The International Working Group on Education: Supporting Global Education Initiatives

Preface

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The International Working Group on Education (IWGE) is an informal group of aid agencies and foundations created in 1972 to facilitate the exchange of information and innovative ideas and practices among donor agencies working on education. Since1982 the IWGE has focussed on promoting basic education and has served as a catalyst for preparing and following up on the 1990 Jomtien Education for All Conference. After the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, the Working Group continued to exchange information on issues of basic education, but it broadened the scope of its discussions to look into such current challenges in the development of education as preparing young people and adults for work and entry into the labour market, coping with the growing demand for post-primary and secondary education after EFA, mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on education, and organizing education in countries in situations of crisis and reconstruction. The standing exchange of views and experiences on how to move to a sector-wide approach (SWAp) has broadened to include the progress made on the poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI).

The Working Group has essentially three objectives:

- To exchange information among donors concerning education aid policies and practices in an open and informal way.
- To strengthen co-operation among agencies and facilitate a convergence of approaches and operational modalities.
- To advocate for bringing major education policy issues to the forefront.

All agencies involved in work concerning education or development, whether multilateral or bilateral, governmental or non-governmental, can join the IWGE, which is managed by a planning Committee[1] and assisted by a Secretariat. The meetings are attended regularly by 40 to 50 participants representing some 25 to 30 multilateral and bilateral development agencies,

[1] This group was previously known as the Bellagio group. Planning committee members include the Aga Khan Foundation, the World Bank, the Swedish Co-operation Agency, UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, and DFID. The Secretariat is provided by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).

as well as foundations. Several publications have been prepared on the basis of debates that have taken place during the meetings.

The 2004 meeting, which took place in Washington and was organized jointly with the World Bank, focused on how to improve governance in education. A presentation of the EFA monitoring report reminded participants that 43 countries are in danger of failing to achieve one of the EFA goals, while 28 countries are likely not to meet any of them. More efforts have to be made to increase access as well as to emphasize the quality of learning. Without improved governance however, it will not be possible to reach the EFA goals and educational objectives in general. The meeting considered three sub-themes of the general theme on governance: corruption in education, decentralization, and increased participation in decision-making.

Several studies have clearly emphasized the negative impact of corruption on the economic, social and political development of countries. They reduce the resources that reach the grass-roots level where action is taking place; they increase inequalities, as the poor are the most severely affected by leakages in resources; they reduce the efficiency of public service, distort the decision-making process and undermine social values. Overall presentations on the extent of corruption and the correlation between corruption and poverty were made. In education, specific corrupt practices are noted, which prevent the development of education. The higher the level of corruption in general, the lower the enrolment ratios. Several strategies to fight corruption have been presented, which emerge from the International Institute for Educational Planning's project: these were illustrated in case studies on tracking funds in Papua New Guinea and controlling corruption in the distribution of school improvement grants in Indonesia. The key to fighting corruption appears to be to develop a regulatory framework, monitor the implementation of the rules, apply sanctions when necessary – which itself requires strong political will, enhanced management capacities and ownership of the management process.

Decentralization is another way of improving the efficiency of education provision, which similarly requires management capacities and ownership of the process. Decentralization may take different forms (increased power given to schools, to lower levels of government or to elected bodies), concern different aspects (from curriculum to management of human and financial resources) and be introduced for different reasons (to improve the efficiency of public services in general; to increase the relevance of education and accountability; to pass the financial burden to lower levels). Generally speaking, decentralization has been introduced on fairly ideological grounds and not on the basis of scientific evidence showing that it works. Research is, however, required to monitor the impact of such policies and correct the negative aspects when they are identified. Decentralization is not an end in itself but a means to an end, and it needs to be implemented carefully, transferring the necessary resources, setting accountability mechanisms, and building capacities at local level. Experiences from Africa, Latin America and Central Europe were discussed. They show that financial resources at the local level are often not sufficient; data are scarce and local capacity to use such data weak. In several cases decentralization has led to increased inequalities where no effort had been made to strengthen the poorest and weakest districts and regions. Another trend is to give more power to school boards, but headmasters and members of such boards have to be trained.

The potential of increasing the participation of civil society in educational change was also presented, with examples from central Europe. Another potentially useful approach is the human-rights approach, which emphasizes the children as those who hold the rights to education; and the communities, the teachers and the state as those who have educational duties. This leads to a new chain of accountability.

Three of the papers presented during the meeting are available in this issue. Others can be found on the IWGE web page. Another important theme of governance was not dealt with in this meeting: that of capacity-building. What does capacity building entail in reality? What are the best strategies to enhance it? This will be the topic of the next IWGE meeting.

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Does decentralization lead to school improvement? Findings and lessons from research in West-Africa

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Abstract

Decentralization is a fashionable reform, adopted by many countries with different characteristics. There are doubts, though, about its objectives and impact. Did inspiration come from a desire to improve quality or from a need to share the financial burden? Does it not increase disparities and the workload for local officials and headteachers? Against this background, the International Institute for Educational Planning, in collaboration with ministries of education, a national institute and the NGO Plan, co-ordinated research on the challenges that local offices and schools encounter. Results are partly disheartening, as they indicate the limits to the implementation of decentralization but they also show that successful innovations are taking place. They help to identify principles of good practice: complementarity between actors; equilibrium between their mandate and resources; reform of school supervision; and the need to counterbalance autonomy by an effective accountability framework. One principle stands central: decentralization does not imply that the State is abandoning control, but rather a change in its role.

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[2] The research on which much of this article is based, was undertaken by four teams, led by Moussiliou Moustapha and David Odushina (Benin), Djénabou Baldé (Guinea), Denis Dougnon (Mali) and Cheikh Diakhaté (Senegal). It was co-ordinated by Anton De Grauwe (IIEP) and Candy Lugaz (IIEP).

The preoccupations concerning decentralization in developing countries

Decentralization is a buzzword in current discussions on public management, including education. In countries as diverse as Mali or Mexico, Sri Lanka or Senegal, the central authorities are giving more responsibilities to the regional or district offices, to the municipalities or to the schools. Discussions on decentralization have increased in complexity in recent years because of the realization that the 'school' as an institutional unit is a core actor in ensuring educational quality. A growing number of studies demonstrate that the management of a school, the relationships between the different actors (the headteacher, the teachers and the community) and the school's own involvement in defining and evaluating its improvement have a profound impact on the quality of education (see, on developing countries, Dalin et al, 1994; Carron & Chaû, 1996 and Heneveld & Craig, 1996). This 'autonomization' of the school, in combination with the more traditional forms of decentralization, has led to greater diversity in the policies implemented in different countries. They carry many names: deconcentration, delegation, school-based management, school self-governance, privatization, charter schools, and so on.

The debate on decentralization has always been a contentious one. It has been argued that in many of the least developed countries the decentralization of public services, including education, has not been the result of an internal debate, even if there was a conviction that such a policy would lead to higher quality services. Pressure from the local authorities or communities, who demand a more participatory decision-making process, has generally been absent. Rather, in many countries two forces combine to push for decentralization: first, external pressure by international development agencies and experts; and second, internal political expediency in national contexts, where the public authorities are unable to organize or finance basic public services. In quite a few cases, specific political objectives play a major role, such as weakening the power base of the teachers' union or preventing secessionist demands.
This leads to three concerns:

Firstly, advocates of decentralization, and the governments which have heeded their advice, do not sufficiently take into account a country's specific context. Countries vary considerably: In some, the State is strong and efficient; in others, it is weak and inefficient, especially in the more remote areas. Some countries are homogeneous; others are characterized by several cleavages – ethnic, regional or religious. Policies need to be adapted to each country's context, its strengths and its weaknesses.

Secondly, several countries have adopted this policy without paying sufficient attention to the strategies needed for its successful implementation. In many countries legislation reflects the willingness to share authority and resources, but this has not always translated into efforts to reform existing structures, to strengthen an appropriate information system, to review career profiles, or – the greatest challenge – to change the institutional culture.

Thirdly, in developing countries relatively little is known about the impact of decentralization on the ways in which schools and districts function (an exception is

Davies et al, 2003). Anecdotal evidence indicates that presently not all district offices are able to exercise to the fullest the responsibilities that they have been assigned. This lack of capacities within some district offices helps to explain that disparities in quality and access between districts and schools might have worsened. There has, however, been little systematic research on the implementation of decentralization at the local level. Field research to identify in some depth the ways in which districts and schools manage the process of decentralization, the challenges they encounter and the strategies they introduce to overcome these could be very useful for further implementation of such a policy.

The research programme

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) decided, therefore, to launch a research programme on the functioning of local offices and schools in a context of decentralization. In a first phase, on which this article comments, the focus was on West-Africa, where four countries were selected: Benin, Mali, Guinea and Senegal. The research itself consisted of two stages: one focussing on the functioning of district offices and a second on the management of schools.

Each country set up a national team consisting of one or two members of staff from the ministry of education, a senior researcher from a national institute, and the education programme officer of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Plan. The choice of these three partners was a conscious one. The reason for including the ministry was to increase the chances that the programme would influence ministerial structures and policy-making. In this regard, it is interesting to learn that in Guinea the research conclusions were discussed during a one-day seminar with all the regional and provincial directors at the beginning of the 2004 school year. The field research was undertaken by a national institute and was under the charge of a senior researcher. Collaborating with these national research and training institutions had as objective to build their capacities, as they will have a crucial role to play in the implementation of decentralization through for instance the organization of training programmes. The involvement of the NGO Plan (previously Plan International) was justified by the fact that it is increasingly interested in reaching out to national policy makers. It is therefore working not only with schools, but also with district offices and municipalities. Plan's experience in working at the local level and its support to innovations taking place in different schools offered enriching insights.

The programme went through different phases, which are briefly summarized hereafter.

- Each national team prepared a diagnosis on decentralization in the area of education. It examined the structures, the responsibilities of various actors in some core decisions, and the evaluation mechanisms.
- A first technical workshop (in Bamako, Mali) brought together the four teams to discuss the state of decentralization in the region and to prepare the field work on the functioning of local offices.

- Through a pilot exercise, the four core researchers and IIEP staff prepared a case-study on the functioning of a local district office in Benin and its relationship with the municipalities and the schools.
- Each team prepared a similar detailed case-study on three education offices. These were chosen to reflect as far as possible the country's variety: one concerned an urban area; a second was based in a rural poorly developed environment and a third was equally in a rural area, but received support from the NGO Plan.
- A second technical workshop (in Dakar, Senegal) discussed the findings on the local offices and prepared the field work on the management of schools.
- A pilot exercise on two schools in Guinea was undertaken. The senior researcher from Senegal later accompanied the Benin team in their field work, as the researcher from Benin had been unable to participate in the pilot exercise.
- Each team prepared case-studies on six schools chosen within two of the three examined districts. Three were in the urban area, three in the area where Plan operates. The six schools were again chosen to reflect the variety of circumstances which schools face, with differences in the available resources, the types of teachers they work with and the support they receive from the local authorities and NGOs.
- Each country team prepared a brief synthesis of the main findings and completed the case-studies. The teams undertook in total 36 case-studies: nine per country, namely of three local education offices and of six schools. IIEP drafted a synthesis report.
- During a policy seminar (Cotonou, Benin), the teams presented the complete research results to senior decision-makers in the West-Africa region, and to representatives of the NGO Plan and of international agencies.

Some core findings

The insights offered by the field research are rich and plentiful. We will attempt to summarize some key findings around four themes. Beforehand though, we briefly recall the nature of the decentralization process implemented in the four countries.

In all four countries, decentralization is a combination of four quite different, at times complementary, trends. We use here to some extent the terminology developed by, among others, Rondinelli (1981) and McGinn & Welsh (1999), though the actual translation of these terms in the reality of West-Africa is somewhat different from what the literature describes. Firstly, there is an aspect of devolution: elected local authorities (generally municipalities or village councils) are given a number of responsibilities in the field of basic education. In Senegal, the central level transfers some funds to these local authorities to allow them to take care of nine competencies, including construction, equipment and maintenance of pre-primary and primary schools, the recruitment of support staff, and several tasks related to literacy eradication. In Benin, where municipalities have only recently been installed, they are responsible for the construction, equipment and maintenance of primary schools. In Mali, these municipalities have existed for more than a decade, their function being to take charge of education in their area. It is the intention of policy-makers that in the future they will manage those teachers, who are currently recruited by communities. The corps of community teachers should therefore disappear as it is integrated into that of municipal teachers. This trend of devolution is least visible in Guinea, partly because it has not passed through the same democratization movement as the other three countries.

A second trend is that of widening the role of regional and district education offices and offering them a greater say in certain decisions, e.g. concerning the use of their budget or the nomination of principals. This deconcentration is most evident in Mali, where there has been a major reform of the district structure. The previous inspectorates have been transformed into *Centres d'Animation Pédagogique* (CAP) – the Pedagogical Animation Centres. They have a new mandate: to offer support. They are rather well staffed and work in new, fairly well equipped offices. The official texts offer heads of the CAP a much bigger say than their predecessors (the district inspectors) in the nomination of school principals. In the other countries, the reform has not been so profound. Efforts have been made, however, to improve the efficiency of district offices, either by ensuring that more resources are available or through the creation of a professional corps of pedagogical advisors, as is the case in Benin.

A third trend, less prevalent in the legislation than the two previous ones, consists in allowing schools somewhat more autonomy in resource management. This timid school-based management concerns for instance the evaluation of teachers, where the principal's role has expanded somewhat. More significant is probably a reform in Benin, where, since 2001-2002, funds are transferred directly from the central level to the schools, which have their own bank account, something which is not the case for most schools elsewhere. In Guinea, a step was taken in the same direction through the initiation of a project in the mid-1990s which provided a selection of bulk funds to finance the implementation of the improvement proposals. More significant than these 'official' amendments, however, are the changes on the ground. Faced with a lack of finances and teachers, principals recruit teachers from the community, who are paid small stipends, and ask parents to contribute to the school's financing through contribution to the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) funds and other fees.

A fourth trend is least evident, namely decentralization as a form of community empowerment. Although nearly everywhere structures exist to represent the community within the school, their at times unrepresentative constitution and their limited involvement mean that they have seldom led to genuine community participation, even less to their empowerment. In policy declarations though, this objective is quite prevalent, and in some cases, especially where NGO support has focussed on this issue, the relationship between schools and community has become tighter and more balanced.

These four trends are thus in part the result of a larger administrative reform, which impacts on education and on other sectors, such as health or rural development. But they are also caused by a lack of involvement by the central government, which forces the local actors to take initiatives. National governments face nearly insurmountable difficulties to ensure expansion and improvement in the quality of the education service, and other actors, by default, are taking over that responsibility. This is most clear at the school level. The context of scarcity, in which decentralization is being implemented, intensifies the challenges local actors encounter while making it more necessary for the State to offer support to them. The purpose of the research was not to distinguish between the impact of poverty and that of decentralization but to study a process of decentralization in a context of lack of resources.

From among the many themes that deserve closer study, we decided to focus on the following:

- What is the nature of the relationships between the various actors (local authorities, education offices, communities and school staff), whose involvement in school is being promoted by the decentralization policy? How are these relationships working?
- How effective is the quality monitoring of schools? How competent are local offices and school managers in this area?
- What resources are available to local offices and schools, and how are they used?
- How are the different categories of teachers (public servant, contract, volunteer, …) recruited, managed and supported?

The following sections address these points.

The relationships between education offices, local authorities, schools and communities
One of the core objectives of decentralization is to widen the implication of actors who do not belong to the community of education professionals, in particular elected local authorities and community or parent representatives.

There is a lot of variety in the involvement of local authorities in education. In quite a few cases it is very low, quasi nil, with teachers complaining about the total lack of support from the municipalities. Others do spend some resources on school construction or the hiring of teachers. In general, their interest does not go beyond the visible, which is in many cases superficial. In Benin, where elected municipalities started to function only a few months before the field research, this is not all that surprising, but the scenario is not very different in Mali, where they have existed since the early 1990s. There is a variety of reasons for this. Few municipalities have a lot of resources. Their tax base is low, and many complain that the delay of transfers of funds from the central level is too long. In one rural community in Mali, no local taxes were collected in 2003 because of a famine, the priority being to find food for the people rather than to tax them. There are many competing demands on municipalities, with schooling not always being a priority. Few have the expertise necessary to address complex educational issues. In some cases though, municipalities, especially the bigger ones, do take educational initiatives which go beyond the superficial, for instance working with NGOs to improve principals' and teachers' skills. The lack of involvement should therefore not be interpreted as an inherent characteristic of decentralization but more as the result of implementing decentralization in a context of scarcity.
A related factor is that the relationship between elected authorities and local education offices is as much one of conflict as of collaboration. Two different legitimacies are in confrontation: education officials refer to their professional legitimacy, while local authorities emphasize their political legitimacy. The balance between the two does not depend on an official framework, which does not exist everywhere, but on the

characteristics of each one and on the personal relationships between them. At times their collaboration is mutually beneficial, with the education office acting as technical support to the local authority. At other times there is conflict regarding the recruitment of teachers or the transfer of funds. The district education officer is seldom invited to participate, as an observer, in municipal council meetings – even if they concern education.

At the school level, the relationship between the school and the community is a much closer one than that between the local education office and the municipality, but is not without problems either. Firstly, the relationship is especially strong between the school principal and the chair of the PTA. Teachers and other PTA members are poorly informed, if not excluded altogether. One reason concerns the profile of the PTA members: many are illiterates and have been chosen as members because of their possible usefulness as, for example, mechanics or plumbers. Many do not know the decrees which rule PTAs and accept easily that their role is mainly one of mobilizing funds and offering practical help. The principal in all four countries is, because of his/her position, the secretary of the PTA. As he (or she, though most principals are men) is also in many cases the only well educated person and the only one with a good knowledge of education issues, this position offers him great leverage over the decisions made by the PTA. Therefore, the PTA seems to have become an instrument in the hands of headteachers – at times in collaboration with the PTA chairperson – to reinforce their authority over the school and the teachers, rather than an organ representing parents.

At times, conflicts arise between the school and the surrounding community, especially regarding the use of land. The PTA structure does not seem to be of much help in such cases as it is not representative of the community as a whole, but only – and imperfectly so – of parents. There are also quarrels between the PTA and the principal, e.g. about the use of funds. The principal, then, will lean on his teachers to gain an advantage, but generally an outsider, such as the district education officer, will have to intervene.

Dissatisfaction with the PTAs has led Mali and Senegal to set up an alternative structure: the School Management Committee (SMC). But this structure is not functioning much better. One reason for this is that it was created only recently. But there are two other factors at play, which are more worrying: Firstly, the authority of this SMC comes into conflict with that of the PTA, and their relative powers, while they might be clear on paper, are much less evident in reality, especially as PTAs have a tradition to refer to. Such conflicts are already visible in some schools. Secondly, what is needed is not so much the creation of a new structure, but the development of a culture of accountability and participation. In the absence of such a culture, any structure will easily be hijacked by those who have the power at the local level. Building up such a culture is time-taking and complex. At the end of this article, we offer some hints how such a transformation can be achieved.

Quality monitoring

One key mission of a local education office is to monitor the quality of the teaching in its schools. Inspectors are expected to visit schools and examine the teaching provided at regular intervals. Their recommendations should be followed up by the administration and the school itself. Statistical information, transformed into indicators, should be of assistance to the monitoring process. The reality, though, is quite different.

Little inspection is exercised, and this for several reasons, of which lack of staff and lack of resources are the most evident. The number of teachers per inspector has increased; for instance in one Senegalese district, four inspectors supervise nearly 800 teachers. The profile of teachers has also changed, with many having less training and lower qualifications than was the case some years ago. This is coupled with a lack of resources, especially as regards travelling. In Benin pedagogical advisors receive a petrol allowance, but many do not have vehicles. The result is that inspectors undertake few visits, and that these are generally short and superficial. The problem, though, is more than one of mere resources.

- The mandate of district offices is demanding, as they are expected to cover all schools, and conflicting, as they have to exercise control and offer support – tasks which are not easily combined.
- There is a serious discrepancy between the mandate and the available resources. While some offices have enough staff, they lack nearly always the necessary funds to allow this staff to undertake their tasks effectively.
- The profile of district officials sometimes leaves much to be desired. In Benin, quite a few offices are used to accommodate teachers who are, for health reasons, unable to continue classroom teaching.
- In their interaction with schools, the officers privilege the traditional visits with little reliance on other interventions to influence and guide schools, such as holding workshops or providing assistance in a school self-evaluation process.
- District offices very seldom engage in strategic planning. Their actions are more responses to administrative requests from higher up in the hierarchy, or to emergencies from further down.

In all four countries, efforts are underway to reform the inspection services. In Mali, the offices have been renamed and are now called Pedagogical Animation Centres. This change in terminology reflects a change in their mandate: they no longer inspect, as the traditional inspection is felt to have no impact and leads to conflict with teachers. They focus on giving advice. In Senegal a few years ago, one district decided to group neighbouring schools into clusters and ask the directors to meet regularly and to visit each school to offer assistance where necessary to teachers, with one director acting as the cluster head and link with the central and district administration. Directors and teachers greatly appreciate this clustering initiative, which offers them more regular and appropriate support. It has recently become national policy, but its implementation is not without challenges. One somewhat controversial issue is: should these directors be given the authority to assess teachers, or should the whole structure remain more informal? Some directors find the latter option frustrating, but turning cluster heads into sub-district inspectors could simply mean that they will encounter the same problems as inspectors and lose their originality. In Benin, such clustering in what are called ‘pedagogical units’ has existed for some time and has become a tradition: teachers from neighbouring schools meet nearly twice a month to discuss pedagogical and other matters. Every district office has a few advisors to support these units. The unit heads have no supervisory authority; their role is simply to ensure that teachers meet regularly and to guide their discussions.

Supervision by the district offices will never have much of an impact if it is not accompanied by control and support within the school. This puts emphasis on the headteachers. However, the latter face a scenario somewhat similar to that of inspectors. They are increasingly overburdened with tasks for which they are poorly prepared, such as mobilizing resources, negotiating with the municipality, recruiting volunteer teachers and getting funds to pay them. They lack time to give significant support to their teachers. Some have felt it very useful to delegate that task to senior teachers, and such delegation is greatly appreciated and in bigger schools functions well. Nevertheless, problems remain. Firstly, and this is especially serious in small schools, few principals have a suitable profile to be at the same time manager and pedagogical leader. In a small Malian school, the principal is 27 years old, only has a degree in plumbing, a few weeks of teacher training and no further experience. While this is an extreme example, it highlights the inexistence of a policy aimed at transforming the job of principal into a motivating profession. A related problem is that principals lack the authority and resources to take action, be it supportive or disciplinary.

The management of financial resources

In all four countries – and this is surely not a surprise – local offices and schools struggle with a lack of resources. The situation differs quite significantly. In Benin, for instance, many local offices function only because the schools, through student and parent fees, participate in their financing, including at times for the construction of new buildings. In one recent case parents finally refused to do so, arguing that this was surely the responsibility of the State and that their focus would remain on school construction. In Senegal, on the other hand, the financing provided by central government is just sufficient for the office's daily functioning but does not allow for much initiative-taking. The lack of resources, beyond the basics, goes some way in explaining why district offices are seldom able to plan strategically, take initiatives and focus their efforts where they are most needed. This weakness is not only the result of insufficient resources, but is compounded by three management related factors.

Firstly, resources made available by the central level generally come within tight budget lines, based at times on provisions made by the offices and the schools. Once the budget is in place, district and school managers have little, if any, autonomy in deciding how to spend them. Any change in planned spending needs approval from higher up in the hierarchy. This leads to absurd situations, which one would have liked to see as a thing of the past. One school in Guinea received at the beginning of the school year 40 staplers and 30 registers, but no notebooks or chalk.

Secondly, the level of financial support given by the government generally does not take into account the characteristics and needs of each district and its schools. In Senegal, for instance, the same budget for transport expenses is provided to all regions and districts, regardless of the geography and the number or quality of schools. One district, whose total primary school population is nearly the same as the number of sixth graders in another district, receives the same budget as the second. This is not only inefficient; it also frustrates district managers, whose complaints in this regard are left unanswered.

A third problem concerns the lack of transparency in the use of resources. This is especially the case when funds are collected from parents or students. In nearly all schools in all four countries the headteacher and/or the chairperson of the PTA make/s decisions concerning the use of these funds, which can add up to sizeable amounts. Although in principle the PTA members have the right to control the use of these funds they are generally unable to do so. Many are illiterate or do not have, within the locality, the standing to contradict the headteacher or PTA chair. The ambivalent character of the fees (which could be considered public as well as private funds) complicates matters. The issue of transparency is equally preoccupying when it comes to spending by regional and district offices. Although there is an *ex ante* control through the tight budget lines, this control does not check for what specific purpose a sum was spent, neither in how far that spending contributed to educational improvement, as long as it respected the budget ceiling. In one country the research team visited a regional office, where the director had at his disposal a computer, printer, fax machine and television. The district office in the same region did not even have a telephone line. The lack of transparency reinforces the monopoly of power exercised by certain individuals within many offices and localities, which is in itself the cause of that lack of transparency.

The situation is paradoxical. Where autonomy is needed it is lacking because of a rigid control which, however, is inefficient and counterproductive. And where control is needed, for example as regards the use of parent contributions, it is equally lacking. As a result, without doubt, the already scarce resources are not used as much as they could be for educational improvement.

Teacher management

In all four countries there exist now different categories of teachers. Volunteer, contract and community teachers have joined the public servants to make up for the lack of recruitment in the public service resulting from the governments' financial difficulties.

The nomination and posting of teachers in the public service remains a somewhat contested domain. Headteachers argue that they are the best placed to decide who should teach in their school and that they cannot be held accountable for the results of their school if they have no say in teacher posting. District officials feel the interests of a single school should make place for those of the district as a whole and that they have a better insight into the needs of all of their schools. The central level, which pays salaries, keeps, in quite a few cases, control over this process; partly because teacher posts are scarce assets to be distributed. There is disagreement also over the best practice for headteacher nomination: headteachers are quite satisfied with the present arrangement, whereby the decision is made at a fairly high level and is based mainly on the grade. Teachers suggest two changes: that their voice in the process should be heard, and that the criteria should take into account personal competencies and leadership skills.

More contentious than these issues is the question of how to manage teachers recruited under contracts other than public service contracts. Governments did not go about the creation of these categories of teachers in the same way. In Senegal in the 1990s, the government took the initiative of recruiting volunteer teachers, and there is now a fairly clear career path open to all teachers, whatever their category. Volunteers can move from one category to another, until ultimately they become civil servants. Elsewhere, the existence of these various types of teachers has been more the result of initiatives taken by local communities, municipalities, NGOs, and even PTAs. In certain districts, the teaching corps now contains a minority of public servants, and some schools have only volunteer or community teachers. Somewhat surprisingly, the co-existence of these different categories in many, if not most schools does not create great tension between teachers. That does not mean, however, that there is no jealousy or conflict, but these are not played out within the school. Each category prefers to attack the policy-makers. Public servants feel that the teaching profession is undermined by the existence of unqualified and poorly trained youngsters. These same youngsters feel that they perform as well as their colleagues who have job security and higher salaries.

Policy-makers have not remained indifferent to these complaints, but have rather tried to better regulate teacher management through legislation specifying minimum recruitment criteria. But as long as the State does not have the financial resources to contribute to the salaries of these teachers, its legislation is poorly respected. To some extent, local offices prefer not to intervene too strongly in the recruitment process of volunteer or community teachers for fear that such intervention will lead to demands for greater financial involvement. Recruitment at the local level at times leads to the selection of candidates who belong to the community and therefore show greater commitment to the local school, but without regulation or a motivational career path. This creates many problems: a rapid turnover rate is one; another is that community teachers are left unpaid and get little response to their complaints, as both the principal and the district chief disclaim responsibility. A third problem – and not the least important – is that principals or PTA chairs select friends or relatives as teachers.

Constructing a decentralization policy

The above summary paints a somewhat frustrating picture of the implementation of decentralization, but the research has also highlighted some elements of hope. First, parents contribute strongly to the education of their children, even going as far in some places as financing the functioning of local education offices. While this is not a sustainable policy and while its impact on equity is probably negative, it shows a commitment to education, which is an indispensable building block for any decentralization policy. It also puts into perspective a core belief that has pervaded educational planning since the 1980s: that the slow progress of enrolment in rural Africa was to a large extent the result of a lack of demand for education. This dedication to education can surely be used for better purposes than that of resource mobilization. The case-studies have offered examples of parents participating in school life without financial repercussions, and of how such involvement strengthens the linkages between the school and the community. Two such examples can be given. In one school, PTA members contact the parents of kids who have been absent from school for a while to enquire why and, if necessary, attempt to convince them of sending their child back to school. In a second case, an older woman in the village has become the “school mother”: she takes care of practical or minor health problems pupils experience and in this way she makes the school a more child-friendly one.

A second positive element is that there is a strong belief among parents, teachers, local councillors and education officials who were interviewed in the research that decentralization is the way forward. There are of course differences of opinion: many teachers in Mali, for instance, are among the most disappointed and feel that decentralization has made no difference whatsoever. The support for decentralization among many other actors is not an indication of gullibility. They are all conscious of what decentralization should entail and of its weaknesses, but this does not translate into a refusal of the policy. The feeling expressed the most is: if only everybody would play their role fully….

A third encouraging finding concerns the fact that several schools and local offices, although they struggle with resource constraints, have taken innovative initiatives. Arguably, the lack of support from the central level obliges them to do so, while the absence of a regulatory framework makes room for such initiatives. We have already referred to the reorganization of quality monitoring. Several others can be mentioned; many are small scale, but they do point to possible ways forward. In one school, teachers and parents are working together on the preparation of a school improvement plan with support from the NGO Plan. In another locality, the inspector systematically assists the mayor and the council with decisions concerning education.

This commitment to education and to decentralization, linked to the existence of effective initiatives, provides fertile ground for the successful implementation of decentralization. The challenge remains to transform these initiatives into national practice, which demands strong and concerted government efforts. The research has helped to identify key principles to guide such efforts and has highlighted examples of a number of promising ways forward.

A first principle concerns the need for complementarity. The essence of decentralization is to incite more actors to work together towards Education for All. While the efforts of one single individual are easily outweighed by the challenges, collaboration between all can make a difference. Indeed, the schools which function most satisfactorily are those where there is a good relationship between the community and the teachers, and where the PTA assists the headteacher. Legislation recognizes this principle, but isolation or conflict are often the order of the day.

One reason for such conflict lies precisely in the disrespect of a second principle, namely that the mandate of all actors should take into account their resources, competences and assets. The opposite is at times the case: parents contribute from their very scarce resources but are refused control over teacher presence. Principals manage finances and recruit teachers (delicate and intricate tasks) but their involvement in pedagogical supervision has not been strengthened. Inspectors have to supervise all teachers, while their resources allow them very few visits during each term. A strategic reflection is needed on the balance between the mandate and resources of all actors. The term 'resource' in this regard should be understood in a broad sense. It includes not only the finances at the disposal of actors or their formal qualifications, but also for instance their credibility and social network. In that sense, school principals might have better assets to supervise the teachers than inspectors because of their credibility.

This principle of complementarity helps in rethinking quality monitoring, a key concern in a context of decentralization. Initiatives in Benin and Senegal show the potential of school networks, where teachers exchange experiences and which develop a tradition of peer support. Research in Africa and elsewhere shows that many principals are competent to monitor the performance of their teachers, while parents, community organizations and municipalities can exercise responsibility in supervising teacher presence and maybe in their recruitment. The district office is best placed to offer intensive support to a few schools that are seriously under-performing. There is a need to reform school supervision by changing: its mandate, from inspection to professional development; its focus, towards the most needy schools; and its practices, from school visits to a mixture of visits, workshops, exchanges and the creation of networks.

Comparing the present situation to such an ideal scenario could easily lead to a sentiment of pessimism: actors at the local level do not have many resources, whatever meaning we give to that term, and those who do have them might be tempted to use them for their personal interest rather than for the benefit of society. This pessimism should not lead to inaction, but should rather be taken as a call for action on two fronts. On the one hand, resources, competencies and assets are not immobile; they change continuously, and governments have opportunities and the obligation to impact upon them. Legislation, capacity-building and awareness-raising are indispensable steps in this regard. It might also be useful to review recruitment criteria and procedures in order to close the gap between the expected role of an actor and his or her profile.

On the other hand, autonomy at the local level needs to be counterbalanced by an effective evaluation and accountability framework. One of the more disappointing findings of the research is that in none of the four countries has much attention been given to monitor the actions taken at the lower levels. Information on the performance of local offices or on how schools use the funds, which in some cases are put at their disposal, is scarce, if not completely lacking. This is particularly worrying when disparities are vast, and decentralization might aggravate them further. An effective accountability mechanism also informs, therefore, about the evolution of disparities. When the decentralization process is more the result of abandonment than policy, then its regulation and monitoring pose serious problems.

The absence of transparency in the local management of resources is probably the clearest expression of the challenges of decentralization. Ensuring that rules and regulations are known to all and that parents who contribute to school financing have an explicit right to know how these were spent is indispensable. Training and setting up financial control structures is equally important. This could be part of a wider accountability framework linking the actors to whom the district office and the school are responsible: the administration; the other teachers and schools; the students and parents; and the public at large. Such transparency and accountability, though, may encounter serious resistance when it threatens the existing power relations. It takes time to change traditions of power monopolization and refusal of participation. Arguably, NGOs who work at the local level are the best placed outsiders to work on a cultural transformation.

The existence of different corps of teachers is not a result of a policy of decentralization, but it is surely an issue that decentralized actors need to face. The profile of the teaching force has changed considerably because of the inclusion of volunteer, contract and community teachers. The motivation and quality of this new teaching corps need to be addressed. The development of a transparent career plan, allowing for a movement from volunteer to contract teacher to public servant based on commitment and on performance, and their inclusion in school-level management and decision-making help retain their motivation. Quality improvement demands regular support from within the school and outside, some basic resources, and recruiting teachers who belong to a community, be it that of the school or that of the locality.

A core principle runs through the previous paragraphs: decentralization does not imply abandonment by the State, but rather a change in the role of the State. Where its supervision and support is weak and where its absence is not counterbalanced by strong local accountability, the inefficiency and mismanagement which characterized central management might be repeated, if not multiplied, at lower levels. Decentralization is therefore neither a panacea nor a shortcut. In all countries disparities will continue to exist. Some municipalities, districts and schools have all that is needed to benefit from more autonomy, others need support, orientation and control. In all countries, changing the social and institutional cultures will take time. The implication is two-fold: on the one hand, decentralization is not a policy objective in itself, it is a management strategy, adopted when and where centralized management is felt to be inefficient. On the other hand, decentralization demands flexible implementation, with a balance between the autonomy and the characteristics of its beneficiaries.

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South Africa equity and quality reforms: possible lessons[1]

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Abstract
In the period 1995 to 2002 South Africa managed to make major policy changes in education. Almost everything about the education sector has changed. This paper focuses on policies aimed at resource distribution. It documents significant improvements in certain measures of resource inequality. It documents that, against perhaps excessively optimistic expectations, responses in learning outcomes have not followed automatically, but have instead required much managerial pressure and oversight. Things appear to have started to improve, at least on some measures, though much remains to be done in this area.

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Introduction

Over the last few decades, the most profound education reforms attempted anywhere in the world have been instituted in post-apartheid South Africa. The following points highlight the magnitude of South Africa's education reforms:

a) Reshuffling approximately 19 racially based administrative ministries (or departments)[3] into nine geographically based, decentralized ministries in nine new provinces (with a national policy-setting ministry). Each province has inherited four to five and sometimes as many as six of the previous ministries, where personnel, payroll, school resourcing, etc. have had to be merged and unified.
b) Shifting pro-rich and racial education funding (where whites traditionally had per-learner expenditures 10 times greater than Africans[4]) to one where distributed resources are pro-poor and based on income rather than race.
c) Preventing spontaneous privatization and flight of the increasingly nonracial[5] middle class to private schools, i.e., attempting to maintain public schools as a center of community life.
d) Making large-scale reforms in curriculum and teaching methods in order to remove apartheid content and ideology as well as to modernize pedagogy.
e) Working across all key subsectors to make them accessible to all, including those that were previously only for the privileged. These subsectors include schools from grades 1 through

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[3] Determining how many systems or ministries of education existed in apartheid South Africa is in itself a bit of an interesting counting game. There were 10 homelands, and each one had its own education system. These were independent states that were generally not recognized as nation states by the worldwide community, although they had some operational independence in education matters. Then there were four racially based systems that operated in the apartheid republic itself: one for Africans, one for the so-called coloured group, one for Indians, and one for whites. (This racial terminology is still used by the new government because it is sociologically useful in understanding the ongoing dynamics of social change.) If one notes that the white system operated with some decentralized independence in the four old provinces, that is another four. Overseeing everything was a general policy ministry without much administrative implementation mandate. That would make 19 ministries, probably the maximal count that can be produced.

[4] The racial terminology which came to be used during apartheid has continued to be used, for example, by Statistics South Africa (see Statistics South Africa 2001) because of its importance for statistical and analytical purposes. However, whereas during apartheid each person was nonvoluntarily assigned to a racial category, today one is generally asked to self-classify (e.g., in census returns), and one can generally opt not to self-classify at all. This paper adopts the practice of Statistics South Africa of using *white* for those of European ancestry, *African* for those of African descent, *coloured* for those of mixed ancestry but often associated with Malay ancestry, and *Indian* for those whose ancestry is in South Asia. *Black*, in the common parlance of the anti-apartheid movement, generally refers to all but whites.

[5] In this paper the term *nonracial* rather than *multiracial* is generally used, as is common within South Africa itself. Much has been written on the meaning of this term; and the debate continues, since the term has no official definition even within the ANC. For an international audience, a former US Ambassador to South Africa has put it this way: "South Africa's new politics is a novel practice of non-racialism. Having ended legal apartheid, the ANC government is committed to nation-building that goes beyond racial to national claims. This vision of non-racialism is uniquely South African and should not be confused with what is often called multi-racialism in the American context. For black South Africans, apartheid was multi-racial. It brought racial distinctiveness to new heights. Even the term multicultural was a euphemism for apartheid's notion of separate development… " (Joseph, 1998). The political and ideological uses of the term, and the implications of various definitions for practical policy, are debated in South Africa: it is by no means a term with a universally accepted definition. What is clear, though, is that the terms of the debate are quite different from those common for dealing with race and ethnic relations in Europe or the United States. (See also Kotzé, 2000.)

12, Early Childhood Development, Further Education and Training (mostly technical colleges not requiring a secondary leaving certificate), Adult Education and Training, inclusive education or education for learners with special needs, and a tertiary sector of universities and technikons (essentially degree-granting polytechnic institutes).

In short, the South African system is attempting a set of reforms that is much larger in scope than what was attempted in the desegregation of school systems in the United States. South Africa's system is starting from a much greater level of inequality, where the poor and disadvantaged are the majority rather than the minority. Simultaneous with its equity and justice agenda, South Africa is attempting a modernization and quality agenda, all the while trying to prevent the sort of white-flight privatization of education common in American cities. South Africans themselves sometimes seem unconscious of the magnitude of the goals they have set themselves.

Equity reforms

The distribution of income and of social opportunity in South Africa is among the most unequal in the world, comparable to that in Brazil. This inequality is substantiated by the Gini coefficient, the most widely used indicator of inequality in the distribution of income or of any other commodity.[6] This coefficient for income or expenditure distribution in South Africa has been variously measured, with a benchmark for the recent past and present approximating 0.60 (Hoogeveen & Özler, 2004). Two other useful coefficients are the zero-order entropy coefficient, also known as the Theil mean logarithmic deviation, and the mean absolute deviation.[7] The former, in stylized terms, is also 0.60 while the latter is about 0.80 (Hoogeveen & Özler, 2004; author's own estimate). These three coefficients provide a means for comparing educational inequality.

There have been significant, even dramatic, improvements in equity in South Africa since 1994. There has been improved equity in inter-provincial allocations, but improved equity in intra-provincial allocations has been even more important. A discussion of how South Africa's equity and quality reforms were achieved will be preceded with a presentation of evidence that there were indeed improvements. Basic data showing the changes in inter-provincial distributions are shown in Table 1.

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[6] The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality that ranges from 0 (for total equality where everyone has the same income or wealth) to 1 (for total inequality where one person controls a nation's entire income or wealth). For benchmarking purposes, very unequal countries such as Brazil or South Africa have Gini coefficients for their income distributions around 0.55 to 0.65, whereas Nordic countries, for example, typically have Gini coefficients around 0.25. This coefficient can be applied to just about any wealth-like concept, such as educational inputs or outputs. For example, the Gini coefficient for the distribution of educational attainment in Korea improved from about 0.55 to 0.30 from the 1960s to the 1990s. For an explanation of the Gini coefficient and the various other coefficients, visit http://utip.gov.utexas.edu/web/Tutorials_Techniques/Introduction%20to%20Inequality%20Studies.ppt.

[7] These two other coefficients are also summary indicators of inequality. The mean logarithmic deviation is useful because it can be disaggregated into "within" and "between" components, such as the income inequality within races and between races. The ratio of the average deviation to the mean is simply the ratio of the absolute value of each observation's difference from the mean, over the mean. It is an intuitively appealing measure of how much each actual observation (province, person) differs from the average, standardized for units.

The provinces listed – the new provinces – did not exist in 1991/92. At that point there were only the four traditional provinces as well as 10 self-governing territories or bantustans. However, unpublished data exist from legacy administrative information systems (SANEX) on the proportion of learners from various ex-Departments. These data allow one to construct a good approximation of what the per-learner public expenditure would have been in 1991/92 had the new provinces existed. The notable thing is that the reduction in inequality since the early 1990s has been a remarkable 67% (see last column in Table 1). In 1991/92, provincial deviation from the mean (coefficient of absolute variation) was 31% of the mean; by 2001/2002, this had been reduced to only 10%. (It should be noted that the same variable, applied to either average provincial family expenditure or the average provincial income of school catchment areas, is generally more than twice as unequal today.) There was some reduction in inequality to 1995/96, but a stronger reduction has been noted since then. Thus the story on inter-provincial inequality is one of considerable achievement.

Table 1. Reductions in Inter-Provincial Inequality in Education Spending

(Current RAND per-learner public expenditure in "public ordinary schooling")

	1991/92	1995/96	1997/98	2001/02
Eastern Cape	1034	1897	2450	3333
Free State	1473	2091	2913	3638
Gauteng	2054	2883	3638	3763
Kwazulu Natal	1117	1971	2353	3066
Limpopo	1109	1256	2737	3095
Mpumalanga	1177	1761	2380	3243
N Cape	2234	3765	3944	4500
North West	1255	2110	3072	3896
Western Cape	2530	3509	3390	3870
Simple mean	1554	2360	2986	3600
Mean absolute deviation[8]	479	684	466	370
Coefficient of absolute variation	0.31	0.29	0.16	0.10
Reduction in inequality from 91/92		0.06	0.49	0.67
Reduction in inequality from 95/96			0.46	0.65

Sources: 1991/92 data: Buckland & Fielding, 1994. Other years: South Africa National Treasury, 2001, Annexure C. (1997-2000); South Africa National Treasury, 2002, Annexure C. (2001-2004), for financial data, and National EMIS Directorate for enrollment data.

It is unfortunately impossible to perform a similar analysis for intra-provincial allocations, i.e., allocations to schools. Accounting systems for tracking expenditure down to the school level are only now being developed. However, one can approximate the analysis by focusing on two key inputs: the distribution of the learner-educator ratio and the distribution of the learner-classroom ratio. These two factors account for 90% of the total budget (recurrent and capital). This analysis relies not on yearly administrative records but on two episodic censuses – the 1996 and 2000 *School Register of Needs* (South Africa Department of Education, 1996, 2000b) – which

[8] Measures such as the Gini coefficient would not have been appropriate in this context as these data exist only at the provincial level. The mean absolute deviation provides a simple and intuitive measure of inequality useful in this highly aggregated context.

measured the allocation of key inputs school by school. These census data give some idea of the improvements in input distribution, as the years 1996 and 2000 fall within the period when most equalization was taking place between and within provinces. As a caveat, it should be noted that the census-taking methodologies used in the two years were not strictly comparable, though it is unlikely that the data would be very wrong for such easily countable entities as classrooms, educators, and learners. The basic results are sown in Table 2.

Table 2. Changes in Total and Intra-Provincial Inequality in Teacher and Classroom Provision

		Primary Teachers	Secondary Teachers	Primary Classrooms	Secondary Classrooms
1996	Gini	0.142	0.188	0.214	0.216
	Entropy: Intraprov	0.030	0.049	0.062	0.064
	Entropy: Interprov	0.004	0.010	0.012	0.015
2000	Gini	0.109	0.153	0.207	0.221
	Entropy: Intraprov	0.022	0.043	0.064	0.070
	Entropy: Interprov	0.002	0.005	0.006	0.011
% Change 1996 to 2000	Gini	-23%	-18%	-3%	3%
	Entropy: Intraprov	-27%	-10%	2%	9%
	Entropy: Interprov	-63%	-54%	-50%	-28%

Source: calculated by the author from Student Register of Needs databases (South Africa Department of Education 1996, 2000b).

Equality in teacher allocation improved quite dramatically. The improvements in inter-provincial equality were the most notable, even though inter-provincial inequality was already smaller than intra-provincial inequality. However, improvements in intra-provincial equality of teacher allocation – in the range of 20% or so in just four years – are quite notable, especially since equalization has continued after 2000 and allocations are becoming pro-poor in 2003. Inequality in classroom allocation was higher than teacher allocation in 1996, and the situation appears not to have improved, except, significantly, in the case of inter-provincial inequality. Thus, while teachers represent the majority of the total cost of education (and are arguably a more important input in the production of learning than classrooms), the story of equalization, thus far, is not a total success on every indicator – just on the most important ones. The reasons for this will become clearer below.

The story on the most easily measurable and costliest indicators is quite good. Other, less measurable indicators are significant because they convey a sense of justice and entitlement or are instrumental in the learning process. These are items such as quality of classroom space and items of equipment more directly related to learning. Unfortunately, between 1996 and 2000, the definitions of these variables changed sufficiently so that one should not make comparisons over time in their distribution. Nonetheless, using 2000 data for comparison, the distribution in quality of infrastructure and provision of per-learner equipment was much worse than the distribution of educators in 1996. For example, the Gini coefficients for quality of infrastructure and for equipment in 2000 were 0.20 and 0.36, respectively, abstracting from level of schooling.[9] The distribution of equipment is obviously a serious concern.

[9] Calculated by the author from South Africa Department of Education, 2000b.

Furthermore, particularly in the case of quality of infrastructure, there is the issue of poverty in some absolute sense. Poverty in this sense entails schools being below a certain standard, the summative measure of all substandard schools to that standard (the total poverty gap), and the geographical distribution of poverty to political units in the country. Most absolute poverty (as measured by the cost of bringing truly wretched schools up to some absolute standard) is highly concentrated geographically and easily traceable to particular apartheid homeland administrations. For example, while the old homeland of KwaZulu had 22% of the reporting[10] schools at the primary level, it had 35% of the poverty gap in equipment. Similarly, although the old homeland of Transkei had only some 4.7% of the schools reporting data on infrastructure, it had 21.1% of the infrastructure poverty gap. These are evidently issues that require work.[11]

Finally, equity in the distribution of the education system outputs is not nearly as high as in the distribution of inputs. This is, of course, to be expected. After all, educational results are not produced solely by school inputs but are highly influenced by family socioeconomic status and social capital.[12] If such environmental factors as parental literacy and income are very unequally distributed, one would expect that educational results would also be. However, there has been considerable improvement in actual educational results, even though this improvement started long before the end of apartheid. Furthermore, given that until 1994 public allocation to schooling emphasized rather than combated parental income inequality (since the rich got more public inputs than the poor), it is surprising to note that the distribution of basic results is not much worse than the distribution of income and – by some measures – is more equal. Because schooling results are distributed a little better – or no worse than – than income, there is reason to believe the education system is playing a role in improving equality of distribution of income for the coming generation.

The generational story is told in Table 3. The table shows the number of grades achieved by successive population cohorts, as measured in the 1999 October Household Survey (Statistics South Africa, 1999). The differences are large: every five years, on average, another 0.6 grades are added to the average grade-achievement of learners. Better yet, as the inequality coefficients show, the inequality of achievement is narrowing dramatically.

[10] Not necessarily of all schools, as the census was not 100% complete for every item.
[11] The standards were defined as half of the median of simple multifactor indices of quality of school infrastructure and provision of equipment per learner. The indices were developed by the author.
[12] In South Africa this appears to explain some 30% of variation in school results, as will be seen below.

Table 3. Grade achievement of various cohorts by 1999

Age	Grades of Schooling: Mean	Std Error[13]	Gini	0-order entropy
20-24	9.87	.03	.14	.14
25-29	9.57	.04	.19	.27
30-34	8.89	.04	.23	.39
35-39	8.24	.05	.27	.54
40-44	7.38	.06	.33	.77
45-49	6.88	.08	.38	..96

Source: calculated by the author from the 1999 October Household Survey (Statistics South Africa, 1999).

This is good news indeed. Yet, even as late as the 1990s, only 60% of each cohort was making it to grade 12, and only 50% of these were passing the all-important "matric" (secondary school leaving) national exams,[14] which means that only about 30% of each cohort were achieving twelve grades and entering life with a "pass" to offer the labor market (Crouch & Mabogoane, 1997a). Also, only 10% to 15% were passing with "exemption" or "endorsement," which allows access to higher education.

On the other hand, as shown in Table 4, the inequality of distribution in the pass rates is decreasing; furthermore, it is lower than that of the distribution of income. Note that this table is only a distribution of the pass rates among schools, not the distribution of the actual average marks or grades among students. Nonetheless, it is clear that the situation has improved. (Note that during the same period, 1997-2001, the average pass rate improved from about 50% to about 60%.)

Table 4. Changes in the Distribution of Educational Results: Matric Exams

	Passes		Exemptions	
	Gini	0-order entropy	Gini	0-order entropy
1997	.36	.54	.50	1.60
1998	.32	.25	.64	1.70
2001	.25	.14	.63	2.19

Source: calculated by the author from Exams unit data (South Africa Department of Education, 1997c, 1998, 2001).

[13] This is the usual standard error, i.e., the standard deviation of the sample mean. The Gini and 0-order entropy or mean logarithmic deviation coefficients were explained in a previous footnote.

[14] The exam is officially termed the Senior Certificate Examination, but is popularly and almost universally known as the *matric* exams, the 12th (last) year of secondary school also being called the matric grade. The matric pass rate thus measures the proportion of 12th graders that are successful in the secondary school leaving exam.

Since only some 60% of the learners even make it to grade 12 (taking into account all provinces and all racial groups), a Gini coefficient of only 0.25 in the distribution of matric exam pass rates can still yield a distribution of passes based on population cohorts that is worse than the distribution of income. This is because the coefficient ignores all those who never made it to grade 12, when in some sense they should be considered not to have passed the exam. A simulation was done to see what would happen to the above Gini coefficient if one added sufficient schools with zero pass rates to make up for the learners who never even make it to grade 12. The result of the simulation showed that the distribution of pass rates is no worse – and probably better – than the distribution of income. But note that the distribution of "exemptions" (a mark high enough to allow entrance to tertiary education), even considering that those who take the exam are already a selection, is worse than that of income as measured by the Gini coefficient and much worse as measured by the 0-order entropy coefficient. If one includes those who never make it to grade 12, then the distribution of exemptions would be considerably worse than the distribution of income. (Of course, it is not just the degree of schooling that determines one's income success later in life: while passes and exemptions measure success in schooling, South Africa is liable to the "sheepskin effect".)[15] Nevertheless, these indicators do inspire cautious optimism about total grade achievement and pass rates – though less about exemption rates – while also suggesting that more needs to be done to equalize quality and achievement.

All this begs the question: will redistributing resources lead to a redistribution of achievement? Unfortunately, research on the determinants of educational achievement in South Africa is inconclusive. To some degree it depends on whether one considers managerial quality a resource. The author's own analysis suggests that if one takes the high school leaving exam as a measure of achievement and makes comparisons across the entire set of schools, environmental and parental poverty and socioeconomic status, as well as managerial tradition (i.e., which apartheid department formerly ran the school) together explain about as much of inter-school variation as does the variation in traditional resources (Crouch & Mabogoane, 1997b). In particular, the correlation between some of the variables that exercise the public imagination about inequality (because they are so visible and so clearly deficient, such as physical infrastructure) appear relatively uncorrelated with achievement. But other resources do definitely appear to matter, such as equipment, pedagogical process inputs, and teacher education. (One should note that access to decent infrastructure is a matter of dignity and justice rather than a critical determinant of output.) Furthermore, to the degree that resources can make up for parental poverty (e.g., by allowing schools to devote more teacher attention to children whose parents cannot help with homework), resources do matter because poverty itself matters.[16]

On the other hand, in evaluating results of pilot project schools in poor areas (i.e., schools with a narrow spectrum of achievement), by measuring achievement at grade 3 levels, one finds little correlation between achievement and resources. In fact, there is little correlation between achievement and anything else, as if achievement were more or less random or depended on

[15] For example, having completed 12 grades as opposed to 11 confers much more extra income than having completed 11 grades as opposed to 10, which would not make sense if income is accruing truly in proportion to learning and/or years of education.
[16] For evidence on these issues, see the discussion and data in the section on efficiency, below.

variables that education systems tend not to measure (Crouch, Vinjevold, 2001). While somewhat expected – since the range of variation in both outputs and inputs would be smaller in poorer schools than in the whole range of schools – this cannot be the main explanation, because there is still some variation in both results and inputs, even in schools that appear equally poor.

How are these improvements being achieved?

Education in South Africa is relatively decentralized. The Constitution makes education a "concurrent" matter. Implementation is largely a provincial matter, governed by provincial legislation. For example, it is the provincial governments that employ schoolteachers. National education legislation prevails over provincial legislation when it is a matter of correcting inter-province issues and when national standards and policies are needed to preserve uniformity. The national level sets policy, but implementation is up to the provinces. Furthermore, a province's education budget is determined largely by its own legislature and cabinet. The budget is financed largely via grants and transfers from the national government. These transfers do not stipulate how much each province must spend on education: they are multisectoral block transfers driven by a formula (the "Equitable Shares Formula"). This process of revenue sharing has been relatively successful, although not without criticism. Unlike apartheid financing, equity is generated by making the formula largely population-driven. Importantly, the formula does not produce absolute amounts of funding, nor is it based on a sense of "adequacy" or "costed norms" approach to meet needs. The Equitable Shares Formula simply produces shares of revenue that are then divided among claimants in what is hoped to be an equitable manner.[17]

The reasons for using the Equitable Shares Formula are complex and have been subject of much debate, but the present national government favors this approach. Education is an important nominal driver of the allocation, in that it carries a weight of 41% in the total allocation of shares. Thus, one could take 41% as the nominal proportion of its revenue share that a province "should" spend on education. Although they vary, internal provincial allocations to education on average come fairly close to this proportion. Each province's share of the total allocation is driven by each province's share of education need. In turn, education need is driven by the average of school-aged population and enrollment. Population is used as a driver, in addition to enrollment, to minimize incentives for repetition and to encourage efficient flow-through (coordinated with a national educational policy that normalizes flow-through). Thus, provincial spending per learner can vary largely depending on the following conditions:

a) The gap between population and enrollment
b) How much internal revenue each province has, in addition to what it derives as a share of national revenue (which in most cases is less than 10% of total provincial revenue)
c) How much of its total revenue it chooses to spend on education versus other social and economic needs

[17] An "adequacy" or "costed norms" approach would attempt to provide each school with the inputs adequate to provide a given standard of education. These concepts generally originate in developed countries, where the poor are a minority. The appropriateness of such an approach to the South African context is a debatable issue. The tendency might arise to define adequacy in a manner that would be fiscally unsustainable, leading to promises that cannot be fulfilled. The current approach simply takes the total budget available, which is fairly high as a proportion of GDP, and divides it up in a pro-poor manner. It is very much a shares approach rather than an absolute amounts approach.

This approach was applied in a phased manner, starting from a baseline that was historically driven.

Only one of the drivers in the formula is related to poverty, namely a "backlogs" component that has a weight of only 3% and is used to give more funding to provinces with particularly poor infrastructure (school and other). While most of the other components in this formula are driven simply by population, there is a driver, with a weight of 8%, that returns revenue to each province in proportion to the degree of national output the province generates. Thus the formula returns to each poor province a share of revenue much larger than the share of national income generated by it (for example, though Limpopo generates only 3% of national income, it receives 14% of the shared revenue). The Equitable Shares Formula allocation process ends up being redistributive even though this is not an explicit aim of the formula. Furthermore, there have been special allocations outside the formula, for example, for school construction and improvement.

It is largely the application of this approach that has been responsible for the improvement in inter-provincial variation in per-learner expenditure, begging the question of what politico-economic factors have enabled the application of this formula. While a detailed explanation would take us too far afield, the following two points are significant: a national government with a strong majority and mandate at national level to carry out redistribution; and a modern approach to crafting fiscal formulae that are clear, simple, transparent, and well studied so as to avoid perverse incentives. (While focusing on shares rather than absolute amounts has increased transparency and reduced debates, this focus on shares – rather than adequacy – has been the target of some criticism.)

As noted, intra-provincial equity has also improved. While the improvement in allocations to the poor provinces has permitted poorer provinces to improve local distribution by leveling up – rather than leveling to the median or mean – the reason for this cannot have been driven by the inter-provincial allocations. The reason lies, instead, with the national government, which has issued policies that regulate intra-provincial resource distribution, thus issuing provinces with a mandate that forces them to redistribute internally out of a fixed bottom line but does not result in an unfunded mandate affecting total expenditure on schooling.[18]

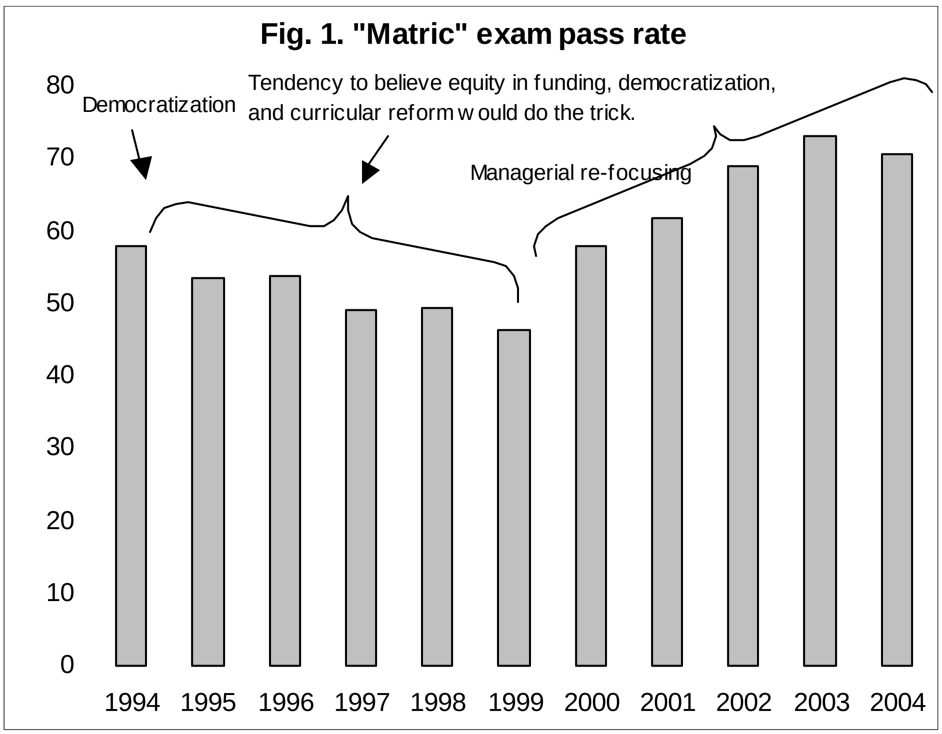
Necessary efficiency and quality reforms

As was noted above, it was logical, given the history of South Africa, that equity reforms would be tackled first. However, it was not long before it was noticed that there are serious quality and efficiency problems with South African education, not just equity problems. Of course, the two are not necessarily unrelated. If one apartheid system had 10 times as much administrative and support assistance per teacher as another system (an equity problem), it is logical to expect efficiency to differ in the new provinces that inherited these disproportionate apartheid systems,

[18] An unfunded mandate occurs when a higher level of government imposes some functions or service standards (e.g., a pupil-teacher ratio) but does not fund the lower-level government to pay for the needed inputs and (even worse, but not needed to define a mandate that is unfunded) does not allow the lower-level government the local tax-raising capacity to pay for it.

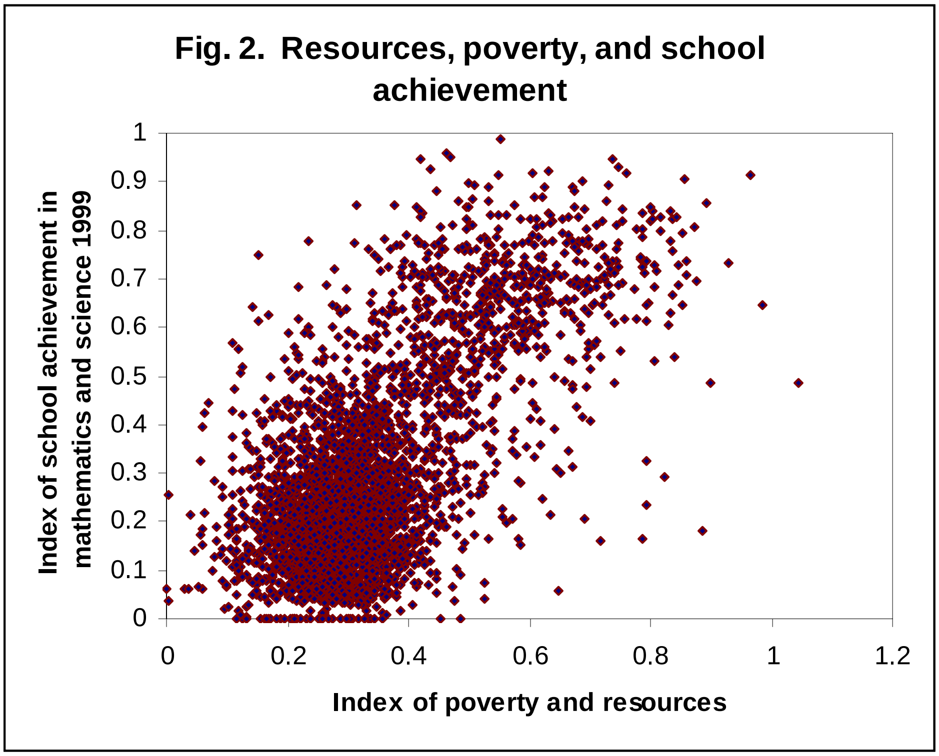
with one province having many fewer capable administrators per teacher (and hence per student) than another. While equity and curricular issues have been tackled in South Africa, the efficiency reforms have been slower to start, and there is still considerable debate about their nature.

In the first few years of democratization, the most widely tracked quality indicator, the matric pass rate (or total passes) declined, as Figure 1 indicates. There are many reasons not to take the matric pass rate excessively seriously: the exam suffers from self-selection problems, data are not firmly anchored through common items year to year, students' work has influenced the grades in recent years, and the denominator (numbers sitting for the exam) has changed. (For a discussion of some of the controversies surrounding the matric exams see Mukwevho, Khosa, & Kgobe, 2004; Kanjee, 2005; and Schinlder, 2004.) The exam results have, at the very least, political and managerial significance, and the trends probably do signal a turnaround of some importance.



Source: 1994-2003 from Mukwevho, Khosa, & Kgobe, 2004; 2004 from South Africa Info, 2005.

After a few years of declining results, policy makers became aware that democratization, improved resource flows, and curricular change, among other factors, could not be expected to make an impact on measured learning, particularly not in grade 12 and not in just in the short-term. Furthermore, policy makers began to note considerable slack in the system: schools with equal resources serving the equally poor achieved vastly different results, due presumably to differences in the quality of management. Figure 2 illustrates that in South Africa resources and poverty do matter in school achievement, but they are not all that matters – efficiency in resource utilization matters as well. That there is a central tendency is clear, but that there is considerable deviation around the central tendency is also clear. While not necessarily presented in this manner, this sort of information began to persuade policy makers that focused intervention on quality and management was needed.



Source: calculated by the author. [19]

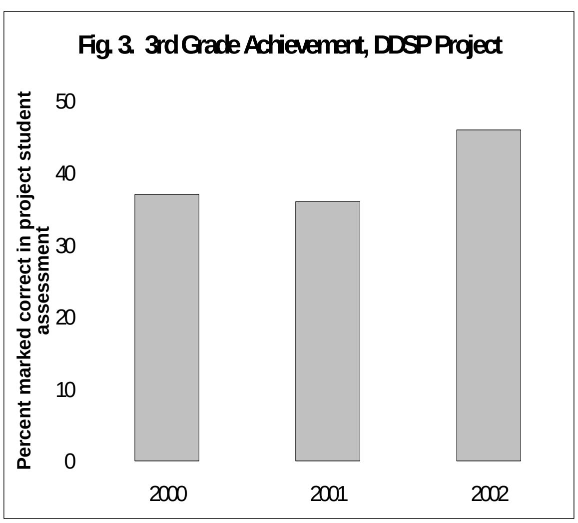
Figure 2 refers to secondary schools, with data gathered throughout South Africa. The index of school achievement or performance refers to an index of mathematics and science results in the matric exam. The index of poverty and resources, or the resource and social advantage index, comprises the following variables: income, unemployment, youth dependency, illiteracy, language spoken at home, type of water supply in the school catchment area (an indicator of public infrastructure quality), qualifications of teachers, existence of school hostels, provision of textbooks and science laboratories, teacher experience, and learner-classroom and learner-educator ratios (as indicators of resourcing). The resource and social advantage index is simply the predicted value of performance, as suggested by the named advantage indicators.

The South African education system is coming to grips with these issues, including activities to bolster "Culture of Learning" in schools, whole-school evaluation and improvement, and district assistance to schools in management improvement. Some provinces have increased pressure on nonperforming schools or areas, with various degrees of success. As shown in Figure 1, where a dramatic turnaround was created in the late 1990s, there is no clear, overall conclusion as to how to press the matter of quality. (However, the numbers are somewhat deceptive, as the numbers

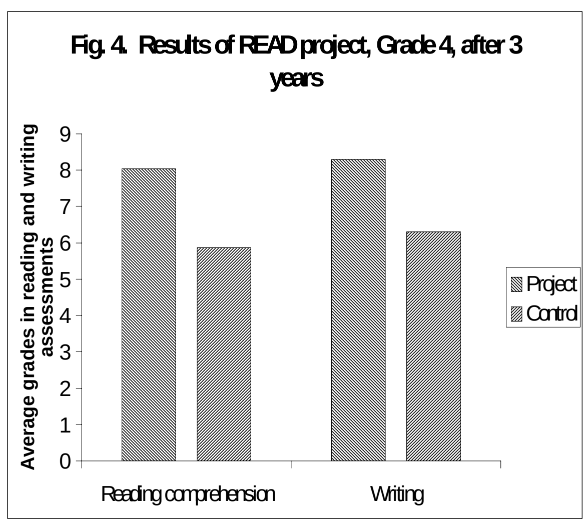
[19] The data and school achievement index were provided by Helen Perry, consultant, who in turn sourced the data from official sources, in particular the EMIS and exams areas at the National Department of Education. I would like to express my gratitude to her. However, the responsibility for the analysis and any resulting errors are mine.

of exam-takers was reduced, which helped improve the pass rate, as those least likely to pass did not sit for the exam. Other data would show, however, that the total number of passes – not just the pass rate – improved (though this rate of improvement was not much better than the rate of growth of population).

An important issue is that most of these efforts target nonperformance by using the matric exam as a tracking device, already described above as an imperfect indicator. A leaving and filtering exam applied at grade 12 is hardly the most effective diagnostic device imaginable; but until very recently, there was no systemic assessment applied in earlier grades. A grade 3 assessment was applied for the first time on a nationwide pilot basis in the year 2000 and on a nationwide non-pilot basis in 2001 (South Africa Department of Education, 2003b). Because this is being done on a nationwide school sample, rather than on a universal basis, it is difficult to track specific schools with this approach. Nonetheless, the evidence provided by this assessment should help policy makers to decide on which factors they should focus. Other donor-based projects have begun to focus on learning in the early grades, with some indications of success in increasing learner performance. Schools in the USAID-funded District Development Support Program (DDSP) project, for example, have improved learner performance by a significant degree in a few years (Claasen, Makgamatha, and Kanjee, 2003), as have schools with reading interventions by the READ Trust (Hoffman, Pearson, Beretvas, and Sailors, 2003). Some of these results are shown in Figures 3 and 4.[20] While these are not full random-assignment experiments, they are as rigorous as anything currently available in South Africa, and they do prove that improvements in results in the order of 20% to 25% (not percentage points) are possible in a fairly short time and with large numbers of schools (DDSP worked with about 15,000 children).



Source: Claassen, et al. (2003).



Source: Hoffman, et al. (2003).

[20] The DDSP results refer to the average of mathematics and communication. The READ project results in writing are rescaled to the same axis as the reading comprehension test.

A recent Ministerial review on resourcing has also drawn attention to the issue of efficiency (South Africa Department of Education, 2003a). As resources come to be distributed more and more equally (or on a pro-poor basis), it is clear that performance does not track resources as closely as one might hope. Pressure from central government levels – national and provincial treasuries, provincial premiers, and the nation's presidency – to have the education system show impact in return for funds spent is likely to increase in coming years. The education system will have to respond creatively, both to moderate expectations (it may not be reasonable to expect outputs to track inputs in such a short time frame, especially when factoring in poverty and other social variables), and to tighten up management to effectively deliver more impact for the money spent.

One of the key problems affecting education in South Africa, which was not anticipated by African National Congress policy makers in the early 1990s, is the scourge of HIV/AIDS. This will place considerable human and budgetary strain on the education system. For a discussion of these issues, see Crouch (2004).

Conclusions

South Africa has taken on an educational transformation more immense than any attempted in the world in the last few decades. This transformation has been approached deliberatively, consultatively, and with considerable attention to a sound legal base. The transformation is beginning to produce results, first in equity and now – slowly but increasingly certainly – in quality. There have been surprises and difficult environmental changes that have worked against earlier hopes, but these obstacles are being faced down, some better than others. The example of South Africa's innovativeness and careful dedication in reforming the equity and quality issues behind its educational system can perhaps serve as a useful lesson for other countries. South Africa—eight years after sowing the seeds of transformation—is only now beginning to reap the fruits, further example to the world that such profound reforms take years to design, more years to implement, and even more years to bear fruit.

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Ethics and corruption in education: an overview

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- *"Corruption hurts the poor disproportionately – by diverting funds intended for development, undermining a government's ability to provide basic services, feeding inequality and injustice, and discouraging foreign investment and aid" (*Kofi Annan, in his statement on the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption by the General Assembly, NY, November 2003).
- "*Corruption is a major drain on the effective use of resources for education and should be drastically curbed*" (Drafting Committee of the World Education Forum, Dakar, April 2000).

Abstract

In a context of budget austerity and pressure on international flows of funds, there is a clear demand for more efficiency in the use of public resources. Recent surveys suggest that leakage of funds from ministries of education to schools represent more than 80% of the total sums allocated (non-salary expenditures) in some countries; bribes and payoffs in teacher recruitment and promotion tend to lower the quality of public school teachers; and illegal payments for school entrance and other hidden costs help explain low school enrolment and high drop-out rates. This paper argues that the problems posed by corruption in education have been neglected for too long. It details the three assumptions that underlie the IIEP's project on "Ethics and corruption in education". It then describes the approach followed to tackle this sensitive issue within the framework of the project. Finally, it summarizes a few conclusions drawn from the research thus far in three areas: teacher behaviour, teacher management, and private tutoring. It then concludes by identifying key strategies for improving transparency and accountability in education.

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Introduction

Several studies conducted during the last decade have clearly emphasized the negative impact of corruption on the economic, political and social development of countries. It has been observed that corruption increases transaction costs, reduces the efficiency and quality of services, distorts the decision-making process, and undermines social values. Recent surveys conducted on the impact of corruption on the provision of social services – including education – thus suggest, for instance, that illegal payments for school entrance and other hidden costs help explain low school enrolment and drop-out rates in developing countries; and that bribes and payoffs in teacher recruitment and promotion tend to lower the quality of public school teachers.

Among the main factors leading to corrupt behaviour, one can mention poverty and the low salaries earned by public officials and civil servants. It thus seems that the poorer a country, the higher the level of petty corruption; in very poor countries, petty corruption is sometimes considered as a normal pattern of behaviour or as a norm for buying services (this is not the case for grand corruption, which can be found everywhere and is generated and maintained at a high level of decision-making in the power structure of different societies). But the existing literature on the subject shows that corruption also has connections with the stability of political systems, the existing legal frameworks, the transparency of public information, the level of accountability of individuals and institutions, the efficiency of the mechanisms of governance in place, the importance and characteristics of foreign aid, etc.

A cursory review of the literature suggests that there are very few documents available dealing in a comprehensive and systematic manner with the various aspects of corruption that exist in the field of education. Yet, it is clear that the fight against corruption in the specific sphere of education should be regarded as a major priority as it affects not only the volume of educational services, including their quality and efficiency, but also equity in education and public confidence in educational systems. Against this background, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has launched a new research project, devoted to "Ethics and corruption in education," whose main objective is *to improve decision-making and the management of educational systems by integrating governance and corruption concerns in educational planning and administration methodologies.*

Part I. Three assumptions of the IIEP's project on: "Ethics and corruption in education"

The IIEP's project on "Ethics and corruption in education" is based on three main assumptions:

(i) *First, monopoly power and lack of accountability mechanisms favour the development of corrupt practices in the education sector*

Literature shows that corruption has connections with the existence of monopoly and discretionary power, poor governance and supervision at all levels, poor public information on government decisions, lack of transparency with regard to foreign aid and more. As Klitgaard, Maclean-Abaroa & Parris (2000) illustrate in their formula: *Corruption (C) = M (Monopoly Power) + D (Discretion by officials) – A (Accountability).* Although problems of corruption tend to be ignored in education, there is a strong case to suggest that this formula also applies to it, where this sector is characterised by lack of competition among providers (monopoly power by state authorities), complex regulation systems, an absence of adequate mechanisms of control and sanction, limited access to information, low salary levels for public officers (including teachers) and weak incentive systems. With on-going trends such as decentralisation, privatisation and sub-contracting, one would expect an automatic reduction in corrupt practices in education. Unfortunately, the reality shows the contrary in many cases: the increasingly complex nature of the education sector simply appears to be creating new opportunities for corruption.

(ii) Second, actors' behaviours (intangible inputs) have a significant impact on problems of access, of quality and of equity in education

There are a variety of misbehaviours which can disturb the implementation of planned interventions and, particularly, the correct functioning of the teaching/learning process. These include: embezzlement of education finance, demands for unauthorized fees for admission to school or for exams, absence of teachers from schools, leakage of information before examinations, etc. The cost of such unethical behaviour can be very high, as the issue of teacher absenteeism reveals (a recent survey found that a third of all teachers in Uttar Pradesh, India, were absent; World Bank, 2004). Moreover, teachers who indulge in unethical practices are arguably unfit for teaching universal values (civic education, moral values, honesty, integrity, etc). Nevertheless, plans for addressing issues of access, quality, equity and efficiency in education often focus on the use of quantitative data such as the number of teachers by age/grade/status/level of qualifications and pupil/teacher ratios rather than on “intangible inputs”[2]. These “intangible inputs” are however necessary conditions to the delivery of quality education, even if these are not sufficient conditions: a host of other factors are recognised to determine the quality and level of education, e.g. the experience and skills of teachers, the relevance of the curricula and the availability of appropriate textbooks, the involvement of parents in school activities, etc.

(iii) Third, facilitating access to information and promoting a "citizens' voice" are essential for improving transparency and accountability in the use of educational resources

A number of strategies to fight corruption have been documented, including the improvement of legislative and regulatory frameworks, the strengthening of control mechanisms, the establishment of reward and penalty systems. However increasing the number of legislations, controls and bureaucracy can also paralyse the administration and foster new varieties of corrupt practices in some instances. This is particularly true in countries where the monopoly of the administration is important, and where the salaries of public officers are low. At the same time, decision makers, academia and advocacy groups have come to recognise the potential of access to information and of public feedback in making the government more responsive and accountable. What can be termed a “citizens’ voice” appears especially powerful in cases where the government operates and leaves the user of the services with no real “exit options.” In conditions such as this, the “citizens’ voice” can indeed become a real catalyst for change – provided they are based on an objective assessment of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of educational services and on close interactions with service providers.

[2] Intangible inputs include not only: (i) the professional and ethical commitments of teachers and staff, but also (ii) transparent systems for collecting and disseminating information, (iii) effective systems of accountability and monitoring, (iv) reliable judiciary, etc.

Part II. How did we approach the issue of ethics and corruption in education?

Corruption and education is a complex and sensitive issue. The IIEP has decided to address it by:

- making a clear distinction between two concepts: corruption in education and education against corruption;
- focusing on institutions, procedures, mechanisms (governance, transparency, accountability), and not on individuals (crimes, prosecutions, etc.);
- mapping out the opportunities for corruption the education sector offers as a framework for both diagnosis and action design;
- developing a set of new methodological tools for assessing corruption problems properly;
- giving priority to the identification and documentation of successful strategies that can be adopted to improve transparency and accountability in education (positive approach).

(i) Corruption in education/education against corruption

First, a distinction has to be made between corruption in the management of the education sector (corruption in education) and education as a means to fight corruption (curriculum, methods used, and mobilization of actors). A clear relationship exists between corruption in education and education against corruption: in a "corrupt environment," education cannot successfully promote ethical values and behaviours. In other words, to create a favourable environment for the teaching of values, it is crucial to ensure integrity and limit unethical behaviours within the educational sector, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. During the initial stage of the program, the IIEP has focused its work on the first dimension, namely: corruption in education.

Figure 1.

(ii) Focus on institutions, procedures and mechanisms, and not on individuals

Second, there is another distinction that has to be made between opportunities for corruption, which is linked to the institutional setting, existing procedures and mechanisms and the rationale of the actors in seizing that opportunity (their logic of action). We decided to limit the IIEP's project to the study of the opportunities for corruption that exist within the educational sector. The logic of action of educational planners, either at central, regional or local level, or of head teachers and teachers we set aside as we felt it would simply lead to "individual stories," without much significance, as well as to th description of the particular political, economic and social conditions in which those engaging in corruption operate, helping to understand how people use corruption to provide for basic needs, but without providing much use in designing appropriate actions to remedy it.

(iii) Identification of opportunities of corruption offered in the education sector

Corruption is likely to concern all areas of planning and management, i.e., information systems, the building of schools, recruitment, promotion (including systems of incentives) and appointment of teachers, the supply and distribution of equipment and textbooks, the allocation of specific allowances (fellowships, subventions to the private sector, etc.), examinations and diplomas, out-of-school activities and so forth. We have drawn a typology of the main areas of planning and management that offer opportunities for corruption in education (please find a summary in Table 1 below). Different types of corrupt practices liable to crop up in each of these areas are given, including favouritism, bypassing of criteria, and embezzlement as well as the possible impact of these practices on access, quality, equity, and ethics.

Table 1. Typology of opportunities of corruption in education

Areas	Corrupt practices	Impact on education
School building, rehabilitation	• Fraud in public tendering • Embezzlement • School mapping	Access Quality *Example*: bad location of schools; too high or too low use; demand for places unattended
Equipment, Textbooks, Food	• Fraud in public tendering • Embezzlement • Bypass of criteria	Equity Quality *Example:* school meals free to the rich and not available for the poor; lack of consistency between textbooks and curricula
Teacher appointment/management	• Favouritism • Nepotism • Bribes	Quality *Example:* less qualified teachers appointed
Teacher behaviour	• “Ghost teachers” • Bribes (for school entrance, exams, assessment, private tutoring, etc.)	Equity Ethics *Example:* disparity in staffing by schools; discrimination against the poor
Examinations and diplomas	• Selling of information • Favouritism • Nepotism • Bribes • Academic fraud	Equity Ethics *Example:* unjustified credentials available to students who can afford to pay bribes
Information systems	• Manipulating data • Selecting/suppressing information	Equity Ethics Policy priorities *Example:* omitting data on repetition/dropout; less priority on quality improvement

Table 1. Continued

Specific allowances (fellowships, subsidies, etc.)	• Favouritism • Nepotism • Bribes • Bypass of criteria	Access Equity *Example:* inflating enrolment figures to increase financial transfers
Finance	• Transgressing rules/procedures • Inflation of costs and activities • Opacity of flow • Leakage of funds	Access Quality Equity Policy priorities *Example:* less resources for quality improvement: textbooks, materials, etc.

Source: Adapted from Hallak & Poisson, 2002.

(iv) Study of a variety of approaches for assessing corruption problems

Obtaining data on corruption is very difficult for obvious reasons (according to certain sources, the world cost of corruption is an estimated 1 trillion US$ out of an economy worth US$ 30 trillion. The national level of corruption in Mexico, for instance, is estimated around 15 percent of GNP today; in India it was around 20 percent of GDP in the 1980's) (see Roy, 1996). As this also holds true for education sector, the IIEP has decided to put a particular emphasis on possible methodologies to diagnose the origin, the magnitude, the characteristics and the impact of the phenomenon of corruption in this sector by paying attention to audit methodologies, public expenditure tracking surveys, perceptions surveys, participatory diagnosis, report cards, etc. Table 2 below illustrates the results of the study the IIEP conducted on report card surveys in Bangladesh.

Table 2. Amount of illegal fees, in Bangladesh Taka (BDT), collected in 8 Upzillas (Sub-districts) in Bangladesh

Admission into primary schools	73 876 BDT
Entertaining government officers	435 049 BDT
First-term examination fees	6 102 893 BDT
Second-term examination	6 069 765 BDT
Annual examination	6 086 059 BDT
Total (including other fees)	19 849 000 BDT

Source: Karim, Santizo Rodall, & Cabrero Mendoza, 2004.

(v) Analysis of successful strategies to improve transparency and accountability

The diagnosis of opportunities of corruption is a crucial step, as is the analysis of successful strategies to improve transparency and accountability in the use of educational resources (financial as well as human and material ones). To help countries develop their capacity to curb corrupt practices in education, in addition to adopting a positive approach to the problem, it is vital to learn and draw conclusions from the success and failures of strategies that have already been experimented. Summarised in Part III below are examples of such strategies and a few lessons that we have drawn from them.

Part III. Some successful experiments taken from the IIEP project

The IIEP has documented a series of successful experiments aimed at improving transparency and accountability in education (financing, academic fraud, textbook management, school nutrition, participatory diagnosis and monitoring at local level using report cards, etc.). As other panellists made presentations on other examples like public expenditure tracking (see Reinikka & Smith, 2004) and formula funding (see Levacic & Downes, 2004; Baines, in press), we restrict this paper to detailing the following:

– teacher codes of conduct,
– reforming teacher management, and
– regulation of private tutoring.

(i) Teacher codes of conduct (Bangladesh, India, Nepal)

To curb malpractices, various countries have developed professional codes of conduct in the education sector. Their main objectives are: to enhance the commitments, dedication and efficiency of service among members of the profession by formulating a set of recognised ethical standards to which all members of the profession must adhere to; to provide self-disciplinary guidelines for members of the profession by creating norms of professional conduct; and to ensure the that the community supports and has confidence in the profession by emphasizing the social responsibilities of the profession towards the community.

A comparative study undertaken by the IIEP in Bangladesh, India and Nepal reveal that all the actors in the educational sector see codes as useful instruments. Although the surveys suffer from several limitations (sampling, small size, perception) the study suggests that codes have a positive and significant impact in attempts to improve the commitment, professional behaviour and performance of teachers and staff, and really contributes to the reduction of teacher absenteeism (see Table 3 below). In the state of Uttar Pradesh, in India, improvement in the quality of education is partly attributed to the effective implementation of the codes in some of the provinces.

Table 3. Impact of the codes on the teachers ethical and professional behaviour [3]

Ethical and professional behaviour of teachers	**Strongly agree**	**agree**	**disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
Improved teachers' behaviour	I, B	India, Bangladesh	L	L
Little or no abuses in the school admission system	India	I, B	Bangladesh	L
Improved transparency and fairness in human resource management - i.e. recruitment, promotion, appointments, transfers, etc …	L	I, B	India, Bangladesh	L
Improved commitment and performance of teachers and staff	I	India, Bangladesh	B	L
Decrease in teacher absenteeism	I	India, Bangladesh	L	L
Less malpractice in examinations	I	India, Bangladesh	L	L
Improvement in quality of education	I	India, B	Bangladesh	L
Less number of cases of mismanagement and embezzlement of school funds	L	India, Bangladesh	I	L
Improvement in human relations among staff in schools	I	India, Bangladesh	L	L
Decrease in private tuitions by teachers	India	I, B	Bangladesh	L

Source: van Nuland & Khandelwal, in press.

The significance of the impact of codes on teachers' behaviour is however sometimes questionable, due to limited access to them, difficulties in understanding them, absence of training for teachers, the dearth of knowledge about procedures for lodging complaints, the lack of capacity for their enforcement, pressure exerted by teacher unions, etc. Suggestions proposed for guarantying their credibility and impact include: simplifying and making them more relevant; building ownership by involving the teaching profession in their design and implementation; ensuring their wide dissemination; strengthening mechanisms for dealing with complaints; integrating issues on teachers' professional conduct into various pre-service and in-service teacher training courses.

[3] 'I' implies that fairly a large number of respondents in India 'strongly agree' or 'agree' or 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to particular statement listed in the table
'B' implies that fairly a large number of respondents in Bangladesh 'strongly agree' or 'agree' or 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to particular statement listed in the table
'L' implies that very small number of respondents in India and Bangladesh 'strongly agree' or 'agree' or 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to particular statement listed in the table
It is important to note that the scale "agree/disagree" is not automatically supported by changed behaviours; the scale provides a framework for expressing opinions in an ordinal way.

Following are some conclusions that we have drawn from this study on codes:

1. Adherence to ethical standards and to codes of conduct can greatly contribute to the establishment of a more favourable educational environment, thus directly influencing the quality of education.

2. The successful enforcement of these codes requires: (i) a clear definition of their aims (not limited to professional development); (ii) the wide dissemination of the codes; (iii) the establishment of both social or professional controls for their implementation; (iv) a strict sharing of responsibilities among the different stakeholders involved in their monitoring; and (v) the training of education personnel.

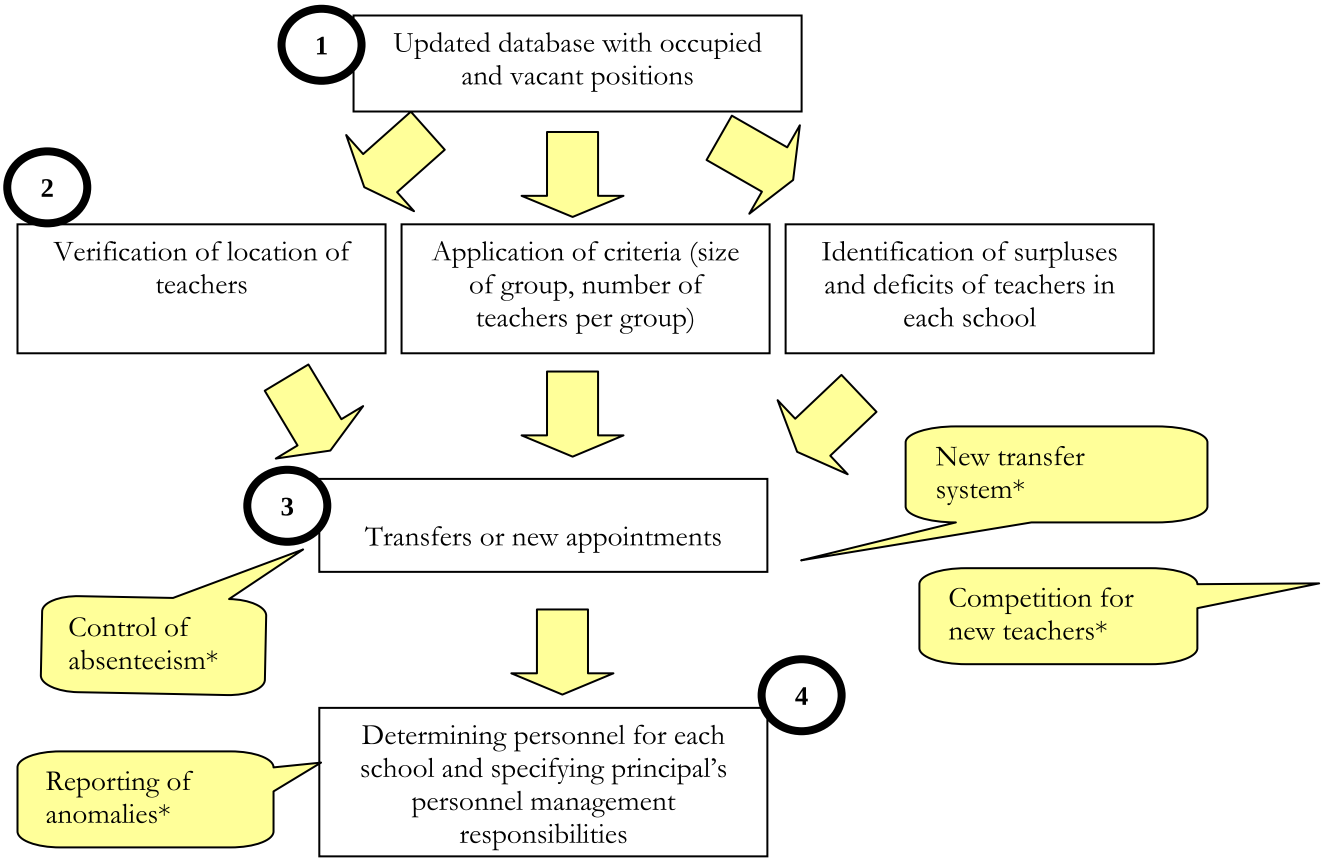
3. To ensure their credibility and ownership, teacher codes of conduct should be established through a participatory process involving the teaching profession. Minimum targets to achieve are the undertaking of sensitisation exercises, the sharing of information, capacity building, and efforts towards ‘mainstreaming participation’.

(ii) Reforming teacher management (Bogotá)

Between 1998 and 2003, school enrolment in the city of Bogotá increased by 37% (+240 000 pupils); however the resulting percentage increase in costs was about half, thanks to the design of a more transparent system of teacher management. The implementation of this new management system involved several steps, including: reforming management, introducing a new information system, cleaning and continuously updating the list of employed teachers, more transparent procedures for transferring teachers, correcting distortions in the payment of salaries, and better control over medical assurance and pension funds. Each of these steps are described in detail in the monograph prepared for the IIEP on this experience. As illustrated in Figure 2 below, the most important is probably the “cleaning up” of the list of employed teachers, which required:

– making an accurate estimate of teachers’ requirement by region and institution;
– checking the existing stock of teachers employed and eliminating double counting, ‘ghost teachers’, etc.;
– taking into account budgetary constraints in defining the maximum amount available for salaries;
– estimating the number of teachers to be deployed and /or re-deployed from one region to another and between schools (this implied an ‘iterative’ procedure involving each CADEL regarding teacher movements);
– involving as much as possible representatives of the teaching profession (unions); and
– using a formal administrative act to validate the final list of teachers eligible to receive salaries from the ministry of education.

Figure 2. Updating the list of teachers in Bogotá



Source: Peña & Rodriguez, 2004.

Thanks to this procedure, it was possible to serve 240 000 additional pupils enrolled between 1998 and 2003 – for 120 000 no additional recruitment of teachers was required, thanks to the redeployment of existing staff.

Here are some conclusions that we have drawn from our study on teacher management:

1. More transparency in teacher management entails the setting of clear and objective criteria and the design and implementation of well-defined and transparent procedures for the recruitment, posting and transfer of staff.

2. Automation of personnel functions works against the traditional scheme of favours, replacing it with fixed, widely publicized procedures, in which the only condition for being recruited, promoted or transferred is that the requirements made are met.

3. The involvement of trade unions, combined with easy access to information both from within the system and in response to requests from the citizens, together with a communication strategy to disseminate accurate and timely information to the public at large, can contribute to a transparent management system and help build an ethical culture among the various levels of the education administration.

(iii) Regulation of private tutoring (Taiwan)

In some countries, supplementary private tutoring has become a major industry, which consumes a considerable amount of parents' money and pupils' time. Moreover, in some cases, it has become a source of distortions, which adversely affects mainstream education (curriculum taught, schooling hours, behaviour of both students and teachers, etc.) and the goal of equality of opportunity in education. This is particularly obvious in countries where private tutoring is offered on a large scale at the end of secondary education to help students pass entrance exams for higher education (see the figures given in the Table 4 below). There, within the mechanisms for selection to higher education, private tutoring is a major area of corrupt practice. This is the case in many former soviet states, due to the direct interference of teachers/professors both in private tutoring and in selection committees for entrance to higher education and to the lack of reliability of criteria of access to higher education.

Table 4. Scope of private tutoring in various countries

Country	Scope
Brazil	In Rio de Janeiro, 50% of students receive tutoring
Cambodia	In 31% of primary schools, pupils receive tutoring. Among urban schools, the proportion is 60%. At post-primary-levels, the proportion was higher still
Egypt	65% of urban primary children and 53% of those in rural ones receive tutoring
Japan	24% of elementary pupils and 60% of secondary pupils attend *juku*. Another 4% receive tutoring at home. Nearly 70% of all students receive tutoring by the time they complete middle school
Malaysia	83% of students receive some form of tutoring by the time they reach upper secondary level
Mauritius	78% of Grade 6 pupils receive extra lessons
Morocco	53% of mainstream secondary science teachers provide after-school tutoring (78% in the most senior grade)
Tanzania	In a Dar es Salaam school, 70% of Grade 6 pupils receive tutoring
Zimbabwe	61% of Grade 6 pupils receive extra lessons. The regional range is from 36% to 74%

Source: Bray, 2003.

There are a wide variety of strategies that have been experimented in an attempt to address the adverse effects of private tutoring:

– Few countries, like South Korea, declared a formal prohibition of supplementary tutoring – but without success. Others, like Kenya, decided to forbid teachers to provide private tutoring to their own pupils – but often also without success, as no compensation was granted to teachers. Finally, some states prohibit private tutoring for specific grades (Mauritius, Hong Kong) or on certain days or at certain hours (Taiwan).

– Some countries regulate the use of schools premise for private tutoring. More globally, some states limit strictly the number of weekly hours and class size for private tutoring. Others impose strict standards on the facilities used: tutorial schools may be required to register in order to comply with specific requirements (space, safety, but also teacher qualifications, curriculum, teaching materials, fees and systems for assessing student performance). In few cases, like Singapore, assistance is given to some private centres offering tutoring to pupils from low-income groups.

For a better regulation of private tutoring canters, Taiwan, for instance, has opted for a better regulation of private tutoring centres by adopting the following measures: reducing the dominance of the examination system; forbidding academic 'buxiban' to enrol primary school students; banning secondary school students from having tutoring classes from Monday to Sunday noontime. In addition, adequate regulations for private centres have been established, with clear criteria for registration, and an association of tutoring schools functioning as a self-regulating body has been created.

A number of conclusions drawn from our work on private tutoring are as follows:

1. Actions to strengthen transparency of the private tutoring should include the setting of basic norms to regulate this sector, with indications on conditions for using school building, fees to be paid, services to expect, modes of delivery, the establishment and maintenance of a certification system for both training centres and tutors, etc.

2. Governments do not always address the consequences of private tutoring: some do not intervene and rely on market forces to provide regulation; others have taken direct actions to control and monitor (and at times also finance) it with some success. This is indeed the only way to ensure that private tutoring complement mainstream schooling and does not become its substitute.

3. Private tutoring can be successfully (more or less) self-regulated by the education profession, as the experience of Taiwan demonstrates (mechanisms for peer control); information to parents (public awareness) can constitute also a very useful tool.

PART IV. Concluding remarks

The IIEP is preparing a mid-review synthesis of its work in the area of "ethics and corruption in education". Within its framework, it has identified three major strategic axes for improving transparency and accountability in the management of the education sector:

– the creation and maintenance of regulatory systems,
– strengthening management capacities, and
– the encouragement of enhanced ownership of the management process.

These three axes can be deduced from the lessons drawn from the three examples presented above on teacher behaviour, teacher management and private tutoring, as it is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Regulation, management and ownership

Areas	Regulation	Management	Ownership
Teacher behaviour	Professional and ethical standards	• Training • Sensitization • Peer control	• Involvement of the profession (design, enforcement)
Teacher management	Clear and objective criteria	• Computerized/ automated process	• Involvement of trade unions • Information to the public
Private tutoring	Basic norms	• PT complementary to mainstream education • Financing • Peer control	• Involvement of the profession (enforcement) • Information to the public

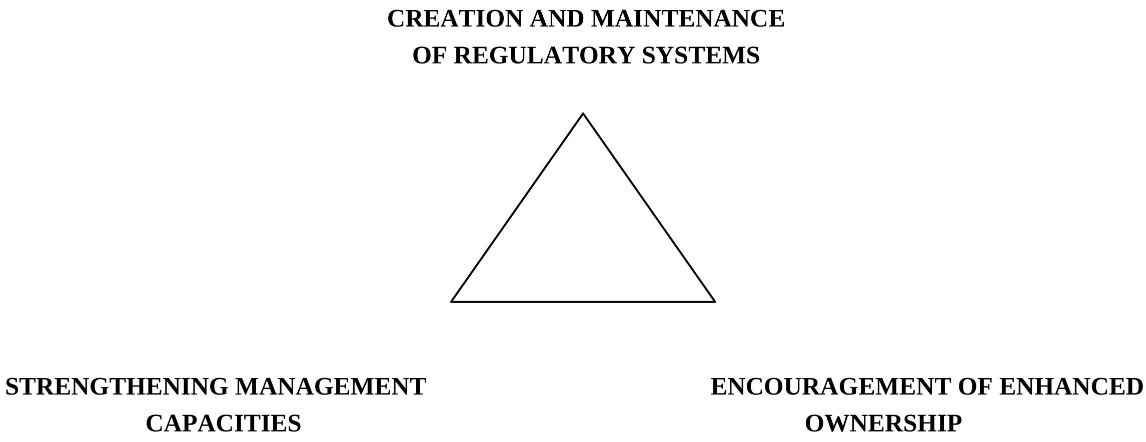
More broadly,

1. The creation and maintenance of *regulatory systems*: this involves adapting existing legal frameworks for them to focus more on corruption concerns (rewards/penalties), designing clear norms and criteria for procedures (with regard to fund allocation or procurement for instance), developing codes of practice for the education profession, and defining well-targeted measures, particularly for fund allocation.

2. Strengthening *management capacities* to ensure the enforcement of these regulatory systems: this involves increasing institutional capacities in various areas, particularly information systems, setting up effective control mechanisms against fraud as well as promoting ethical behaviour.

3. The encouragement of *enhanced ownership* of the management process: this involves developing decentralised and participatory mechanisms, increasing access to information, particularly with the use of ICTs, and empowering communities to help them exert stronger "social control".

Figure 3.



These components should not been considered separately, but as part of a broader integrated strategy aimed at fighting corruption in education. The success of this strategy in the long term is dependent on a number of factors, such as strong political will, strengthening professionals (status, salaries), the support of a free press to publicise wrongdoing, etc.

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