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DRAFT

IMPACT:

USAID'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN AFRICA

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABEL	Advancing Basic Education and Literacy
AED	Academy for Educational Development
API	Assessment of Program Impact
BQS	Basic Quality Standards
CRT	Criterion-Referenced Testing
DAE	Donors for African Education
DFA	Development Fund for Africa
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
EOPS	End of Project Status indicators
FQL	Fundamental Quality Level
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
IQC	Indeterminate Quantity Contract
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental Oganization
PA	Project Assistance
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

This report is the third of a series of papers on USAID programs supporting basic education in Africa produced by the Office of Analysis, Research, and Technical Support in the Africa Bureau. The first publication in the series is the ***Overview of A.I.D. Basic Education Programs in sub-Saharan Africa*** (January 1993), the second is ***Budgetary Impact of Non-Project Assistance in the Education Sector: A Review of Four Countries*** (May 1993). These reports document a major shift in USAID's approach to education development. Prior to 1989, most assistance to education was provided through projects - where USAID would design, appraise, implement, supervise and evaluate interventions. Projects provided specific inputs such as materials production, teacher training or the development of an educational management information system. The experience has been that project interventions alone seldom result in the policy reforms, resource allocations and administrative restructuring necessary to sustain systemic reform.

In 1988, following legislation establishing the Development Fund for Africa, the Africa Bureau developed a strategy of assistance to support education policy reform. The non-project assistance (NPA) approach disburses funds to governments in tranches against mutually established conditions which mark the implementation of key policy, institutional and budgetary reform. This approach strengthens collaboration with other major donors supporting common macro-economic and sectoral strategies. It also provides project-based technical assistance to build analytic and management capacities to support the objectives of increasing access and improving equity, quality and efficiency.

The first USAID basic education program which used NPA was in Mali, where of a total of $20 million, $3 million was designated as NPA. Today there are eleven basic education programs in Africa funded at $388 million, of which eight have NPA components. For these eight programs a total of $258 million is committed to NPA and $71.1 supports project activity. This represents a significant shift in both the nature of the assistance and the level of financing.

This rapid expansion into uncharted territory has been controversial. Some argue that NPA is not a sound approach to leveraging policy change; others argue that the NPA strategy may be a good one, but that the Agency is not equipped to manage such a radical departure from the normal ways of providing development assistance.

This report examines what has happened in the relatively brief time since the NPA basic education programs started. What impact have the programs had thus far on policy, on institutional strengthening, on schools, and on children?

We are examining those programs which have varying amounts of NPA (all have some degree of project assistance) as well as those which are entirely managed as projects. While NPA represents an entirely different development philosophy from the project approach, in reality the programs represent a spectrum from full projects to almost entirely NPA.

In preparing the report we are drawing on all available USAID program documentation, on field trips to each of the countries, and on the inputs of the USAID education professionals in the field, in the regional offices and in Washington. A conference on Basic Education co-hosted by USAID and the African Development Bank in Abidjan in February 1993 for some 80 participants from 15 countries provided many insights. Human Resources Development Officers and education staff in each Mission

will provide comments at a preliminary stage, and help to shape the final analytical section of the report at a workshop in Harare in January 1994.

In **Section 1**, a model of systemic educational reform is developed as a framework for the review of program designs, inputs and effects. The framework views conceptual, behavioral and material changes in the community, school and classrooms as the object of educational reform. The changes at policy and institutional levels are effective insofar as they produce changes at the school level – leading to greater learning by larger numbers of children.

In **Section 2**, the report examines the background, the principles and the design of the eleven basic education programs. The defining characteristics of the non-project assistance approach are described and placed in the context of USAID's historical experience. A survey of the preparation and design of the eight basic education programs in Africa examines the structure and nature of financing, the policy intents, the conditions, and the outcome objectives for the programs.

Sections 3 and 4 of the report examine the experience of the past three years in the implementation of the basic education programs. **Section 3** provides an analysis of the sources of information, our knowledge of educational systems in Africa, the requirements of our systems for monitoring and evaluation, and the implicit assumptions we make about educational change provides the context for examining the impacts that have occurred.

In **Section 4** we describe the impacts that the programs have had at the different levels of the education system: from people-level outcomes to the policy level. The report focusses on the changes taking place in the structure of resource allocations, institutional reforms, and strengthening of management capacity at central and regional levels. The report also establishes markers for monitoring changes in children's access, participation, attainment and achievement -- recognizing that it is premature in most cases to attribute recent changes in these indicators to USAID's current programs.

Section 5 analyzes USAID's experience in undertaking a new approach to supporting the education sector in Africa. It examines the relationship between the overall framework for educational system reform and the design of USAID's basic education programs -- both the explicit intents and the implied assumptions. It seeks to make a mid-course review, posing the following questions:

- Is the NPA model itself sound as an approach to developing basic education?
- Is USAID's application of the model effective in terms of design, management and evaluation?
- What are the principle lessons learned at this time?
- Where does USAID go from here? What guidelines are needed?

SECTION 1: A FRAMEWORK OF BASIC EDUCATION REFORM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this framework is to assist USAID to analyze the design, interventions, impacts and outcomes of its education programs. Impacts refer to the observable changes within the education system -- at policy, institutional, program, school and classroom levels. Outcomes refer to long-term, sustained changes in the access, participation and learning of children.

The general objective for educational reform in countries where USAID supports basic education is to increase the number of children entering and completing primary school and to improve the quality of their learning in ways that are efficient and sustainable. This objective has four dimensions, not mutually exclusive, to which each country, and each USAID program, give varying emphasis, depending on the country's level of development and other contextual factors. These are:

- **To increase access to and participation in basic education.** Participation means that children not only enter school at the first grade, but remain throughout the basic education cycle.

- **To increase equity of access, participation, and quality of schooling.** Equity refers to equal educational opportunity for girls, rural and urban children, and those of different ethnic, cultural, religious and/or linguistic backgrounds.

- **To increase the quality of schooling.** Quality refers to inputs (staffing, facilities, materials, training); processes (leadership, management, teaching, evaluation); and outcomes (children's attainment and learning). The precise objectives for improving educational quality vary for different social contexts, and are best defined by local stakeholders (Adams, 1993).

- **To increase efficiency**. Efficiency means getting maximum results from a given level of effort and resources expended. Management efficiency is focussed on strengthening institutional effectiveness; internal efficiency is concerned with school outcome and aims at having low wastage and good academic achievement at sustainable levels of expenditure (Eggers-Pierola et al, 1992); external efficiency is concerned with the relation between the costs of education and its contribution to social and economic well-being including population growth, health and nutrition, productive activity, economic well-being, social participation and the environment.

The context and processes which lead to significant and sustained change on these dimensions are enormously complex. The framework presented here highlights the major elements and processes that are involved in systemic and enduring educational reform.

The importance of this effort is underscored by the experience that education reform represents "the triumph of hope over experience" (in the words of Samuel Johnson). Will our current efforts to focus on policy reform avoid the fate of our previous efforts in supporting educational development? The answer depends in part on whether we have a realistic view of what to expect, how we move from one stage to the next, and whether we can articulate the language we use to clarify a long-term vision and short-term victories along the way. The development of a common conceptual picture helps both USAID and governments to share a framework for negotiation.

The framework is based on a wide body of literature drawing from the analysis of domestic and international experience in educational change -- especially the experience of USAID, the World Bank and UNESCO. It begins with the political, economic and cultural conditions (and the dynamic changes in those conditions) within which the education system operates, and moves to the governmental, ministerial and local institutions, and to the community, school and classroom, and finally to the child. The overview of the elements of the education system is represented in Figure 1 (see next page).

Figure 1 presents a structured overview of the organizational hierarchy of educational systems within the economic, political, culttural and ideological context. Although this overview does not present an ideal model, it portrays the kind of hierarchy that frequently exists which places heavy emphasis on highly centralized, top-down structures.

A second part of the framework describes the phases of reform. Systemic change is seldom a simple linear process and typically operates at multiple levels simultaneously. The framework of the phases of reform is concerned with the relationship between change at one level and the impact on another. For example, how changes in the level of financing for basic education impact on programs for teacher training, or how changes in Ministry of Education (MOE) in-service training programs affect teacher classroom behavior.

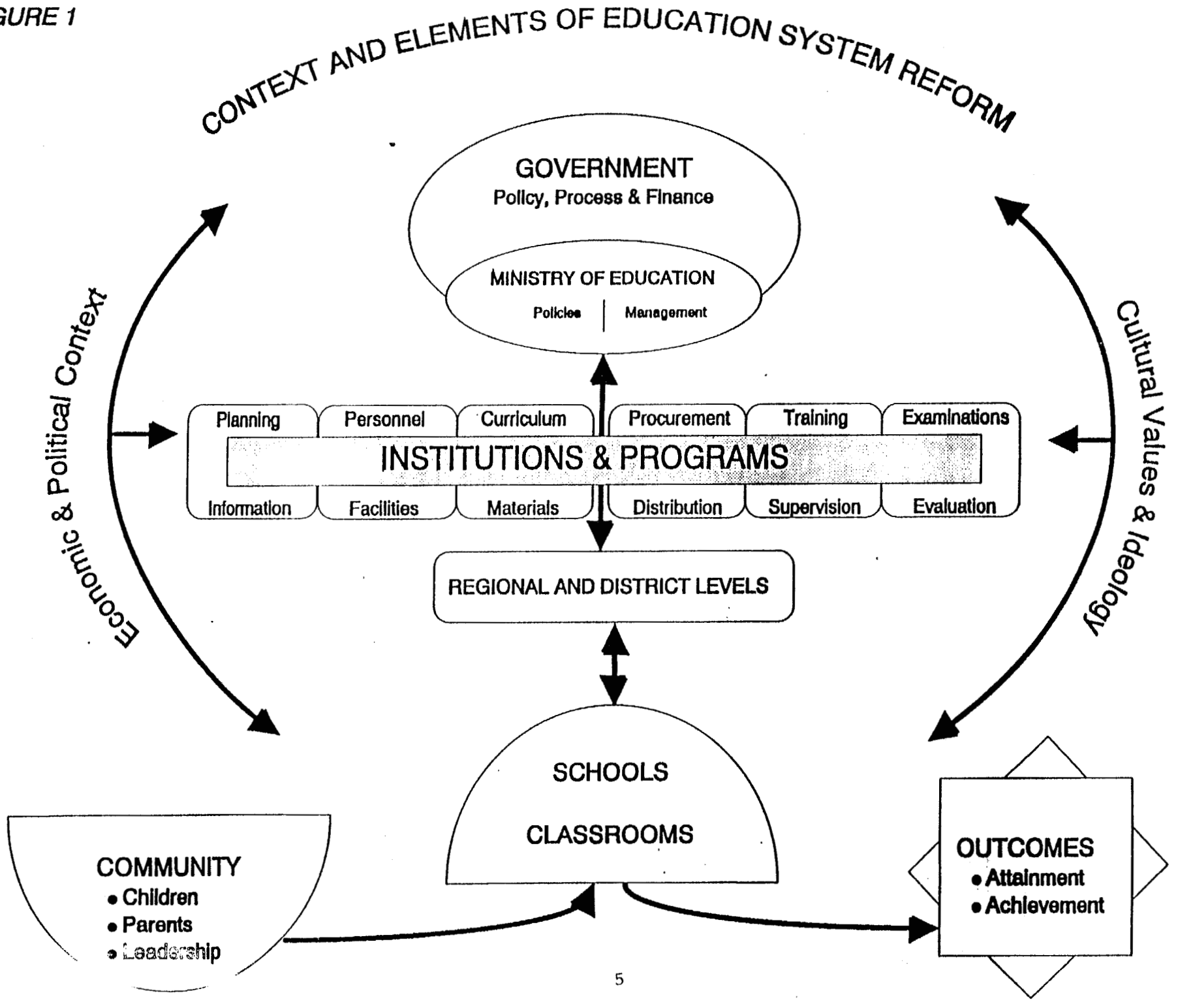
Two conditions for sustainable education reform are so critical that they should be considered in analyzing any element or phase. The first is that the reform must be driven by widespread support for change, with political and technical consensus about a vision of how things will improve. The second condition is that leadership for this must exist or be developed at the different levels of the system, from the decision-makers in government, in the ministry departments, in the regions and districts and in the schools.

1.2 THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The education system is embedded in the larger society and education reform is critically dependent on macro socio-economic conditions. These conditions include the political factors of democratic governance and participation; the freedom of association and the press; the record of human rights; the openness and transparency of government policies and programs; the level of actual and perceived government integrity or corruption; and the environment for public participation in policy debate. One must analyze these factors, as well as the other elements of the framework, both in terms of current status, in relation to movements elsewhere in the region and the world, and in relation to prior trends and anticipated developments (UNDP, 1993). It is not only an absolute, external judgement on these issues that is important, but the values and perceptions of those within the society, which define the potential for sustainable reform.

A key element of the context for reform is the influence and activity of the international community and donor agencies. Does the country have a stabilization agreement with the International Monetary Fund and/or a structural adjustment agreement with the World Bank? What is the activity of the major multilateral and bilateral donors? Is there a regular donor roundtable? Are there mechanisms for donor collaboration and co-financing of assistance? In Africa, the framework of international institutional and donor activity in many cases plays a defining role in establishing the parameters for human resource development policies and education sector reform (DAE, 1993).

FIGURE 1


CONTEXT AND ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM REFORM
GOVERNMENT
Policy, Process & Finance
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Policies
Management
Economic & Political Context
Cultural Values & Ideology
Planning
Personnel
Curriculum
Procurement
Training
Examinations
INSTITUTIONS & PROGRAMS
Information
Facilities
Materials
Distribution
Supervision
Evaluation
REGIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS
SCHOOLS
CLASSROOMS
COMMUNITY
• Children
• Parents
• Leadership
OUTCOMES
• Attainment
• Achievement

Economic factors that affect the possibilities of reform begin with the direction of economic trends: where the economy is in decline it is almost certain that the education system cannot sustain a large-scale reform (although individual schools and institutions may be reformed). The liberalization of economies and the shift away from government-run industry and subsidies to the private sector, generally promote education reform. This is so because market-led economic growth helps to direct curriculum and learning to productive ends (since graduates tend to be employed on the basis of actual competence rather than certificates) (Kusterer, 1993). With an economy in decline there is usually increasing unemployment, which undermines confidence in the value of education. Economic growth also facilitates putting additional resources into education, which is often necessary at the start of a reform process, if only to rehabilitate a neglected infrastructure. An important element of any major educational reform is a change in the activities and behaviors of teachers and education staff (headmasters, supervisors, administrators). If their financial remuneration is declining in real terms, relative to either past levels or in relation to others in the society, it is virtually impossible to inspire the level of commitment necessary to initiate and sustain these changes.

Cultural values, ideology, and practice are extremely important in defining the possibility and character of reform. "Culture" here is not simply indigenous ethnic traditions, but also institutional and schooling culture. Within the classroom, for example, the role, the power, the behavior of the teacher are shaped more by the enduring culture of the school than by the pedagogic principles taught at teacher training or in-service courses. An examination of successful education reform experience shows that it transforms the culture of the classroom, the school and the office.[1] It moves from a static tradition and rule-bound environment to one which is characterized by an exchange of ideas, by experimental inquiry, and by social learning.

1.3 GOVERNMENT POLICIES, PROCESSES AND FINANCING

Education policies, institutional processes and financing are embedded within general government functioning. The processes of planning, budgeting, personnel policies and practices are governed not by the sectoral ministries, but by more politically central institutions (Cabinet, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, the Office of the President, the Civil Service Commission, etc.). Reforms relate to shifts in and/or from: public to private management; criteria for evaluating and rewarding personnel, and providing incentives for recognized talent; allocating more resources to education, and within education to basic education and disadvantaged subgroups. These are not policies that a Ministry of Education can unilaterally articulate and implement. Policy reform in basic education requires from national leaders an appreciation of the central role that human resources play in the country's development, and the strategic importance of basic education within the area of human resources (Crouch, 1993).

The analysis of education program strategies, including budgets and organization, is an important aspect of the process of policy dialogue. This process is often supported by the technical analysis provided by an education sector assessment (IEES, 1986). The dialogue and assessment have as their aim putting into place the details of an effective reform policy.

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[1] *See Carron (1993) and Evans (1993).*

One area which requires a central government commitment to education sector reform is the selection, appointment and support of those in leadership positions. Too often frequent transfers of ministers, permanent secretaries, and even chief education officers undermine and distort reform initiatives. It was reported at the recent meeting of Education For All forum members in India that 75 percent of the ministers who signed the Jomtien Declaration in 1990 are no longer in post.

1.4 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: THE LEADERSHIP OF EDUCATION REFORM

The headquarters of the Ministry of Education is where the central vision and strategy for education reform should be articulated and communicated. The degree to which those within the system, and not just donors, are clear about the reform policy is a test of its efficacy. While the policy environment and central government provide the context for educational reform, the reform needs the leadership of key actors within the Ministry itself.[2] Characteristics of those who elaborate and implement reform include: political courage, power, integrity and a technical understanding of the content and management of reform. In addition to the key role of continuing central leadership, a number of features characterize an effective ministry reform policy:

- it is based on thorough knowledge and analysis of the sector;
- it embodies contemporary theory and knowledge of the learning process;
- it is consistent with and supported by macro-economic and government human resource development policies and financial support for basic education;
- it reflects social consensus, and seeks participation of those who will be affected by and those who will implement the reforms (especially teachers);
- it is communicated to stakeholders and the public using various channels, languages and forums;

Ministries of Education have not been notably successful as managers of reform. The bureaucratic culture -- pervasive across all ministries -- rewards those who maintain an existing order, not those who are innovators (Craig, 1990). The pressure for reform, and the leadership and drive to realize change, are essential. The question is how to develop an organizational climate that rewards key players for effectively managing and sustaining reforms. This is not an absolute condition, but a dynamic one: Are things getting better or are they deteriorating? If the latter, it is arguable that external assistance is at best harmless, at worst counterproductive.

Successful reform is marked by top leadership of the Ministry directly speaking to teachers, communities, supervisors, administrators and professional forums, and getting out into the field and using radio, newspapers and other media to persuasively and consistently present the vision of reform and the policies of change.[3] This advocacy in the public eye is, however, viewed by insiders as simply political rhetoric if it is not matched by the hard, inside, bureaucratic decisions on key staff and resource allocations.

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[2] *See Craig (1990), Havelock and Huberman (1977), and UNESCO (undated).*

[3] *See Anderson (1993) and Hallak (1992).*

1.5 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING/PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A clear manifestation of systemic reform is an increasing ministry capacity to translate broad policy intents into strategies, plans, programs, budgets, procurement and distribution of goods and services, accounting, supervision, and systems for monitoring and learning. Traditionally, these functions have supported a system of expansion and maintenance. They inevitably need to be reoriented to support the process of reform. As an example, ministry budgetary lines generally do not itemize the amount spent on instructional materials for primary schools, although the provision of textbooks and materials to all pupils is a recurring reform target. The process of institutional reform must be linked to the specific program priorities and strategies of the reform.

One key consideration in this process is the match between the management requirements of a program and institutional capacity. Frequently program objectives exceed management capacity, leading to inefficiency, frustration and cynicism (Rondinelli, 1990). An important strategy is to allow for the process of staff development and learning in the implementation of a reform program, rather than assuming that somehow the organization can immediately implement a new program on a large scale (Senge, 1990). One of the strongest arguments for a piloting phase for a reform is to allow the staff at all levels to learn from, contribute to, and grow in capacity.

Another constraint on institutional reform relates to the nature of education as a "loosely coupled" system. A loosely coupled system does not respond to a set of inputs in a predictable way. Attempts to develop a general production function which relates inputs to learning outcomes have been frustrated by system complexity and the importance of local contexts (Monk, 1992). Centralized attempts to reform by simply providing more material inputs and training are likely to fail as long as Ministries do not recognize that schools are largely self-contained, autonomous social systems and that, within schools, classrooms further insulate the learning process from outside influence.[4]
A useful conception of the role of central planning and policy is that it creates the conditions, sets standards, and provides the resources for school level reform. Within those conditions, supervision, support, responsibility and incentives can be used to encourage quality school leadership and quality teaching (Windham, 1982). But attempts to directly manage "quality" from central or regional levels tend to be counterproductive. For example, quality teaching cannot be mandated: it finally resides in the teacher's character, competence, and deep knowledge of the students.

In a pivotal review of literature on improving primary education in developing countries prepared for the World Conference on Education for All (Lockheed, 1991), six key program areas were identified:

1) **Improving school management**

- Developing criteria for effective schools,
- Supporting in-service work with school heads and teachers to implement those criteria.

2) **Improving the curriculum**

- Developing an appropriate scope and sequence of instruction,
- Attending to language and skill levels and the grading of materials,
- Improving the relevance and presentation of topics,
- Building in methods of pupil assessment and designing examinations consistent with instructional objectives,

[4] *See Heneveld (1993), Hallak (1992), Havelock (1973), and Huberman (1984).*

- Providing teacher's guides and supplementary materials.

3) **Increasing learning materials**

- Increasing the number, quality and distribution of textbooks, teachers guides, and appropriate supplementary learning materials.

4) **Increasing instructional time**

- Setting and maintaining standards for instructional/learning time for each child. This must take into account multiple grade levels per class, double shifting, and class size.
- Preparing teachers with the knowledge, skills and supervision to provide learning time for each pupil.

5) **Improving teaching**

- Effective teachers have knowledge of subject matter, language achievement, and pedagogic skills including: promoting active student participation, providing for student practice, monitoring and evaluation of student work, and providing feedback.
- Policies that support this include on-going in-service teacher training and professional development, including distance education and on-going supervision at school level.
- Other means of improving teaching include using interactive radio and programmed instructional materials.

6) **Increasing the learning capacity/readiness of students**

- Providing children with nutritional supplements where needed (iodine, iron and Vitamin A),
- Developing pre-school learning activities,
- Working with parents and the community to support student learning.

These six program areas for improving education are not exhaustive as a guide to achieving educational reform, although they do provide an excellent guide for improving school quality (Also see NREL, 1990). In countries and regions where access to primary schooling is still very low, the design and construction of appropriate school facilities and furnishing may be an essential element of educational improvement.

Program responsibilities can be organized at central, regional, district, and at school/community levels. The location of powers and responsibilities over resources and personnel is a sensitive policy issue. It also relates to the capacity of national, regional, and district offices. Decentralization will not necessarily improve education services unless those at the lower level have the capacity, the guidance, the resources and the incentives to manage reform.[5] These conditions are rare in Africa. Yet decentralization is a policy direction in which many countries, with external support, are moving.

[5] *See Williams (1993) and Winkler (1993).*

1.6 FACTORS RELATED TO SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

As a necessary condition of effectiveness, a school requires administrative and teaching staff, policy guidance, a curriculum framework, instructional materials, supervision and on-going staff development training and community support. But all of this is not sufficient for an effective school, although it is a good start. The essence of systemic educational reform is that the school provides an environment for learning, where children are engaged with teachers in developing their competencies and learning about themselves and the world around them. Elements that characterize an effective school are listed below:[6]

School climate
- high expectations of students
- positive teacher attitudes, relationships
- order and discipline
- organized curriculum and schedule
- rewards and incentives

School management
- effective leadership
- capable, committed teachers
- professional support, supervision, communication
- available space, supplies, equipment, use of local resources
- school/community support, interaction

Teaching/Learning process
- classroom organization and use of materials
- time of pupils on appropriate learning activities
- variety of teaching methods, groups, activities
- frequent student assignments, assessment and feedback

One of the important characteristics of an effective school is that the school staff, sometimes with the active participation of the students, plays a role in prioritizing, defining and putting into practice those elements which characterize their concept of school quality.[7] This is one of the strategic aims of a systemic reform.

1.6.1 Community and Parental Factors

Most reform efforts attempt to gain greater involvement of the community in school financing and governance. Six factors are identified here as important contributions from the community to school effectiveness:[8]

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[6] *There is an enormous body of research identifying elements related to school effectiveness. Heneveld (1993) provides a good review relevant to the African context. NREL (1990) cites up to 800 studies - most of which are within the USA in developing its characteristics of effective schools and classrooms. Carron's (1993) study examines more than 200 schools in four developing countries.*

[7] *A quotation from Evans (1993) highlights this: "No one should expect teachers to embrace ideas that they didn't develop, that they generally oppose, that have previously failed, and that reach them as competing sets of unrealistic and unfair demands."*

[8] *See Levinger (1992) and Shaeffer (1992).*

- The health and learning readiness of eligible children;
- Financial and material support to the school, both in terms of community support for school facilities, equipment and maintenance, and in terms of school fees;
- The encouragement of children to attend school, and monitoring children's daily attendance;
- The frequent communication between school staff and parents to encourage home support for a child's school work and activities;
- The community role in school governance, including oversight of school conditions, and school staff behavior;
- Assistance of community members and parents, on a voluntary basis, with school activities and instruction.

1.7 OUTCOMES

Outcomes of student attainment and achievement are the result of systemic reform: from the governmental level, through the ministry, its departments and programs, through the regions and districts, and the community, school and classroom levels. When all of these levels are "reformed" the result is improved outcomes in student access, participation and learning achievement. By participation is meant that students attend school regularly, do not drop out before completion of the basic education cycle, and that they do not repeat grades. Achievement encompasses both the acquisition of the knowledge and competencies of the basic education cycle (this includes at the very least functional literacy and numeracy), the capacity for learning, and a general knowledge of and curiosity about their world. It also includes social aspects such as the confidence and skills to participate in group activities, team sports and civic activities.

These attributes and achievements can lead to further education and training, to productive activity and employment, to behavior and actions that contribute to individual and social well-being within the family (influencing family size, health, and nurturing), the community, and the larger society. These outcomes from an education system reform are clearly long-term effects, taking a generation or more to be realized.

1.8 THE PHASES OF REFORM

Significant reform of social services is not a routine activity in any country, and certainly not in African states. The preconditions for such reform -- an absence of civil conflict or repression, economic strength and the political leadership for change -- are rare. African countries over the past twenty years have experienced a large measure of internal political upheaval, economic decline, corruption and state repression which have constrained attempts to introduce reform.

When conditions are favorable, education reform may follow a variety of paths, seldom working out as a logical progression from one phase to the next. An important strategic question is where is the best starting point(s) for leveraging systemic change. Reform may start with a small cluster of schools, or at a program or regional level, and be generalized from that experience to become system policy. This strategy has the advantage that the system learns as the reform expands. It has occasionally led

to sustained, systemic reform.[9] If it is embraced as a strategy, then the means by which it will generalize to the entire system is a central strategic issue.

A more common process leading to sustainable, systemic change begins with a deliberate attempt by the government to initiate improvements in education. It is this model of the process of reform that is most often supported by USAID programs and is described here (see Figure 2 on next page).

The phases of this reform process are:

- *policy dialogue;*
- *formal policy marketing;*
- *planning, financing and organizing;*
- *program and institutional development; and*
- *school level reform.*

1.8.1 Policy Dialogue

Conditions that characterize successful policy dialogue include:[10]

- The broad support of leadership in government and private sector for the main lines that change should follow;
- The active participation of major interest groups (e.g., the teachers' union, the Ministry of Finance, parent or community organizations, non-governmental organizations, business community, etc.);
- A sector analysis based on reliable data, insightful evaluation and feasible proposals for action;
- Support and assistance from donor agencies; and
- Time to carry out the analysis and engage stakeholders in negotiating options for action.

The policy dialogue process is a time-consuming activity that raises consciousness and engages leaders and stakeholders (including donors who will help in financing the reform) in serious negotiations leading to consensus on strategic issues. It is the experience of numerous countries that, with the time pressure donor agencies apply in committing funds to a "reform," the policy dialogue phase is often truncated, and sometimes omitted altogether.[11]

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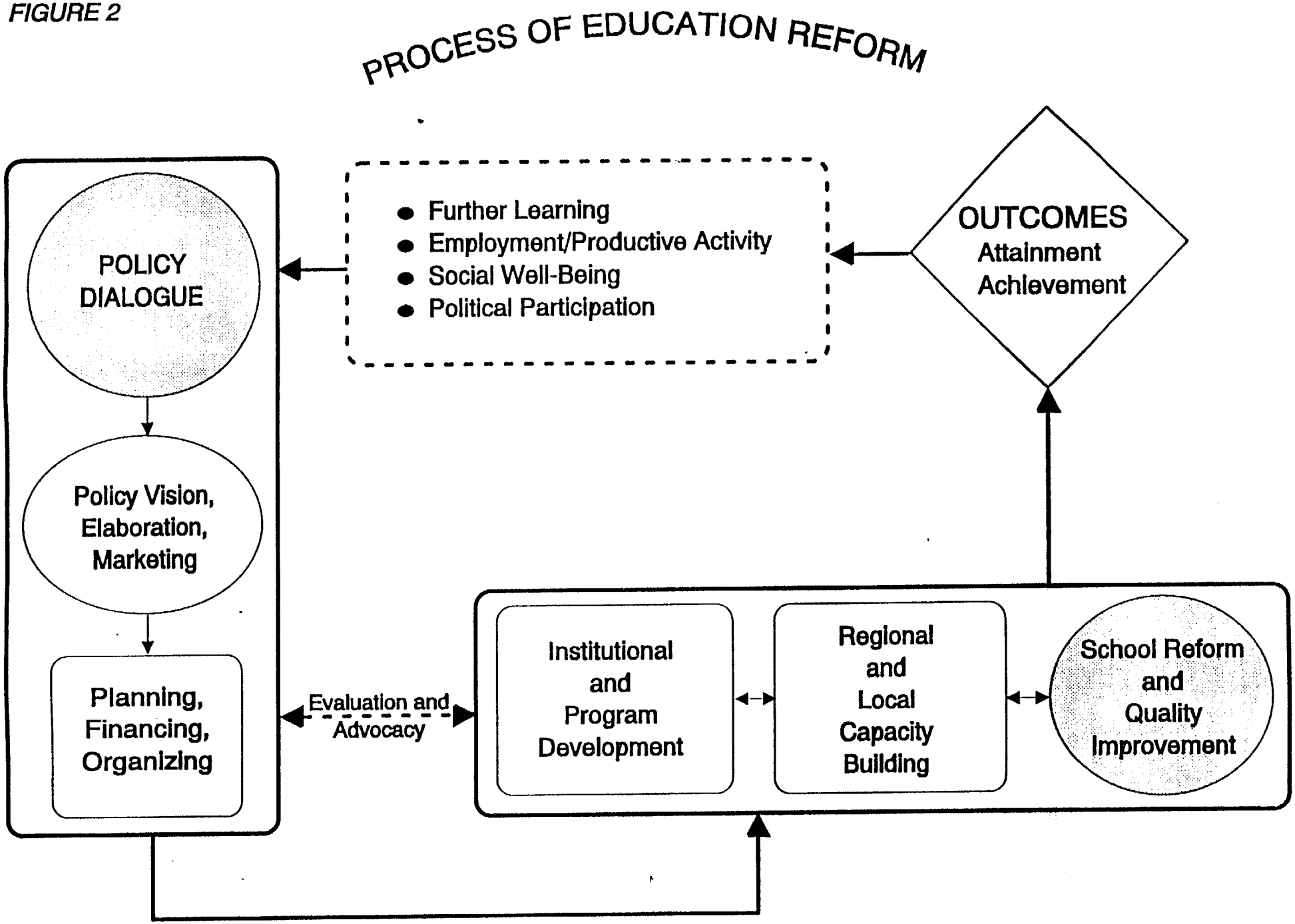
[9] *For example, the case of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), described in Ahmed (1993), or Escuela Neuva in Columbia in Schiefelbein (1992).*

[10] *See Crouch (1993), Fuller and Habte (1991) and Research Triangle Institute (1991).*

[11] *See Craig (1990) and Havelock and Huberman (1977).*

FIGURE 2



● Shaded areas are starting points for the process of education reform.

1.8.2 Policy Vision Formalized, Elaborated, Marketed

Following policy dialogue, during which the agreements on strategic options are formed, the policy recommendations are vetted officially within government. If successfully reviewed by the appropriate bodies (Cabinet, the President's office, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, etc.), a formal statement of the policy is made by the government. This statement may take many forms, such as an official government report, a cabinet "White Paper," a legislative act, a presidential decree, or embodiment within the national plan.

Whatever form the official policy statement takes, a critically important stage in policy reform is an explicit presentation of the reform to the those within the system (teachers and supervisors) and the public. This involves both the elaboration of the reform and the marketing of its principles (Crouch, 1993). The introduction of the reform policies by national leadership in the media and through other forums, translated into appropriate languages, is a vital aspect of effective implementation.

1.8.3 Planning, Financing and Organizing

In order to create change, the policy reform must be incorporated into specific plans of action. These plans will be costed, and the financing sought both domestically and through international donors. Countries may seek to have a donor sector roundtable approach to obtain financial support for the plan, following the participation of key donors in the policy dialogue. The time period on this process will reflect the formal procedures various donor agencies require to design and commit to a program of support.

Any major reform will require either new organizational units, or the reorganization of the functions of existing units. Although the process of institutional development will be a continuing one, getting the key organizational units in place, with appropriate leadership, is a signal that the reform is entering the implementation phase. The country's selection and appointment of appropriate leaders and staff to the implementing offices is an important indicator of its capacity to implement reform policies.

1.8.4 Institutional and Program Development

The process of the reform of institutions and programs involves reorganization, building skills through staff development and training, and management. Institutional reform implies building a learning environment within the ministry and at regional/district levels. Operations that are developed include: planning, accounting, curriculum development, materials development and distribution, examinations and testing, teacher training, and supervision. The ministry cannot do everything at once, yet ultimately all of these functions must be performed. Change in one area implies change in another, and it is important not to neglect a systemic perspective simply because a specific program area is given priority. A characteristic of sustained reform is focussing and planning on feasible organizational tasks (Rondinelli et al.).

Programs of change often seriously underestimate the time required for design and implementation. For example, a curriculum change for primary school, if it covers all grades, will seldom be possible in less than a five to seven year period, with a more realistic estimate of ten years. This is because the cycle of organizational and staff development, curriculum and materials design, piloting, trial testing,

teacher in-service training, supervision and follow-through at all grade levels cannot be collapsed without serious jeopardy to quality.

1.8.5 School Reform and Quality Improvements

The phase of a reform that is ultimately the most important is reform at the school level. While inputs can be provided, and guidance given from the central or regional offices, effective school change is actually a cultural transformation that cannot be forced. The body of research and experience documenting effective school level reform is predominantly from the West.[12] Fullan (1989) summarizes the following dimensions in the process of school change:

- *Ongoing in-service* Since school reform means learning how to do things in new ways, it requires on-going professional development. Once-only workshops without follow-up and support have little impact. Innovations live or die by the amount and quality of assistance that teachers receive (Huberman and Miles, 1984).

- *School-level leadership* The research evidence on the critical role of the headmaster in facilitating or inhibiting school change is compelling. The headmaster engages staff through: in-service work, consultation on instruction, providing time for planning, holding teachers accountable, encouraging initiative and experimentation, providing incentives and recognition for good work.

- *Direction, commitment and support from district level administrators and supervisors*

- *A clear process for initiating and carrying through plans*

- *Monitoring and problem solving* The monitoring of change begins with the classroom and is based on the children's response and learning. Teachers begin to frankly discuss problems and progress with each other first through in-service workshops and later as a regular part of their work. This staff development process, supported by data on children's attendance and learning, forms the basis of ongoing reform strategies communicated and supported at the district and higher levels.

1.8.6 Outcomes

Only with authentic reform at the school level will children benefit from educational policy changes. That will result in a higher number and proportion of children entering school, completing the basic cycle on time, and gaining the competencies and knowledge deemed important. These results -- given the time frame for policy dialogue, planning, financing and organizing, program and institutional development at national, regional, local and school levels -- are long term; up to ten years if the reform goes well. And yet, if the strategy for reform works so that school reform takes place while the policy dialogue is occurring, there can be some gain on the time for some changes to be felt. But coherent, systemic change is not possible in the short term.

An even longer timeframe is necessary in order to witness the impact that the improved operations of the system and schools have on society in general. School leavers from basic education will: go on to

[12] *See Huberman (1984), Havelock (1973) and Evans (1993).*

further education and training; will start families; and, if our research is correct, will do a better job of spacing and nurturing their children; will enter into more productive activity or employment; and will effectively participate in social and political activities within their communities. These results, on a systemic scale, require at least a generation to track; a timeframe beyond the programming horizon of most governments and donors.

SECTION 2: USAID'S APPLICATION OF THE BASIC EDUCATION REFORM FRAMEWORK

The last five years have witnessed a major shift in USAID's approach to supporting basic education in Africa; both in terms of an increase in funding for education and in the modality of assistance. This section lays out some of the factors that led to this change in Agency policy, the direction of that change, and the way in which it is manifested in current USAID education operations.

2.1 NON-PROJECT ASSISTANCE, EMERGENCE OF AN APPROACH

The stabilizing effects of structural adjustment in the late 1980s have helped establish a context for renewed development of formal education and have set the stage for redefining the direction of that development. For example, in countries such as Ghana and Uganda, economic recovery and political stability are enabling those governments to effectively address the rehabilitation of their education systems. With coordinated donor support most education systems in Africa are entering their own period of adjustment and reform, which includes:

- consolidation of resources to establish minimal levels of quality schooling;
- control of the expansion of enrollments and new schools to ensure the financing of a minimum standard of quality in existing institutions;
- development of more rational budgets and decentralized budgets that can be used to leverage an increased share of government spending; and
- improvements in administrative systems that should lead to better management of resources.

USAID's non-project assistance (NPA) programs in education are designed to support these kinds of sectoral reforms.

The use of NPA as an USAID granting mechanism is not new. Economic Support Fund balance of payments support and commodity import programs are forms of NPA. However, the last five years have seen a rise in the importance of NPA as a tool for sectoral assistance, especially in African education. Prior to 1988, most assistance to education was provided through projects which USAID would design, appraise, implement, supervise and evaluate, albeit with as much government participation as could be urged. It became increasingly apparent that project inputs had limited impact and were not sustained when -- as was often the case -- the failure of resource allocation policies and institutional weaknesses prevented effective long-term change. The emergence of NPA in the education sector, with eight programs approved between 1989 and 1992, is partly a response to those lessons, and partly due to the convergence of four factors that have defined the strategy of USAID itself.

Adjustment: The defining theme of development strategy in Africa during the 1980s was structural adjustment. The central principle of structural adjustment is that macro-economic policy and government institutional capacity define the context within which development does or does not take place, and that it is possible to adjust this context to make it more conducive to economic progress. Over the past few years, this strategy has moved from being applied to macro-economic and central government policies to sectoral level policies as well.

Development Fund for Africa (DFA): In 1987 the U.S. Congress, concerned about the failure of development in Africa, determined to provide a new assistance instrument to USAID. The DFA was the tangible result of a new compact between USAID and Congress on an approach to development in

Africa. The DFA embraces five management principles to guide Agency budgeting, design and implementation of projects and programs. These include:[13]

- concentrating efforts in those countries in which economic and political reform provide a favorable policy climate and, within those countries, focussing on two or three strategic areas;
- working to improve public sector institutions as the most effective means to create an environment conducive to development;
- encouraging the participation of providers and clients by working at all levels of systems;
- coordinating and cooperating with other donors through mechanisms such as the Special Program of Assistance (SPA) or Donors to African Education (DAE); and
- striving to ensure financial, institutional and environmental sustainability.

Special Program of Assistance (SPA): Within the context of adjustment, the DFA made it possible for USAID to have a secure source of financing to support systemic, policy and institutional changes in an effort to ensure the greatest and most sustainable "people-level" impact (i.e., more children getting into school and getting a better education). The development of the Special Program of Assistance (SPA) followed the donor community's commitment to supporting structural adjustment through coordinated contributions to bridging the "financing gap' faced by most countries during periods of adjustment.

The Education Earmark: Starting in 1988, in response to persistently low indicators of educational development and in recognition of the centrality of human resource development as the foundation for economic and social development, Congress established within the foreign assistance appropriations a set aside for education. The emergence of NPA as a dominant mode of assistance to African education was driven by this earmark. Not only were annual absolute dollar amounts to be spent on education defined, Congress also mandated that fifty percent of the earmark be committed to basic education and that USAID launch new programs in at least five countries where the Agency did not already have a program.

Working according to the principles defined by the DFA, and within the context of adjustment and the SPA, the Agency has in fact developed eight new NPA education programs in Africa since 1988.[14] The education earmark and the DFA generated pressure within USAID to obligate large sums of money on an annual basis. In most African countries, the education sector consumes the greatest share of the government budget. NPA programs in education, which provide general budgetary support (consistent with the theme of the Special Program of Assistance) and lend themselves to substantial annual obligations, were therefore believed to be a relatively easy means of committing DFA funds toward meeting the education earmark.

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[13] *"Fresh Start in Africa", USAID, Washington, D.C., Dec. 1992.*

[14] *The first education sector NPA program was in fact approved in 1983 in Zimbabwe. The Basic Education and Skills Training (BEST) Sector Assistance Program consisted of a Commodity Import Program (CIP) of US$29 million and US$15.9 million in technical assistance and project-related equipment. The CIP-generated local currency was used to finance some 20 projects in the education sector in support of government efforts to expand and reform its education system.*

2.2 NON-PROJECT ASSISTANCE IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The design of the eight NPA programs in education implemented since the creation of the DFA has been governed by prior experiences and evaluations of education projects, combined with new thinking about how to enhance sustainable education system reform. In seven of eleven countries where USAID has an education program in Africa, support to basic education is provided primarily through non-project assistance. In keeping with the management principles of the DFA, all of these programs have focussed on broad systemic policy and institutional changes. The objective of the programs is to promote increased, equitable access to better quality basic primary schooling. Within that broad objective, each country's particular situation shapes the determination of the specific policy conditions for financial disbursements. While country programs vary in their content and structure, they all contain certain design elements that are the defining themes of the NPA approach. There are six such elements in education NPA programs.

2.2.1 NPA Themes

Primary among the defining themes is that USAID financing is granted to government **in support of a national program of education sector reform.** *NPA is not intended to create a reform, rather to support one that has been developed and articulated by the government.* The education sector reform is placed within the context of overall government economic, policy and institutional reform (often as defined in a macro-economic adjustment program). In addition, because sectoral reforms often include an emphasis on inter- and intra-sectoral resource allocation, they must be linked to the larger efforts to better manage government revenues and expenditures. Also essential to USAID's support are government commitments on the policy changes necessary for the reform. Examples of the areas of policy reform supported through education sector NPA include:

- absolute and relative levels of allocation and expenditure;
- policies, statutes and regulations governing personnel;
- policies setting standards for student admission and advancement through the system; and
- priorities for planning and program budgeting.

The nature and quality of the reform may vary across countries in the participation leading to the reform, the clarity with which it is defined, the technical quality of the information and analysis, the comprehensiveness and nature of proposed changes, and the degree of government commitment to the reform. These variations in what could be called the policy environment have a determining effect on the progress of NPA program implementation and impact.

A second element of education NPA is **budgetary support conditioned on performance**. An USAID grant in support of a government education sector reform is divided into tranches, corresponding to the number of years in the program (varying from three to nine). The disbursement of each tranche is conditioned on the government meeting *a priori* negotiated performance standards, collectively referred to as "conditionality." In general, conditions precedent to tranche disbursement serve as i) leverage points for advancing policy changes; ii) benchmarks of progress, or iii) demonstrations of government commitment. The conditions are intended to identify essential elements of reform without which the overall program cannot succeed.

A third element is the Agency's adoption of a **systems approach to educational change**, in which reform of the entire education system is seen as necessary for sustainable improvement. This is in contrast to earlier attempts to provide project assistance to develop separate components of the

education system (i.e., curriculum development and instructional materials, school construction, teacher training). With the focus on selective elements of overall system reform, the importance of the policies which govern the system becomes apparent. Agency guidelines governing the application of NPA are specific on this point, stating: "The DFA's legislative history [the congressional directives concerning use of DFA funds] makes it clear that non-project assistance under the DFA can be used only to support sectoral policy reform programs...The purpose of such reform programs must be to alleviate the policy constraints impeding longer term development and growth at the sectoral level."[15]

A fourth element of education NPA is the focus on **institutional development** within the sector. The education system consists of a complex of institutions with different administrative, managerial and technical responsibilities. These institutions are the means by which policy is translated into operational programs; they include finance and accounting, planning and information, management services, personnel and teaching services, supervision and in-service training, curriculum development, instructional materials, tests and examinations, school facilities and equipment, etc. Reform of the education sector, if it is to be sustainable, requires the coordinated development of host country capacity for managing all phases of these elements.

Donor coordination is a **fifth feature** of education NPA programs. Unlike a project approach, in which each donor can operate within a specific program area, NPA requires a review of the government's system reform strategy and financing, including the support from all major donors. Cooperation among donors can take the form of co-financing, where major donors join in the design of the program, including conditionalities, and participate together with government in tranche reviews. A less intense form of coordination is regular donor sector review meetings, in some cases convened and chaired by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

It is an explicit directive both of the DFA legislation and NPA guidelines that programs will be evaluated on the basis of *people-level impacts*. This focus on **people-level measures of outcomes** is a **sixth defining characteristic** of education NPA. USAID's support of education reform is therefore ultimately accountable for outcomes such as an increased proportion of children coming to school, getting through school without repeating grades, and finishing school having learned something useful.

2.3 THE STRUCTURE OF USAID'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The general model of educational reform (discussed in Section 1) postulates that macro-economic conditions and overall government and education sectoral policies define the environment within which an education system functions, and that Ministry of Education institutions are the means to deliver programs designed to improve teaching and learning to schools, classrooms and students. The discussion that follows examines the design of USAID programs and outlines their specific elements related to this general model. It begins by looking at the structure of USAID's education programs (including financing), and then moves on to examine policy intents, the development of institutional capacity and programs, and, finally, outlines the intended outcomes or people-level impacts.

The review focuses on those programs which have NPA elements, but also includes Botswana, Swaziland and South Africa, countries where USAID's assistance to the education sector does not

[15] *"Revised Africa Bureau NPA Guidance" USAID, AFR/PD/SA, Memorandum, August 1990.*

include NPA. These three cases depart from the Agency's "new" approach to education in Africa, but do so for exceptional reasons.

South Africa is a particular case because the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act has legislatively barred USAID from providing support to the South African government. Consequently, the education program in South Africa has consisted of projects designed to channel resources and support to the non-governmental sector, which the government increasingly views as a model for public sector reforms.

Botswana presents an interesting case because of USAID's long history of support and the level of development of its education system. By African standards, Botswana's education system has made substantial progress, with USAID and other donor project support, in implementing sustainable, system-wide reforms. At present, the sectoral policy and institutional environments are well positioned to enhance the continued improvement of education at the primary and secondary levels. In such an environment, the caveats normally associated with project assistance are lifted because the government itself has sufficiently defined sectoral policy and strategy so that project interventions feed into a sustainable system. This being the case, Botswana serves as the exception that proves the NPA rule.

In Swaziland, the previous education projects had identified specific areas in which institutional strengthening is needed to ensure implementation of government policy reforms. The present project targets those areas for capacity building and, having a point of entry in the education sector, hopes to engage the government in effective policy dialogue.

NPA programs are expected to support government policy reforms in basic education and are usually designed following a sector analysis. The funds provided are assumed to augment government (and other donor) funds in support of a rational, well-managed sectoral budget, governed by sound accounting procedures. Performance criteria spelled out in the program agreement require, among other things, that education ministries develop procedures for strategic planning, undertake rational budgeting on the basis of planned activities, and monitor the use of resources in the sector according to the 'reformed' program budget items.

Of the $388 million of USAID education assistance in Africa, $258 million (66 percent) is in the form of NPA (see Table 2.1). All of the NPA grants are accompanied by traditional project assistance in varying proportions. The projects consist of technical assistance and training designed to help education ministries build their capacity to better manage the additional resources and to implement other technical elements of the reform. The projects also can contain support to the USAID field missions for managing, monitoring and evaluating the education programs.

Table 2.1: Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa

COUNTRY	FINANCING (USM)				DATES	
	NPA	PA	Total	%NPA	START	END
Mali	3.0	17.0	20.0	15	1989	1995
Ghana	32.0	3.0	35.0	91	1990	1995
Guinea	22.3	5.7	28.0	80	1990	1995
Lesotho	18.6	6.4	25.0	74	1991	1997
Malawi	14.0	6.0	20.0	70	1991	1996
Benin	50.0	7.5	57.5	87	1991	1996
Namibia	35.0	0.5	35.5	99	1991	1996
Uganda	83.0	25.0	108.0	77	1992	2002
Swaziland		**6.9**	**6.9**	**0**	**1989**	**1996**
South Africa (two projects)		**39.5**	**39.5**	0	**1986 1992**	**1996 1998**
Botswana		**12.6**	**12.6**	0	**1991**	**1997**
TOTAL	257.90	130.10	388.0	66		

2.4 OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In terms of their design elements, USAID's education programs work, albeit in different ways, on issues relating to financial reform, improved quality, increased access and equity, and institutional or administrative reform.[16] Summaries of these general objectives are presented below.

Finance: NPA provides a modality for addressing the sustainability of sectoral financing by working with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to plan and budget for the required level of activity. This often involves increasing or stabilizing education's share of the government budget and, within that, the share allocated to primary education.

Quality: USAID supports a number of quality enhancing objectives ranging from curriculum development, to materials development and distribution, to teacher training (pre- and/or in-service), to student assessment, to pedagogical supervision.

Access and Equity: USAID's education efforts support increased access in those countries where expanding the provision of basic education is a priority of the government's sectoral reform. Equitable access to primary schooling is a concern in almost all of USAID's education programs, and is

[16] *For a summary of the Africa Bureau's education programs see Overview of A.I.D. Basic Education Programs in sub-Saharan Africa, USAID/AFR/ARTS, Technical Paper No. 1, January 1993.*

addressed through targeting of expansion and improvement to previously neglected areas or populations (i.e.girls).

Institutional Reform: USAID provides assistance to reorganization, decentralization, improved collection and use of information, planning, budget preparation and expenditure control, MOE staff development, as well as community participation in school finance and management.

2.5 POLICY CONTENT

Policy is being defined to include centrally-determined, system-wide (or government-wide) decisions that establish the framework for sectoral development. Specifically, this includes formal policy declarations, ministerial acts, civil service statues, budgetary allocations, or other governmental statements of priority or strategy. Analysis of the policy content of USAID's education programs in Africa indicates that despite the variety of areas of policy-level interventions, certain general characteristics are discernible.

2.5.1 Resource Allocation

Almost all of the NPA programs address sectoral priorities as expressed in government **resource allocation decisions**. Budget and/or expenditure targets, as conditions for tranches of budgetary support, are defined and range from the general (adequate resources to cover the cost of the reform) to the specific (unit expenditure amounts) and cover inter- as well as intra-sectoral allocations.

2.5.2 Efficiency

Reforms intended to **increase efficiency** can address improved administrative efficiency through strengthening planning and administrative operations, as well as supporting the reorganization of ministry structures and functions and the improved use of physical facilities (i.e., double shifting in schools or increasing intakes to teacher training facilities). Policies governing teacher recruitment and assignment, staffing norms, career structures, etc., are also targeted as means to increase efficiency in the use of teachers and staff, and to improve ministry personnel management. **The internal efficiency** of primary schools is addressed through policies aimed at reducing repetition and drop out rates.

2.5.3 Decentralization

Programs often include support to government reforms intended to devolve authority and responsibility to regional or sub-regional levels with the aim of improving the quality and efficiency of management. These policies may also seek to secure **greater community involvement** in education at the school level or to promote **private sector initiatives** in the provision of education.

2.5.4 Access and Equity

USAID education programs support policies aimed at the **expansion of opportunity** for schooling in those countries which place priority on overcoming low rates of access. In addition, **equitable provision of educational services** is another policy preoccupation. A project may envisage policy reforms in the areas governing girls' access and retention, distribution of resources between urban and rural areas, or to target previously disadvantaged regions or populations.

Table 2.2 summarizes the policy content of USAID's education programs in Africa. The policy content is often expressed in the conditionalities of an NPA program, or may simply be part of the government's reform program to which USAID is providing support.

Table 2.2: Policy Reforms Supported by USAID Education NPA Programs

COUNTRY and ISSUES	RESOURCE ALLOCATION	ACCESS	EFFICIENCY	EQUITY	OTHER
Mali: Redirect resources from higher and secondary education subsidies to primary to permit expansion and improvement of basic education. Facilitate expansion through improved personnel management (staffing patterns and recruitment).	Maintain education's share of govt, increase primary share to 42%, limit tertiary's share to 19% and reduce scholarships by 10 then 5%, increase share of ed budget for materials to 9%.		Study of personnel policies in order to reduce secondary teachers and establish new teacher recruitment guidelines. Target staffing norms of 36:1, 18:1 and 10:1 for cycles I, II and secondary.		
Ghana: Increase amount of budget available for non-salary quality-enhancing inputs such as textbooks and the development of criteria referenced testing. Develop and implement pilot programs to improve equity.	Maintain govt budget share for primary and increase share of ed budget for materials to 6%.			On basis of equity pilot programs develop policy for north-south and gender equity.	Develop decentralization policy. Develop and administer criterion-referenced testing (CRT).
Guinea: More efficient use of teaching personnel through redeployment, and of infrastructure through multigrade teaching and double shifting, to permit expansion. Increase non-salary expenditure as means to improve quality.	Education share of govt to 21%, primary share of education to 34%, non-salary share of ed budget to 18%. Non-salary per primary pupil and per administrator to GF 2800 and 210000.	Target of 54% gross enrollment by 2000.	Redeployment of surplus secondary teachers to primary. Promulgation of double shifting and multi-grade.	Implement study and develop and implement national strategy to promote girls and rural access. Concentrate construction in rural areas.	Promote (and require) community participation in construction and maintenance of infrastructure.
Lesotho: Large initial increase in and maintenance of higher level of budget for education, with 70 percent of new resources to go to improving the quality and efficiency of primary education.	Real ed allocation by 5-4% in first year, then 4% each year. 70% of increase for primary.		Implementation of age and repetition limits. New criteria for cycle completion.		Legal framework for MOE-school proprietor/parent relationships.
Malawi: Increase overall budget allocation for primary education. Improve efficiency by developing strategy to address repetition and making greater use of existing facilities through multigrade teaching and double shifting and greater enrollment in teacher training colleges (TTCs). Promote girls access through targeted fee waivers and development of gender-sensitive curricula.	Education share of overall budget to 16.5%, share of education budget for primary to increase by 4 percentage points per year.		Maximization of TTC capacity (admission of day students). Introduction of double-shifting and multigrade. Develop repetition policy.	Waiver of fees for non-repeating girls. Development and introduction gender sensitive curriculum.	Development and implementation of procedures for competitive procurement of materials.
Benin: Develop Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) as a standard for basic quality education as a means to ensure equitable allocation of increased level of non-salary inputs.	Maintain govt budget share for primary and increase primary non-salary expenditures.	Limit enrollment growth to no more than 5% per year for next three years.		Setting of targets for equitable attainment of FQL standard. Development of specific activities to promote girls' and rural access.	
Namibia: Consolidation and integration of regional education authorities and development of FQL as means to ensure equitable re-allocation of qualitative improvements	Maintain existing level of education budget and ensure adequate financing for reform objectives.			Integrate regional education authorities and allocate resources for equitable attainment of FQL.	
Uganda: Improve quality through targeting of resources to textbooks and through upgrading the qualifications of the teaching force. More efficient management of teaching personnel.	Earmarking of budgetary resources for textbook procurement.		Reform of statutes governing teaching profession.		

2.6 DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND PROGRAMS

With the shift from project-based to program-based support, the Agency has adopted an approach that targets specific areas of technical concern through the development of the related sectoral institutions. Under projects, the emphasis of USAID's intervention was on the programmatic output -- e.g., teachers trained, textbooks delivered, etc. Unfortunately, those outputs were often pursued at the expense of institutional capacity building. A project would set its own system for delivering training or developing an information system and USAID could claim victory when project objectives were met, whether or not the project had fostered any permanent change in a ministry's capacity. Under NPA, the targeted objective is now defined as an institution capable of achieving the desired technical output (with its recurrent operational costs covered by the sectoral budget), not just the output itself.

As all the programs consist of substantial infusions of resources to the education sector, the development of budgeting and financial management institutions and capacities are critical aspects of USAID's interventions. Other institutions are targeted depending on the programmatic focus of the education reform. For instance, where the emphasis is on teacher in-service training, the development of institutions associated with the development and provision of in-service programs are supported -- e.g., the National Teacher Training College in Lesotho. The table below identifies the targeted institutions in each of the Africa Bureau's education NPA programs.

Table 2.3: Institutions Targeted in USAID Education Programs

Institutional Focus	MAL	GHA	GUI	LES	MLW	BEN	NAM	UGA	BOT	SWA
Budget and Financial Management			XX	XX		XX				
Planning and EMIS[17]	XX			XX	XX	XX	XX			XX
Structure and Organization of MOE			XX	XX		XX	XX			
Decentralized Administration	XX	XX	XX	XX		XX				
Pre-service Teacher Training					XX					
In-service Teacher Training and Support	XX	XX		XX		XX		XX		
Curriculum Development					XX	XX	XX		XX	
Textbook Development and Distribution	XX	XX		XX	XX	XX				
Student Assessment	XX	XX		XX		XX			XX	XX
School Construction	XX		XX		XX					

[17] *EMIS: Education Management Information System.*

Development of targeted institutions is addressed in USAID's education programs either through direct technical support (long-term and short-term technical assistance) and training included in a companion project or through aspects of policy reform and conditionality. For example, many programs include conditionality requiring the development of an expenditure tracking system capable of disaggregating budget data by the nature, category and educational level of expenditures. In some cases, technical advisors in the area of financial management are also provided through project assistance.

2.7 VARIATIONS

Within the general framework of coordinated, policy-based, conditioned budgetary resources in support of a government program of systemic reform, USAID's education NPA programs vary in several different ways. The variation across programs in the focus of design depends on several factors, among which are the following three: i) the stage of development of a country's education system in terms of the levels of access and quality, ii) the history of USAID's involvement in the education sector, and iii) the extent of government commitment to reform.

Assistance to countries with severely underdeveloped education systems focuses on meeting the challenge of broadening access equitably and within the constraints of resource limitations (e.g., Guinea and Mali). Often the issues that most dominate regard efficiency and quality; how to make most efficient use of available resources and how to expand access without compromising quality, the former contributing substantially to resolving the latter. In countries where education systems are well developed, the focus of assistance may be on consolidating and improving quality while reaching out to the most marginalized populations (e.g., Benin, Ghana and Lesotho). The degree of development of government institutional capacity to manage and administer public education also determines the orientation of USAID assistance and often correlates with the overall level of provision of educational services -- better institutional capacity often leads to the greater access and better quality. The other confounding variable in this framework is resource availability. Again, institutional capacity, access and quality and availability of government resources are all highly correlated -- richer countries tend to have better administered, more universal, and better quality basic education systems (e.g., Botswana, Swaziland and Namibia).

The focus of USAID's assistance is also determined by how long a history USAID has in the education sector and at what point in USAID's experience with education sector NPA the program was designed. In countries where USAID has a long experience of projectized assistance to the education sector, current programs can build on that experience. In some cases these programs continue the projectized mode (e.g., Botswana and Swaziland) as a means to target specific elements of the education sector. Lesotho is a case of an NPA program following a large-scale education project. In this case, based on a government reform plan resource allocation, policy change and institutional development are sought through NPA as a means to make previous improvements in the sector more sustainable. The timing of program design is most clearly reflected in a program's approach to setting the policy and institutional agendas. Those designed early on in USAID's shift to NPA attempted to set out conditionality for all tranches of support from the beginning (e.g., Guinea and Mali). In addition, they were limited to three years. More recent designs cover a longer time span (six to ten years) and have a more flexible approach to defining conditionality.

In addition to the variation in terms of policy objectives and institutional or programmatic focus, some important structural aspects of the programs differ as illustrated by the following table.

Table 2.4

Country	NPA/PA SPLIT		NPA FINANCING	PROJECT ASSISTANCE (PA)				PA CONTRACT MECHANISM /f
				SPEC. ACCT./a	Lg-tm/b	Sh-tm/c	Trng/d	USAID mgt/e	
Mali	15%	85%	General BOP /g	NO	5	?	?	1	Buy-in to Advancing Basic Education and Literacy Project (ABEL)
Ghana	91%	9%	General BOP	YES	-	33	48/h	1	PA Contract: Institutional Contract (Mitchell Group)
Guinea	80%	20%	Debt Repayment	NO	2	85	360/i	-	Buy-in to Improving the Efficiency of Education Systems Project (IEES)
Lesotho	74%	26%	General BOP	YES	4	35	150/j	1	Institutional Contract (Ohio Univ.)
Malawi	70%	30%	General BOP	NO	4/k	-		1	ABEL
Benin	87%	13%	General BOP	NO	2	46	/l	1	Mission-based IQC
Namibia	99%	1%	General BOP	NO				1	/m
Uganda	77%	23%							Institutional Contract (Academy for Educational Dev.)

a/Local currency generated from USAID grant is earmarked for education, and controlled separately from the sectoral budget.
b/Number of long-term technical assistants working directly in support of education sector activity.
c/Person-months of short-term technical consulting, including in some cases locally hired consultants.
d/Person-months of training.
e/Number of personal services contractors working as program or project managers for the USAID Mission.
f/Contracting mechanisms used for short and long term TA. Buy-ins refer to centrally funded USAID projects.
g/Balance of Payments Support.
h/Includes 18 person-months of in-country training.
i/The equivalent of 20 U.S. masters degrees.
j/Seven U.S. masters degrees, and 24 person-months of study tours in Africa and the U.S.
k/Long-term technical assistance is used intermittently (for 2 to 4 months at a time).
l/Project includes a lump sum dollar amount for unspecified training.
m/The project does not have any technical assistance. The Namibian government has contracted directly with Florida State University for long-term consulting.

On average, about 74 percent of the funding in these eight education programs is through NPA, with the lowest share being 15 percent in Mali, and the highest, 99 percent in Namibia. Only Guinea uses NPA to repay debt, while all the other programs provide general balance of payments support. Two programs use special accounts for earmarking local currency for the education sector: Ghana and Lesotho. Project assistance in all the programs conforms to the usual configuration of long and short term technical assistance, training, and some equipment purchases. Contractual arrangements for technical assistance range from Mission-based management of a number of personal service

contractors (PSCs) and an indeterminate quantity contract (IQC) to buy-ins to existing centrally funded (R&D/Ed) projects. All the countries except Guinea use project funds to hire a U.S. personal services contractor program coordinator to facilitate Mission management of the program.

The analytical part (Section 5) of this paper attempts to explain these variations in the design of USAID's education program, both in terms of their particular areas of focus and in terms of the administrative structures discussed above.

SECTION 3: A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING IMPACTS

USAID's education specialists -- both in the field and in Washington -- are regularly asked to provide evidence that USAID has improved education in Africa. But what does "improving education" mean and what constitutes compelling proof? The purpose of this section is to develop a framework to assess the impacts of the eleven programs, by (1) placing the impetus for measurement within an historical context, (2) developing a grounded definition of "impact" from the programs themselves, (3) reviewing systems for data collection and reporting, and (4) examining the potential for divergence between expectations and effects of the actual programs. Finally, this section is intended to lay the groundwork for program results presented in Section 4.

3.1 THE EMPHASIS ON IMPACTS

"Getting results" has always been the ultimate focus of USAID's design, management and evaluation activities. The logical framework, which distinguishes between higher and lower order objectives and impacts, was developed to assist project designers to express their intent in coherent and measurable/observable terms, and to track and assess project accomplishments. However, the impetus for measurement and pressure to demonstrate results has increased in recent years. The reasons for that are multiple and not unrelated.

Increased Congressional interest in and watchfulness over U.S development assistance to Africa has been concretized though the Development Fund for Africa and the Congressional earmark for Education. Both underscore the need for discernible progress and accountability. The DFA closely prescribes management principles to which USAID activities must adhere. These in themselves create a need for careful monitoring and reporting to prove responsiveness to Congress. But more significantly, the DFA's call for ***sustainability*** or ***"lasting change"*** and ***people-level impacts*** places the onus on USAID to prove that its programs are achieving these goals.

This results-and-accountability orientation is further accentuated by the education earmark, which mandates the amount spent on education. Implicit in both the earmark and the DFA is the assumption that not only has USAID been less than fully effective in its previous efforts to support African development and that its overall project-oriented approach has been faulty, but that it has not allocated sufficient resources or attention to education. The current generation of USAID activities in Africa is seen as a "fresh start", a new page in Agency assistance to Africa -- one that must produce tangible and large-scale results in improving the lives of the continent's citizens.

USAID has responded by recasting its assistance in terms of programs aimed at systemic sectoral change, rather than more narrowly-focussed projects aimed at *one* aspect of *one* part of a sector. "Investing in people" has become the watch-word of its programs, and societal "transformation" is the ultimate standard by which its success will be judged. Both because of intensified external oversight and its lack of experience with the new program modalities, primarily NPA, it has developed comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems of its programs.[18] New measurement schemes and indicators have been devised to capture the effects of USAID's programs at the beneficiary or

[18] *The need for these has been recently underscored by skepticism of the NPA approach expressed in the 1993 House Appropriation Committee's report which states that "the benefits of such assistance have not been conclusively demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Committee."*

people-level. In the Africa Bureau, a performance contract paradigm is used in the development of the country programs. In it, Missions are held accountable for the promised results. Performance accountability is also a defining feature of the NPA modality. Budgetary support is conditioned on governments undertaking specific policy-level actions and/or achieving certain outcomes, such as -- resource reallocation or increasing girls enrollment. Government proof-of-performance is submitted at periodic tranche reviews. All programs institute monitoring and evaluation plans. In education, many of these plans specifically include assessment of the NPA modality as one of their objectives.

Further, the application of NPA to educational development converged with the increasingly accepted view that educational development must be predicated on system-wide reform in order to maximize the efficient use of diminishing resources for education faced by African nations.

It would be difficult to argue that the magnitude of risk has not intensified with the introduction of NPA as a modality for assistance in Africa: the dollar amounts allocated to sectoral programs far surpass those previously invested in projects and entire country programs. For example, in the 1980s less than $XXX million was allocated to education compared with the $XXX of the current educations programs. In this context, monitoring and evaluation takes on added significance. Big money must be carefully husbanded and should produce big results.

3.2 DEFINITION OF EDUCATIONAL IMPACTS

The DFA mandates that USAID's education programs in Africa result in "people-level" impacts. According to the Africa Bureau's Non-Project Sector Assistance Guidance, "...In all cases, DFA NPA programs should support sectoral development objectives, which must be defined in terms of their impact on poor people or households; e.g., increased income, production, employment..." (p. 6) and "...defined in terms that are quantifiable and measurable " (p. 11).

A review of the USAID's education programs' logical frameworks shows:

- a similarity in program purposes across the programs;
- two target levels of program reform;
- a "disconnect" in the relationship between program focus and the EOPS[19];
- a definition of impacts that addresses education system reform and student outcomes;
- a commonality in how the programs define impact;
- a lack of correspondence between education program EOPS and indicators chosen to monitor USAID's overall country strategy.

Table 3.5, which delineates each program's purpose and EOPS, is appended to the end of this section.

3.2.1 Program Purpose

The program purpose, as defined by Agency guidance[20], expresses the expected impact of the program, the real or essential motivation for producing outputs and undertaking the support activity. In the hierarchy of objectives, the purpose is considered the highest level of impact (or change or

[19] *EOPS refers to End of Project Status indicators which corresponds to the purpose-level goal in the logical framework.*

[20] *"The Logical Framework Instruction Guide," Management Systems International*

reform) within the "manageable interests" of the program. Cumulatively, the USAID education programs identify five purposes or potential areas for impact. They are to improve: *access to, equity of, efficiency of, quality of and sustainability of educational systems and services.* While there is a tendency to use all these words in different combinations in the purpose statement, most programs limit themselves to two or three goals. The exceptions are the Ghana program which includes all five, and the Mali and Malawi programs which confine themselves to one. The majority of the eleven education programs claim "quality" (9), "efficiency" (8), and "equity" (6) amongst their goals. "Access" and "sustainability" are named by only three and two programs, respectively.

3.2.2 Program Focus

Program focus describes the orientation, target or focus of the education program's effort, as defined by its purpose. The education programs are characterized by two foci: *systems and students.* "System-level" focus means that the educational system itself -- its policies, institutions, organization, administrative structure, management, personnel and service -- are the objects of improvement. Change and reform at the systems-level is what the program expects to support and deliver. Conversely, "student-level" focus means that change is targeted and expected in student outcomes -- increased access, attainment and achievement for all primary school children or targeted groups (i.e., girls, rural children). In these cases, while the program may support activities or require through conditionality actions aimed at system-level improvements, it expects and holds itself accountable for producing results measurable at the student-level.

Of the eleven education programs, eight programs target system-level improvements as within their scope for impact. Three programs target student-level improvements. As the program purpose is intended to be achievable within the timeframe of the program, this clearly indicates that -- at the time of program design -- the majority of programs expect only to positively influence change in educational systems and not in student performance. Of the three that do -- Malawi, Uganda and Swaziland -- there may be special circumstances involved. The Uganda program has a longer timeframe than most program (10 years), which arguably leaves enough time to impact at the student level. Swaziland is a case where USAID has a long history of assistance and student-level impact should be appreciable. However, in Malawi the rationale is not clear.

3.2.3 End of Project Status Indicators (EOPS)

EOPS are designed to capture and express in measurable -- "objectively verifiable" -- terms the impact of the education program. According to agency guidance, they are to communicate "concisely and unambiguously" the conditions that signal successful achievement of the program purpose, so that *"proponents and skeptics can agree on (program) status and what the evidence implies."* EOPS should be "targeted and expressed by quantity, quality and timeliness." The USAID education program EOPS often deviate from this prescription.

Lack of precision: In some cases, the education EOPS are neither measurable, objective or verifiable. There are numerous instances in which the EOPS merely repeat the purpose. For example, the Lesotho program expects to demonstrate "effective" MOE structure, financial management, evaluation and planning, but offers these goals as EOPS. Actual measures of quantity or quality are often omitted. Proof of the Namibia program's success in making a more effective basic education system includes a "...more coherent, balanced and relevant curriculum...", adjectives which should be explicated. Other EOPS lack specificity. Evidence that the Uganda program is improving the quality of classroom instruction is "evidence of improved classroom teaching; evidence of continuous

assessment; and evidence of resources flowing to schools." As proof of impact, these EOPS leave much to interpretation and open to debate as program designers' intentions become distant memories.

Disconnect between focus and EOPS: The majority of the education programs' EOPS are not targeted to the type or level of change they claim as their purpose. This results in a "disconnect" or gap between what the programs are designed to do and how their success will be gauged. **Seventy-three percent of the programs focus on system-level reform, but fifty-eight percent (31 of 53) of the EOPS measure student-level outcomes.** Consequently, there is a significant probability that several programs -- and possibly the NPA modality -- will not be judged according to appropriate criteria and to what was planned for in the design.

Four education programs represent notable anomalies. Ghana, Benin and South Africa are all clearly system focussed, yet they assess their impact in the metric of student outcomes. Conversely, the Uganda program, whose purpose is described in unambiguous terms of enhanced learning, reduced inequities and improved student persistence, chooses to measure its impact at the system-level.

TABLE 3.1:
COMPARISON OF PROGRAM PURPOSE, FOCUS and EOPS INDICATORS

Country	Purpose: to improve...					Focus (level)		EOPS Indicators		
	Access	Equity	Effi-ciency	Quality	Sustain-ability	System-Level	Student -Level	#	SYSTEM	STUDENT
Mali			X			X		3	2	1
Ghana	X	X	X	X	X	X		7	0	7
Guinea	X	X		X		X		7	1	6
Lesotho			X	X		X		6	5	1
Malawi		X					X	1	0	1
Benin		X	X	X		X		7	1	6
Namibia	X		X	X	X	X		4	3	1
Uganda		X	X	X			X	5	4	1
Swaziland			X	X			X	7	3	4
South Africa		X		X		X		3	0	3
Botswana			X	X		X		3	3	0

3.2.4 Typology of Measures of Impact

Based on EOPS indicators and selected "output" indicators taken from the program logical frameworks, Table 3.2 presents a framework, which attempts to organize and codify the collective vision of impact that has evolved over five years of education program design and development. (Specified target levels or country-specific information has been dropped from the EOPS in the table to make them more generic.) The intent here is not to improve program measures but to develop a typology grounded in what actually exists. Also included in the table are some output indicators, selected on the criteria that they herald real and significant change at the system-level. Given the interaction and overlap among these variables, their placement under the various purpose rubrics is subject to debate. Again, this table is not prescriptive, but merely illustrative of USAID education program impact indicators. The typology of impacts which emerges from the eleven education programs shows a hierarchy of impacts, both in terms of-magnitude of impact and in the level of the system at which the impact will take place.

People- versus process-level impacts: The impacts identified fall into two broad categories: *people* and *process* impacts and indicators. People-level impacts, as defined by USAID education programs, are limited exclusively to the product or outcomes of the educational system, measured by student access, attainment, and achievement. Additional crosscutting measures at the student-level include indicators on special groups (e.g., girls) or reduced costs in terms of years or dollars per graduate. The grounded definition of people-level impact, and within the manageable interests of the programs, does not include measures of external efficiency (e.g., increased employment, higher wages, reduced fertility, etc.), although these may be cited as higher-order goals. Process-level indicators show significant benchmarks or harbingers of meaningful change which can, in combination, lead to improved student outcomes. These are limited to the public sector and rely on Ministry of Education action (hence educational **system-level** impacts), with the exception of South Africa where the program works with the private sector and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community.

Types of system-level impacts: System-level impacts fall into four groups: *policy, institutional, school* and *community. Policy* indicates that the government has promulgated, decreed and/or declared a specific course, practice or standard of action which will guide its activities, programs and interventions in the future. For example, a policy-type impact may be signalled by waiving tuition fees for girls as part of its equity objectives. *Institutional* relates to the apparatus of government or the ministry and its organization, operations and capacity. An institutional impact might be the reorganization of the Ministry of Education to favor primary education. *School* refers to impacts which take place at or have immediate effect on the school, such as increasing teacher time on task. *Community* alludes to system-level intervention or change that directly involves the community or village. Strengthening parent-teacher associations is an example.

The abundance of indicators in the quality, efficiency and equity columns in Table 3.2 mirror the emphasis placed on these process goals by the education programs. Although not noted in the typology presented, it appears that school-level impacts may be the closest omen or sign that portends real improvement in student outcomes. The school-type impacts of the education programs capture in a substantive and tangible way the improvement taking place in policy and institutional operations and capacity.

TABLE 3.2
TYPOLOGY OF IMPACTS AND MEASURES

		ACCESS	EQUITY	EFFICIENCY	QUALITY	SUSTAINABILITY
P E O P L E	*STUDENT-LEVEL OUTCOMES:*	•increased enrollment ratio •increase 1st grade admission rate	•increased enrollment of girls and rural children •increased % of girls in each grade •increased girls persistence rates •increased participation of disadvantaged groups	•reduced cycle years/pupil •reduced cycle cost/pupil •repetition rate reduced •drop-out rate reduced •increase % sitting for primary exam	•increased % of primary students demonstrating mastery at grade levels •improved test scores •increased % of student in FQL/BQS schools •increased % students with non-native language fluency	
P R O C E S S	*SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPACTS:*					
	Policy	•teachers redeployed to primary classrooms •private schools certified	•equity policies promulgated •teacher:learner ratios equalized •fee waivers for girls instituted	•per pupil unit cost reduction at higher levels •MOE reorganized by decree	•increased % schools with basic materials •targeted student:teacher ratio met	•increased % of education budget for primary (sans donor funding) •increased % of nat'l budget for ed. •increased % for non-salary recurrent budget
	Institutional	•more teachers trained/retrained	•equity strategy developed •gender bias removed from curriculum •teachers trained in gender awareness	•MOE functions decentralized •strengthened planning capacity •personnel tracking system in place •strengthened management capacity •strengthened school inspection •M&E system in place •EMIS system in place •annual budgets developed •transparent accounting systems developed •timely salary payments •standard commodity package developed •improved MOE staff competencies	•student assessment system in place •increased % of budget for teaching materials •improved curriculum in place •improved curriculum development process •better teacher training •improved textbook production/delivery system in place •FQL/BQS standard established •in-service teacher training in place	
	School	•more classrooms built •multigrade schooling introduced/developed	•equity program implemented	•teacher absences reduced •school supplies delivered on time	•increased % schools with qualified teacher •increased % schools offering certain courses •increased % teacher classroom time on instruction	•increased funds for school
	Community	•NGOs strengthened/personnel trained		•parent-teacher associations strengthened	•quality changes discussed in public forum	•community contributions to construction

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

Impact reporting is expected to happen at two levels within USAID: at the field mission level and in the regional bureaus.

3.3.1 Field Reporting Systems

Education program activities and progress are principally tracked, monitored and evaluated at the field level, under the supervision of Mission staff and generally through the offices of long- and/or short-term technical assistance. Many of the reports prepared are standard across programs, such as tranche review documentation, USAID portfolio or program reviews, USAID annual and semi-annual progress reports, institutional contractor status reports and consultant reports. While much of the content of these reports focusses on the quotidian activities of program management and performance condition reporting, the obligatory external evaluations scheduled during the program design are expected to report on indicators and benchmarks signifying impact. However, given the magnitude and complexity of the data collection, processing and analytical needs of impact reporting for NPA education programs, data collection for these external evaluations is planned -- in varying detail -- in the design phase of the program. Table 3.3 presents the impact reporting systems of the different programs.

The USAID education programs' approach to impact assessment are very similar. In general, the programs:

- have avoided creating parallel data collection systems, and rely on the Ministries of Education's statistics and/or planning offices;
- have made provisions to supplement ministry data with (i) special studies targeted at a particular research question, (ii) surveys and baseline data collection on a sample basis, (iii) targeted regional investigation;
- expect data for impact analysis to be reported in annual statistical handbooks produced by the Ministry of Education and in research reports generally prepared by expatriate and/or local technical assistance (outside the ministry);
- have not been able to produce as many supplementary reports as planned;
- have planned for two external evaluations, one formative and the other summative, at the mid-point and end of the program; and
- have provided some technical assistance -- either short- or long-term -- to assist ministries in information management and monitoring and evaluation.

TABLE 3.3
PROGRAM IMPACT REPORTING SYSTEMS

COUNTRY	DATA AVAILA-BILITY	PRIMARY SOURCE OF DATA	ADD'L DATA SOURCE	NON-STANDARD REPORTS[21]	RESPON-SIBILITY	# COM-PLETED	# OF EXTN'L EVALS. PLANNED/ EXECUTED	AID EMIS TA	AID M&E TA
Mali	Poor	•MOE Stats	•Sample Schools	•Research •Quarterly •Stat Hndbk	•USAID •USAID •MOE	2 1	1/1	1 F/T	1 F/T
Ghana	Good	•MOE •PMU /MES	•EIP Studies •Spotchecks •Attitude Baseline	•Research •Status •Annual Report •Research	•PMU •USAID •PMU •USAID	1	2	PMU, S/T	PMU, S/T
Guinea	Adequate	•MOE Stats	•Special Studies	•Research •Stat Hndbk	•USAID •MOE	1 2	2/1	1 (FAC)	S/T
Lesotho	Good	•MOE Stats	•Special Studies	•Research •Quarterly •Stat Hndbk	•MOE w/ TA •? •MOE		2	1 F/T	S/T (IIEP)
Malawi	Adequate	•MOE Stats	•Special Studies •Baseline Sample	•Research •Research	•USAID •USAID		2	0	S/T
Benin	Poor	•MOE Stats	•Special Studies	•Research /Analysis •Annual Stats	•MOE w/ TA •MOE	1 2	2	2 F/T	1 F/T
Namibia	Poor	USAID Baseline		•Quarterly	•USAID?	0	4/2	0	S/T
Uganda	ND[22]								
Swaziland	ND								
South Africa	Poor Nat'l	•USAID Baseline •NGO Data	•Regular Investiga-tions	•Analysis	•NGOs	?	2	1 F/T	S/T
Botswana	Good	?							

[21] *In addition to routine AID reports, such as tranche review documentation, Assessment of Program Impact, etc.*

[22] *ND: Not determined.*

3.3.2 Assessment of Program Impact (API)

The Africa Bureau devised the API approach to ensure impact reporting at the country program-level, in conjunction with the country strategy development process. Following the development of a country's strategy, a monitoring and evaluation review (MER) team assists the mission in identifying impact indicators and establishing benchmarks to note progress toward impacts. The missions are responsible for tracking and reporting on impacts. Missions with large country programs must report on these indicators on an annual basis, while missions with small country programs report every two years.

The Office of Development and Planning of the Africa Bureau uses these reports as its principle tracking mechanism and as a basis for its reports to the Bureau and Congress, as mandated by the DFA. It views the APIs as a means of ensuring consistency in country programs and their orientation over time, and as a means of mitigating the disruptive effects of personnel changes. Missions have generally treated the APIs as performance criteria, by which they can track and evaluate the effectiveness of their country strategies. Table 3.4 lists the APIs for each country education program.

TABLE 3.4
Indicators from the Assessments of Program Impacts (APIs)

Country	ACCESS	EQUITY	EFFICIENCY	QUALITY	OTHER
Mali	• Increase in gross enrollment rate (GER)..	• Increase in female GER. • Increase in number of complete schools in Koulikoro region.	•Increase in completion rates (to P6). •Decrease in repetition rates.	•Improvements in achievement in core areas of P2 and P5. •Decrease in student/teacher ratio. •Increase in number of trained teachers. •Increase in availability & utilization of texts. •Increase in number of classrooms.	•Increase in school funding by school parent groups. •BUDGET
Ghana		•Increase in GER in rural areas.		•Improvements in achievement at end of cycle (P6). •Increase in number of trained teachers. •Increased availability of texts & other instructional materials. •District ed officers, circuit supervisors, circuit monitoring assistants hired and trained.	•CRTs developed and conducted. •BUDGET
Guinea	•Increase in GER.	•Increase in female GER, and in rural areas.	•Increase in completion rates (P6). •Decrease in primary school repeaters.		•BUDGET
Lesotho			•Increase in completion rates. •Decrease in cycle costs.	•Improved achievement at Std. 3. •Increase in number of trained teachers. •Decrease in pupil/teacher ratio & in pupils per classroom. •Increase in availability of texts, other instructional materials, & seating.	•MOE restructuring and EMIS. •BUDGET
Malawi		•Increased GER & retention of female pupils.			
Benin	•Increase in GER.	•Increase in female GER. •Equitable enrollment in FQL schools by region and gender.	•Decrease in repetition and dropout rates. •Increase in rate of completion of cycle.	•Improvements in achievement throughout cycle and at end of cycle.	
Namibia	•Increase in GER.		•Increase in completion rates. •Decrease in wastage and repetition rates.	•Improvements in achievement in core subjects. •Increase in pass rate on national examinations. •Increase in # of schools providing a minimum quality of education.	
Uganda		•Increase in retention of girls.	•Decrease in # of years provided per graduate.	•Increase in number of students passing P1-6. •Increase in availability of books. •Increase in # of trained teachers.	
Swaziland					
South Africa					
Botswana					

3.4 CHALLENGES TO IMPACT REPORTING

Two questions arise from the previous discussion:

- Can USAID measure and report the impacts of its education programs?
- Can USAID's education programs produce the expected and mandated results?

3.4.1 Conflict Between Data Needs and Capacity Building

Lack of reliable data collection and reporting mechanisms complicates USAID's ability to prove and document the extent of its impacts. This problem is particularly acute at the outcome level which requires detailed nation-wide educational data, as well as population data, in order to calculate gross enrollment ratios, repetition and drop-out rates, completion rates, etc. As previously noted, the NPA approach requires beneficiary-level data. But because the NPA modality emphasizes country-wide change and budgetary support (and provides relatively little technical assistance), USAID generally must rely on the Ministry of Education's statistics service or other data collecting offices.

Half of the eight programs reviewed recognize in their design documents the inadequacies of government management information systems and have provided for some minimal assistance to this area. Similarly, three programs contribute to the development of student assessment systems. That six out of eight program countries are receiving assistance in EMIS and student assessment from USAID is not to imply that the remaining countries have adequate reporting systems. In many cases – such as Guinea -- other donors are providing the assistance. Further, the technical assistance provided may not be sufficient for the task of developing an entire EMIS. A single advisor can not alone be expected to develop and implement data collection, processing, analysis and reporting/dissemination systems.

This means that at the same time that data collection and information reporting capacity is being developed, the infant information systems are expected to provide comprehensive and credible statistics. Given the amount of time it takes to develop systems and capacity -- and collect, process and analyze school census data -- it may not be reasonable to expect that student-level outcomes can be readily reported on an annual basis or even, in some instances, by the end of the USAID program.

3.4.2 Poor Baseline Data

Impact reporting is further confounded by poor baseline data, needed to show the rate of change accomplished during the program. It is fairly obvious that in those countries where EMIS assistance is required, the pre-program baseline data should be regarded with some caution. Statistics have often been inflated, deflated or skewed for political reasons, and entire information units have been dismantled because of the politically unpalatable information they bring to light (as in the case of pre-program Mali). New standards and conventions in collecting and tabulating data required under the new educational reform may introduce inconsistencies which either magnify or diminish the rate of change.

Additionally, information is often not reported in terms that directly respond to USAID program objectives. While education data may be disaggregated by gender, it is not by urban-rural parameters. More often than not, the information does not extend beyond simple head-counts and some compound statistics, such as percentages. Seldom are more complex and sophisticated calculations, such as cycle or equivalent years, presented. The result is that meaningful baseline data must be amassed at the

beginning of a program. But, as noted above, where local capacity is weak and on-the-ground technical assistance is scarce, as is the case in many of the education programs, it is difficult to produce the statistics that define an accurate "starting point."

3.4.3 The "Wrong" Type of Data and Reports

It became fairly obvious in preparing this report that data of the "right" sort (i.e., program impact indicators) is difficult to come by. Despite generally well-prepared logical frameworks with ample indicators of impact at both the student- or system-levels, most of the available documentation was not oriented toward impact accounting or answering the questions of how and to what extent access, efficiency, equity and quality have been affected. Differing accountabilities -- tranche reviews for performance conditions, mid-term evaluation reports, and annual API reports -- structure field reports and their contents such that, while a plethora of documentation exists (and can be tracked down with some difficulty), much of the information these reports contain really do not provide accurate data on impacts or compelling proxy measures.

Monitoring and reporting on performance conditionalities is not necessarily a substitute for impact reporting. Tranche review documents are geared to conditionalities, which do not and should not directly reflect student outcome changes. Occasionally they do reflect system changes at the policy, institutional and program levels, such as resource reallocations or classrooms constructed or teachers trained, which promise future student-level impacts. But often conditionalities are framed as activities or incremental steps toward achieving system change (i.e., the development of work plans or installation of computers). Seldom do the reports relate these activities to important changes in system structure as reflected at the school-level. For example, in Guinea, it should be possible to relate the redeployment of teachers to an increase in the number of staffed classrooms and an increased number of available student places. Or in Malawi, the elimination of school fees for girls, should be reflected in some way in enrollment applications, if not enrollment.

Ideally, mid-term or periodic evaluations during the life of the program should fill the gaps left in conditionality review and provide data on impacts, both as specified in the logical framework and "unanticipated" impacts. However, this mechanism has -- thus far -- proved less than satisfactory for several reasons. First, several years often separate these reviews. Both Mali and Ghana had entered their fourth years of operation before the first mid-term evaluation took place. Second, evaluation teams can hardly be expected to come up with student outcome or other quantitative data if such data has not already been collected or processed. And third, based on a review of the reports from countries where mid-term evaluations have taken place -- Guinea and Mali -- there is a tendency to focus on projectized activities. This is due, in large part, to the nature of the evaluations, which must recommend mid-course corrections and necessarily focus on "outputs" or "deliverables". These are incremental indicators of change, and seldom satisfy impact reporting requirements. Since the scope for immediate concrete action within the control of USAID is mainly limited to the projectized portions of the NPA program, it is nearly inevitable that project-type operational concerns receive the bulk of attention -- with the result that it is difficult to get a sense of the magnitude of reform accomplished. This appears to be exacerbated by the notion that indicators of change must be directly traced to USAID funds or technical assistance.

Assessment of Program Impact (API) indicators, as applied to education programs, are designed to capture change at the student and systems levels. This may be the best means by which impacts are tracked over time and reported. However, a comparison of the End of Project Status objectively verifiable indicators (EOPS) and the API indicators for the same programs shows considerable

difference between the two. In many cases, this "disconnect" seems be characterized by "inflated" or higher-order of impacts for APIs. For example, in Ghana the program logical framework indicates that an equity policy will be defined and implemented by its termination date. In contrast, the API for Ghana expects that gross enrollment in rural areas will increase. While the two are closely related, and certainly policy implementation is a pre-requisite of a student-level outcome, there is a conflict in what program designers anticipated as a reasonable result and what the Mission negotiated as a likely outcome. To the extent that a program's viability and mission accountability is judged by API indicators, there is potential for underestimating a program's performance and impact, deeming it a failure and subjecting the program to unnecessary redesign and the sector to superfluous scrutiny. The bottom-line is that even the API reporting system may not accurately present the extent and type of change associated with an education program.

3.4.4 "Acceptable" Impacts

What type of impacts are the "right" sort, those that will convince observers that education systems are indeed improving? The guidance is not entirely clear. The DFA requires that the poor majority and vulnerable in society be the chief beneficiaries of USAID's programs, and specifies increased literacy and numeracy as the expected "people-level" impacts. Rather than targeting these societal impacts, the Education earmark focusses on the student-level outcomes of an education system itself -- more primary education, increased female participation (access and retention), gains in student achievement.

However, the Africa Bureau's Non-Project Sector Assistance Guidance is less clear and reveals a certain schizophrenia. It states, "At a minimum, all NPA programs must result demonstrably in increased welfare at the household level." Yet it professes to equate "increases in income" with "increases in the provision of social services." As applied to education this would argue uniquely for system level impacts: more school places, more favorable student:teacher ratios or student:book ratios, etc. While this might seem reasonable to those designing education programs, few would argue that the provision of more school places is analogous to "increased income," which appears to be a higher level goal. In terms of strict comparability most educators would substitute instead "increases in student enrollment."

But more significantly, the ambiguity concerning acceptable impacts is revealed in the USAID explication of DFA management principles themselves.[23] Sustainable change through systemic sectoral reform is a major precept. Systemic change is defined as policy and institutional- and political-type reforms, most of which will be effected within the government itself. Both the short- and medium-term impacts will be necessarily expressed in terms of change in governmental structures and services. In education, for example, we may see a greater percentage of the education budget going to primary education or a change in the curriculum. In short, according to this reasoning, the discernible impacts of USAID's current education programs should be represented as changes in educational systems and structures, or process indicators, and not outcomes at the student level.

However, while this guidance may arguably call for process indicators of system level impact, the arbiters of design and program approval apparently do not. Only one education program (Ghana) has defined its End of Project Status indicators (EOPS) as system-level improvements resulting from supply-side interventions (e.g., more textbooks, more schools, more teachers). Even those education programs whose stated purpose is to improve the education delivery system, and **not** the percentage

[23] *"Fresh Start in Africa: A Report on the First Five Years of the Development Fund for Africa," USAID, March 1993.*

of primary school educational attainment,[24] have included student-level impacts among their EOPS. And, as noted above, API indicators are primarily defined in terms of student-level outcomes.

3.4.5 The Time Factor

Timing, consequently, becomes a critical factor in whether a program can produce the desired and/or expected results at the student level to clearly demonstrate gains in access, achievement and persistence for all children or targeted groups, such as girls. Most of the USAID education programs are in countries where the entire education system must be adjusted or rebuilt, not merely improved at the margin or perfected (as is arguably the case in Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland). Creating operational services within the education ministry, formulating policy, and developing and executing the programs to carry it out can easily take longer than the five year timeframe USAID generally allows its education projects.[25]

For these system and structural improvements to be felt at the school level and expressed in improved student outcomes may take even longer for several reasons. Methodologically, a number of years is needed to show increments of change. It is likely that there will be a "lumpiness" in student-level gains. Information lags -- the time it takes students or their parents to learn about and take advantage of improved educational services -- can contribute to the uneven growth in student outcomes, particularly in areas of low educational demand. Quality improvements at the student level are particularly difficult to capture in a shorter time period, as a full cohort progression through the system is often needed to actually measure (and not project) gains in terms of persistence, completion and promotion.

The need for a generous timeframe is appreciated <u>in principle</u>. As noted in more than one Africa Bureau document, "...systems change requires a longer-term view and a willingness to accept medium term impacts that are indirect and intermediate, rather than direct and household level."[26] <u>In fact</u>, however, either external pressure to show results or lack of appreciation of what a longer-term timeframe really means conspires to force programs into scrambling after people-level impacts prematurely and to ignore the importance of intermediate impacts or process indicators. While there appears to be a greater appreciation for a longer timeframe of assistance in the design of many of the later-developed education programs which often refer to several program phases, the early programs were conceived as a single phase of three-to-five years. The Guinea Program Assistance Approval Document (PAAD), the third program to be developed, explicitly cites "imperceptible student-level impacts" at the end of three years as a critical issue affecting program success or, more appropriately, perceptions of program success.[27]

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[24] *Benin, Botswana, Guinea, Lesotho, Mali, and South Africa.*

[25] *This can be further retarded in those cases where institutional development relies on external technical assistance. For most of the current AID education programs, a year has elapsed between Program Assistance Approval Document (PAAD) approval and fielding the first long-term technical assistant.*

[26] *USAID, 1992.*

[27] *Despite this cautionary note and the caveats included in AID documents about longer timelines, the recent mid-term evaluation based much of its assessment on the absence of student-level impacts.*

> *"The Mission realizes that both the Congressional earmark and Development Fund for Africa legislation seek quality improvements in basic literacy, numeracy and primary education...It is precisely in these areas, however, that the least progress will be seen during the three years of USAID assistance to Guinea. The PASE[28] is directed towards these ends, but the magnitude and complexity of the anticipated reforms along with need for associated social and economic changes mean that in the short run donor assistance will serve mainly to establish a framework within which expanded enrollments among boys and girls and improved efficiency and quality in primary education will be possible." (1990)*

Nonetheless, six out of the seven EOPS for this 3-5 year program are student outcome indicators. The latest NPA program to be designed, Uganda, may reflect a growing appreciation of the time factor: it enjoys a ten-year time horizon -- due to prolonged efforts by the program designers to convince the Mission that a strategic intervention of more than 2-3 years, as originally envisaged, was required.

3.4.6 Unclear Linkages and Imperfect Knowledge

An underlying assumption of the NPA approach is that clear linkages exist between system-level reforms -- in resource allocation, policies and institutions -- and improved outcomes at the student-level, such as increased enrollment, persistence and achievement. Much of the analytical work in international education in the 1980s attempted to "unbundle" the package of educational inputs associated with positive student outcomes and assign relative weights and investment priorities, using a production function approach (Heyneman and Loxley, Fuller, Lockheed et al, etc.). The reasoning behind NPA in education is that, given the primacy of the public sector in African educational systems, central planning, policy and resource improvements can create a favorable environment for lasting and sustainable school-level reform. While this is arguably true, there are two practical limitations inherent in this somewhat linear, "trickle-down" logic.[29]

First, educational systems have been described as systems that have "loose-tight coupling." They are characterized by the absence of tight hierarchical linkages among its operating units or divisions, and particularly between central administration and the school itself (Weick, Bidwell). Particularly in the developing country context, ministries of education often exhibit a lack of communication, coordination and supervision among departments, regional and field units, and schools.

The best efforts at reform of ministries of education often end with policy declarations and the formulation of a set of rules and regulations accompanying the policy. However, real change -- that which will result in improved student performance or system efficiency -- is stymied by inattention to implementation issues, such as advising appropriate personnel of both the policy or procedural change and providing them with the proper incentives and guidance on what to do to realize policy objectives. The "distance" -- both literally and figuratively -- between administration and the school in developing countries is immense. The control exercised over regional and school personnel is weak. Policy-makers rarely take into account that each school is largely a self-contained, autonomous social system which can be highly insulated from outside influence. Without special attention to the actual targets and beneficiaries of educational reform, policies to improve access, efficiency and equity can be halted at the school door.

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[28] *PASE: Programme d'Ajustement Sectoriel de l'Education or Education Sector Reform Program.*

[29] *The following discussion derives, in part, from Chapman, D and L. Mahlck (eds.),* From Data to Action: Information systems in Educational Planning, *1992.*

However, at the same time, rigid, culturally-defined roles of behavior and ways of doing things, particular teacher behavior at the classroom level, are highly resistent to change and are tightly coupled.

Second, the school and classroom factors that positively affect student outcomes are not fully understood. Controversy surrounds the list of inputs to improve school quality. Debate concerning student achievement centers on the relative effectiveness of textbooks/instructional materials, pre- versus in-service teacher training, instructional supervision, etc. Nor are the strategies to put school improvement elements in place fully developed. For example, economic factors are almost universally recognized as a barrier to girls' educational participation, but there is little guidance and even less experience in crafting a workable program to offset direct and opportunity costs of schooling.

In a system which has "loose-tight coupling," good intentions can easily go awry and sets of inputs can behave in unpredictable ways because of the way changes are perceived and implemented. Yet as ministries of education and educators struggle to find the effective combination of inputs, procedures and strategies that can unlock the black box of the classroom, the time clock and inexorable pressure for national student-level impact push on.

3.4.7 Problems of Attribution

If change occurs during the period that an USAID education program is in effect, can it be attributed to USAID support and intervention? The question of attribution or "credit" is one that is perplexing evaluators and confounding impact analysis. As discussed above, the loosely articulated and partially understood linkages in an education system make it impossible to ascribe clear cause-and-effect associations between educational inputs and student outcomes. Likewise, the process of education reform, which experience teaches us to view as a holistic one, is not amenable to strict control and management, which allows impact to be easily tracked and imputed. In addition, the characteristics and nature of the NPA modality impede direct ascription of impact to USAID input.

USAID's NPA programs in education -- as expressed by performance conditions and technical assistance -- are primarily aimed at systemic policy and structural reform, rather than at classroom interventions more directly associated with student-level outcomes. This emphasis derives from DFA objectives of contributing to lasting and sustainable change, which -- in turn -- calls for developing a sound and efficient delivery system, as a pre-condition for better education and an improved learning environment. In those educational systems in Africa which must undergo drastic restructuring to become effective, it is difficult for ministries to do everything at once, much less tightly supervise the way reform takes place at the various tiers of the system. For an educational system to produce desired student outcomes, change must simultaneously take place at many different levels. For example, for textbooks to reach students and improve learning, the curriculum may have to be revised, the books written and produced, the systems put in place for their purchase/delivery/storage, and teacher training in their use provided. Resource and capacity constraints will undoubtedly limit what a ministry (and donors) can do at one time. Consequently, while sufficient time is a necessary factor in producing results, the conceptual distance between, for example, developing a line-item based budget or allocating more funds for non-salary recurrent expenditures or rationalizing teacher remuneration, and improved student performance is great. Given the scope for intervening and other contributing variables, our ability to identify and track direct effects is limited.

By definition, NPA consists predominately of **budgetary support** to governments conditioned on fulfillment of performance criteria. In theory, changes in the education system and results in student outcomes are "plausibly" attributed to USAID financing. Nonetheless, there is a tendency to force the issue of attribution and attempt to link these impacts directly to U.S. dollars. Program evaluators seem to be most comfortable with the projectized aspects of USAID education programs where results can be directly linked and ascribed to USAID resources. In fact, in one country a mid-term evaluation criticized the NPA budgetary support approach precisely because it was impossible to develop an USAID dollar:reform calculus.

Finally, the NPA principle of **donor coordination** complicates directly crediting USAID with specific reforms and student outcomes. The idea is that, united, donors can exert more influence and leverage greater change by governments and their ministries of education than the individual donor assistance program could do. Complementary programs and "pooled" budgetary support funds will provide significant impetus and incentive to reform. As is obvious, joint and contributing donor programs make it exceedingly difficult to disaggregate influence and attribute change to one particular donor. When multiple donors are providing budgetary support a single donor can hardly be selected as uniquely responsible for change. Likewise, when one donor is providing budgetary support and another technical assistance, it is not fair to attribute improvements to the technical assistance whose impact on the system may have been made possible by funds leveraged through budgetary support. For example, a UNESCO textbook designer may be credited with the development of a new series of textbooks, but it may have been USAID and World Bank budgetary support funds which allowed the government to fund the textbook development unit, develop the production and delivery systems and fund the purchase of new books. A holistic approach to educational reform and donor coordination may simultaneously promote educational reform and rob the individual donor of its glory.

Donors also notoriously suffer from myopia in the scramble for credit. Although the dollar figures going to education in Africa are unprecedented in USAID's history, these do not begin to cover the cost of operating educational systems. Even when coupled with other donor contributions, the relative amount of external financing as a percentage of overall recurrent educational resources is small, ten to twenty percent. In view of these figures, it is hard to argue that impact can be significantly attributed to any donor.

This chapter has examined the types of data that should exist and the mechanisms by which impact data is reported. It has also noted some of the limitations faced in documenting and providing convincing proof of education program impact. The following chapter, using the typology of impacts presented above, delineates and describes the system- and student-level impacts of USAID's education programs to date.

TABLE 3.5
End of Project Status Indicators (EOPS) from Logical Frameworks

Country	ACCESS	EQUITY	EFFICIENCY	QUALITY	SUSTAINABILITY
Mali *Purpose:* *To improve the efficiency of the Govt. of Mali's basic education system.*			• 10% per pupil cost reduction at the primary level and 45% at higher levels • Reduction in number of years of schooling required for one primary school graduate from 24 to 17.		• Parent/Teacher associations receive grant funds from the government's matching grant fund
Ghana *Purpose:* *To strengthen the policy and institutional frameworks required to assure a quality, accessible, equitable, and financially sustainable Ghanaian primary education system.*		• Equity Improvement (EI) Policy in place; EI Program being implemented.	• Policy for increased decentralization of MOE in place; MOE financial, managerial and operational authority decentralized. • Education system planning, management and supervision significantly strengthened.	• 90% of primary schools have qualified teachers and basic teaching materials. • Institutionalized student achievement testing system being administered. • Policy and plan in place for increasing the percentage of primary school expenditures spent on teaching materials to 6%.	• Adequate proportional expenditures for primary education funded entirely from MOE's own recurrent budget excluding donor funding.
Guinea *Purpose:* *To achieve a level of staff and organizational performance within MOE which promotes a continuously improving quality of schooling to a continuously increasing percentage of the primary school age cohort and to ensure equitable access to girls and rural children, through support of the implementation of the National Educational Policy of the government.*	• 3% increase in primary school enrollment by 1992. • 30% admission rate by 1992.	• No decline in % (30%) of girls' enrollment through 1992. • 5% increase in enrollment in rural areas by 1992.	• Target strategies and implementation budget plans to improve equity, access and efficiency of primary schooling being developed and monitored on a regular basis by Ministry of Education (MOE) staff. • Increase completion rate (40%) to reach 72% by 2000. • Reduce years of instruction/ or adequate (16.1) to reach 8.2 by 2000.		

Country	ACCESS	EQUITY	EFFICIENCY	QUALITY	SUSTAINABILITY
Malawi *Purpose:* *To increase girls' attainment in basic education.*		• *Increase percentage of girls in each standard.*			
Benin *Purpose:* *To institute an effective, efficient, and equitable primary education system that is sustainable.*	• Gross primary enrollment rates will attain 78% nationally, and will continue to increase and meet targeted levels in every region.		• Average repetition rates in grades 1-5 will drop below 15%, and will not exceed 20% in any region. • Average drop-out rates in grades 1-5 will fall below 15%. • The proportion of 6th grade entrants sitting the CEP will increase to 90% (from approximately 80%).	• Proportion of 3rd and 6th grade completers demonstrating mastery of core educational competencies will exceed the baseline measure. • National target of 75% for the % of students in FQL schools is met, and regional FQL targets are met. • Average student-teacher ratio will range between 40 and 50 to 1, with an interregional and urban/rural range of no more than 8 to 1.	
Namibia *Purpose:* *To make a more effective, efficient and sustainable basic education system accessible to more Namibian children.*		• A reduction of approximately 50% in the inequalities of public resource expenditures per learner. • A reduction of approximately 50% in the inequalities of learner/teacher ratios per learner.		• X% increase in the percentage of students attending BQS schools (target to be set by tranche 4). • A new, learner-centered, coherent, balanced and relevant curriculum will be in place throughout the basic education system.	
Uganda *Purpose 1:* *Improve the quality of classroom instruction to enhance students' acquisition of basic skills.* *Purpose 2:* *Improve the efficiency of local level education administration, management, and accountability.* *Purpose 3:* *Reduce inequities in access to and persistence in primary education.*		• Rise in girls' persistence rates.	• Teachers' salaries paid in time to teachers actually teaching.	• Evidence of improved classroom teaching. • Evidence of continuous assessment in the classroom. • Evidence of resources flowing to the schools.	

Country	ACCESS	EQUITY	EFFICIENCY	QUALITY	SUSTAINABILITY
Swaziland *Purpose:* *To improve the quality and efficiency of basic education.*			• Repetition and dropout rates reduced by 30%. • Logistics management in schools improved as indicated by an increase in timely availability of a standard set of commodities. • MOE using empirically generated data to make policy and planning decisions.	• Effectiveness of instruction improved as indicated by student test scores. • Headmasters engaged in improved instructional leadership as indicated by improved student test scores and an increase in the number of primary schools offering home economics and agriculture courses. • Teachers actively engaged in instructional activities at least 90% of their classroom time. • High quality and appropriately trained Swazi students and school teachers as indicated by: (a) practical subjects studied and basic skills mastered; and (b) English Language fluency.	
South Africa *SABER Purpose:* *Increased development and use of innovative educational models and policy systems which improve the quality of primary education for historically disadvantaged South Africans.*		• Increased participation of male and female primary school students.	• Increased persistence rate of male and female primary school students.	• Increased percent of quality and quantity of student achievement at the end of primary schooling.	
Botswana *Purpose:* *To enhance and increase the capacity of the MOE and consolidate a nine year basic education program.*			• Enhanced organizational and staff capacity among curriculum developers, teachers, evaluators, researchers, and planners.	• Integrated basic education curriculum. • Improved management of the curriculum development process and greater coordination with teacher education.	

SECTION 4: IMPACTS

4.1 *INTRODUCTION*

What has been A.I.D.'s experience with the basic education programs in Africa? Has the NPA form of assistance, which forms sixty-six percent of the total aid to basic education, had an impact? What is that impact? This section of the report examines these questions. By impact we mean any significant change in policies and resource allocations, institutions, programs, school conditions and teaching, and the outcomes of these changes on school access, attainment and learning achievement of children.

Although our principal focus here is the impact of NPA, we also examine those parts of country programs which are funded through the project mode, as well as those countries where all of USAID support for basic education is through projects (Swaziland, South Africa and Botswana).

The first NPA program began in 1989 in Mali, and Uganda's program only became fully operational this year. None of the USAID programs has been operational long enough to have leveraged major systemic change in terms of children's learning. On the other hand, the USAID assistance has had a marked effect at the policy and institutional levels, and in some cases at the school level. Over the next three years we should begin to see more evidence of increased children's school participation and learning gains.

In no way does this paper mean to imply that USAID's education program caused the indicated changes. This report does contend that USAID's programs contribute to and support those inputs and changes that affect children's access, attainment, and learning.

4.2 *PEOPLE-LEVEL IMPACTS/OUTCOMES*

Although it is too early in the operations of USAID-assisted programs to measure or track system-wide changes in children's learning achievement, changes in the areas of access and equity are evident in five countries:

ACCESS & EQUITY: [30]

Mali

- *Information on the impact of the Mali program is forthcoming.*

Ghana

- *From 1976 to 1986 there was stagnation in primary school gross enrollment rates. However, with the introduction of the educational reform in 1987, enrollments have again begun to accelerate, and have grown by 23 percent since 1986/87. Gross enrollment rates have increased from 67 percent in 1985/86 to 81 percent in 1991/92.*

- *Intake to P1 has grown from 72 percent of the estimated six-year-old population in 1987/88 to 83 percent in 1990/91. In 1991/92 there was a drop of 4.2 percent in P1 enrollments from 1990/91 which has been attributed to unauthorized locally imposed fees.*

[30] *Countries will be listed chronologically, according to the opening dates of their NPA Programs (see Table 2.1).*

Guinea

- *Access to primary education has increased by over 30 percent since the inception of the government's reform program. The primary school gross enrollment ratio has progressed from 28 percent in 1989/90, to 32 percent in 1991/92, and to 37 percent in 1992/93. Approximately 72,000 students have been added to the system during this time period.*

- *A larger percentage of children are entering first grade. First grade admissions have increased by nearly 35 percent, rising from 35 percent of the six-year-old population in 1991/92 to 47 percent in 1992/93. In 1992/93, over one-fifth (23 percent) of primary students were newly enrolled. The growth rate for new enrollments between 1989 and 1993 was 67 percent, with the fastest growth taking place in rural regions and for girls (32 percent v. 17 percent for boys). (Discrepancies between World Bank and government of Guinea data.)*

- *The girls' gross enrollment rate in primary school has increased from 19% to 23% during the period of reform. Furthermore, the growth rate of girls' enrollment has outfaced boys' in three of the four rural regions by up to 8 percentage points.*

- *The highest growth rates in enrollments have taken place in predominately rural areas. While the GER growth rate in urban Conakry between 1989/90 and 1991/92 was 2.6 percent, the rural regions of Middle Guinea and Upper Guinea reached 23 percent, respectively. However, the more developed Lower Guinea at 17 percent outfaced growth in the rural Forest Region at 14 percent.*

Lesotho

- *During the period of 1986-1990, enrollment at primary schools increased by 10 percent, and the number of teachers by 12 percent. Despite the fact that enrollment increased in absolute terms, the proportion of the 6- to 12-year-old age group enrolled remained static, given the rapid population growth.*

Malawi

- *The Government of Malawi fee waivers for all standard one and two students caused the enrollment rate to rise dramatically -- as much as 60 percent -- during the first year of implementation, although almost half of the increased percentage of students dropped out in the middle of the year when the remaining fees became due.*

- *The government began promoting girls' education by eliminating all of the fees for non-repeating girls in standards two through eight in 1992-93. Early indications show increases in the enrollment of girls and decreases in the number of girls dropping out of school.*

Namibia

- *Since independence there has been a 15 percent increase in first grade enrollment, an 11 percent increase in primary school enrollment, a 15 percent increase in the number of teachers, and a 10 percent increase in the number of schools.*

In Mali USAID has supported the development of an Education Management Information System (EMIS), but no systemic changes in access are evident. In Benin and Uganda the EMIS system is incomplete, and unable at this time to report system changes in access and equity.

4.3 *BUDGETARY, EFFICIENCY, EQUITY AND QUALITY IMPACTS*

Within each of these areas -- budget, efficiency, equity and quality – we will look at the impacts at the policy, institutional and school levels.

A. BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS

USAID basic education programs in Africa have made a major contribution to policy reform. African governments' decisions to increase resource allocations to the basic education system are the most immediate and dramatic evidence of this impact on policy. NPA policy dialogue has also been highly successful in targeting specific education sector budgeting reforms. In each of the programs conditionalities have identified the percentage of funds to be allocated to the education sector, and within the sector, the amount to be allocated to basic education. In six of the eight countries there are explicit conditionalities related to a proportion of the basic education budget for non-salary expenditures, primarily for instructional materials.

Building technical capacity in the areas of budgeting and accounting has also been a major component of several programs. Activities in this area include developing budgets, creating effective accounting procedures, and increasing the capacity to monitor and track funds, equipment and materials.

POLICY:

Ghana

- *Ghana's record on education financing has been commendable. With economic growth holding at almost 5 percent per annum, and the share of government expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product held at 14 percent, the Ministry of Education has continued to receive just over 40 percent of the total government recurrent budget, with primary education receiving 44 percent of the Ministry of Education budget, and 4.5 percent going to instructional materials.*

Guinea

- *The Government of Guinea has exceeded the targets in all categories of the policy reform objectives of the reform program, including:*
  (1) increasing education's share of the government budget from 14 percent to 25 percent (target: 21 percent);
  (2) increasing primary education's share of the education budget to 36 percent (target: 35 percent); and
  (3) increasing the share of material and operating expenses to 28 percent of the recurrent education budget (target: 18 percent).

Lesotho

- *The first tranche of the reform program, authorized in May 1992, required as a condition an increase of 54.4 percent in the real value of the recurrent budget to education, of which 70 percent of the increase was allocated to primary education. In fact, government increased the MOE recurrent budget allocation by 55.8 percent. Most of the large budgetary increase is attributable to an overall increase in government wages, and the inclusion of teachers within that increase.*

Malawi

- *The share of resources allocated to primary education from the overall education budget has increased from 42.8 percent in 1990 to 56.7 percent in 1992.*

Benin

- *There has been a significant increase in the share of resources allocated (and expended) on non-salary items for primary education, from 2.3 percent of the total education budget in 1991 to 5.5 percent in 1993. Likewise, primary education's share of the total education budget increased from 48.1 percent in 1991 to 56.8 percent in 1993.*

INSTITUTIONAL:

Guinea

- *Major gains have been made in the area of budgeting and accounting, such as the creation of a detailed line item-based budget corresponding to management requirements of more detailed attribution of allocations and expenditures, and minimizing off-budget expenditures. The MOE budget was lauded by the Ministry of Planning and Finance as the most detailed and rational budget presented by government ministries.*

- *The government has developed and implemented a needs-based budgeting process responding to annual action plans submitted by division and levels within the MOE.*

- *A special budget office has been created within the Financial and Administrative Affairs Directorate to track expenditures and facilitate the devolution of financial management responsibility to the prefecture level.*

- *MOE financial field offices have been trained in accounting, budget preparation, procurement, materials management, etc. in keeping with new responsibilities.*

- *Annual action plans are now developed by a different division with the MOE and its regional and district offices, and are prepared according to specific budget categories.*

Lesotho

- *A financial advisor has conducted extensive on-the-job-training, and this has enabled the finance office to introduce cost-center based budgeting for the next fiscal year. A critical constraint is that the Accountant General has not seconded sufficient staff (there is an overall government freeze on additional employment, related to International Monetary Fund conditions), although the required positions have been created.*

Benin

- *A more transparent budget nomenclature, with more detailed categorization of expenditures and disaggregation by region, has been developed and implemented.*

- *An independent external review of government financial management procedures and practices has been conducted and initial improvements in expenditure tracking have been implemented.*

Namibia

- *The Ministry of Education and Culture has produced a report titled "Basic Education Reform in Namibia -- Costs, Resources and Sustainability: Projections for 1993-2002." This document represents a very useful start in understanding what it will cost to maintain the education system that is being planned for Namibia. It is a modular, largely spreadsheet-based, projection model that uses all available information to produce projections of expenditure levels on a variety of assumptions about the trajectory of the education system over the time period.*

SCHOOL:

Guinea

- *The MOE school construction program which has successfully incorporated a community support component into its model in which the community contributes 15 percent of construction costs in cash or in kind (materials and labor). No new construction has been delayed for lack of community participation. This component has proved more successful than the public finance component, which has experienced delays and mismanagement by the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and MOE.*

B. *EFFICIENCY OF ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT*

POLICY:

Providing more resources to the education sector will accomplish little if funds are not used effectively and efficiently. Policy dialogue has focussed on the management of reform, strategies for building institutional capacity, and measures for redeploying staff so as to put greater effort on improving the quality of classroom teaching.

Support for policies to reorganize and rationalize ministries of education has been a major component of most of the programs. Emphasis has been placed on reducing ministry personnel and increasing teaching personnel without massive hiring.

Another important area of policy dialogue is decentralizing the control of resource allocation and monitoring. In the past five years there has been a thrust to diffuse the control of the central ministry and provide for greater decision-making authority at the regional and community levels. In each of the countries, responsibilities that have been removed to the regional or subnational level include budget preparation, technical support, in-service training and supervision of schools, financial management and expenditure control.

Ghana

- *In 1991, the government approved a new set of staffing norms for primary schools, with a target pupil/teacher ratio of 45:1. With the implementation of these norms, the pupil/teacher ratio should rise rapidly to around 40:1 in 1994/95, but thereafter continue to rise at a much slower rate.*

- *A decentralization policy, which increased the number of staff members and the amount of authority residing in the Regional and District Offices, was adopted by the government in November 1992.*

Guinea

- *The Government's initiation of the reform program was accompanied by a major reorganization of the Ministry of Education, which established a new structure supportive of pre-university education, rationalized staffing norms, and delegated more responsibility/authority to regional and district offices. These changes were decreed by statute and have been implemented. In 1992, in recognition of the primacy of primary education, the government created the Ministry of Pre-University Education and Technical/Vocational Training.*

- *Approximately 120 central Ministry of Education personnel have been redeployed to classroom teaching positions.*

- *To optimize use of the existing teaching force, the MOE adopted a policy of redeployment of teaching personnel. This policy includes reassignment of surplus secondary teachers to primary classrooms and, similarly, university teachers to secondary classrooms.*

- *The government developed low-cost construction norms for primary school classrooms which rely on the use of local materials, private contractors and community contributions. These norms govern all donor capital development assistance.*

Lesotho

- *The Ministry of Education has been reorganized into four main divisions to streamline and decentralize decision-making and management.*

Malawi

- *A new policy, designed to increase the efficiency of the educational system by reducing extremely high repetition rates in the last standard of primary school, was implemented for the 1993-94 school year. The policy sets new requirements for admission to secondary school: 75% of the students accepted cannot have repeated the eighth standard; 20% can have repeated only once; and 5% can have repeated two or more times. The government plans to initiate implementation of policies for reducing repetition for standards one through seven in 1993/94.*

- *In order to reform the highly centralized educational system in Malawi, a new policy promoting decentralization was implemented by the government in 1992.*

Benin

- *Authority and responsibility for planning and budget preparation, technical support and supervision of schools, financial management and expenditure control have been given to regional education offices.*

Namibia

- *Eleven separate education authorities, each defined in terms of a specific ethnic group it was designed to serve, have been integrated into one single, unified educational system.*

- *Six Regional administrative authorities have been established.*

- *The Ministry of Education and Culture has developed a Cabinet-approved plan for rationalization of the entire administrative structure of the Ministry that will be put into effect during early 1994.*

- *Districts located within the former ethnically-defined Homelands have been granted new legal status, which will allow financing for teacher's homes in those areas.*

Uganda

- *Textbook/supplies procurement system has been privatized.*

INSTITUTIONAL:

Activities to strengthen management efficiency have included support for strategic and operational planning; introducing training and staff development activities; strengthening ministry capacity to collect, process, analyze and report information to improve planning and management decisions.

An activity closely linked to planning has been the effort to obtain reliable and timely reporting of data in the sector so that administrative decisions are supported by demonstrated (statistical) need. One of the most significant accomplishments at the institutional level to date is the development of an Education Management Information System (EMIS) which provides information to educational planners, donor agencies, etc. and creates better links between programming and budgeting.

Creating an EMIS requires strengthening mechanisms for annual reporting of statistical data in addition to the installation of a computerized database system which assists in compiling, analyzing and reporting the information. Emphasis has also been placed on analyzing and reporting data that is disaggregated by gender, rural/urban, ethnicity, etc. which can provide a more holistic assessment of sector information including teacher classload, qualifications, attrition, etc. and student rates of access, drop-out, and repetition.

Mali

- *A management information system is in place and is making educational planning more transparent and a team of Malians has been trained in how to design and implement a monitoring and evaluation system.*

Ghana

- *XXX percent of the new Regional staff members required to fully implement the decentralization policy of the Ministry have been hired and a number of important functions were shifted to the Regional Offices during 1992 and 1993.*

Guinea

- *In 1992/93, the MOE redeployed 1,826 teachers from secondary school to primary classrooms, such that the proportion of primary school classrooms in rural areas increased from 20 to 27 percent. Each re-assigned teacher received appropriate retraining.*

- *A Technical Secretariat was created as a temporary entity outside the ministerial hierarchy (soon to incorporated into the Secretary General's office) to provide technical support to line divisions within the ministry in carrying out reform activities. The Technical Secretariat advises the Steering Committee, composed of all MOE division directors, and which is responsible for overseeing implementation of reform activities. The progress of the educational reform is monitored by an interministerial Tracking Committee, whose members include Ministry of Planning and Finance representatives.*

- *In 1989, the MOE initiated a school mapping exercise to target priority areas for school expansion, accompanied by training of district offices in the use of school map data for planning. This resulted in a school census and complete database on the schools.*

- *Improved data collection procedures and regularized data reporting resulting from the school mapping exercise have improved the content, preparation and timeliness of the annual statistical handbook. A recent evaluation's criticism was limited to population data analysis and not the viability of school data. To date, however, most data analysis has been limited to descriptive statistics and used in reports to donors.*

Lesotho

- *The MOE has developed a restructuring plan to improve educational management which has been approved by the government and is now being implemented. The plan calls for the reorganization of the MOE into four main divisions to streamline and decentralize decision-making and management. A major emphasis is on the creation of an effective field structure at the district level (supported by the appointment of seventy District Resource Teachers).*

- *Lesotho has one of the better educational statistical information systems in Africa. It has produced a comprehensive 1991 report, and with the held of the Institute for International Education Planning, it prepared an analysis of the past ten years of educational development in tables and graphs using key indicators. However, in 1992, with the move to decentralize functions to the district level, there was a decline in the number of schools reporting -- largely due to the lack of effective follow-up from the district office. This has delayed the production of the 1992 education statistics. The national statistics office is taking steps to rectify this by strengthening orientation and training at the district level.*

Malawi

- *In order to assist in the reduction of primary school repetition rates, all primary students were registered during the 1992/93 school year and the registration data collected has been processed.*

- *The new government policy limiting the number of standard eight repetitions for students who are accepted into secondary school was implemented for the 1993-94 school year.*

- *Private sector contracting for the distribution of textbooks has been implemented and is expected to create a more efficient system.*

- *Inspectors for primary schools, who will be working on a new administrative level between the local District and the three large Regions, were hired in 1993. As part of the same decentralization process, some of the financial functions and accounting activities that had previously been carried out only in the central Ministry have been relocated in the Regional and District Offices.*

Benin

- *A functional audit of the Ministry has been carried out with specific recommendations made for new procedures, practices and structures. Action plans were developed for all the components of the Ministry's primary education reform program including: development of new competency-based curricula for primary grades one through six, development of new textbooks and teaching materials based on those curricula, establishment of a criteria-referenced*

system of student assessment, improvement of teacher in-service training and support, definition and implementation of the Fundamental Quality Level-based approach to planning, establishment of an EMIS, institutional reform and reorganization of the Ministry, enhancement of girls' and rural children's access, improvement of budget procedures, overall increase in access, administrative training, and increased public/community participation.

- *The MOE has launched efforts to establish an education management information system including installation of computers in central and regional education offices and an inventory of information needs.*

- *Reform objectives and action plan strategies have been disseminated to regional administrators and education sector stakeholders through the Lokossa workshop.*

- *A single planning unit is responsible for managing the reform as a permanent structure within the Ministry hierarchy.*

- *A Human Resources Directorate has been established to develop more rational and efficient assignment and employment of sector personnel.*

- *School statistics for 1990/91 and 1991/92 have been compiled and published as the baseline against which impact of reform efforts can be evaluated.*

Namibia

- *The Ministry of Education and Culture is in the early stages of the process of developing a comprehensive information system. Concerted effort during the past year has produced the collection and reporting of the 15th School-Day Study and Annual Education Census and piloting of the data collection in two regions leading to lessons learned for further regionalization and the implementation of a school mapping process.*

- *The Information, Statistics and Data Division of the Ministry of Education has made impressive progress in terms of data collection, processing, and, especially, integrating educational data with geographic and demographic information and other information in a Geographic Information System. They have:*
  (1) completed the baseline learner assessment;
  (2) provided staff training offered in developing, setting, and grading the IGCSE; and
  (3) provided training for three staff members in educational planning and policy analysis.

- *The schools with the worst academic records in each community are being closed and their students transferred to the better schools in that community, a process which will decrease the duplication of facilities created by the apartheid system on the local level and increase the efficiency of the total educational system.*

SCHOOL:

Guinea

- *The redeployment of surplus secondary teachers has permitted the opening of (x) new primary classrooms.*

- *The global repetition rate has fallen from 23% in 1989 to 20% in 1991. During the same period, the repetition rate for girls declined even more, from 28% to 23%.*

C. *EQUITY*

POLICY:

Enhancing equity is an objective of nearly every program, with much of the policy dialogue focussing on increasing access and retention for girls. Programs such as Benin, Ghana, Guinea and Namibia introduce equity issues targeting other disadvantaged groups including underserved communities in rural areas. Policy changes to enhance equity include fee waivers for girls, school mapping and building plans targeted to underserved areas, non-punitive pregnancy policies, repetition policies, age entry requirements, and active promulgation of equity principles through social marketing campaigns.

Ghana

- *A pilot equity project has been implemented under the Ministry of Education. It has been designed to assess strategies for upgrading the quality of schools in traditionally disadvantaged areas and regions and to encourage increased enrollment and retention of children in these more remote areas. The project involves 45 schools participating in eight different activities, which include fee waivers for girls, provision of free textbooks, incentives for teachers to work in remote areas (bicycles and motorbikes), building of housing for head teachers, establishment of libraries for students, incentives for increased community participation, attendance record competitions among schools and furniture for students.*

Guinea

- *Improving educational opportunities for girls and rural children is a goal of the education reform program in Guinea. Studies were called for to develop baseline data on which to base later strategy and program development. Thus far the government has:*
  - *(1) targeted all school construction for rural and disadvantaged areas;*
  - *(2) provided incentive payments to teachers who accept posts in rural schools; and*
  - *(3) eliminated the punitive policy of automatic expulsion for pregnant school girls.*

Malawi

- *The government is promoting girls' education by eliminating all of the fees for non-repeating girls in standards two through eight.*

- *The curriculum is being revised to make it gender-sensitive, which includes insuring that all curricula in standards three to eight become gender-appropriate, providing supplementary gender-appropriate curriculum materials for the newly revised standards one and two materials, and developing gender appropriate materials and in-service teacher training.*

- *A new policy regarding pregnant students has been drafted by the Task Force on Girls' Education.*

Benin

- *Definition of the Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) of primary schooling has been adopted as a framework to ensure equitable allocation of resources to marginalized groups in poorer areas and to increase the number of stakeholders who take part in the reform.*

- *School fees for girls have been eliminated.*

Namibia

- *Among the policy statements included in the new constitution written at the time of independence were the declarations that education is a constitutional right and that no school may deny access to students based on race, color or creed.*

- *Primary education was also made compulsory and free by the new constitution.*

- *The former policy, requiring that pregnant students be permanently expelled from school, has been reformed to allow pregnant girls to return to a new school within the same region where they previously attended school after the child is born.*

- *Schools with the lowest student-teacher ratios, usually the formerly all-White schools, are required to admit additional students to adjust their ratios to the level of other schools in the same community, usually formerly Colored schools and/or schools formerly for any of the various Black ethnic groups. Schools refusing to admit these new students are closed.*

INSTITUTIONAL:

A number of countries have approached the development of strategies for enhancing girls' education, and reaching underserved populations, by designing and carrying out studies to identify the most critical factors that keep them out of school. Working groups to develop strategies based on these studies have been organized within ministries.

Mali

- *An office which monitors and tracks girls' enrollment is using allocated resources to provide training workshops for teachers and ministry personnel to increase awareness about the constraints against girls' schooling.*

Guinea

- *An Interministerial Working Group on Equity headed by the Secretary General of Pre-University Education has been established.*

- *The Working Group on Equity has*
  - *(1) prepared an analysis of girls and rural children's educational participation and government policy and programs in order to develop a national plan;*
  - *(2) undertaken a participatory research program which works with 32 villages to improve girls' and rural children's enrollment and persistence rates; and*
  - *(3) planned and initiated a social marketing campaign aimed at increasing girls' enrollment.*

- *The government instituted a program of multigrade classrooms in order to expand intake of students in rural areas. Previously, small rural school would accept new students only every 3-6 years. In three years, this program has grown to include 186 classrooms. Support to multigrade classes consist of teacher training modules, guides and materials, mimeograph machines and school inspection criteria and systems.*

- *The government has undertaken to disaggregate school and student data by gender and rural-urban breakdowns.*

- *The MOE is pioneering a participatory approach to identifying potential interventions to improve educational participation of girls and rural children. Villages throughout Guinea have taken part in discussion of what should and can be done to improve enrollments and persistence. Least often heard groups -- women with school-aged children, parents with non-enrolled children, never-enrolled girls -- have been encouraged to express their views and ideas.*

Malawi

- *A gender unit, located in the Malawi Institute of Education, is actively involved in conducting in-service training courses focussed on gender awareness and sensitivity to gender structuring as well as overseeing the reduction of gender bias in the new curriculum materials being produced.*

- *A workshop on policies effecting girls' education was held in early 1993. The recommendations from that workshop and the plan of action produced there have led to the creation of a Task Force on Girls' Education.*

Namibia

- *Eleven, ethnically-defined Ministries of Education, each with different access to resources, have been combined into a single MOE.*

- *The government has set up a new Department of Women's Affairs within the Office of the President. The Ministry of Education and Culture has begun to address gender issues through a series of training sessions of varying duration for most of its staff.*

- *Most of the underqualified teachers are in the north; this is also where more than 50 percent of the students are located. To address this problem the Ministry of Education and Culture has taken the following steps: developed a five year in-service training program, which will be assisted by UNESCO; begun to train instructors and supervisory personnel; created teacher centers; developed methods to increase language proficiency of teachers; and devised a standardized teacher training program for new teachers.*

D. *QUALITY*

POLICY:

In 1991 USAID developed the ***Fundamental Quality Level*** *(FQL)* approach to improving the quality of basic education. The FQL describes the content and process for developing a country-specific system for monitoring and improving school quality and equity. FQL is a set of criteria used to assess whether a school is providing the fundamental prerequisites for

student learning to take place. Two countries have begun to implement the FQL approach to planning, while others are clearly influenced by the concept. Strategies designed to attain fundamental quality schooling include upgrading teaching, providing basic inputs (textbooks, desks, etc.) and improving supervision.

Ghana

- *Government is planning to increase the output from the teacher training colleges from 6,000 per annum to 8,000 per annum within the next two years so as to largely eliminate the "untrained" teachers -- most of whom have only middle school credentials and a very poor command of English -- by 1995/96.*

Guinea

- *In 1991, the government revised the statutes governing the teaching profession, providing a classification system for teachers and defining career paths and advancement criteria.*

- *The MOE has instituted a comprehensive reform of teacher pre-service training consisting of the development of new curricula and training methodologies.*

Malawi

- *The government has improved its recruitment procedures at its eight teacher training colleges and enrollments have substantially improved. In addition, the three urban teacher training colleges began to admit day students in 1993.*

- *Previously offering a two-year program that included six weeks of practice teaching, the teacher training colleges began in 1993-94 to provide new, one-year programs preceded by one year of practice teaching and distance education. This should double the annual output of trained teachers.*

- *The government has recently substantially increased teachers' salaries, making the profession a more attractive one for new entrants.*

Namibia

- *Five ethnic-based teacher's colleges have been restructured into four integrated colleges.*

- *English is now the only official language in Namibia. The new language policy for the education system that was introduced in 1991 allows education through grade three to be in either a mother tongue or in English and requires that English be introduced as the language of instruction from the fourth grade on. English as medium of instruction was introduced in grades four through seven in math in 1993; it will be gradually introduced in science, geography and history over the next three years.*

INSTITUTIONAL:

Developing the institutional capacity for carrying out curriculum revisions to reflect contemporary learning theory and key social and economic issues has been a major accomplishment in several countries. Other initiatives include providing schools with textbooks and instructional materials, developing systems of pupil assessments, and improving teacher training (both pre-service and in-service) and teacher supervision, and to enhance teacher motivation and morale. These activities have had several objectives:

i) improve classroom instruction by enabling teachers to effectively implement available curricular materials and textbooks;
ii) provide feedback to pupils, teachers and "the system" concerning pupil's learning gains;
iii) upgrade underqualified and/or untrained teachers;
iv) improve the language proficiency of teachers;
v) provide more focussed and effective teacher evaluation; and
vi) provide motivation for teachers through a variety of incentives that include increases in salaries, improved living conditions, opportunities for professional development, etc.

Ghana

- *Short in-service courses for teachers have been organized to enable teachers to better use the new materials now available in the schools. Approximately half of all primary teachers are provided two-week courses each year in English and Mathematics, and all teachers are provided with teacher guides and syllabi.*

- *In 1992 the first draft of the criterion-referenced test (CRT) was pilot tested, and in 1993 a revised criterion-referenced test was given to a 5 percent sample of 6th grade pupils. This was the first national assessment of learning achievement for Ghana.*

Guinea

- *To improve the French and mathematics skills of its primary school teachers, the government has provided in-service training to all primary school teaching personnel (roughly 7,000).*

- *Through provision of equipment, training, and operational budgets, the MOE has reactivated the network of decentralized school inspection, supervision, and support.*

- *With assistance from the French Ministry of Cooperation the MOE has retrained pre-service instructors and provided pedagogical equipment to teacher training colleges.*

Lesotho

- *The 70 new District Resource Teachers, who provide in-service and supervisory support services to primary school teachers, have been trained and posted.*

- *The Lesotho In-service Teacher Education Course, providing untrained teachers with coursework leading to full certification, has been upgraded, and took the first group of 450 teachers in June 1992.*

- *The National Curriculum Center has established a plan for curriculum priorities and a timetable for revisions, subject to the formal approval of the Ministry of Education (as of June 1993). This will require revisions in most of the subject syllabi, for which technical assistance in needed.*

- *New instructional materials for agriculture are completed, and new materials are being developed for mathematics.*

- *A plan for improved management, operation, and staffing at the National Teacher Training College has been developed and is being implemented.*

- *A plan for providing primary schools with basic furnishing is being developed for three pilot districts, based on a survey carried out in 1993. A national school mapping exercise will take place in 1993/94, leading to the supply of school furniture in 1994/95.*

Malawi

- *The government has embarked on its revision of the primary school curriculum. The revised curriculum will have fewer subjects and an approach that involves students more actively and the subject matter will be oriented toward the needs of rural Malawians.*

Benin

- *All first grade teachers have received training in language instruction methodology, and all underqualified teachers seeking professional certification received training preparatory to the professional exam.*

- *The reinforcement of the permanent system of teacher support and in-service training has begun. It involves the reform of criteria for selection and training of Pedagogical Counselors, inspectors and heads of pedagogical units.*

Namibia

- *The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) has developed a Basic Education Teacher Training Program, which was implemented in 1993 in all four colleges. In response to the number of teachers leaving the field, the MEC has developed a new teaching career structure to create uniform conditions of service for all teachers. This teaching structure is now awaiting acceptance by the Public Service Commission.*

- *The National Institute of Educational Development has been established with a focus on curriculum reform and development. The intention is to make education both more relevant and more accessible to the majority of Namibians than was the previous, teacher-centered system, which assumed that many children cannot and will not learn.*

- *In keeping with its goal to democratize curriculum reform, teachers' colleges and schools are now involved in curriculum development. Even in the colleges themselves, the MEC is now encouraging a collegial form of management so that college staff can begin to have a sense of ownership of college programs and activities. College management and curriculum reform before independence were very authoritarian and repressive.*

- *In addition to the accomplishments in curriculum reform, many initiatives are underway and are beginning to show results in the schools even though they must be considered preliminary and vary in importance from one region to another. Emerging strategies include:*
  - *(1) provision of curriculum-related in-service training offered at various sites, including the regional teachers' centers, the head office region, Windhoek, and in the school clusters;*
  - *(2) provision of subject advisory services responsible for subject supervision at the school site;*
  - *(3) recruitment of non-Namibian qualified teachers particularly in critical subjects such as science, English and mathematics;*
  - *(4) deployment of non-Namibian subject specialists to broaden the base of subject-specific support to teachers;*

(5) *design and distribution of new syllabi and textbooks, particularly in grade 4 mathematics and as part of the junior secondary curriculum reform initiative;*

- *In order to improve the quality of school management, the first objective of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) was to train primary school principals through in-service programs. The MEC's plan called for training of trainers in each region, training for principals, evaluation of the workshops, development of a training manual and training for school inspectors. The 25 trainers for the regions have been trained and 300 primary school principals have also been trained.*

SCHOOL:

In describing quality impacts at the *school* level it is not enough to know that in-service teacher training has been provided, or that textbooks have been distributed from central levels; these inputs do not necessarily lead to better teaching or improved learning. What is important is to see a change in the behavior of leadership and teachers in the schools. At this stage we will report the material changes that are taking place. The effect of these inputs should begin to be evident in those countries developing student assessment systems within the next three years.

Ghana

- *After more than a decade of primary schools operating with virtually no textbooks, chalk, or other materials, starting in 1987/88 under a World Bank Project, and then under the USAID reform program, the Ministry has begun to resupply the schools. At the present time it appears that most students have access to up to three textbooks, and all teachers have a minimum of essential supplies. However, evidence suggests that the texts are not being effectively utilized at the classroom level.*

- *In 1989 the proportion of untrained teachers in the primary system was 50 percent. Today, in 1993, that has been reduced to 30 percent.*

Guinea

- *A large share of the additional non-salary expenditures in the education sector has been allocated for the first time to the school level. This has permitted, for the most part, improvements in the physical infrastructure but has also included supplies for teachers, basic pedagogical materials, and the distribution of approximately 520,000 textbooks.*

Lesotho

- *In 1993, the first set of 260 new teachers was assigned to primary schools, and 80 percent of them were assigned to lower grades in needy schools, as confirmed by a report from the school inspectorate.*

- *Additional materials for primary schools in radio English and reading Sesotho for grades 1-3 were partially distributed in 1992/93.*

Malawi

- *The new revised standard one textbooks and teachers' guides were published and distributed in 1992/93; the standard two material has been pilot-tested and will be in school for the 1993/94 school year.*

Benin

- *Syllabi for grades one through six have been published and printed; copies have been distributed to every primary school at the beginning of the 1992-93 school year. No written curricular guide existed prior to this.*

- *Pedagogical kits for teachers have been procured and distributed.*

SECTION 5: ANALYSIS OF USAID EXPERIENCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

What does the description of the program impacts in Section 4 tell us about USAID's support to education programs? What have we learned that can inform our future design, management and evaluation of support to basic education? This section of the report provides a framework for addressing these questions.

USAID's total disbursement in support of basic education in eleven African countries averages approximately $53.2 million annually. Two thirds of that, or $35 million, is in the form of non-project assistance. To put this amount in perspective, in terms of the leverage on the improvement of basic education systems, the total government recurrent expenditure on basic education in these eleven countries was $_??__ in 1991/92. Total USAID contribution to the annual budget is (less than five percent of total expenditure??).

Ghana provides a good example of the relationship between USAID's inputs and impacts in basic education. The USAID Primary Education Program provides Ghana with $35 million over six years, an annual amount of approximately $5.8 million. The World Bank began to provide support to Ghana's education system in 1986, and it has provided $225 million. All other donors provide approximately $2 million annually to basic education. The government's annual recurrent expenditure for basic education increased dramatically in 1987/88, and has continued to keep pace with the 5% rate of inflation: it is $205 million in 1992/93. Total donor support for basic education amounts to about 12 percent of total expenditure, with USAID providing a bit less than 5 percent.

In Ghana USAID's support was only a small fraction of total annual expenditure. Yet it has provided leverage and incentives for the following impacts: a positive government policy on resource allocations to basic education; the introduction for the first time of a measure of student learning achievement linked to curriculum objectives; the provision of texts and learning materials to all classrooms; short in-service training on an annual basis to newly-appointed district level supervisors and virtually all the primary teachers in the system; and the initiation of a policy discussion on equity for underserved rural areas through a pilot project.

The other side of the picture is that Ghana's basic education program has not yet made a significant impact in children's access and participation, or in their learning achievement. Actual rates of participation in primary school increased sharply prior to USAID's interventions -- largely as a result of reducing school fees -- and have stayed steady, or slightly declined, since 1991. Only a major investment in expanding infrastructure and the trained teaching force is likely to change the current enrollment rates -- those investments are financed through a recently negotiated World Bank credit. As for learning gains, evidence is that long-standing neglect of school management and effective classroom teaching will take more time to turn around. The provision of texts, the increase in the instructional time, the consolidation of subjects, the use of standardized testing, the increase in local supervision, community participation in school management, and the continued program of upgrading teachers through in-service work will all contribute to improved learning -- but this will take time to realize and to measure.

Two points are immediately evident from the description of impacts: the first is that NPA -- if it is implemented to provide support for sectoral reform -- is inextricably linked to government and other donor inputs, and cannot claim independent credit for outcomes: it is a *part* not the *whole*. A second lesson is that the impacts at this point in time are concentrated at the policy and institutional levels, not at the community, school and children's outcome levels. This is not a weakness in program design or implementation. It simply reflects the reality of systemic education reform that initiates

change from the national level, and which focusses on the development of institutional capacity, rather than simply project interventions.

In this section of the paper we will examine the soundness of the NPA approach as a vehicle for supporting education reform, and USAID's application of the NPA approach over the past three years.

5.2 SOUNDNESS OF THE NPA MODEL

5.2.1 Development of model/approach

As recounted in Section 2 of this paper, a number of different factors combined to lead USAID to adopt NPA as the modality of choice for assisting the development of primary education in Africa. Some of those factors had to do with legislative changes, the development of the DFA and the basic education earmark, and some of them had to do with lessons learned from the failings of previous approaches -- both within USAID and other bilateral and multilateral agencies. In particular, certain aspects of NPA can be seen as responses to the inability of projectized assistance to lead to sustainable improvements in education systems.

Recent studies of experience in implementing education projects indicate that sustainable improvements in education systems are for the most part not achievable through traditional project approaches. A review of USAID experience in the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau concluded that the complexity and inter-relatedness of the problems facing basic education require a system-wide approach to improving the delivery of education and as a result USAID has moved away from project assistance to program-level assistance.[31] Similarly, a World Bank study of its role in the development of human resources in sub-Saharan Africa concluded that one positive aspect of the evolution of Bank lending for education in Africa has been the adoption of a systems approach (or a focus on the "whole package of inputs") and a greater emphasis on policy change as necessary for successful long-term development of the education sector.[32] Three concurring conclusions of both of these studies concern:

i) the need for policy-level intervention to define the context for development of the education sector;
ii) the focus on developing the institutions that will serve as the foundation for sustainable capacity to implement policies and programs; and
iii) the necessity to view the education delivery system as a whole and work on the package of inputs and institutions and not to focus on individual components.

In addition to these lessons, a more pragmatic evaluation of the possibilities for educational development has begun to emerge. While the 1970s saw developing countries and donors agree on the call for universal primary education, the harsh economic realities of the 1980s revealed the constraints most African countries deal with in trying to achieve that goal. Following the Jomtien conference on Education for All, the objective of universal primary education is still espoused. However, the discussion of what measure of access to primary education is achievable in a given country is framed in terms of what can realistically be financed.

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[31] *Ray Chesterfield, Basic Education: Review of Experience, USAID, 1992.*

[32] *Operations Evaluation Department, The World Bank's Role in Human Resource Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Education, Training and Technical Assistance, World Bank, 1993.*

NPA as an approach for USAID in the Africa Bureau represents an attempt to link development of basic education to the fiscal constraints and real resource allocation decisions faced by most sub-Saharan African countries. This model for assisting the development of education embraces the means to improve on projectized assistance, especially through the following four types of interventions:

i) Linking development of the education sector to sustainable government allocative decisions within the framework of overall macro-economic constraints;
ii) Dialoguing with governments about the policy changes required to create the environment most conducive to the attainment of sectoral objectives;
iii) Concentrating on developing the administrative, technical, and managerial capacities of Ministry of Education institutions (as well as of other key actors in the sector -- communities, parent associations, NGOs);
iv) Working within the context of a sectoral reform, taking into consideration the "education system" and the interaction of the different policies, institutions, processes, and inputs impacting the delivery of basic education. (links to desired student outcomes)

5.2.2 Validity of model

NPA can most simply be defined as the provision of conditioned budgetary support, coupled with some technical assistance and an ongoing policy dialogue and performance review process.[33] The utility of this approach as a means to support educational reform is based on a number of fundamental assumptions, some of which are imbedded in our generic understanding of how educational reform takes place, some of which concern USAID's role in that process as expressed in the design of its education programs.

It has been demonstrated that USAID's education programs conform, in general, to the framework for basic education reform presented at the opening of this paper. The Agency's current approach is also rooted in the principles of the DFA and recent thinking on how to foster sustainable development. It may be possible to state simply that it is therefore a valid model for assisting educational reform. However, this section of the paper examines some of the assumptions on which both the general model and the NPA approach are grounded.

Analysis of USAID's guidance for implementing sectoral NPA and of the design of education NPA programs has disclosed the following set of assumptions (some of which are explicit to the NPA approach, some of which are inferred from program design):

> **The existing education policy environment and status of the education system are the result of bad or uninformed choices and this can be remedied through "better" advice or the introduction of "rational" systems.**

This assumption underlies much of donor intervention and is perhaps the major flaw of the technocratic approach to development. In assuming that what is missing is rational choice about policy options and the practical systems for delineating and making those choices we overlook the political and contextual realities that lead governments and bureaucrats to make the decisions they do. Often those decisions are highly rational. However that rationality responds to a different set of pressures and incentives than those espoused by development technocrats.[34]

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[33] *There are variations in the mechanisms used for providing budgetary support and in the amount and types of companion TA. The analysis of the implications of these variations is explored in the following section.*

[34] *Reallocation of resources in Mali away from over-subsidized higher education to underfinanced primary may seem rational in terms of equity and efficiency. However, the death of a previous education minister at the hands of rebellious university students creates a disincentive the present minister may find hard to ignore.*

Reform is desired by governments, the objectives of that reform are clearly defined, and USAID and the government share the same objectives.

We assume that a program for educational reform has been defined and that it represents the expression of a true desire to change the way the education system functions. Furthermore, we like to believe that this desire to change is wholly independent of donor pressure or promise of reward in the form of funding. This further implies that USAID shares the government's indigenously-defined objectives and is willing to support them.[35]

For a given situation it is possible to identify optimal policy choices and a government can select among those choices and implement its decision.

This is linked to the first assumption concerning the role of rational decision making. What is implied here is that some evaluative mechanism for decision-making can be applied to whatever rationality operates in the sector. In addition, we are assuming that the actors in the sector responsible for implementing policy and program directives will themselves adhere to that decision and carry it out.

Changes in policy will lead to changes in the behavior of "institutions" within the sector and will result in student-level impacts.

The fundamental assumption of USAID's approach to education reform is that through the improved capacity of education sector institutions (planning and budgeting, teacher training and supervision, etc.) sustainable increases in access to and quality of education are achievable.[36]

Meaningful policy change is expressed through budgetary allocations, and the prevailing patterns of resource allocation are what need fixing.

This assumption is implied by the budgetary support nature of education NPA and is explicit in the allocation conditions contained in each of USAID's education NPA programs. Policy priorities are reflected in how a government apportions funds inter- and intra-sectorally. The inherent hypothesis is that the existing pattern of resource allocation is either inefficient, inequitable, or both, and that reform in the sector is predicated on adjusting those allocations to obtain the "right" or "desirable" mix. This further implies that someone knows what the right mix is.[37]

Institutional capacity can be developed simultaneously with the implementation of a reform program.

Imbedded in the programmatic emphasis on resource allocation is an assumption that development of institutional capacity is less an issue than the budget. While concessions are made in NPA programs to the need for some institutional development (through some technical assistance and training), it is

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[35] *As may well be the case as in Lesotho or Ghana where the education reform programs are defined by the government and are integrated into the development strategy of the country. The contrast would be a country like Malawi where USAID is promoting its agenda of gender equity in access to primary education in the absence of real government commitment to that objective.*

[36] *Early results from some NPA programs indicate that part of this assumption appears valid. For example, in Guinea, improvements in the mechanisms and practices governing delegation of budgetary credits to the interior of the country have led to resources being available for improvements in classroom environments. Whether or not this will translate into tangible improvements in learning is the aspect of this assumption that remains to be validated.*

[37] *The dominant paradigm of the last decade has been that social rates of return are highest for primary education so governments should shift resources to primary and away from higher education (where the returns are more private than social). Beyond this general principle, rules of thumb and regional averages have determined what percent of the budget should go to education and within education, to primary.*

further assumed that the demands of a reform, and especially of managing additional resources, do not countervail attempts to develop administrative, managerial and technical capacities. Or, more importantly, that the lack of certain capacities does not jeopardize the ability of the sector to responsibly manage additional financing.[38]

USAID can leverage change through the carrot of budgetary support and with the stick of conditionality, and the amount of change that can be obtained is a function of the amount of financing being provided.

In the logical frameworks of all but one of USAID's education NPA programs the most significant input is the annual disbursement of budgetary support. The provision of this financing not only permits the government to increase non-salary expenditures in the education sector, it also affords USAID a voice in the discussion of policy options. USAID's prerogatives (which, as stated above, we assume are shared with the government) are expressed in the performance conditions which govern the release of funds. It is assumed that this mechanism (releasing funds only when conditions are met) helps the government implement the policy decisions required to pilot its reform. Inherent in the Agency's requirements for justification of levels of financing in NPA programs is the assumption that the amount of dollars being disbursed should somehow correlate positively with the amount of reform occurring in the sector (though we are loathe to say we are "buying" reform). This further implies that there exists some threshold level of financing below which change is not possible. Therefore, tranches of budgetary support should be large enough to leverage the desired change, but not a dollar more than necessary to elicit it.

The process of change and the pattern of resource allocation obtained under an NPA program will continue in the absence of external financing and conditionality.

The whole issue of sustainability boils down to this assumption. Whether or not this hypothesis is valid depends to a great degree on whether or not many of the previously discussed assumptions also hold. For example, if the government truly desires change, if its objectives are well defined and it has identified the policy options it wishes to pursue, and if the education sector institutions are capable and willing to implement those options, then the odds of this final assumption holding are greatly increased. Where the converse holds, then the Agency is fooling itself in thinking that NPA equals sustainability.

Policy-, institutional- and people-level change can be observed and measured, and will occur during program life.

This assumption has been discussed in-depth in terms of what USAID can expect as tangible outcomes from its NPA programs. It also relates to the above-mentioned assumption regarding the translation of policy reform into institutional change and eventually classroom impact. While that hypothesis may hold, all of the results will certainly not be observable during the life of a single USAID education program.

In general, experience has demonstrated, as evidenced in the previous section on progress to date, that it is possible to leverage important policy and institutional changes through the NPA approach. That success depends in large part on the degree to which the above-mentioned assumptions are addressed in the relationship between USAID and the host government (and with other donors) and in USAID's design and implementation of its education program. The next section (5.3) will examine the

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[38] *This is most clearly evident in the area of budget and financial management. Benin is an example of a program that introduces additional non-salary resources to the education sector while simultaneously attempting to develop procedures and practices for accountability virtually from scratch.*

relationship between design and implementation (process and nature) and the relative success of the NPA model.

Whether the success which USAID's NPA programs are reporting at the policy and institutional levels will be translated into the desired student outcomes of greater and more equitable access to better quality education can only be answered in the longer-term. In the short-term, we have learned the following lessons about applying the NPA approach:

- Where government commitment to reform is strong and a sectoral strategy is well-defined, NPA works because key policy and institutional changes have already been identified (examples include Guinea, Ghana, and Lesotho).

- On the other hand, where commitment is not strong and a sectoral strategy is embryonic at best, NPA has not worked and USAID has focussed on projectized activity in the education sector (the case of Mali).

- Commitment to reform and a strategy alone do not suffice. Namibia is an example where the NPA approach has encountered difficulty because, among other reasons, certain elements of the education bureaucracy are opposed to the fundamental goals of the reform effort. In this case, policy changes are not readily translating into reformed institutions capable of implementing the government strategy.

- Budget allocations are the bottom line in terms of where a government places its priorities. However, unless the institutions responsible for planning, programming and expenditure management are well-developed, actual use of resources will not correspond to budget allocations and implementation of priorities will be compromised (the case of Benin, and in some ways Guinea).

- Conditioned budgetary support has leveraged significant changes in resource distribution within education sectors,[39] but whether the new levels of financing are sustainable without outside assistance and/or pressure is still an open question.

5.2.3 NPA and other donor modes of assistance

The efforts of other donors and the nature of their assistance also play a role in determining how successful USAID's NPA programs can be. The issue of donor coordination was raised in Section 3, but here the concern is how well other modalities of assistance mesh with the non-project approach. The evidence is irrefutable regarding the success of joint USAID NPA and World Bank Education Sector Adjustment Credit efforts. Ghana and Guinea have illustrated how with coordinated implementation of policy dialogue and conditionality, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The two agencies have had mutually reinforcing conditionalities and have worked together to maintain the policy dialogue with government as well as to conduct performance reviews.

Similarly, where donor modalities are complementary, government reform programs have been greatly aided. This has been the case with USAID and the World Bank in Uganda and Lesotho, and with USAID, the World Bank and the French in Guinea. In these cases, donors are not using the identical support modality, but have coordinated their financing, technical assistance, and policy input to fit into a government strategy and to support or complement each other.

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[39] *See DeStefano and Tietjen, Budgetary Impact of NPA in the Education Sector: A Review of Four Countries, USAID, 1993*

Conversely, disagreement among donors and divergence of approaches can dilute efforts at supporting education reform. This has been the case in Mali, where the World Bank and USAID have not agreed on government compliance with conditionality. In Benin, the World Bank and other donor delays in defining their support programs has left USAID stretched beyond its means in terms of technical assistance, and beyond its mandate which is limited to the primary sub-sector.

This last example raises the issue of whether USAID can implement NPA as the approach to supporting sectoral reform if no other donor, especially the World Bank, is involved at the policy level. Indications are that the effectiveness of USAID's support is greatly compromised under these circumstances. For one, USAID's interest and mandate is limited to basic education, while sectoral reforms encompass all levels of education. This is a critical issue in terms of intrasectoral reallocation of resources. Furthermore, if a government is assured of projectized assistance from other donors sufficient to make the usual show of activity in the sector (schools being built, training programs implemented, cars and equipment purchased), then willingness to make the hard choices inherent in policy reform and compliance with conditionality is subverted. This is in contrast to the leverage two or more donors can exert when they co-implement policy-based programs of assistance. Similarly USAID's use of PL480 counterpart funds to finance projectized education activities in the context of an education NPA program serves to undermine the Agency's own efforts at policy reform. The same could be said of amending the project assistance component of the Mali program to expand activity and increase projectized financing while the policy component was completely stalled and NPA disbursements blocked.

5.3 ASSESSMENT OF USAID'S APPLICATION OF THE NPA APPROACH

Conceptually, NPA as an approach to assisting educational reform is sound. However, its effectiveness is contingent on several contextual factors. As the above discussion illustrates, primary among those are government commitment to and definition of reform objectives, as well as the institutional capacity and willingness to implement those objectives. This being in place, the applicability of the NPA approach is further dependent on how USAID manages it. The following discussion explores USAID's identification, design and implementation of NPA as a support mechanism.

5.3.1 Pre-design issues

Choosing when and where to mount an education NPA program should take into account the assumptions inherent in the modality. It was stated earlier as one of the defining themes of NPA that this form of assistance be provided in support of a national program of education sector reform, and that is one of the basic assumptions discussed above. It seems apparent then that an a priori condition for embarking on an education NPA program is the existence of such a national effort. What confounds the issue is the fact that there is great variation in the extent to which a government program of educational reform is actually in place. In some instances, governments may politically pronounce basic education as a priority (often in terms of commitments to education for all), but have not translated that proclamation into cogent sectoral objectives and strategies. In other cases, donor activity in the education sector may give the appearance of a government program of reform, when in reality external assistance is driving most effort in the sector. While in other circumstances, USAID may convince itself a reform exists in a country in order to justify a given decision to pursue an education NPA program. Some examples will help illustrate this.

In **Ghana**, USAID began supporting the education sector in 1990, after the government had several years of experience implementing a reform program that was supported by the World Bank. In addition, the Ghanaian government sees human resource development as the cornerstone of its economic development strategy and is thoroughly committed to reforming and improving basic

education. This tremendously facilitated USAID's decision to support education and has proven to be one of the important factors contributing to the success of that program.

Similarly, in **Lesotho** USAID's NPA program has essentially adopted the objectives and targets of the government's five year development strategy for the education sector. A first analysis of conditionality in the Lesotho program would tend to indicate great complexity and a micro-management of the sector. However, these conditions have proven easy to monitor on the part of USAID and compliance has not diverted government effort from its reform objectives. Why? Simply because they were taken almost literally from the government's own education sector reform plan.

In contrast, **Benin** is an example of USAID getting involved in education at a much earlier point in the process of government definition of a sectoral reform. While the Beninese had established national consensus around priority investment in reforming and improving basic education, much of the definition of sectoral strategies and plans remained incomplete. As a result, USAID's program has spent its first two years helping the government more clearly define its intentions in the primary sub-sector. This has been useful and important work, but it has meant that concrete results and outcomes will be that much slower in coming.

Under orders to develop an education program, USAID in **Malawi** proposed supporting a reform effort accented on enhancing girls' access to primary education. Meanwhile, government plans for the sector did not even mention equity as an objective. Female access to education, because of its correlation with reduced fertility, was seen as supporting USAID's larger strategic objective in Malawi of helping reduce the population growth rate. Thus an education program supporting a reform objective which did not exist was justified in USAID's internal logic, but not with respect to the government's intentions in the sector.

In **Uganda** it was difficult for USAID to gauge the readiness of the government to undertake a reform program. True, at the time of the decision to develop an education NPA program in Uganda the government had instigated a reform effort. However, the momentum for reform was due in large part to World Bank initiative in the form of pre-appraisal studies. This created an appearance of commitment to reform, while actual government internalization of certain objectives and strategies was basically unknown.

What factors intervene to make the Agency decide to develop education NPA programs in such divergent circumstances? Two are readily identifiable: the basic education earmark and political imperatives to provide assistance to certain countries. Not only did the congressional earmark for basic education set annual targets for USAID obligation of funds in this sector, it also explicitly stated that five new programs be developed between 1989 and 1991. This placed considerable pressure on USAID to start-up education programs (and to start NPA programs because of the dollar absorptive capacity of this modality). In addition, U.S. foreign policy interests used USAID funding to reward countries for progress in democratic reforms (Benin and Namibia). Taken together these two factors determined that education NPA programs were sometimes launched in countries without respecting the assumption that a sectoral environment conducive to policy reform be in place, and if one is in place, that USAID share its objectives.

In addition to NPA programs being developed under differing degrees of government commitment to reform, they have also been started in countries with varying levels of institutional capacity. Again, political and bureaucratic motives have sometimes held sway and countries have been slated for education NPA programs under less than ideal institutional conditions. In this case, it does not only concern the decision to develop an NPA program or not, but also regards the structure of a particular program. Mali, Benin and perhaps Guinea, are two cases where, at the time of the decision to embark on an education NPA program, institutional capacities, especially in terms of budget preparation and expenditure monitoring were not sufficiently developed to efficiently shoulder the responsibility of

substantial levels of additional sectoral financing. Whether adequate levels and appropriately targeted technical assistance were included in the programs was less a function of systematic needs assessments than of political and administrative imperatives at the time of design.[40]

Once a country has been selected for an education NPA program, how does USAID determine the amount of budgetary support to include in the program? Non-project assistance, by definition, is a mechanism for supplying governments with much needed foreign exchange. For this reason, the dollar disbursements should be based on a macroeconomic analysis of a country's balance of payments situation. In addition, because these programs are in support of budgetary changes in the education sector, specific analyses of financial requirements and allocative targets are also required. In fact, however, these technical analyses are often sacrificed to the desire to move money as discussed above. Often a dollar amount is already in mind when supposed financial analyses are conducted, owing primarily to Washington's calculation of how best to meet the basic education earmark. How this translates into problems at the design and implementation stages is discussed below.

5.3.2 Design issues

The basic structure of education NPA programs includes tranched budgetary support, performance criteria expressed as conditions precedent to disbursement of that support, and a package of technical assistance. All of the programs are designed according to this format. However, there is important variation in the way each of those elements is designed – amount of financing and number of tranches; intent, nature and content of conditionalities; and amount and areas of focus of technical assistance. The following discussion attempts to explain that variation, as well as to associate them with any differences in program outputs and outcomes.

(A) NPA/PA Split

According to the general model for education reform and USAID's NPA approach, policy change without the institutional capacity to implement those changes is meaningless. For this reason, all the Africa Bureau's education programs combine project and non-project assistance, however to varying degrees. It is difficult to assess why USAID opted for different combinations of NPA and PA in different countries. What is important here is to evaluate the extent to which that split has had an impact on the success of a given program.

Not having sufficient technical assistance to accompany a program of budgetary support has negatively impacted the implementation of certain programs. Three examples are **Guinea, Benin** and **Namibia. In Guinea**, despite an institutional analysis that indicated problems in ministry management capacity, technical assistance provided in the program is limited. Although some success has been realized, institutional changes have been difficult to come by and are fragile at best. Guinea's recent evaluation strongly recommended additional technical assistance. In **Benin**, because other donors have yet to deliver on anticipated assistance, and because of the complexity and number of reforms being undertaken, the program has recently been amended to add more projectized assistance in certain key areas (financial management and pedagogy). In **Namibia**, because the USAID program was designed prior to the formalization of the government's own educational priorities, the Ministry's sequencing of reform activities were often not synchronized with the tranche conditions of the USAID program. Consequently, although the Ministry had procured its own technical support through institutional contract, this valuable part of the Ministry's staff was frequently pulled away

[40] *In Benin, at the time of program design, government technical capacity appeared more developed than it has turned out to be because a UNESCO project had funded and implemented sectoral analyses, using primarily outside consultants. In the case of Guinea, the amount of long-term technical assistance included in the project assistance portion of the program was limited to one person (and later expanded to two) because of Mission reluctance to manage additional personnel. Recent evaluation of the Guinea program indicates that substantially more technical assistance is required.*

from reform activities defined by the Ministry to work for extended periods on activities specifically involved with meeting USAID conditionalities.

The converse example would be **Mali**. In this case, too much projectized assistance may be countervailing USAID attempts at policy dialogue. Essentially, the Ministry has been able to forego meeting conditionality without losing the majority of USAID's assistance to the sector. In fact, one could argue that $3 million as inducement to make hard policy choices regarding cutting of subsidies to higher education was grossly inefficient, especially compared to the $17 million the Ministry could continue to receive with no progress on the policy front.

Swaziland is a country where USAID is working at the policy level without the lever of an NPA program. USAID hypothesized in Swaziland that it could provide project assistance to support key institutions in the sector, and thus participate in the definition and articulation of policy. This has proven to be a false assumption as USAID has not been able to broker significant policy changes without some incentive for the government to engage in policy dialogue with USAID.

(B) Finance Mechanism

As noted, USAID employs three different modalities to transfer budgetary support funds: (1) direct repayment of debt; (2) disbursement of funds to the central bank for general budgetary support; and (3) supplementation of Ministry of Education budget through earmarked local currency counterpart funds. Each has its benefits and drawbacks from both a developmental and operational perspective.

Debt repayment satisfies USAID dollar tracking requirements, particularly in countries where counterpart fund management has proved problematical. U.S Treasury funds are directly transferred to creditor institutions' accounts, essentially never leaving the transparent international banking system (or entering the more opaque, less documented banking and treasury systems of USAID NPA fund recipients where funds may be subject to misuse). However, this externalized -- but secure -- process contravenes a founding premise of NPA: that the government introduce USAID funds into its national finance system, in order that they be subject to the same public accounting procedures as internal funds and linked to responsible planning, disbursement and accounting practices.

Furthermore, despite the obvious fungibility of funds used for direct debt repayment -- the premise being that the alleviation of national public debt will liberate government money for use in the sector -- it is unclear that funds marked for debt repayment will have the intended impact for leveraging desired government policy changes. Because the government is obliged to meet payment of multilateral debt to continue receiving balance of payment support, it is arguable that USAID funds do not provide adequate incentive to convince the government to increase and/or reallocate resources for the education sector.[41] To date, this concern, however, appears to be unfounded. That the Government of Guinea, whose grant agreement with USAID is founded on direct repayment of debt, has met the specified budgetary conditions requiring increased primary education investment tends to allay these reservations.

Transfer of funds to the national treasury is most consistent with the NPA philosophy: that external funds will become internalized and subjected to the same treatment as all government funds, thus increasing potential for sustainability by becoming part of the national budget and serving to increase government capacity for rational planning and accountability. In addition, by "voluntarily" increasing non-earmarked allocations to the education sector, the government demonstrates its commitment to educational reform. A risk, however, is that if the government does not meet the budgetary

[41] *And, theoretically as no AID program is so structured, in the case of debt repayment to private sector creditors, the assumption that the government intends to service this debt may prove fallacious.*

conditions specified in the grant agreement, USAID will have incurred a significant loss of development funds. Given that in many of the USAID NPA programs the magnitude of a single tranche disbursement (on average, ranging between $5-10 million) exceeds the total amount often allocated to traditional projects, the size of the potential loss is substantial. This possibility is mitigated by predicating continued disbursement on performance.

An emerging issue of concern about both this method of disbursement and debt repayment is that USAID funds cannot be directly linked with positive (or negative) impacts on the educational system. While the developmental objectives of USAID's NPA programs are to support systemic and structural change in education systems which will provide an appropriate context for eventual student-level impacts, the political objectives of the Agency understandably require that effects be **plausibly** attributed to USAID funds. The controversy centers on the word "plausible". As yet, there is no means of isolating the impact of USAID funds when (i) they, pooled with other donors' funds, are added to the national treasury, (ii) the recipient government is subject to performance conditions shared by multiple donors, and (iii) the NPA approach focusses on policy level changes, yet calls for "people-level" impacts in a relatively short timeframe. The challenge is to devise an evaluation methodology which can both capture the incremental process of educational reform and convincingly link it with USAID support.

The third method of fund disbursement for NPA programs does provide the means of tracking USAID funds to educational outputs, as funds are directly transferred to a Ministry of Education account and their use is earmarked for specific activities or purchases. However, the funds are managed by a special project management unit and are not integrated into the overall ministry budget, which may do little to increase ministerial capacity for overall planning and management of resources. In addition, accountability is ensured by contracting with an international accounting firm which further marginalizes ministry involvement in fund management, as the observed tendency is for the ministry to relinquish tracking responsibility. There is, at base, little difference between this approach and the more traditional project approach, in which funds are under the control of groups outside the government. The trade-off is between assured auditability, on one hand, and capacity building and integration, on the other.

(C) Nature and Content of Conditionality

The disbursement of USAID grant funds in NPA programs is contingent on a government's meeting specific pre-arranged conditions collectively referred to as conditionality. Conditionality serves several purposes, but primarily acts as the means to ensure that certain policies or actions, seen by both parties as essential to the success of the program, take place. In addition, the fulfillment of conditionality provides USAID with the justification required to secure the release of a tranche of financing.

In the eight NPA programs there a is range of similarities and differences in the types of conditions, and in their nature and content as well. In addition, there appears to be some variety in approaches to the application or management of conditionality in the various programs. The objective of our discussion is to raise some issues centered around countries' experiences in the implementation of conditionalities in their NPA programs, and to extract from those experiences any concrete lessons for future implementation and design. An initial analysis of conditionality leads to a first order classification by area of focus. Conditions in the seven NPA programs generally fall into four broad categories, based on whether they focus on financial reforms, administrative reforms, technically specific reforms, or general management of reform programs.

Financial:	specifying levels of education sector allocations or expenditures.
Administrative Reform:	indicating specific policies or administrative and institutional changes to be implemented.

Technically Specific:	addressing technical elements of educational reform (e.g., curriculum development, materials production, teacher training, etc).
Program Management:	establishing procedures or institutions for management of the program.

Within these categories, conditions can be further classified according to their intent, nature, or approach. The following analysis examines the range of conditions under each of the four headings. Distinctions are made on the basis of the degree of specificity, the aspect of reform they address, and the nature of the requirement they establish. Conditions range from the very general to the absolutely specific, sometimes within the same program. Within a given program, there may be a few, focussed conditionalities (Malawi) or a large number of conditions covering a broad spectrum of issues (Lesotho).

Degree of specificity and flexibility: Guinea presents a case making use of two types of approaches. Regarding financial conditions, Guinea has the most detailed conditionality. It sets out targets for education's share of overall budget, primary's share of the education budget, percentages for non-salary inputs, and per student annual expenditure on pedagogical inputs. In addition, financial conditionality requires verification of both budgeted and actual expended amounts in these categories (Ghana and Benin also address both allocations and expenditures, while Mali, Lesotho, and Malawi are concerned only with allocations). In contrast to the detailed and inflexible financial conditions in Guinea, administrative and technically specific conditions (teacher redeployment, equity, construction) are expressed in terms of establishing and implementing plans.

Many other programs include this approach of explicitly requiring only a plan for certain reforms (e.g., restructuring of the ministry in Lesotho and Benin). Subsequent conditions then refer to the implementation of the plan. Malawi is perhaps the best example of this. The NPA program in Malawi requires several different plans for the first tranche. Additional tranches simply require that targets laid out in the original plans be respected. This approach appears to build in some flexibility so that Ministries of Education can implement reform at the pace agreed to in a planning phase.

Another approach that affords some flexibility is the one adopted by Benin. In these programs, conditionality at the time of design was only included for the first one or two tranches of financing. Subsequent conditions precedent are negotiated on a yearly (or semiannual) basis, allowing for adjustments in expectations depending on the evolution of the reform.

General vs. Detailed: The most detailed set of conditions are contained in the Lesotho program. Multiple conditions for each tranche address such items as appointment of personnel to specific posts, fixed numbers for hiring of teaching personnel, detailed incremental increases in the education budget, etc. In addition, the conditionality in the Lesotho program covers a broad range of policy issues including finance, staffing, testing, curriculum development, teacher training, restructuring of the MOE, provision of classroom inputs, EMIS, teacher support, etc. While almost all the reform programs supported by NPA have as equally ambitious and broad a range of objectives, only Lesotho addresses a large number of them through conditionality.

In contrast to the above approach, are the programs making use of an annual Letter of Intent (LOI): Benin and Namibia. The LOI requirement as stated in the conditionality is sufficiently general to allow inclusion or exclusion of any element of the reform. The end result may the same as in Lesotho in that conditionality addresses whatever is considered part of the sectoral reform. However, use of a LOI provides for yearly renegotiation of what should be included.

Why Conditionality? Programs appear to make use of conditionality for different purposes. In some cases, conditions address essential elements of the reform program. For example, in Guinea, redeployment of a surplus of teaching personnel at the secondary level was identified as a necessary reform. Only through making use of teachers already in the system could Guinea expand access at

the primary level (the government's priority in the sector) within the financial constraints imposed by adjustment. Another example is the condition addressing competitive procurement in the education sector in Malawi. While not as essential as redeployment in Guinea, competitive procurement in Malawi was signaled as critical to realizing savings in the education sector, lowering the cost of expansion and improvement of the sector.

In other cases, conditionality is used to verify that certain reforms do take place. For example, in Ghana, an important aspect of realizing and monitoring the impact of qualitative improvements in basic education is the introduction of criterion-referenced testing. Therefore, adoption of criterion referenced testing was made a condition of the program. The definition and implementation of the fundamental quality level (FQL) standard in Benin was made a condition because it is the planning tool that will facilitate the establishment and implementation of the MOE's plans to equitably improve quality.

Financial conditions in all programs often serve as an indication of government commitment to the reform program. Allocation (and expenditure) of funds for the education sector is the only true signal that efforts are being made throughout the government (not just in the education ministry) to realize the objectives of the reform program. Financial conditions are also the most obvious example of target setting through conditionality. In addition, programs establish other targets through conditionality. For example, in Lesotho, numbers of primary teachers to be hired are detailed in conditionality. In Mali, target student to teacher ratios are identified.

Results: (Issues to be addressed by this section)
Have different types of conditions led to differing results?
What are management implications of different conditionality approaches?
What kinds of burdens have different types of conditionality created for USAID? Goats?

(D) Type of Project Assistance and Areas of Intervention

(Issues to be discussed in this section)

Contracting for Project Assistance:

What are different contracting mechanisms?
- Buy-in
- Institutional Contract
- Use of PSCs
- Mission-based IQC

What have been experiences with each?
What are pros and cons of each?

Lessons Learned in Different Technical Areas:

What do we know about how best to develop capacity/provide assistance in the areas of
- Financial Management
- EMIS
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Teacher Training
- Curriculum Development
- Promoting Girls' Access and Achievement
- Textbook Procurement, Distribution, and Use
- Student Assessment

5.3.3 Implementation issues

(A) Staffing and Management

One basic misconception on which the NPA approach was founded was that it would require less management input than traditional project assistance. In fact, the Agency has discovered that NPA is actually a management intensive modality of assistance. In addition, the type of supervision and support NPA requires from USAID is drastically different from that which was associated with project management.

USAID's involvement in managing project assistance focuses on issues such as procurement, contracting for technical assistance, and assuring that Agency reporting requirements are respected. NPA programs, because they almost all include a project component, end up requiring similar management and supervision for those projectized elements as a traditional project. In addition, the policy and budgetary support aspects of NPA require new and different management inputs. Maintaining the dialogue with the government about policy direction and reform in the education sector consists of a regular involvement in the details of government decision making and the provision of a high degree and broad range of technical advice.

In addition to the education-specific technical input, NPA programs also imply Mission senior management involvement. General budgetary support in the form of an education NPA grant constitutes a contribution to a government's macro-economic program. This implies that Mission economists and senior managers stay informed about progress in macro-stabilization and the implications of Ministry of Finance operations for the education sector budget.

(B) Dialogue with Government

Missions that have been successful at maintaining an ongoing dialogue with government about education reform and that have been able to monitor progress accurately are those that have included a human resources office staffed with education specialists. The degree to which that contact and dialogue is formalized also determines how easily implementation of the reform program supported by USAID proceeds. Over-formalization, through official letters and communiques, sometimes works against the policy dialogue as governments may see USAID's insistence on written reports and exchanges of information as time consuming and diverting effort from the real business of implementing the reform. On the other hand, lack of clear official agreement on interpretation of conditions and requirements has led to miscommunication and divergent expectations.

The policy dialogue vehicle universal to the education programs consists of the conditions precedent to disbursement of funding and the process of annual review of compliance with them. Just as the nature and content of conditionality strongly determine the outcome of a program of assistance, the way in which those conditions are managed and implemented is equally significant a factor.

(C) Conditionality and Program Review

The above sections address conditionality almost in the abstract, attempting to define or classify conditions and explore somewhat their role in fostering reform objectives. We have yet to examine the important question of how conditionality is applied in the implementation of NPA programs. The basic format for the management of NPA is simple. On an annual basis, compliance with conditionality is verified as a pre-requisite for releasing additional financing. The annual review (or tranche review) is included in every program. Where there may be great variation is how in different countries the concerned actors play their roles.

In general USAID's responsibility has three aspects. USAID should:

- agree with the government on the interpretation/application of conditionality;
- provide assistance to the government to implement the components of the reform addressed through conditionality; and
- verify compliance.

In addition, USAID may employ contractors to help it fulfill any of its roles. USAID also contracts technical assistance to work with the government in fulfilling its role. In the former case, the responsibilities of the contractor correspond to those of USAID. In the latter, they correspond to the responsibilities of the government. The government's role should be to:

- agree with USAID on the interpretation/application of conditionality;
- complete or manage the tasks required to implement the elements of the reform that will satisfy conditionality;
- produce the required proof/documentation that the specifications of the conditionality have been met.

How has this played out in the field?
What have been different approaches to the above mentioned roles?
What can we say about tranche reviews -- as process and in terms of results?
What can we say about results of conditionality -- overall, specific examples, lessons about how different types of conditions and different approaches to managing compliance are leading to different results.

A total of XX tranches of budgetary support have been disbursed by USAID. Therefore, that many sets of conditions precedent have been met in the eight programs. What have been the results of the implementation of those conditions? Many of the impacts attributed to USAID's education programs (in section 4) can in fact be traced to government compliance with program conditionality (e.g., equity component in Ghana, teacher redeployment in Guinea, fee waiver in Malawi, development of action plans in Benin, etc.). It is not possible to say whether the changes brought about through conditionality would have occurred anyway. However, it is clear that the promise of disbursement on compliance has served in many instances as an incentive for governments to accelerate the pace of reform. Some examples follow:

> In **Guinea**, the government recognized the need to make better use of teaching personnel through redeployment of existing surpluses. However, the Ministry of Education saw the redeployment as a politically difficult endeavor and was willing to put off facing the hard decisions needed to operationalize it. Requiring an implementation plan for the redeployment exercise as a condition for both USAID's and the World Bank's second tranches of budgetary support engaged the ministry in a dialogue that resulted in a strategy that effectively diffused most opposition or resistance to redeployment. As reported in section 4, the impact on enrollment at the primary level has been impressive.
>
> In **Malawi**, where gender equity is more USAID's objective than the governments, conditionality has "encouraged" the government to at least establish an office responsible for developing gender appropriate curricula and for promoting girls' access and persistence. Progress has been made in defining the issue and in establishing an institutional base from which to address it. In this way, USAID may be succeeding in placing gender equity on the sector reform agenda.
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> CRT in **Ghana**
>
> Reform of teacher training in **Lesotho**

Development of action plans in **Benin**

FQL in **Namibia**

(D) Govt Factors

What facts about what is going on inside govt and in the education sector help explain the relative successes of NPA programs?

(E) Donor Coordination

Linked back to idea about complementarity of modalities

(F) Classroom Impact

What can explain why some programs are having impact at the classroom level while others are not (is it only a question of time)?

(G) Agency Factors

What more general characteristics of the way the Agency manages implementation have an effect on how well programs are managed and what outcomes they are able to achieve?

Examining the roles of different parts of USAID and how they interact. For example:
Washington (Development Planning and Congress)
Reporting Requirements
Auditors
Inspector General
Lawyers

5.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Take some ideas from Section 3.

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