physical infrastructure needed for markets to operate efficiently. These guidance skills are perhaps the most lacking.

All this is not to say that all interest groups have to be accommodated, and that everyone will get along nicely and difficult reforms will be able to proceed if everyone just sits and talks. On the contrary. Certain interest groups will have to be opposed, and, in a democracy, they may need to be cajoled, "bribed" (or "compensated") via certain policy actions, or isolated in the view of public opinion, deprived of legitimacy by showing up what they claim is in the public interest as being only in *their* private interest. The point is that, when implementation will ultimately require the cooperation of certain individuals in groups that are opposed, public policy dialogue is not a bad way to isolate those groups (usually their leadership) in terms of public opinion, or to express openly what they will take for compensation, etc.

8. Policy dialogue, advocacy, and social marketing are *not* "all the same"

Considerable confusion surrounds the use of words such as "policy dialogue," "social marketing," and "advocacy." Since these are crafts more than they are well-defined sciences, almost everyone imagines that they know what they are asking for when asking for, say, social marketing services. But since practitioners of these crafts have very clear ideas about what they do, and what they do is quite specific, confusion amongst the donor representatives purchasing these services can lead to considerable waste of money and misapplication of effort and talent. We have discovered that it is important to use this kind of language very specifically, since these various skills are more useful in certain situations than others. When they are all used together on various aspects of the reform process, they can be used to good effect. Since we find that the use of these sorts of techniques is surrounded by considerable confusion, and since at the same time we believe these skills can be very useful, we devote a considerable amount of space in this series to clarifying the uses of these skills.[7] Table 1 above draws some distinctions between these areas, in terms of the usual policy tools or "decision-support" spectrum. Table 2 suggests *when* these the approaches might be useful, in terms of "stages" in the policy process.

[7]See **Education Reform Support: Tools and Techniques**. Refer also to table 1 above for a delineation of where some of these skill areas fit in the public policy analysis and advocacy spectrum.

Table 2. Likely uses of social marketing, policy dialogue, and policy advocacy in stages of the policy process

"Stage"	Social Marketing	Policy Dialogue	Advocacy
High-level awareness creation			Use to create awareness at high levels and commit budget and resources to reform
Putting specific issues on the agenda	Determine, target, coalesce, and channel sense of desire for change from bottom up.	Use to help decision-makers understand, define directions of change.	Use to communicate sense of changes needed to wider circle of opinion-makers.
Determination of policy options, begin to generate core consensus	Use to determine implementability of options via "consumer" research.	Use to debate options, present and "sell" the better ideas, narrow down.	
Expand core consensus		Use to "sell" narrowing set of options to wider circle—as options narrow, circle of decision-makers and opinion-makers widens.	Use to "sell" specific options to wider circles of opinion-makers and implementors, with less two-way interaction.
Begin implementation	Use to explain and "sell" the decisions, and to train and elicit implementation behaviors consistent with the policies.	Continue reinforcing and refining via debate and options analysis, since nothing works well immediately.	Continue "selling" to high-level implementors and decision-makers.

9. Skills in institutional development and networking are the link between all aspects of ERS

The provision of skills in networking and institutional development for groups interested in analysis-based public policy dialogue is the final important "tool-like" aspect of ERS work. This area of work overlaps with the operational aspects we have already discussed at some length, so we will only point out that the ability of an NGO, a policy think-tank, or a government policy reform support unit to network with other institutions, to make strategic research and discourse plans, is at the heart of the whole process: it is what links together a) the mechanical "tools and techniques" issues we have discussed in this section, b) the "Reform Support Infrastructure" and other operational issues discussed in the previous section, and c) the "Political Mapping" issues so important to a donor-and-counterpart *design* of ERS activities as described in the following section.

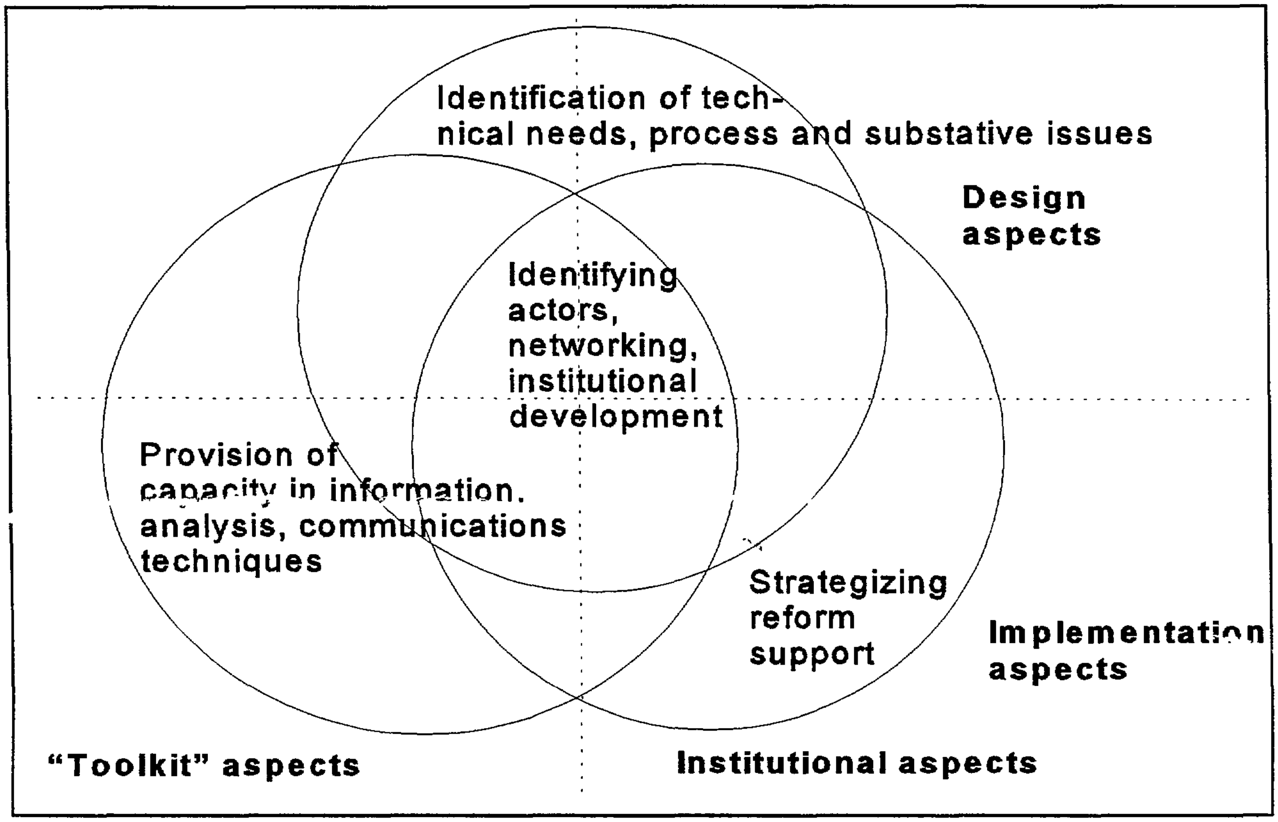

Figure 2. Integration of key aspects and phases of ERS

Figure 2 makes it clear that networking and institutional analysis/development is the key node that links most of the aspects we have been talking about. The upper half of the diagram deals with a design phase, the bottom half with the implementation phase (noting, as amply discussed above, that the phases may be synchronous). The left half deals with toolkit aspects, the right half with the more "institution-building" tasks. Thus, the upper-right quadrant deals with the more institutional aspects of design, the lower left quadrant deals with the more toolkit-provision aspects of implementation. Each circle has two elements, one of which is the institutional assessment and re-assessment aspect. Thus, the intersection of the three circles, at the center, contains the institutional assessment aspect of ERS, and links all three aspects of our discussion: designing, getting things done institutionally, and providing technical support. Note that internal institutional development issues are quite as important as the "networking" ones. Learning how to react strategically to the environment is a key skill.

An Ecuadorean foundation or NGO, with USAID funding, set itself up as a think-tank and advocate on investment policy, and as a broker between foreign investors and local entrepreneurs, to promote and to take advantage of economic liberalization during the 1980s. The NGO was successful in promoting legislative change on issues such as tariff barriers, trade liberalization, customs reform, reform of the capital market, and easing of restrictions on capital movements. But the general external environment changed. First, this NGO, along with others, was successful, so that to some extent the task was done. In a sense the environment changed in response to its success, thus making it less necessary in terms of its original objectives. Second, once the task of structural adjustment was done or at least well embarked (for the continent as a whole, if not so successfully for the country in question), it was clear that the big donors were becoming interested in both a) enormously expanding lending to the social sectors, but b) doing so in a "social-reformist" context, rather than through "bricks, mortar, and textbooks" projects as was common in previous decades for donor lending in the social sectors. Furthermore, the NGO's single source of support, USAID, saw declines in its funding, and in any case it wanted to wean the NGO from exclusive dependence on one donor and move towards a project-funded rather than institutional support basis. The NGO carried out a strategic planning exercise.

The NGO decided to deal with the implicit opportunities and threats. However, the NGO knew it had some weaknesses. First, it did not have the right personnel to work on social sector reform issues. Second, it did not really have the right style for working on social sector reform issues. On investment reform issues, where the problems are perhaps more cut-and-dried, and require less constant negotiation and dialogue, the NGO could contract out the drafting of legislation. In social sector reform, it had to rely more on in-house dialogue capabilities, since policy dialogue requires continuous presence at the discussion table, and a process of continuous marketing of ideas, and the NGO was not accustomed to this. Thirdly, it did not have the habit of being funded by more than one client and more than one major project at a time. Through a process of strategic planning (and some groping and muddling through), the NGO changed its direction, acquired the right personnel, developed alliances with outside NGOs and think-tanks on social sector issues which provided both "instant" expertise as well as a learning-by-doing opportunity for its staff, and is learning the managerial styles required to work in a multi-client, multi-project mode. Today the NGO is working on education, social security reform, and a program for the re-training of retrenched government officials. For this work, it has several contracts with other donors, beyond the USAID support it started out with. It continues to collaborate effectively with external think tanks. As is the case with any other institution, its future is not automatically assured, and it can still improve in some areas, but it is a good case study of using strategic thinking and planning fairly consciously as a way of facing the future. The lesson is not that a detailed plan was necessarily developed and followed to the letter, but that, relying on strategic planning, a strategic awareness, a future-based orientation, a sense of Mission, an action philosophy and approach was developed and was followed. In this sense, a strategic plan is more like a road map than like an itinerary, and proves most useful in a difficult and complex environment. Due to the importance of strategic management in the policy process, research/advocacy NGOs are particularly in need of this kind of assistance, as opposed to an NGO that is more similar to a traditional project implementation unit.

Box 6. Ecuador: strategic institutional management of policy NGOs

6. How to design "projectizable" ERS activities

Strategic design and re-design must continue throughout

Any notion of initial "design" is meant only to provide a starting point. The essence of a successful process of ERS is constant re-strategizing and re-design, as it were, based on monitoring how the process is going. This makes it difficult for donors to fund and monitor. But, if we are correct that this is really the only way support reform, and that supporting reform is worthwhile, then we will simply have to find a way to deal with the unpredictability. The donors need confidence that there is some method to the madness, and a means to monitor progress, more than they need complete method and predictability. Careful design, and an explanation that careful design and re-design are possible, is part of the method in the madness.

Ten steps in ERS design

The design process involves several steps. On paper we can only describe them sequentially, and in an initial assessment a sequential process is not only unavoidable but useful. During ongoing re-design, however, the steps completely lose sequentiality. The design steps are as follows.[8]

1. **assess the political economy,**
2. **list and understand the key substantive reform issues,**
3. **list and understand the key process issues blocking reform,**
4. **list and understand the actors and stakeholders,**
5. **understand the tools and techniques that can be brought to bear,**
6. **"cross-tabulate" substantive issues with process issues,**
7. **"tabulate" actors with each other and with issues,**
8. **"tabulate" actors with tools and techniques,**
9. **develop concrete actions steps, levels of effort, etc., and**
10. **develop a monitoring and assessment strategy.**

The first step is a stand-alone step, and represents a kind of cut-off or "abort takeoff" point: in certain countries the activities recommended here should be tried only very cautiously and slowly. The next three steps (lists) involve the accounting of entries in three "vectors." The next three steps involve combining these vectors, two at a time, into three matrices. The matrices thus evolving constitute the basis of the design. The last two steps develop an initial implementation plan for the activities implicit in the matrices.

1. Assess the political economy

This step involves determining the overall nature of relationship between the state and civil society, the openness of the country to public debate and discourse, the ability and willingness of actors to engage in a public debate that is both sharp *and* technical, and the degree to which reformist agendas are already accepted, discussed, or even implemented. Not all countries are equally ready for the approaches we are describing here, nor are they all ready in the same ways. The countries that are less ready will typically differ more from each other in *how* they are ready. Thus, in poorer countries with less tradition of public discourse, less democracy, and less technical capacity, the assessment is doubly important: it can help rule out a major effort in that country and, if only limited efforts are warranted, it can help focus and target the effort by laying a better foundation for the rest of the design. Other documents in this series provide extensive questionnaires and guidelines for assessing the political-economic

[8]More detail on design can be found in **Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design**. Each of the steps summarized here is discussed in great detail in that document.

environment for reform in any country.

2. Understand the substantive reform issues

The lists of substantive reform issues that are relevant will usually be fairly obvious from reading what donors and local technocrats and intellectuals have already written about the country in question and about the sector, as well as from discussions with local intellectuals and officials. They include the well-known litany of issues such as re-orienting education budgets towards basic education, reform of university financing, giving meaningful decision-making to actors with more nuanced information (the "decentralization" issue), allowing a multiplicity of providers into the market to compete for public funding, etc. The only relevant point here is that it will be important to understand and list the issues as specifically as possible. One would break down the "university finance reform issue" into as much detail as possible regarding the types of reforms needed (e.g., development of specific targeting criteria for "free" access, development of loan or scholarship systems, etc.). The list of substantive issues, and even their details, is rather standard. References can be found in the more in-depth studies in this series.[9]

3. Understand process issues

Change on substantive issues is often blocked by process issues. We have identified several process "blockages:"

- lack of technical and analytical design capacity,
- budgetary limits,
- legal and regulatory limits and problems,
- pressure group power; and
- realistic fear of management complexity due to lack of capacity to manage the reform process and the resulting system.

Evidently, these are inter-related. For example, legal limits are often related to pressure group problems, since pressure group privilege is usually given legal expression. Nevertheless, the blockages are not always related, and in any case they have to be analyzed separately in order to make it possible to design specific strategies.

4. List and understand actors and stakeholders

This implies casting a wide net, and trying to list anyone who either benefits from education (e.g., parents), who uses educated labor (e.g., business, the public sector, the military), who "produces" education (e.g., teachers and teachers' unions, the bureaucracy, private school associations), or who has "professional" interest in general public policy issues (e.g., editorialists, religious hierarchy, military think-tanks if any, etc.). An extensive reminder list is found elsewhere in this series.[10]

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[9]See **Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design.**

[10]See **Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design.**

5. List "tools" and techniques that can be brought to bear

A standard set of both analytical as well as more institutional and strategic "tools" and techniques can be brought to bear in education reform processes. Developing a very thorough understanding of what techniques are available, and which are useful in what situations is vitally important. Extensive discussion of all available tools and techniques can be found in other documents in this series,[11] and a brief summary has been provided above.

6. Cross substantive and process issues

Beginning insight into how to design an overall strategy is gained by crossing the substantive issues and the process issues. This way, one can assess exactly which process issues block which substantive issues, whether the blockage is a very difficult one, and what kinds of technical and process skills, as well as politico-economic maneuvering, may be needed or feasible, in order to resolve the blockage. Technical assistance usually needs to be orchestrated around process issues. The deployment of the assistance can therefore be prioritized via this kind of cross-tabulation. Furthermore, it may be that there are many substantive issues blocked by the same kind of process issue (e.g., the lack of data on distributional incidence and lack of knowledge on how to do elementary analysis of this kind can contribute to misperceptions about the equity impact of certain subsidies across a wide variety of substantive issues). One can then achieve some economies of scale with certain types of technical assistance. Finally, studying the resulting table gives one a general impression of the overall strategic terrain to be dealt with. A highly simplified example is given in table 3.[12]

[11]In particular, **Education Reform Support: Tools and Techniques**, for the more "technical" or "mechanical" skills and techniques, and **Education Reform Support: Making It Happen**, for the more institutional and process-related techniques and strategies.

[12]A more detailed example can be found in **Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design.**

Table 3. Sample relationships between substantive reform issues and process issues

Substantive Issues	Process Issues				
	Technical and social design (cost-effective and pedagogically appropriate)	**Securing budget, securing new sources of funding**	**Legal and regulatory technical roadblocks**	**Pressure group opposition**	**Management capacity**
Reform teacher salary scale to reward performance. De-link salary scale from paper certification and seniority	Medium: requires human resources and public finance expertise. Activity may include TA in these areas to MoE, think-tank.	None, unless it is tied to a general salary increase as a way to overcome union resistance.	May be high: requires labor law expertise. May require TA in legal areas to MoE or Civil Service Commission.	May be formidable: will require much dialogue and marketing; distinguish union leadership from teachers.	Medium to impossible: depending on design and concomitant reforms, could be quite easy or impossibly hard. Would require TA in improved management of personnel, teacher supervision systems, school principals.
Increase user fees at university, go to system based on grants, bursaries, and full fees based on objective indicators	Medium: requires some experience in targeting subsidies, requires data for simulation of effects. Loans: much more difficult. TA specific to design of loan and bursary systems. Work with MoE or Higher Education Council.	None.	Low to high, depending on whether budget shifts affect personnel, personnel contractual issues, and budget flexibility.	Considerable, but can be done with sufficient discussion and public awareness. Activity includes TA and collaboration in dialogue. Work with MoF, MoE, MinPlan, think-tanks.	Medium. Requires data management on students, tracking. Loan system would be much more difficult: qualifying, tracking, collection.

7. "Tabulate" actors with each other and with the issues

This process begins to develop an understanding of the political economy of education in the country. The "issues" refer to the same process and substantive issues discussed above, and one should be aware of the real interests (pecuniary, such as interest in one's job, and psychological/ideological) as well as more rhetorical (everyone claims the public interest, or the interest of children) interests. This tabulation is sometimes called a "political map."[13] By carrying the thread of analysis from the issues tabulation to the actors *and* issues tabulation, one can begin to pinpoint which actors might be in need of which types of technical assistance, how to network certain kinds of actors, etc. A simple example is given in table 4.[14]

Table 4. A simple (hypothetical) political map

Actor	Issues	Relation to other actors	Influence base
Tertiary students' union	Fees, targeted; loan and bursary schemes.	Supported by teachers' union. Viewed skeptically by rural parents, NGOs, think tanks, economists in Ministry of Finance.	Parents are state administrators, vocal urban elites. Perceived as democratizing heroes. General rhetorical, informational power; mass action.
Teachers' union	Salary issues; opposition to quality and output measurement; opposition to moves away from pay based on certification and seniority; some opposition to shortening pre-service training.	Supported by universities; particularly departments of pedagogy; ambiguous relation with Ministry; supported by other unions.	Mass movement; ideological/rhetorical; parliament.
Ministry of Education: Minister	Not much concern with the issues; not very proactive.	Weak relation to other Ministries; good relation to parliamentarians, who are former teachers.	Parliament; legal responsibility for running the Ministry; influence vested in the Ministry.

[13]This can be quite an elaborate art. See relevant section of **Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design**, or Reich 1994.

[14]A more detailed example can be found in **Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design.**

Table 4. A simple (hypothetical) political map

Actor	Issues	Relation to other actors	Influence base
Ministry of Education: Head of Policy and Planning Unit	Concerned with all the relevant issues; "reformist."	Good relation with economists and Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning.	Technical, but otherwise weak; little knowledge of rhetorical, persuasion, and communications tools.
NGOs	Concerned with funding for basic education; possibility of creative funding formulae.	Not very related to government; possible allies in cost-cutting economists in Finance, Planning.	Grassroots ties; donor perception of efficiency; claims of democratization and participation.
Think tanks	Not much awareness of education issues; but "modernizers" and "reformist" in general.	Strong base of influence with young planners in Finance, Planning, Central Bank; influential with Minister of Finance.	Clarity of thought; coincidence of agenda with powerful donors; not much persuasive, communication ability yet.

8. "Tabulate" actors with tools and techniques

Armed with an understanding of the substantive issues needing reform and process issues blocking reform, as well as how various actors relate to the issues and each other, one can begin to "map" the kinds of assistance and skills certain actors might be provided with in order to move the process forward. In this assessment, it is particularly important to note that certain key actors, those that are important nodes in the social networks that impinge on reform processes, will be particular targets for what we have called institutional or process-management skills, while others may receive certain *technical* skills, and yet others are simply involved in the network. This final table, taken together with all the rest, presents a kind of initial starting agenda for assistance. A simple example is found in table 5.[15]

Table 5. Matching of actors to types of support activities and "tools"

Actors	Support Activities and Technical Tools				
	Data and EMIS	**Analysis**	**Dialogue**	**Institutional capacity development**	**Net-working**
Cabinet				Can provide information about leadership for "think-tank" and advocacy NGOs. Can be on boards.	With MoE, think-tanks
Ministry of Education	Use in policy. Re-orient to community-based qual. assessment. Create demand.	Assessment development, ed. finance, governance design, salary scale re-structuring.	Workshopping. Use of social and policy marketing by planning and policy unit.	Human resource management related to salary scales, performance evaluation.	With MinFin, MinPlan, think tanks, etc.
Ministry of Finance	Linkage to personnel records.	Budgeting and finance. Targeting, inter-governmental transfers. Tax code and communities.			With MoE, NGOs in service delivery and advocacy, think-tanks.

[15]A more detailed example can be found in **Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design.**

Table 5. Matching of actors to types of support activities and "tools"

Actors	Support Activities and Technical Tools				
	Data and EMIS	**Analysis**	**Dialogue**	**Institutional capacity development**	**Net-working**
NGOs		Some general training in public policy issues	Communi-cations, advocacy, persuasion	General institutional development	Linkage to reformist elements in economic Ministries, think tanks.
Legislature		Legal analysis of issues such as civil service, tax law.		Development of education commission.	With MoE, NGOs in service delivery and advocacy, think tanks.

9. Develop action steps, levels of effort, etc.

This step requires that the assistance strategy, at least in its initial steps, be quantified, so that it can be planned and budgeted. This requires more or less standard application of donor project planning methods, so we do not discuss further.

10. Develop monitoring and assessment procedure

All of the above can only provide an initial starting point. The tricky thing about reform processes, however, is that they are relatively unpredictable, and that, unlike infrastructural projects, "reality pushes back." What is the most logical step at any given point depends on the effect the process has had so far, and this is largely unpredictable. Thus, a procedure has to be developed for monitoring and assessing the process, and for constantly re-strategizing in terms of all of the above steps.

Completing the design

After completing all these steps, a reasonably solid strategy for starting out with ERS activities should emerge. Two factors combine to produce a good strategy: a) carrying out the above process *thoroughly* and with a good base of knowledge about all of the issues involved (e.g., really understanding the use of all the tools and techniques, such as not confusing social marketing and policy advocacy, having cast a wide net over the actors and understanding the real and rhetorical interests of each, etc.) but also b) doing all this non-mechanically, and with a good deal of sensitivity and strategic "nose." We should note that while both are necessary, a wooden, mechanistic approach will yield very bad results even if it is complete and systematic. Thus, simply following steps is not a good idea; a project designer that cannot get into the spirit of the process, and absorb the "theory" of it, is probably not suited for this kind of design or this type of work in general.

6. Conclusion

Systematization of the messy

What we have described above sounds messy. It is messy. It *has* to be messy, because it is dealing with a messy reality. Yet, incapacity or hard-headed refusal to deal with messy realities will not make reality less messy, it will simply make irrelevant the institutions that do not know how to deal with messes very well. Fortunately, it appears that one can systematize not only the procedures for supporting education reform, in thinking about both processes and tools or techniques, but also the strategic design of the activities. In all of the above, we have tried to systematize what is inherently a very messy problem. In order to impose order on chaos, we have relied on a step-like and tabular presentation. But we emphasize that this is largely a presentational and organizational trick, and that what is important in the design are not the exact steps, but the deployment of the conceptual categories we have used in a manner that is sensitive to the complexity of the problems.

Annex A.

Guide to further documentation

We have tentatively divided the documents in the ERS series into two: "protocols" and "syllabi."

The "protocols" (for lack of a better name) are intended to assist donors, contractors or implementors hired by donors, and host-country officials to design activities that will systematically support education policy reform in African countries. We have chosen to call these activities "Education Reform Support" (ERS) as already mentioned above. The resulting ERS activities will often take the form of fundable or "bankable" projects similar to typical technical assistance projects. Such projects usually involve some type of training. Since the activities we are proposing here may be somewhat unfamiliar to most donors, donor surrogates, and developing country officials, the initial training component of ERS projects was deemed to be particularly important. Therefore, we thought it best to prepare "syllabi" that would guide these training activities. It is not our intent necessarily to induce ERS projects to use these syllabi. If the provider of technical assistance to such a project has ready-made instructional materials, bibliographies, etc., in these topics, fine. Since, however, not everyone has access to these sorts of materials on a ready-made basis (as they are somewhat new ideas), and since it is important to start off quickly, we thought it best simply to provide materials that would help to quickly "jump start" the ERS projects in so far as training can help to "jump start" such activities.

Guide to the "protocol" documents

It is assumed, for the sake of expository convenience, that the design is carried out by, or at least motivated by, donors. Thus, the guide to how to use the protocol documents is written from this perspective. But this does not preclude the possibility that an NGO or public interest organization, or a government office interested in the approach, could read these notes and approach a donor more proactively than appears to be assumed here. In fact, it seems to us that this should be encouraged.

We have produced the following series protocols or project-definition documents:

1. Education Reform Support: Justification and Basis and General Introduction ("Core" document)
2. Operational Framework for Education Reform Support
    a. Making It Happen
    b. Strategies for Increasing Stakeholder Participation in Policy Dialogue
3. Education Reform Support: Tools and Techniques
4. Education Reform Support: Strategy Development and Project Design

The following table illustrates the specific intended uses and audiences in terms of an idealized "project cycle." Of course, this should be seen as largely illustrative.

List of "protocols" for development of Education Reform Support activities			
Document	"Stage"	Target Audiences	Use
Executive Summary 1. **Education Reform Support: Justification and Basis** (Core Document) **Written and Audio-visual versions**	Project pre-design; field and donor's "awareness" building	Washington or other donor capital policy makers. (Spoken and visual presentation version.)	Understand, generate interest, and commit
		Education Officers (AID, Banks, NGOs), direct tech. counterparts (DDGs, Section Chiefs, NGO leadership, etc.)	Understand, generate interest, and commit
2.Operational guides ("**Making It Happen,**" **"Increasing Stakeholder Participation"**) 3. **Tools and Techniques** 4. **Strategy Development and Project Design**	Specific Pre-design	Education Officers, Strategy Teams	Understand and develop strategy
4. **Strategy Development and Project Design**	Design	Education Officers, Design Teams	Understand and design
1-4.	Scope of Work or Request for Proposals Written, Issued, and Awarded. Donor's consultants, contractors, or other surrogates appointed.	Education Officers, Design Teams	Understand, design, develop workplan
1-4.	Execution	Executing contractor(s) or consultant(s), particularly long-term. Higher-level counterparts.	Execute high-level dialogue, networking, institution-building aspects of workplan.

Guide to the syllabi

Without doubt, much of the activity of a typical ERS project will involve training of one kind or another in the areas the project would work in: information, analysis, and dialogue or advocacy. To facilitate training startup, we have developed a series of products that would facilitate training in these areas. To avoid duplication with other training materials and venues that are already available (e.g., there already exist sufficient courses in Management Information Systems as applied to education, or on analytical techniques applied to education planning), we have emphasized only the issues that are particularly important to the fostering dialogue, advocacy, participation, and accountability as a basis for reform and for reformed systems.

The syllabi vary as a function of the nature of the intended audience, duration and style of the training, and assumed level of specific technical subject-matter proficiency of the trainer.

We emphasize that the training is not intended to duplicate the offerings of current courses and training materials elsewhere. Thus, in spite of their sometimes generic titles, the plan here is to focus on aspects and issues related to participation, accountability, democratization of decision-making, etc. That such issues can be applied to such traditional technocratic areas as finance, EMIS, etc., is precisely the "twist" we wish to offer, and is therefore precisely the point of offering the training, when generic training on issues such as EMIS, education planning and budgeting, etc., already exist.

The following table describes the syllabi and their intended uses.

List of training "syllabi" for Education Reform Support activities			
Title of Syllabus, brief content description	Nature of training	Intended audience	Possible duration
Policy issues in education reform: role of communities, private sector, modernization of management in context of democracy and accountability	Course	Mid-level technical staff in Ministries, NGOs	2-3 weeks
	Short seminar	High-level policy staff in Ministries, NGOs	1-2 days
Selected issues in education finance: school funding formulae in decentralized systems, etc.	Hands-on workshop or course	Mid-level technical staff	1 week
Use of comparative international data in reform motivation and advocacy	Hands-on workshop	Mid-level technical staff with advocacy orientation	2-3 days to 1 week
EMIS and data for community and political accountability	Seminar	Mid- to high-level staff in planning, information, and analysis units, NGOs with research basis or capability	2-3 days to 1 week
Funding options for policy research/advocacy NGOs	Short strategic workshop	High-level staff and assistants in NGOs or governmental policy units	2-3 days spread over several weeks
Strategic planning for policy units	Workshop	High and mid level staff in NGOs or government policy units	2-5 days
Market segmentation for social marketing, policy advocacy, and policy dialogue	Workshop	Mid-level staff in NGOs and government policy or communications units	Variable

List of training "syllabi" for Education Reform Support activities			
Title of Syllabus, brief content description	Nature of training	Intended audience	Possible duration
Advocacy for policy reform	Workshop	Mid-level staff in national NGOs with grassroots backing	2-3 days
Use of boardroom policy dialogue techniques in education reform	Workshop	Mid-level staff in Ministries, NGOs, etc. High-level staff during beginning and end of workshop.	2-3 days to 1 week
Use of social marketing techniques to elicit stakeholder input, to foment reform, and as part of capacity building	Workshop	Mid-level staff in Ministries and NGOs	2-3 days to 1 week

Annex B.

General bibliography and suggested readings on Education Reform Support and related topics

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