Education Reform Support

Volume One:
Overview and Bibliography

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Preface

In 1995, the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Bureau for Africa published a report titled *Basic Education in Africa: USAID's Approach to Sustainable Reform in the 1990s.* That technical paper examined Agency experience in education in Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s and drew out several lessons for how USAID could better approach the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs supporting education reform. One of those lessons concerned the role of information and policy dialogue in improving policy formulation and implementation in the education sector. This series, Education Reform Support, is the product of the Africa Bureau's two years of effort to pursue the operational implications of that lesson.

Neither information use nor dialogue is a new idea. USAID and other donors have years of experience supporting education management information systems. Likewise, the development community has grown quite fond of the term "policy dialogue." What Education Reform Support set out to do was to distill the best knowledge about information and dialogue, to examine the development field's experience in these areas, and to systematically apply that knowledge and experience to articulating a new approach.

This new approach, however, is not really new. Financial analysis, budget projection, planning models, political mapping, social marketing, and the techniques of stakeholder consultation and dialogue facilitation have long been available for use in education projects. These tools and techniques, however, have not been systematically organized into an approach.

Similarly, arguments abound for participation and for better—or more informed—decision making. The Education Reform Support series depicts realistically what those terms mean. Further, Education Reform Support identifies how capacity can be built within countries for broader, more effective stakeholder participation at the policy level, and, how that participation itself can contribute to better informing the policy process.

There is an ultimate irony to education. Good schools and good teaching can be found in any education system, sometimes under very adverse conditions. The problem is that they cannot be found everywhere. The challenge confronted in supporting education reform is exactly that: how to help good practice occur on a larger scale.

The inability of education systems to adapt and spread innovation is a result of poor policy and management environments. The policy environment is deficient for political as well as technical reasons. In most countries, the education of children is an issue of direct and personal concern to all sectors of the population, as well as to a number of large interest groups; as a result, education reform is a delicate and highly charged political force field.

To wade into the politics of reform we must focus on understanding the political economy of reform in the countries in which we work: Who are the key stakeholders (both potential gainers and losers) in a given reform direction? What are their strengths, depth and breadth of influence, and points of vulnerability? What are the characteristics of local institutions, groups, and individuals who might be able to play critical roles of influence and dialogue facilitation as well as analytical and technical support to the reform effort, over the long haul? And, most importantly, how can we design reform assistance that attenuates stakeholder tensions and exploits stakeholder alliances, vulnerabilities, and strengths, to the advantage of positive and sustainable movement toward reform overall?

Education Reform Support creates an operational framework through which education programs and projects can organize the techniques of information, analysis, dialogue, and communication into a strategic package. The objective of that package is to help improve a country's capacity to formulate education policy and implement reform. It does so by applying these techniques in order to

- recognize and counterbalance the political interests that accompany reform,

- build the capacity of diverse actors to participate in the policy process,

- reassert and redefine the role of information in policy making, and

- create networks and coalitions that can sustain the dialogue and learning that are essential to educational development.

The Africa Bureau believes this series will prove valuable in helping education officers in USAID and other organizations design projects that take into account the knowledge and lessons gained to better support education reform. The Bureau also feels that the Education Reform Support approach will help governments, ministries of education, and other interested actors better shape their contributions to the difficult process of negotiating and managing education reform.

Julie Owen-Rea
Office of Sustainable Development
Division of Human Resources and Democracy

Foreword to the Education Reform Support (ERS) Series

This series of documents presents an integrated approach to supporting education reform efforts in developing countries, with particular emphasis on Africa. It is intended largely to specify how a collaborating external agent can help strategic elements within a host country steer events toward coherent, demand-driven, and sustainable educational reform. Additionally, this series of documents may help host country reform proponents understand the aims and means of donors who propose certain activities in this area. We hope that host country officials, particularly in reform-minded, public-interest nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations, find this series of documents both an inspiration and a guide for coherently proposing and articulating undertakings to donors, using the donors' own vocabulary of reform and modernization.

Several key premises and motivations underlie ERS. First, the major *binding* constraint to successful educational development in poor countries is neither the need to transfer more funds nor a lack of educational technology and know-how. That is, we contend that in most instances, countries can make sufficient progress by better using whatever internal or external funds and pedagogical technology already exist, but that in order to so, they need far-reaching modifications in the way they approach both policy formation and system-wide management.

Second, policy-analysis inputs (such as information systems, databases, and models; training in public policy and cost-benefit analysis; training in management, budgeting, and planning; and so forth) into policy reform and management improvements, while necessary, are not sufficient. The constraints to policy improvement are ideological, attitudinal, affective, and political-economic as much as—if not more than—they are analytical or cognitive in origin.

Third, as a means of pressing for the attitudinal and political changes needed for reform, donor leverage of various kinds is largely insufficient and inappropriate. The pressure has to come from within (i.e., it must be both indigenous and permanent), which means that until powerful national groups are mobilized and have the means at their disposal to exert positive policy pressure, little will happen in the way of thoughtful reform.

Our approach aims, therefore, to integrate traditional public policy analysis (using known information and analytical techniques) with public policy dialogue, advocacy, awareness, and political salesmanship, and to build indigenous institutional capacity that can strategically use this integration for purposes of effecting purposeful education reform.

The above suggests that in order to support processes of education reform, a donor would need a rather flexible and sophisticated approach—so flexible that it would verge on a nonapproach, and would simply rely on the difficult-to-articulate wisdom of individual implementors. Yet, to define activities in a way that renders them "fundable" by donors and intelligible within the community whose efforts would support these activities, one obviously needs to have some sort of system—some way of laying out procedures, tools, and

steps that can be used in this messy process. As a way of systematizing both lessons learned and certain tools and techniques, we have developed Education Reform Support (ERS).

A long-winded but precise definition of Education Reform Support is: ERS is an operational framework for developing policy-analytical and policy-dialectical abilities, and institutional capacities, leading to demand-driven, sustainable, indigenous education policy reform. The purpose is to ensure that education policies, procedures, and institutions empower the system to define, develop, and implement reforms that foster relevant and meaningful learning for all children.

There are both operational and technical dimensions to ERS. With regard to the former, we have developed steps one might take in an ERS project. First, there are processes, procedures, operational guidelines for designing a project in ERS. Second, there are the same aspects to running such projects. Aside from the operational and institutional "how-to's," we provide a set of guidelines on the tools, techniques, analytical approaches, etc., that can motivate and generate reform movements, as well as assisting in managing the ongoing reform in a modernized or reformed sector.

The ERS series is organized in the following manner. Volume 1 offers an overview of the entire ERS series. It also contains the ERS series bibliography and a guide to some of the jargon that is found throughout the series. In Volume 2, we introduce the problem, and establish the justification and basis to the approach in terms of past donor activities in the sector, and its critiques from both "left" and "right" perspectives. This volume also sets out some of the main lessons learned that establish a basis for the procedures and strategies described in the following volumes. An operational perspective on how to support reform activities is presented in Volume 3. It discusses both the institutional frameworks that reformers can seek to support or help coalesce if they are only incipient, and some likely ideas for sequences of activities. Volume 4 lists and discusses in considerable depth the specific analytical and communication tools and techniques that can be employed. It also places these tools and techniques in the context of past and ongoing donor activities in areas which have in the past used these tools and techniques disparately and unselfconsciously.

Having provided in Volumes 2-4 both the basic intellectual underpinning as to what might be done and how to proceed technically, sequentially, and institutionally, Volume 5 assumes that reformers, particularly donors, might be interested in designing an intervention of considerable size. Therefore, it lays out in detail the specific design steps one might wish to undertake to ensure a healthy start to a major level of support to an ERS process. Finally, Volume 6 presents ideas for how to monitor and evaluate a typical ERS intervention.

In addition to the volumes, the ERS series includes three supplemental documents: *Policy Issues in Education Reform in Africa, Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) for Accountability,* and *Strategies for Stakeholder Participation.* An ERS Course Description is also a part of this series. This course description provides guidelines for teaching almost any ERS-relevant course (e.g., education planning, EMIS, policy modeling) within a larger ERS construct. It also details the provision of a core set of ERS skills.

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Part I—Overview

Section 1

Introduction

This volume provides an overview of the series **Education Reform Support** (ERS). The series represents an effort to systematize much of what is known about how donor agencies can use explicit, planned projects or activities, together with host country institutions, to foster local processes of education reform in a manner that is sustainable and endogenous.[1] Even in an overview as long as this one, however, it is impossible to tackle all the issues and all their nuances. Our style here is unavoidably telegraphic, so the reader is urged to remember that although this is a stand-alone document, it is but an overview of the remaining volumes. A full bibliography is attached to this volume, and specific author/date citations also can be found in the other volumes constituting this series.

The organization of this overview mirrors the content of the remaining documents in the series. For example, Volume 2 provides a background and justification to place our suggestions within the context of current development thinking. Volume 3 defines ERS and discusses a framework for how to make ERS happen. Volume 4 presents and discusses the available "tools and techniques" of ERS. In Volume 5, we examine how to define fundable activities that could become ERS projects, while in Volume 6, we discuss the means by which to evaluate ERS activities. The ERS package of which this series is a part also includes the ERS Course Description and three ERS supplementary documents:

- *Policy Issues in Education Reform in Africa*

- *Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) for Accountability*, and

- *Strategies for Stakeholder Participation.*

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[1]By endogenous, we mean homegrown. This and other terms—many of them used throughout the series—are addressed in Annex A, "Some Jargon."

Section 2

Background and Justification

2.1 A Political-Economic Perspective

Effective localized innovation is common but fails to spread

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

Most projects that introduce innovations are, in one sense or another, meant to be demonstration projects. They are supposed to yield and disseminate palpable information about good pedagogical practice. Yet the "information" assumption on which almost all this activity is based is contradicted by the following facts: (1) one often finds effective practice in areas that are far from the world's information centers (relatively effective schools are often run by principals who have not read the latest donor manuals or school reform literature), (2) pilot projects frequently actually regress themselves, and (3) one can often find quite effective schools just a few city blocks away from rather

dysfunctional ones, and everyone knows about this. In any case, local- or donor-initiated innovation continues to be equally vexed by the problems of *going to scale* and *sustainability*.[2]

Some key questions

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

Education and interest groups

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

Not only innovations, but also process and environment, need to go to scale

Equally important to consider is what exactly should go to scale and be sustained. Many efforts to replicate success stories meet with modest success at best. In some instances, success is limited because the innovation is not replicable. The material requirements, for example, are simply too great to be assumed by the vast majority of actors within the host country. Worse yet, in most instances the wrong thing is being replicated. Success stories are indeed success stories because: (1) the reform addressed a well-understood local need, (2) there was a local

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[2]Donors sometimes claim to have surmounted the problem of going to scale. Big money will, after all, effect a lot of change—for a time. But in most instances, these efforts run into serious sustainability problems.

demand for the reform, (3) the reform was championed by one or more "messiahs," and (4) there was widespread ownership of the reform. By attempting to replicate the reform itself (i.e., take it to scale), one is violating the very conditions that made the innovation successful.

The fact is that people's educational aspirations, needs, and contexts differ from place to place. Accordingly, what works in one location won't necessarily work in another. And even in those instances where an exogenous innovation addresses some of the specific needs and aspirations of a particular location, its fate is still precarious, for unless there is widespread ownership of the innovation (a factor largely engendered through the development of an endogenous solution), chances are that it will not become a permanent feature of that location's educational landscape.

Instead of the reform itself being replicated, it is the *conditions that give rise to the reform in the first place* that need to be replicated. Replicating the conditions not only improves the prospects of education/school reform going to scale, but also creates an environment that will spawn multiple innovations and will have the potential for significant lateral transfers of knowledge. What is needed, then, are the tools, techniques, structures, mechanisms, and institutions that can (1) help generate the widespread demand for reforms, (2) facilitate an informed localized deliberation over the substance and character of reform, and (3) safeguard the phenomenon of ongoing, learning-driven change.

2.2. Focus on the Donors and Lenders

Uncertainty in donor agencies

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

Bases of critiques

The questioning of the donor agencies has political and hence public-budgetary expression. Some of the critique emanates from what might be called a left-populist perspective, which decries the role of donor agencies in supporting nondemocratic regimes, either of a traditional oligarchic or tyrannous nature, or of a more modern bureaucratic-planning nature. This form of critique is more familiar, and has, in the

past, been the most biting one, particularly of the World Bank, but earlier (particularly when it was part of the Cold War confrontations) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as well. More recently a "right" critique, which sees donor agencies as extensions of the developed countries' welfare state, has begun to have telling effects, particularly on USAID but also on the Banks. This critique decries the statist cast of donor interventions, and calls for more free-market approaches.

Yet, even more recently, many commentators on international development have begun to see a sort of convergence between the "left" and "right" critiques, in terms of the need to create space for localized popular participation, for civil society, *and* for markets; and the realization that societies with inefficient property rights structures often are also societies that do not respect human rights. This finding coincides with the growing realization among many development practitioners that the "market vs. state" polarity is perhaps not the soundest way to cast the development problem. The growing convergence between these points of view has increased the power of both, and has found echo inside the donor agencies, where many thoughtful staffers fully realize the dangers of statism, of oligarchic or bureaucratic group-think, and of the minimization of market forces and participatory processes. They admit that their agencies may have contributed to these trends, but do not clearly see ways to go beyond the usual, often apparently incompatible, remedies (e.g., structural adjustment programs that attempt to give more free rein to market forces are not always popular with the advocates of human rights and democracy).

Weaknesses in traditional mechanisms

The problem is compounded by the realization that the traditional mechanisms used for fostering development, namely capital and technology transfers organized around distinct "projects," have not been as successful as hoped. This is true particularly when they have been used to deal with complex issues of sector-wide improvement, and even more so when they have been applied to social sector issues such as education reform, "integrated rural development," and other complex interventions. (We have cast this same issue in political-economic terms above.) The presence of well-meaning interventionists frustrated at the inability of interventions to go to scale also may account for the uneasiness in the donor agencies that we have noted above. If the donor agencies' role is not to transfer capital and technology, since perhaps this can be done more efficiently by the capital and technology markets, then what is their role? Innovative thinkers in the donor agencies say the new role has something to do with supporting processes of reform, with offering technical assistance, and with providing more informed options. Support of this nature can happen in the context of—and can even be abetted by—pilot projects, particularly if these interventions embody "reformist" points of view

(such as emphasis on governance, information, accountability). Yet the new role clearly goes beyond such traditional projects. But how?

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

Similar realization among counterparts

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

Section 3

Definition of Education Reform Support

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

The development of both system-wide reform and IFG projects embodying those reform principles requires great country receptivity to reform ideas. In effect, this statement means that the appropriate groups within countries must come to own the necessary ideas. This ownership, in turn, will require (1) much more learning from existing pilots and from the plethora of ongoing natural experiments that have never gone to scale; and (2) better methods for policy dialogue and, more broadly, policy communications. Finally, the "primitive inputs" into this process, from the point of view of an external donor agent, are (1) the vision held by the donor's leadership; (2) the internal receptivity within the donor agency (because many mid-level staff may not, in fact, be convinced that the traditional band-aid or "pedagogical engineering" donor-project approach is flawed); and (3) techniques for supporting reform, which include techniques for learning from experiments as well as techniques for analyzing and communicating policy. The dynamic of this process is depicted in Figure 1.

Having observed several donors, we note that of the three "primitive inputs" just discussed, the first (awareness and pressure from donor leadership) is largely assured, although sometimes hazy and inaccurate in its formulation; the second (internal donor staff receptivity) is improving; but the third (knowledge of reform support techniques) is still lacking.

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

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Donor
leadership              ─────────────────────────────►  Information,
awareness                                               finance, and
   │                                                    governance
   │                   ┌──────────┐                     (IFG) projects
   ▼                   │ Pilot    │
Internal     ─────────►│ learning │────────┐
donor                  └──────────┘        │
receptivity                │               ▼
                           │         ┌───────────┐    ──► Reformed
                           │         │ Country   │──►    systems
                           ▼         │receptivity│
Reform       ┌──────────┐            └───────────┘
support      │ Policy   │                  ▲
technique ──►│ debate   │──────────────────┘
             └──────────┘
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ERS—a definition

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

We are calling our approach Education Reform Support. ERS aims to integrate traditional public policy analysis (using information and analytical techniques) with public policy dialogue, advocacy, awareness, and political "salesmanship" (using communication techniques). Education Reform Support seeks to invoke these mechanisms as a means to improve the process of policy decision making in the education sector. We define an "improved policy-making process" as one that is (1) much richer in the use of information and analysis; (2) more competitive, transparent, and accountable;[3] and (3) more open to broad stakeholder participation. In short, the process must be as deliberative, accountable, democratic, transparent, and information-rich as is reasonable to push for.

ERS—what it includes

The ERS approach consists of (1) an operational framework for getting things done, and a process for strategically maneuvering within that

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framework; (2) a set of analytical and policy-dialectical tools that are the substance of that maneuvering; and (3) a set of suggestions for designing (typically) donor-funded activities in ERS. The ultimate aim, of course, is to build the national institutional capacity to apply this approach, helping establish and nurture a permanent "reform support infrastructure."

What does it take to *effectively* set up a process of Education Reform Support? To put it simply: It takes a set of actors who know *what* to do and *how* to do it, from both a philosophical and an operational point of view; and who have the right tools, techniques, and funding at their disposal. Note that we do not suggest that these factors "make" reform happen, and hence that donors can "make" reform. Our argument is more modest. Reform is up to the countries themselves. What outsiders can "make" (or more accurately, help make) happen is only effective support and encouragement of those reforms. The rest of Volume 1 covers those three areas: (1) what to make happen and how, (2) what tools and techniques are available, and (3) how to organize fundable, project-worthy activities.

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[3]We use the terms "competitive" and "transparent" in the sense that groups proposing certain policies must prove the worthiness of those policies using information in a competitive marketplace of ideas that has as few barriers to entry as possible.

Section 4

Making It Happen

As noted immediately above, "making it happen" requires knowing *what* should happen, and, more operationally, some idea as to *how* to make it happen. In this section we therefore summarize the elements of ERS that cover what and how.[4]

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

4.1 What Needs to Happen: Setting an Operational Framework

- Develop a reform support infrastructure and a core group within it.

- Develop within the core group the ability to manage the process strategically.

- Develop an awareness of the changes that need to take place so that reform can spread; discover how to "clear some space" for reform behaviorally, legally, institutionally, and politically.

- Foster, document, and market pedagogical or other schooling reforms to fill the space that has been cleared.

4.2 Steps for Making It Happen

Listing *what* needs to happen is fairly easy. *How* to make all this happen, however, is another matter. In what follows we detail a set of steps that have been found to work in many situations. We list them in chronological order, with the understanding that the chronological order will often slip for operations that need to happen simultaneously, or to account for several iterations in one step while other aspects of the process continue. Again, we highlight the importance of understanding the spirit and theory of the concept, and not woodenly interpreting "the system."

Step 1—Assessment of education issues and political economy

Step 1 is to assess both the status of education and the political-economic situations. If a new ERS activity is designed systematically and

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[4]For more discussion, see Volume 3, *A Framework for Making It Happen*, and the series companion volume, *Strategies for Stakeholder Participation*.

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

Step 2—Start developing (or assisting, if it already exists) a reform support infrastructure

The very notion of reform "support" implies that something is doing the supporting. Reforms of public sectors do not generally happen of their own accord. In most countries where governance is a problem, this support will have to come from a network of affiliated institutions. The network may well include some government offices (preferably more than just the ministry of education), but may also need to include think-tanks, foundations, NGOs, etc., in civil society. The network needs to be more than a loose affiliation; it needs to be thought of as a true infrastructure of support for the reform process, and it needs to

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[5]See Volume 5, *Strategy Development and Project Design*.

be self-conscious about that role. The task for Step 2, then, is for all these entities at first to informally link and network, then to plan strategically—both jointly and singly—how the reform is to be supported. Different institutions will need to do different technical and political-communications tasks, and this specialization needs to be part of the strategic planning. Which institutions to link and network is an important issue. The selection depends on the technical and communications tasks at hand (data and information management, technical analysis, communications and marketing). We have made extensive suggestions regarding how to go about choosing institutions to network depending on the tasks at hand, relative competencies, and so forth.[6]

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

Step 3—Develop core group

The reform support infrastructure typically will be too big and unwieldy for anyone to really work with it very closely. A more executive body, which may consist of representatives of various institutions, but at an executive or high-technical level, will also be needed; development of this core group constitutes Step 3. The core coalition will assist in channeling funds, will comprise the institutions receiving most of the technical assistance, and will be in charge of spreading knowledge of the process and enthusiasm for the reformist efforts (both the

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[6]These recommendations are contained in Volume 4, *Tools and Techniques*, and Volume 5, *Strategy Development and Project Design*.

substance and the process) to their own constituents as well as to their principals at the political level. Thus, the core group will spread ideas, enthusiasm, and information about training and funding opportunities outward toward the institutions in the overall reform support infrastructure, and more generally within high-level political and economic circles. The core group also could constitute itself into a kind of NGO or supra-NGO with operational support from donors. Or a single NGO could *be* the core group. Finally, we should note that the recipe need not dictate a single, monopolistic, core group. Nevertheless, we have found that the members of this core group, either individually or with the backing of their close institutional allies, should have the following key characteristics, particularly if this group is in fact a single institution.

- At least a few of them should be extremely well-connected, such as having the ear of ministers; the highest executive if possible; candidates to the highest executive position; the highest religious, military, and labor union leadership; etc.

- Power of public convocation. Individual "connectedness" is not enough. Power to organize meetings which important people will attend is also key.

- A political perception of at least being willing to discuss and consider the public interest, rather than narrow partisan or guild interests. If representing guild and partisan interests, they must at least be willing to discuss them in terms of public policy, and to allow the public interest to be used as a gauge.

- Technical ability, or at least openness to learn, and realization of the importance of analysis and communications.

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

Step 4—Develop, use, and train in specific technical tools

Step 4 is the development of specific technical tools—be they databases, projection and cost models, or "issues" presentations using com-

puter graphics—as well as the training of counterparts in their development and use. This step accomplishes several goals.

First, offering the tools and the training to various parties, and involving them in the co-design as much as possible, solidifies the network and helps build the reform support infrastructure. Using the infrastructure is the only way to develop it. That is, networks coalesce and solidify because of intense use, not because of careful design and formal agreement. The most neutral (and therefore least threatening) form of initial use is a somewhat technical one.

Second, recall that key elements of the support infrastructure must "co-own" tools such as projection and analysis models. If they use such models and create them at the same time in a public process, they can begin to generate public discussion of serious issues, such as projected salary explosions due to careless design of the teacher salary structure, or the utility of teacher certification based on "effective schools" studies. The more groups feel that they co-own the tools that are used to drive and illustrate the discussion, the more seriously they will take the results. For example, when certain groups object to certain conclusions, they can be invited to modify the model or to provide better data. Diskettes can be shared with them, publicly. If they do not have the training to modify a spreadsheet model, they can be offered training. It is difficult for groups to publicly oppose analytical conclusions when they have been invited to criticize the very analysis that leads to them, and when they are even offered the training with which to criticize. Naturally, this approach requires self-confidence on the part of the core group or the donors, and confidence in the correctness of the analysis.

Third, the process will demonstrate, by doing, how to inject information into a competitive and public dialogue. It will demonstrate how the invitation to further analyze the results can be both cooperative and competitive, and can therefore ratchet up the level of the discussion.

In short, this step, together with the previous two, is absolutely essential. (See Box 1 for an example of how this step occurred in South Africa.)

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

Box 1. South Africa: The Role of Information in Competitive Public Policy Processes

There are some situations in which a country's policy actors are poised to compete with each other, on a clear and relatively rational basis, for control of the right to use budgetary resources. Under these conditions, donor inputs in the area of analysis and information are absorbed as quickly as they can be produced. Donors can contribute most effectively when the brokerage of public information is coordinated by an entrepreneurial NGO or core group. South Africa presents such a case.

During the transition from apartheid, USAID offered technical assistance to groups within the democratic opposition to support both their internal discussions and their discussions with other parties. The assistance consisted of

(1)   computer-based tools to support strategic debate and policy making,

(2)   seminars on innovations in cost-effectiveness in education systems, and

(3)   consensus-building around basic system goals and their budgetary feasibility in a new South Africa.

The work was coordinated by a local, recently formed NGO whose emphasis was the brokering of information for public debate. The atmosphere was one of increasingly open political competition, in a democratizing situation. Since the whites-only public sector had always held both the technology and the data, the USAID assistance broadened the policy debate and heightened the competition over budget resources. Data and analysis immediately became an important currency. They were injected into this debate through dozens, perhaps hundreds, of one-on-one meetings, workshops, and seminars. Many were sponsored by donor assistance, but others took place without outside support.

This experience is an interesting case study in how competitive politics can drive demand for analysis and data. It seems that no one, including the government at the time, had actually assembled complete, basic data on what a new, reconstructed South African education system might look like. Moreover, no one had seriously analyzed what the various options for quantitative targets—in terms of internal efficiency, unified service ratios, contribution of the private sector, etc.—might imply for the total education budget. Thus, the opposition came up with the needed and feasible planning targets as well as the first estimates of their budgetary implications. The government then sought to create its own analytical tools. Naturally, because the methodologies for these tools are well known and understood, and because the base data were nearly the same, the government's conclusions were similar to those of the opposition groups. The donor inputs therefore had the effect of both helping to raise the technical level of the debate and moving the debate forward from the precise points of agreement and disagreement.

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

Step 5—Create demand

Step 5 is to begin creating a demand for reforms and reform tools. The larger reform support infrastructure, the core group, and the tools and techniques can all be used to generate ongoing demand for two things:

- reforms, of a certain type, based on an awareness of what is wrong, what policy options are open for fixing it, and their trade-offs; and

- the *style* of policy intervention one is exemplifying: open, based on solid information, and healthily competitive.

Creating demand for the desired policy interventions essentially requires simultaneously manipulating the degree of openness, the degree of competitiveness in policy formulation, and the use of information and analysis to enhance competition.

The donors can assist in this regard. For example, they can aid competing groups in formulating their policy positions, and require that certain standards of evidence be used in meetings that the donor funds. To the extent that openness and competition can be manipulated, those involved in the process can take advantage of serious learning opportunities, and may even find the process useful and enjoyable. Note that we are not suggesting simply pushing out more information and analysis and assuming that people will come to appreciate it and use it. Supply will not create its own demand. But injecting supply into an increasingly competitive and open process, while helping to refine the rules of evidence, will in fact create demand.

It is not clear that this method will work in all situations, since a crucial aspect is the openness and competitiveness of the policy discussion. It is clear, however, that in some cases it can work even if the openness and competition take place only in the interior of the state. Thus, it may work in "modernizing" authoritarian situations, but is almost certain to fail in traditional authoritarian ones.

In Haiti, in spite of the aforementioned problems, one aspect of the process that worked rather well was the holding of a series of learning and discussion events, hosted by the core group and involving elements of a reform support infrastructure. This method was used to generate and disseminate knowledge via a participatory sector assessment. In El Salvador, after a period of intense conflict, a participatory sector assessment was successfully used to begin a process of knowledge-building and conciliation. It was quite evident that the process was successful, particularly from the point of view of those who participated, because it generated an ongoing demand for continuation, even among very busy people with high opportunity costs. In both countries donors should have capitalized on the momentum. Unfortunately, the correct mechanism for them to do so has been hard to find, partly because there is no systematic knowledge about how to get them to use that momentum, and partly because few donors realize the importance of these processes.

Step 6—Hold seminars,   The venues for solidifying the reform support infrastructure and the

symposia, workshops

core group, for providing the technical assistance, and for holding actual substantive policy discussions are, of course, workshops, seminars, symposia, etc. However, these types of meetings have different purposes at different stages of the process, and their use must be carefully strategized. Arranging such fora constitutes Step 6.

- One-on-one, or one-on-few, seminars and meetings are useful early in the process in setting up the networks.

- Smaller, technical seminars are useful in imparting technical knowledge and sharing the tools and techniques fairly early on.

- Bigger workshops can be used to disseminate results of initial tools and generate awareness, and, later, to begin to discuss policy options, around which to generate some discussion and test where the controversies lie.

- Further small-group training and discussion can take place on the basis of some of the discovered issues. One-on-one discussion reassures stakeholders that their opinions are being taken into account and that their inputs are being incorporated into the design of the technical tools. Additional technical training can actually empower key stakeholders to more closely examine and criticize assumptions, and thus to reassure themselves that their points are being taken care of and that the conclusions hold.

- More workshops, planned in an iterative fashion, can narrow down several policy recommendations.

- Larger symposia can be used to broadcast a narrow set of options or even recommendations, and to legitimate them, but ideally should not be used to seek technical input.

In many of these seminars, opposing interest groups should be asked to present papers. Again, they should be held to a certain minimum technical standard. The core group could conceivably even give the same kind of assistance to various competing groups in meeting those standards.

All these types of meetings and symposia have been used in furthering reform, but usually in a somewhat confused manner. For example, there is a tendency to use large meetings at the outset of the process, and, in a sense, to confuse the functions of executive-like and research-like bodies with those of legislative-like bodies (e.g., the "*Etats généraux*" in Benin). Further, often large meetings are used not to communicate the results of deliberative and open processes, but to convey and disseminate single options developed through closed processes, highly subject to group-think errors. This arrangement has been particularly common in French-speaking Africa, and in cases where the socialist-inspired nature of the government makes it

"obvious" that the government is acting in the best interest of the people by promising to provide the people with universal coverage of basic needs. In such cases it appears to be presumed that policies can simply be "announced." Swaziland presents an alternate case in which a process of informed deliberation, using extensive database querying and modeling, and holding small group meetings, preceded large-group meetings in more parliamentary-like settings (see Box 2). In other countries, such as Botswana or South Africa, a national commission may hold hundreds of smaller meetings, eventually leading to widely vetted policy changes, without ever resorting to large parliamentary-like meetings (other than in the legislature itself to make the actual legal change). These apparently more successful experiences suggest that the order of the meetings needs to be strategically considered as portrayed in the sequence sketched above.

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

As enough consensus develops, the infrastructure should have the technical skill to carry out Step 7: to actually draft policy statements or legislation, as well as to put together, manage, and seek funding for pilot projects that embody the tenets of the reform (e.g., modernized projects that emphasize information, system learning, governance, accountability, the fostering of local power, etc.). Although actual project and reform management and implementation are vital steps in the process, our methodology does not include them. A literature on education policy implementation exists, and a literature on reform implementation more generically is emerging. Thus, important as the implementation issues are, in the interest of keeping our approach focused, we only note the link between decision and implementation.

Box 2. Swaziland: Using Meetings, Workshops, and Symposia to Start ERS Gradually

Education Reform Support was introduced to Swaziland at a time when public spending on education was consuming over 30% of the national budget, the education system as a whole was plagued with enormous internal and external inefficiencies, and policy making was largely the accretion of solutions to crises. ERS activities initially unfolded around the development of a reform support tool (with a cost and enrollment projection model as its basis), *Imfundvo*. Because participants chose to approach the development of the tool in a highly consultative fashion, using meetings, workshops and deliberate stakeholder consultation, the dialogue that the tool was itself being developed to initiate actually had already begun. Stakeholders expressed what they wanted the tool to be able to do, and in so doing identified reform issues in the context of the tool's analytical categories.

Following the consultative development process, *Imfundvo* was widely used in a series of small workshops, with various purposes. The first was to teach stakeholders and opinion makers the systemic features of the education sector. The second was to inform them of the implications, largely financial, of projecting current characteristics of the system into the future. The third was to get stakeholders talking about reform and to frame the talk so that a coherent set of activities could follow.

The small workshops were followed by a National Education Symposium. This three-day affair involved over 400 stakeholders and served to heighten people's awareness of the problems and issues. *Imfundvo* was used to generate the analyses that informed and bound those discussions. Additional reform support tools (such as computer graphics presentations and pamphlets) were also developed. Coming out of the National Education Symposium was a clear mandate to address the gross inefficiencies that plagued the system.

We also point out that there is a literature on the latter subject, and that the same skills that are needed in supporting reforms are also needed in supporting implementation, but they need to be applied rather differently.

We have covered a lot of ground already. So far, we have introduced our approach, and we have made suggestions for how to get things going. We also have referred to the use of most of the analytical and persuasive armamentarium of public policy analysis and communications, but without focusing on the tools as such. We now turn toward those tools and techniques.

Section 5

Tools and Techniques

5.1 ERS as Both Technical Tools and Institutional Process

As defined above, Education Reform Support is a process of using and transferring both institutional and technical abilities. Above we focused on institutional processes. In this section we focus directly on how the tools are strategically put to work in a dynamic, constantly changing institutional context.

Education Reform Support uses the standard techniques and frameworks of decision support and the public policy sciences. Given the problems in the public sector of developing countries, particularly in the education sector, we have added "institutional development" and "networking" as techniques to be extended and developed. Box 3 shows a list of most of the techniques involved in ERS. This is a fairly standard list. Many references exist on these items, documented even down to the manual and textbook level. Because standard methodologies exist for EMIS, analytical tools such as cost analysis and enrollment projections, etc., we will not discuss these topics

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Box 3. Tools and Techniques for Education Reform Support

■ **Data and information**
  – EMIS for accountability and dialogue
  – Survey research and census needs assessment,
    for analysis and public discussion

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

■ **Communications**
  – Policy dialogue
  – Policy marketing

  – Social marketing
  – Advocacy
  – Negotiation and mediation
  – Public communication campaigns
  – Political-economic discourse

■ **Institutional development for analysis,
  communications, and advocacy**
  – Networking and coalition building
  – Funding of public interest or advocacy groups
  – Strategic planning for public sector and NGOs in
    policy development and policy advocacy
  – Environmental mapping/scanning
  – Organizational capacity building
  – Technology transfer

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further in this volume.[7]

However, several aspects of the ERS approach go beyond the standard list. For example, ERS places the list in the context of the process of policy change, and the role of information in that process. We suggest that most activities supporting policy analysis in the developing world have focused too exclusively on such lists, leading to supply-driven attempts to improve the use of knowledge and information in the education sector. Most of these have achieved low levels of demand for analysis, and hence low sustainability of the analytical, information, and communications systems developed. Our approach distinguishes itself in several respects, based on various lessons learned:

Lesson 1—Informational and analytical tools used for reform support should be distinguished from those used for routine management and decision support. Policy reform support is not decision support.

Lesson 2—Supply-oriented technical assistance in information management, analysis, or communications tends to be unsustainable.

Lesson 3—Tools and techniques must be applied systematically, and this requires a demand-focused approach.

Lesson 4—Information not only is a technical-bureaucratic issue, but also is key to basic public accountability.

Lesson 5—Analysis must go beyond planning, budgeting, and quality studies.

Lesson 6—Negotiation, persuasion, and dialogue skills are among the most sorely lacking.

Lesson 7—Dialogue and negotiation are functional, not just "nice."

Lesson 8—Policy dialogue, policy advocacy, and social marketing are not "all the same." They have very specific uses in a strategy of dialogue, persuasion, and negotiation.

Lesson 9—Institutional and networking skills are the glue holding all aspects of ERS together

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[7]They are discussed further in Volume 4, *Tools and Techniques*, and some of the standard references are cited, although there too the discussion is kept short because this is such a well-known area.

Section 5.2 offers more detailed discussion of each of these points.

5.2 Lessons Learned About Tools and Policy Change

Most social science and public policy analysis is directed at supporting good governance. Most donor-provided technical assistance is, in like fashion, oriented toward the management of well-governed systems. Almost no specific technical assistance is offered for reform processes aimed at *arriving* at good governance. Moreover, it is largely assumed that the skills needed to support good governance and the skills needed to arrive at good governance are the same and, as such, that they can be applied the same way in both circumstances.

Lesson 1—Distinguishing between reform support and routine analysis

Our ERS systematization is based on an acknowledgment that (1) the skills needed may be similar but the mix is different, (2) they must be integrated in different ways, and (3) they are applied to different problems in a reforming system vs. a well-governed system. The larger ERS documentation provides extensive suggestions regarding these differences and the types of assistance that are appropriate. In that sense, this ERS series is a theory-like body of justification, as well as a manual for applying technical skills to reform processes. To our knowledge, the distinction we are proposing here has rarely been consciously used by donors.

An example from the family planning area would be USAID's Resources for the Awareness of Population Impacts on Development (RAPID) project, which specifically developed tools whose function was not routine-analytical, but supportive of policy reform (see Box 4). As discussed above, in South Africa and Swaziland, education sector models were developed whose purpose was explicitly not "planning" the education sector, but simply getting stakeholders to acknowledge the main parameters of the problems confronting the country.

Lesson 2—Supply-oriented information and analysis improvements are often unsustainable

Donors often provide technical skills, hardware, software, assistance in developing surveys and censuses, etc., and assume that there will be effective demand for good decisions. Under this assumption they have put hundreds of millions of dollars into EMIS, for example. We agree that good information and a good EMIS are crucial to good decision making. However, over the past few decades, the majority of data-and-analysis efforts that ignored the demand side achieved sustainability only as a random event, or achieved much lower sustainability than would have been possible had the effort effectively "worked" the demand side. Our ERS documentation presents extensive suggestions for creating demand. We note that demand creation has almost nothing to do with the supply of technical input, and a lot to do with creating dialogue, controlling the process, and fostering competitive, open, public or intra-bureaucratic debate. (This is the case in most societies;

Box 4. Malawi: Explicit Use of Technical Tools for Reform Support Rather Than for Analysis or Planning

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

Focused efforts to build political commitment recently have paid off. In November 1995 the NFWCM and MOH&P hosted a three-day workshop, funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for parliamentarians. Objectives of the workshop were to create awareness of, and to elicit support for, population, family planning, and reproductive health programs; to formulate strategies and recommendations for implementing the National Population Policy; and to strengthen the role of parliamentarians in mobilizing community participation in population programs. The workshop featured two computer graphics presentations, one featuring results from the Demographic and Health Survey on demand for family planning services, and the other based on modeling results demonstrating likely impacts of population growth

and potential savings to the government from investments in population programs. The presentations were developed in an entirely collaborative manner between the donor-provided technical assistants and the counterparts, and were given by the counterparts. They were prepared using policy mapping techniques as well, and involving key stakeholders. In January 1996, as a direct result of the workshop, Parliament established for the first time in history a separate line item in the national budget for population activities. Previous efforts in the same country had not had the same results.

Lessons learned are that:

(1) a democratic transition makes it possible to discuss issues that previously might have been inappropriate or a waste of time;

(2) the use of proficient tools can help, but is not enough;

(3) the interviews and stakeholder interest-polling on which the presentations were based were just as important as good analysis and sophisticated presentational techniques;

(4) counterpart involvement and counterpart demand for what they see as a high-stakes and interesting game, rather than another donor imposition, is vital;

(5) the process can take a long time, is unpredictable, and is event-driven; and

(6) success might come in little bursts rather than in a predictable, cumulative fashion.

there are notable and important exceptions.)

We have seen no EMIS projects developed with specific attention paid to the demand side, or to how the effort's output would link to public policy debate. In a few cases the EMIS development has responded to a "need to know" spurred by public policy debate, but these have been smallish efforts by NGOs, not large donor-funded EMIS projects. On the other hand, many donor projects, while having some impact on a country's ability to output information, and even some limited impact on usage, generally have had much less impact than originally hoped because of the lack of any real demand for the data. This problem has been encountered in Egypt, Pakistan, and Mali, just to name three cases. It was encountered in other sectors (e.g., agriculture), in dozens of countries. In countries such as Indonesia or Chile, where some external accountability pressure seems to have existed, EMIS (or at

least some type of data-based decision making) seems to have taken root better. This was true even if the pressure was not exactly public and democratic, such as from NGOs or a legislature.

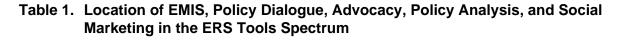*Lesson 3—Systematization is key, yet depends on demand*

The technical skills (data, analysis, communications, networking) contained in Box 3 must be applied *systematically* to be effective. That is, they must be applied as a system; but, more importantly, they must be applied *by* a system (be it a network of bureaucratic agents within or between ministries, a tightly knit policy unit, or a network of dedicated institutions).
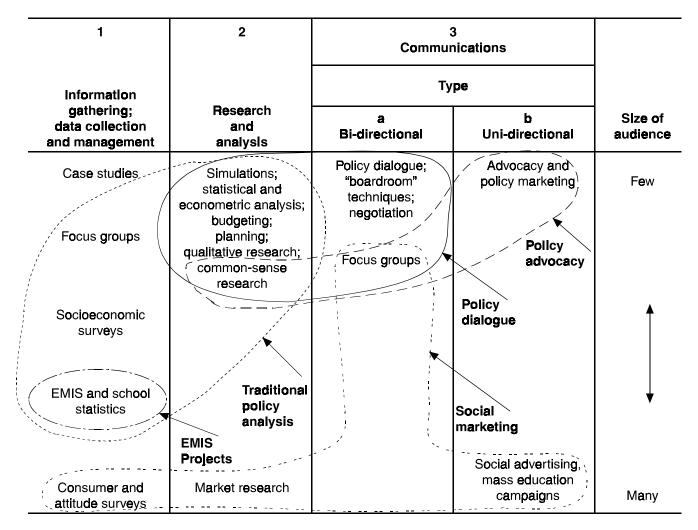
Table 1 illustrates our understanding of how various policy sciences and management techniques can be integrated into a system that effectively supports reform. First, the columns represent tools or techniques used by the various disciplines. They can also be thought of as referring to classical policy analysis or decision support categories (the "data, analysis, dialogue" paradigm). The rows represent, roughly, the size of audience (if we are talking about communications techniques), or the size of the universe or sample (if we are talking about research techniques) to which the technique applies.

Within the "space" created by the two dimensions—techniques and size of audience—we have placed the traditional disciplines as they may be applied to supporting education reform (or any other sectoral reform, for that matter).[8] Thus, "Traditional Policy Analysis," as applied in most developing countries to support sectoral reform, is in the upper left hand of the space: it focuses on data and analysis, and has traditionally eschewed communications efforts. During the 1970s to 1990s, donors spent large sums on policy analysis units placed in the respective sectoral ministries, in everything from agriculture to transport. Most engaged in modeling, analysis, operations research, etc., usually using secondary data or already-gathered MIS or survey and census data.

"Policy Dialogue" is a related discipline or practice. It often draws on the results of analysis, or is somewhat analytical itself. It may not involve engaging in massive data work, and it does emphasize communications. Thus, this technique is to the right of Policy Analysis in the diagram. Since Policy Dialogue is, by definition, oriented at communication, it spills over into the communications column, but it stays to the left of "uni-directional" techniques (since that is more the province of Advocacy), and it stays rather high in the rows, because

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[8]We do not claim that our definition of the domain of the traditional techniques is the only valid one. We do believe it is the one that most well-informed analysts and staffers in the donor community would think about.

Table 1. Location of EMIS, Policy Dialogue, Advocacy, Policy Analysis, and Social Marketing in the ERS Tools Spectrum

1 Information gathering; data collection and management	2 Research and analysis	3 Communications		Size of audience
		Type		
		a Bi-directional	b Uni-directional	
Case studies	Simulations; statistical and econometric analysis; budgeting; planning; qualitative research; common-sense research	Policy dialogue; "boardroom" techniques; negotiation	Advocacy and policy marketing	Few
Focus groups		Focus groups	Policy advocacy	
			Policy dialogue	
Socioeconomic surveys				
EMIS and school statistics	Traditional policy analysis		Social marketing	
	EMIS Projects			
Consumer and attitude surveys	Market research		Social advertising, mass education campaigns	Many

dialogue is usually a one-on-one, or few-on-few, technique. Donors have also funded Policy Dialogue efforts. They typically have (1) been minimally analytical; (2) almost never used primary data, and often not even secondary data, but only taken on the analytical results produced by other policy analysis units; (3) emphasized theory and common sense; and (4) emphasized dialogue and debate with parliaments, cabinets, important opinion makers, etc.

Policy Advocacy, on the other hand, makes even less use of massive data research, and sometimes is not analytical at all. Thus, it is placed to the right. Since most advocacy efforts are by definition aimed at

leaders (even if grassroots leaders), the techniques used are often more one-on-one or few-on-few; thus, Policy Advocacy is "high" in the rows of the matrix.

Traditional EMIS projects usually are narrowly concerned with data management. These projects seldom address the analytical uses the data are put to, much less their communications and dialogue potential. (This situation is changing, of course, but here we are referring to the techniques as traditionally understood.)

Finally, traditional Social Marketing tools span the whole width of the matrix. Generally they are thought of as applying to mass market research, mass communications techniques, etc. To some degree, focus group research also is used; as a result, Social Marketing bulges up into the "small audience" area. The techniques have been used less frequently in policy reform. More often, they have been used to create or bolster demand for certain services, to explain policy decisions ex post facto, or to change *individual* behavior and practices through communications. We believe the potential for using marketing techniques in policy reform, e.g., to create demand for policy change, is great.

An obvious step in applying these techniques systematically and in an integrated way is to be aware of where they fit in the kind of spectrum we have just shown. But, in fact, as we mentioned previously, the only practical way to apply these functions *as* a system may be to have them applied *by* a system. A system may consist of an EMIS arm, an analysis arm, a communications and presentations arm, and a negotiations and networking arm. Yet, to really make such groups work as systems means going beyond the supply capacity of each group, and toward effective demand from each group or part of the system upon the others. Internal demand, in turn, is derived from effective *external* demand.

As we noted above, most donor efforts concentrate on supply. As a result, they not only do not achieve sustainability, but also may not even achieve systematization, because informational flows are unidirectional, and hence are frequently not even effective in the short run (although truly enormous amounts of money frequently will "buy" usage—or the appearance of usage—for a period, even if there is no real underlying demand). We know of no developing country education sectors in which the three key components (data, analysis, communications) have been successfully integrated within a large donor project, particularly in the public sector. A relatively successful non-education example would be the Fundación de Economía y Desarrollo in the Dominican Republic, which developed databases, applied solid analysis and commentary, and then developed intensely graphical communications campaigns which were used in newspapers and on

television. The unit did all this systematically and persistently.

As we mention elsewhere, for effective demand signals to be transmitted with the system, the unit's directorship and technical levels must communicate well, as should the "outside" or "policy" levels, and the "inside" or "technical" levels in the institutions or networks of institutions. Some exercises carried out in Kenya were specifically aimed at promoting this interchange (see Box 5).

Lesson 4—Information not only is a technical-bureaucratic issue, but also is key to basic public accountability

Most information systems have been oriented at bureaucratic management, based on (1) a production function model of education rather than (2) a decentralized accountability *cum* measurement model. In the former, information usage is predicated on the assumption that if we know and control the process, and we measure the inputs, then we can guarantee outputs. (This reasoning is why most EMIS focus on "counting" inputs.) In the latter, information about outputs and outcomes is used to gauge how different "inputs" affect the system.[9] To be effective in supporting reform, as well as in allowing users to manage reformed or modernizing systems, information has to foster an output-accountability response among *all* relevant stakeholders. This accountability not only creates demand for the information system, but is probably the only way to effectively manage loosely coupled bureaucracies. Yet it is a radical departure from most current styles of management, and from most extant proposals for data usage.

Furthermore, the data skills needed in the reform process, as opposed to those needed for the management of reformed or well-governed systems, are very different. The reform process requires a motivational and comparative usage of data; a well-governed system requires a more analytical and statistical usage. The data to be used are quite different as well.[10] For example, while courses, training, and technical assistance in "traditionally understood" EMIS abound, there has been very little thinking about how to use EMIS to improve accountability and to tap into the implementation energies of communities and the private sector. Moreover, almost no training is available in this area.

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[9]This comparison of models of an information system can be likened to the differences between a planned and a market economy. In a planned economy, information is published about the quantity and type of products that are deemed needed to be produced. In a market, transactions generate information about which products are selling (successfully) or not.

[10]All this is fully documented in this series, particularly in Volume 4, *Tools and Techniques*. See also the bibliography at the end of this volume.

Box 5. Kenya: Integrating the Policy Level and the Technical Level in Creating Demand for Policy Support Services

Family planning policy advocates have been adept at using boardroom techniques to market reforms and programmatic change. Recently, they have also begun to train local counterparts in the use of tools with high information-throughput, such as computer graphics presentations. The computer-graphic aspect is only secondary; the useful lessons have to do with the use of any information-intensive means of communicating policy options and policy suggestions. Some of the counterparts in this process have been local advocacy, research, or service NGOs, as well as public sector units.

One workshop along these lines was held in Kenya. This policy advocacy workshop involved two government agencies and three NGOs and was innovative in that it involved both the directors of these organizations and a technical counterpart. Goals behind the design were:

- active participation by both directors and technical persons;

- willingness of directors to involve themselves (paired with one of their technical staffers);

- nomination of serious, talented, knowledgeable technical participants;

- ongoing use of techniques after the workshop; and

- development of stronger ties among these five organizations in promotion of sustainability.

The workshop spanned three weeks but had only five days of formal sessions. On the other days, trainers visited the participants in their own offices to work with them on their presentations. The letters of invitation and the design of the workshop strived to acknowledge the directors' busy schedules while emphasizing the critical importance of their role in developing any policy presentations. The inclusion of a number of high-profile organizations motivated friendly competition.

On the final day, each organization made its presentation at the workshop. Several of the directors in particular were clearly concerned that their organization produce a quality product and not be outdone by or embarrassed in front of the others. If the workshop had included only one or two organizations, the competitive spirit would have played a lesser role, resulting in reduced performance. The funding donors also attended the final session.

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

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

Note that the purpose here is not the self-serving one of creating demand for information systems so as to generate bureaucratic sustainability. The point is that creating this demand is integral to creating a serious, information-based accountability response. One is not possible without the other.

One supplementary reading in the ERS series[11] is specifically oriented at helping fill the void regarding data and accountability. Very few countries use information for accountability purposes. Even where the data exist that could drive an accountability response, as in Chile, these data have until very recently been used for purposes of bureaucratic engineering. Yet in some situations, such as Mali, where data are gathered for other purposes, the private sector does use data for a classical private accountability response. Schools to whom this is an advantage print flyers in which they advertise the fact that the ratio of average grade to fee cost in their schools is high. In Haiti, a minister of education attempted to publish average school grades, but the effort did not last.

In most countries, and even in donor circles, there is fear that such data might be misunderstood by the public, although there is little discussion about possible ministerial responsibility in educating the public in how to read such data. Teachers' unions everywhere tend to fear these kinds of proposals, believing that such schemes are one step away from naive merit-pay schemes. To judge by the proposals one does often hear, there is some sense in this fear. Some merit pay discussion is naive in the extreme, and does not rely on measurement of the kind that is needed for a better accountability response.

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

Policy analysis, either in the reform process or in the routine management of supposedly well-managed systems, is almost entirely limited to planning models and budgeting. And at the classroom level, most work is limited to multivariate or qualitative effectiveness studies. In most developing countries, few people have the capabilities needed to go beyond these types of analyses. The *serious* analysis of external efficiency, of distributional incidence and equity, of user fees and willingness to pay, of targeting and funding schema, of formulae for fiscal transfers, of salary scales and certification schemes and their incentive effects, is almost everywhere absent. Similarly, analysis on the borderline of economics, public policy, and public administration (e.g., in the design of alternative governance options) is missing almost everywhere. Finally, the ability to do qualitative analyses of good classroom management, and of structural and managerial limitations, is also absent.

It is practically impossible to sustain dialogue about these issues when there is almost no local capacity to *analyze* them. The crafting of effective (non-zero-sum) compromise, during dialogue, requires technical imagination—or at least technical knowledge to understand the standard stock of solutions. The capacity must always be local, because

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[11]*Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) for Accountability.*

the negotiation process is endogenous and event-driven, and will not await the arrival of the next technical expert.

Lesson 6—Dialogue and negotiation skills are the most lacking

As countries democratize and as participation becomes more legitimate and less dangerous, social groups begin to use and exercise buzzwords such as "participation," and they cease to be only buzzwords. However, most education sector experts in developing countries are not accustomed to public dialogue or negotiation, using hard information, and in a competitive arena. One of the dangers of having few people skilled at public dialogue and negotiation is paralysis and cacophony, as competing groups express themselves without anyone having a clear idea as to what constitutes good evidence, or how to measure progress toward resolution. Another is the danger of simply polling ignorance, as would happen if one simply asked people how the system should be improved. Frequently, those most sorely lacking in these skills are members of the social groups (parents, enlightened bureaucrats and social analysts, certain editorialists, certain business groups, etc.) advocating positions close to what donors would recommend as socially optimal.

The ERS series contains suggestions for how to overcome these problems. Some of the suggestions (e.g., social marketing and related techniques) are well-specified and have some history in developing countries. Others (e.g., deliberative polling) are less well-defined and more suggestive.

Lesson 7—Dialogue and consensus matter

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

However, for many reforms in the social sectors, the implementation energy of thousands, if not millions, of independent agents is needed if the reform is to be more than words on paper. This implementation energy must rely somewhat on state oversight. After all, sectors such as education have important public good components and public funding is being used. Furthermore, effective implementation requires the

use of information that derives from local dialogue about local prob-
lems, and people will not willingly either gather the information or act
upon it unless the transactions involved are somehow voluntary. There
are at least three reasons why people agree to go along with reform.

(1) They helped design it in a process of dialogue and consensus.

(2) They were extensively polled.

(3) They have resigned themselves to the fact that they cannot fight
     it, because of the bulk of evidence that the reform is in the public
     interest.

In any case, dialogue, people-level information, or persuasion of some
kind is required before the reforms can be effectively implemented.
This is, in fact, what makes the problem so difficult, yet so interesting,
since effective persuasion requires continuous guided dialogue, rather
than ex post facto salesmanship.

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

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

Lesson 8—Policy dialogue,
advocacy, and social marketing
are not all the same

Considerable confusion surrounds words such as "policy dialogue,"
"social marketing," and "advocacy." Since the words represent crafts
more than well-defined sciences, almost everyone imagines that they
know what they mean when asking for, say, social marketing services.
But since practitioners of these crafts have very clear, specific ideas
about what they do, confusion among the donor representatives pur-
chasing these services can lead to considerable waste of money and
misapplication of effort and talent. We have discovered that it is

important to use this kind of language very specifically, since these various skills are more useful in certain situations than others. All of these skills can be used together to good effect on various aspects of the reform process. Because the use of these techniques is surrounded by considerable confusion, and because at the same time we believe these skills can be very useful, we devote a considerable amount of space in this series to clarifying their use.[12]

Table 1 above draws some distinctions among these areas. Table 2 suggests *when* these the approaches might be useful, in terms of stages in the policy process. To clarify further, we offer the following definitions.

Table 2. Likely Uses of Social Marketing, Policy Dialogue, and Policy Advocacy in Stages of the Policy Process

Stage	Likely uses		
	Social marketing	**Policy dialogue**	**Advocacy**
Creating high-level awareness			Create awareness at high levels and commit budget and resources to reform.
Putting specific issues on the agenda	Determine, target, coalesce, and channel sense of desire for change from bottom up.	Help decision makers understand, define directions of change.	Communicate sense of changes needed to the wider circle of opinion makers.
Determining policy options; beginning to generate core consensus	Determine implement-ability of options via consumer research.	Debate options, present and "sell" the better ideas, narrow down.	
Expanding core consensus		"Sell" narrowing set of op-tions to wider circle—as options narrow, circle of decision makers and opinion makers widens.	"Sell" specific options to wider circles of opinion makers and imple-mentors, with less two-way interaction.
Beginning implementation	Explain and "sell" the decisions, and train and elicit implementation behaviors consistent with the policies.	Continue reinforcing and refining via debate and options analysis, since nothing works well immediately.	Continue "selling" to high-level implementors and decision makers.

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[12]See Volume 4, *Tools and Techniques*. Also, Table 1 above delineates where some of these skill areas fit in the public policy analysis and advocacy spectrum.

We define social marketing as the use of market research and communication (or marketing techniques) in the interest of *designing and promoting* programs that are of broad public or social interest, such as basic education. To distinguish the broad term "social marketing" from its usual narrow interpretation as mass media campaigns, we refer to such campaigns as "social advertising," which is only one of many elements of social marketing.
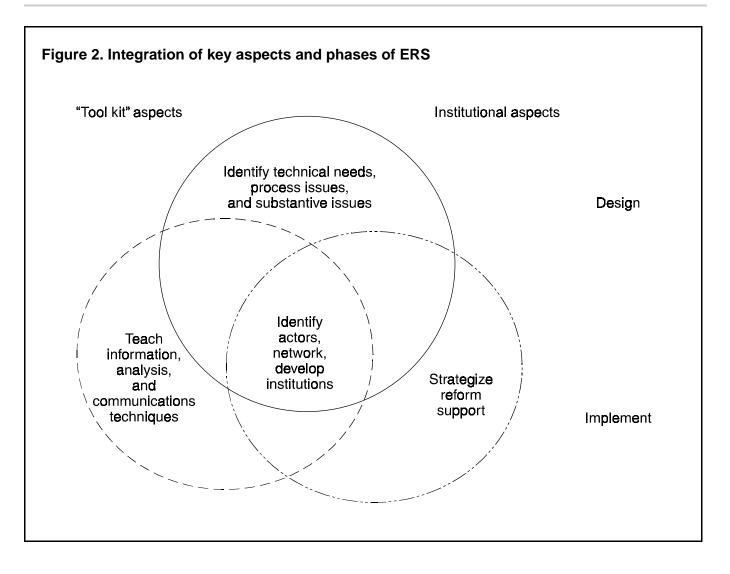
"Policy dialogue" has usually been used to refer to high-level discussion between donors and counterparts in host countries. We distinguish between that usage and a country's internal processes of deliberation, discussion, and mutual persuasion taking place among various (often competing) interests and stakeholders.

Our use of "advocacy" is consistent with the common sense or dictionary definition: to plead, to argue, to appeal for people or ideas.

Lesson 9—Skills in institutional development and networking link all aspects of ERS

Teaching skills in networking and institutional development to groups interested in analysis-based public policy dialogue is the final important aspect of ERS work. This area of work overlaps with the operational aspects we have already discussed at some length, so we will only point out that the ability of an NGO, a policy think-tank, or a government policy reform support unit to network with other institutions, and to make strategic research and discourse plans, is at the heart of the whole process. It is what links together (1) the mechanical tools and techniques issues we have discussed in this section, (2) the reform support infrastructure and other operational issues discussed in the previous section, and (3) the political mapping issues so important to a donor-and-counterpart *design* of ERS activities as described in the following section.

Figure 2 makes it clear that networking and institutional analysis/development is the key node that links most of the aspects we have been talking about. The upper half of the diagram deals with a design phase, the bottom half with the implementation phase (although, as discussed above, the phases may be synchronous). The left half deals with tool-kit aspects, the right half with the more institution-building tasks. Thus, the upper-right quadrant deals with the more institutional aspects of design, and the lower-left quadrant deals with the more tool-kit-provision aspects of implementation. The three circles represent aspects of ERS work: identifying technical needs, as well as process and substantive issues;, strategizing for reform support; and building capacity in information, analysis, and communication techniques. Each circle intersects with the institutional assessment and reassessment aspect. Thus, the intersection of the three circles, at the center, contains the institutional assessment aspect of ERS, and links all three aspects

Figure 2. Integration of key aspects and phases of ERS

"Tool kit" aspects   Institutional aspects

Identify technical needs,
process issues,
and substantive issues

Design

Teach
information,
analysis,
and
communications
techniques

Identify
actors,
network,
develop
institutions

Strategize
reform
support

Implement

of our larger discussion: designing, getting things done institutionally, and providing technical support. Note that the internal institutional development issues are quite as important as the networking ones. That is, learning how to react strategically to the environment is a key skill. Box 6 presents an example of how an institution can make use of these skills.

Box 6. Ecuador: Strategic Institutional Management of Policy NGOs

An Ecuadorean NGO, with USAID funding, set itself up as a think-tank and advocate on investment policy, and as a broker between foreign investors and local entrepreneurs, to promote and to take advantage of economic liberalization during the 1980s. The NGO was successful in promoting legislative change on issues such as tariff barriers, trade liberalization, customs reform, reform of the capital market, and easing of restrictions on capital movements.

But by then the general external environment had changed. First, because this NGO (along with others) was successful, to some extent the task was done. Second, once the task of structural adjustment was completed (for the continent as a whole, if not so successfully for the country in question), it was clear that the big donors were becoming interested in enormously expanding lending to the social sectors, but doing so in a "social-reformist" context, rather than through "bricks, mortar, and textbooks" projects as was common in previous decades. Furthermore, the NGO's single source of support, USAID, saw declines in its funding, and in any case it wanted to wean the NGO from exclusive dependence on one donor and move it toward project funding rather than institutional support.

The NGO carried out a strategic planning exercise to deal with the implicit opportunities and threats, since its members knew it had some weaknesses. For example, it had neither the right personnel nor the right style to work on social sector reform issues. On investment reform issues, where the problems require less constant negotiation and dialogue, the NGO could contract out the drafting of legislation. In social sector reform, it had to rely more on in-house dialogue capabilities, since policy dialogue requires continuous presence at the discussion table, and an ongoing marketing of ideas. The NGO was accustomed neither to this strategy nor to being funded by more than one client or project at a time. Through the process of strategic planning (and some groping and muddling through), the NGO changed its direction, acquired the right personnel, and developed alliances with outside NGOs and think-tanks on social sector issues. As a result the NGO obtained instant expertise as well as learning-by-doing opportunities for its staff.

Today the NGO is working on education, social security reform, and a program for retraining retrenched government officials. For this work, it has several contracts with a variety of donors and continues to collaborate effectively with external think-tanks. Its future is far from automatically assured, and it can still improve in some areas, but it is a good case study of using strategic thinking and planning fairly consciously as a way of facing the future. The lesson is not "we need to develop and follow a detailed plan." Rather, the lesson has to do with relying on strategic planning and awareness, looking to the future, and cultivating a sense of mission. In this sense, a strategic plan is more like a road map than like an itinerary, and also proves more useful in a difficult and complex environment. Because of the importance of strategic management in the policy process, research/advocacy NGOs in particular need this kind of assistance, as opposed to NGOs that are similar to traditional project implementation units.

Section 6

How to Design Project-Worthy ERS Activities

6.1 Continuous Strategic Design and Redesign

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

6.2 Steps in ERS Design

The design process involves several steps. On paper we can only describe them sequentially, and in an initial assessment a sequential process is not only unavoidable but useful. During ongoing redesign, however, the steps completely lose their sequence. The design steps are as follows.[13]

Step 1—Assess the political economy.

Step 2—List and understand the key substantive reform issues.

Step 3—List and understand the key process issues blocking reform.

Step 4—List and understand the actors and stakeholders.

Step 5—Understand the tools and techniques that can be used.

Step 6—Relate substantive issues to process issues.

Step 7—Assess the relationships of actors with each other and with issues.

Step 8—Associate actors with tools and techniques.

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[13]Each of the steps summarized here is discussed in great detail in Volume 5, *Strategy Development and Project Design.*

> *Step 9*—Develop concrete action steps, levels of effort, etc.
>
> *Step 10*—Develop a monitoring and assessment strategy.
>
> The first step is a stand-alone step, and represents a kind of cutoff or abort/takeoff point: In certain countries, the activities recommended here should be tried only very cautiously and slowly. Steps 2 through 4 (lists) involve the accounting of entries in three "vectors." The next four steps (5 through 8) involve combining these vectors, two at a time, into three matrices (see Tables 3 through 5). The matrices thus evolving constitute the basis of the design. The last two steps comprise developing an initial implementation plan for the activities implicit in the matrices. A summary discussion of each step follows.

Step 1—Assess the political economy	Step 1 involves determining the overall nature of the relationship between the state and civil society, the openness of the country to public debate and discourse, the ability and willingness of actors to engage in a public debate that is both sharp *and* technical, and the degree to which reformist agendas are already accepted, discussed, or even implemented. Not all countries are equally ready for the approaches we are describing here, nor are they all ready in the same ways. The countries that are less ready typically will differ from each other most in *how* they are ready. Thus, in poorer countries with less tradition of public discourse, less democracy, and less technical capacity, the assessment is doubly important. It can help rule out a major effort in that country and, if only limited efforts are warranted, it can help focus and target the effort by laying a better foundation for the rest of the design. Volume 5 in this series provides extensive questionnaires and guidelines for assessing the political-economic environment for reform in any country.
Step 2—Understand the substantive reform issues	In Step 2, the substantive reform issues that are relevant will usually be pointed out in writings by donors, local technocrats, and intellectuals about the country in question and about the sector. Other entries on the list will come from discussions with local intellectuals and officials. Still others will emerge from analytical models aimed at eliminating much of the "noise" that tends to hide certain features of an education system. They will include well-known issues such as reorienting education budgets toward basic education, reforming university financing, giving meaningful decision making to actors with the best information (the "decentralization" issue), allowing multiple providers into the market to compete for public funding, etc. The people designing the ERS intervention must understand and list the issues as specifically as possible. For example, they might break down the "university finance reform issue" into the types of reforms needed (e.g., development of specific targeting criteria for "free" access,

development of loan or scholarship systems, etc.). The list of substantive issues, and even their details, is rather standard. References can be found in the more in-depth studies in this series.[14]

Step 3—Understand process issues

Change on substantive issues is often blocked by process issues. For Step 3, we have identified several process "blockages:"

- lack of technical and analytical design capacity,

- budgetary limits,

- legal and regulatory limits and problems,

- pressure group power, and

- realistic fear of management complexity due to lack of capacity to manage the reform process and the resulting system.

These issues are interrelated. For example, legal limits are often related to pressure group problems, since pressure group privilege usually is expressed in legal terms. Nevertheless, the blockages are not always related, and in any case they have to be analyzed separately in order to make it possible to design specific strategies.

Step 4—List and understand actors and stakeholders

Step 4 implies casting a wide net, and trying to list anyone who either benefits from education (e.g., parents), uses educated labor (e.g., business, the public sector, the military), "produces" education (e.g., teachers and teachers' unions, the bureaucracy, private school associations), or has a professional interest in general public policy issues (e.g., editorialists, religious hierarchy, military think-tanks if any, etc.). An extensive reminder list is found elsewhere in this series.[15]

Step 5—List tools and techniques

A standard set of analytical as well as more institutional and strategic tools and techniques can help with education reform processes. For Step 5, developing a very thorough understanding of what techniques are available, and which are useful in what situations, is vitally important. Extensive discussion of all available tools and techniques can be found in other documents in this series,[16] and a summary has been provided above.

Step 6—Cross the substantive and process issues

In Step 6, designers can begin to gain insight into how to design an overall strategy by crossing the substantive issues with the process

[14] See Volume 5, *Strategy Development and Project Design*. A more detailed example can be found in Volume 5, *Strategy Development and Project Design*.

[15] This mapping can be quite elaborate. See Volume 5, *Strategy Development and Project Design*, Section 6.2; or Reich 1994.

[16] In particular, see Volume 4, *Tools and Techniques*, for the more technical or mechanical skills and techniques, and Volume 3, *Making it Happen*, for the more institutional and process-related techniques and strategies.

issues. (A highly simplified example is given in Table 3.[17]) This way, they can assess exactly which process issues block which substantive issues, whether the blockage is a very difficult one, and what kinds of technical and process skills (as well as political-economic maneuvering) may be needed or feasible in order to resolve the blockage. Technical assistance usually needs to be orchestrated around process issues. This kind of cross-tabulation can help prioritize the deployment of the assistance. Furthermore, many substantive issues may be blocked by the same kind of process issue. (For example, the lack of data on distributional incidence and lack of knowledge on how to do elementary analysis of this kind can contribute to misperceptions about the equity impact of certain subsidies across a wide variety of substantive issues.) One can then achieve some economies of scale with certain types of technical assistance. Finally, studying the resulting table gives a general impression of the overall strategic terrain to be dealt with.

Step 7—Cross-tabulate actors with each other and with the issues

The process in Step 7 begins with developing an understanding of the political economy of education in the country. The issues are the same process and substantive issues discussed above. Designers should be aware of the real interests (pecuniary, such as interest in one's job; and psychological/ideological) as well as the more rhetorical ones (everyone claims the public interest, or the interest of children). This cross-tabulation is sometimes called a political map.[18] By carrying the thread of analysis from the issues tabulation to the actors *and* issues tabulation, designers can begin to pinpoint which actors might be in need of which types of technical assistance, how to network certain kinds of actors, etc. A simple example is given in Table 4.[19]

Table 3. Sample Relationships Between Substantive Reform Issues and Process Issues

	Relationship				
	Process issues				
Substantive issues	Technical and social design (cost-effective and pedagogically appropriate)	Securing of budget, securing of new sources of funding	Legal and regulatory technical roadblocks	Pressure group opposition	Management capacity
Reform teacher salary scale to reward perform-ance. Unlink salary scale from paper certification and seniority.	Medium:[a] requires human resources and public finance expertise. Activity may include technical assistance (TA) in these areas to ministry of educa-tion (MoE), think-tanks.	None: unless it is tied to a general salary increase as a way to overcome union resistance.	May be high: requires labor law expertise. May require TA in legal areas to MoE or civil service commission.	May be formidable: will require much dialogue and marketing; union leadership may have to be distinguished from teachers.	Medium to impossible: depending on design and concomitant reforms, could be quite easy or impossibly hard. Would require TA in improved management of personnel, teacher supervision systems, school principals.
Increase user fees at university; move to system of grants, bursaries, and full fees based on objective indicators.	Medium: requires some experience in targeting subsidies, requires data for simulation of effects. Loans: much more difficult. Activity includes TA specific to design of loan and bursary systems. Work with MoE or higher education council.	Not applicable.	Low to high, depending on whether budget shifts affect personnel, personnel contractual issues, and budget flexibility.	Considerable, but can be done with sufficient discussion and public aware-ness. Activity includes TA and collaboration in dialogue. Work with ministry of finance, MoE, ministry of planning, think-tanks.	Medium. Requires data management on students, tracking. Loan system would be much more difficult: qualifying, tracking, collection.

[a]Gradations represent the degree of blockage the substantive issue poses for the process issue.

Table 4. A Simple (Hypothetical) Political Map

Actor	Issues	Relation to other actors	Influence base
Tertiary students' union	Fees, targeted; loan and bursary schemes.	Supported by teachers' union. Viewed skeptically by rural parents, NGOs, think-tanks, economists in ministry of finance.	Parents are state administrators, vocal urban elites. Union members are perceived as democratizing heroes. General rhetorical, informational power; mass action.
Teachers' union	Salary issues; opposition to quality and output measurement; opposition to moves away from pay based on certification and seniority; some opposition to shortening pre-service training.	Supported by universities, particularly departments of pedagogy; ambiguous relation with ministry; supported by other unions.	Mass movement; ideological/rhetorical; parliament.
Ministry of education: minister	Not much concern with the issues; not very proactive.	Weak relation to other ministries; good relation to parliamentarians, who are former teachers.	Parliament; legal responsibility for running the ministry; influence vested in the ministry.
Ministry of education: head of policy and planning unit	Concerned with all the relevant issues; "reformist."	Good relation with economists, ministry of finance, and ministry of planning.	Technical, but otherwise weak; little knowledge of rhetorical, persuasion, and communications tools.
NGOs	Concerned with funding for basic education; possibility of creative funding formulae.	Not very related to government; possible allies in cost-cutting economists in finance, planning.	Grassroots ties; donor perception of efficiency; claims of democratization and participation.
Think-tanks	Not much awareness of education issues; but "modernizers" and "reformist" in general.	Strong base of influence with young planners in finance, planning, central bank; influential with minister of finance.	Clarity of thought; coincidence of agenda with powerful donors; not much persuasive, communication ability yet.

Step 8—Cross-tabulate actors with tools and techniques

Armed with an understanding of what substantive issues need reform and what process issues are blocking reform, as well as how various actors relate to the issues and each other, one can begin Step 8, mapping the kinds of assistance and skills certain actors might be given in order to move the process forward. In this assessment, it is particularly important to note that certain key actors—those who are important nodes in the social networks that impinge on reform processes—will be particular targets for what we have called institutional or process-management skills. Others may receive certain *technical*

skills, and still others are simply involved in the network. This final table, taken together with all the rest, presents a kind of initial starting agenda for assistance. A simple example is found in Table 5.[20]

Table 5. Matching of Actors to Types of Support Activities and Tools

Actors	Support Activities and Technical Tools				
	Data and EMIS	Analysis	Dialogue	Institutional capacity development	Networking
Cabinet				Can provide information about leadership for think-tanks and advocacy NGOs. Can be on boards.	With ministry of education (MoE), think-tanks.
Ministry of education	Use in policy. Reorientation to community-based qualitative assessment. Creation of demand.	Assessment development, education finance, governance design, salary scale re-structuring.	Workshops. Use of social and policy marketing by planning and policy unit.	Human resource management related to salary scales, per-formance evaluation.	With ministry of finance, ministry of planning, think-tanks, etc.
Ministry of finance	Linkage to personnel records.	Budgeting and finance. Tar-geting, inter-governmental transfers. Tax code and communities.			With MoE, NGOs in service delivery and advocacy, think-tanks.
NGOs		Some general training in public policy issues.	Communi-cations, advocacy, persuasion.	General institutional development.	With reformist elements in economic ministries, think-tanks.
Legislature		Legal analysis of issues such as civil service, tax law.		Development of education commission.	With MoE, NGOs in service delivery and advocacy, think-tanks.

[20]A more detailed example can be found in Volume 5, *Strategy Development and Project Design*.

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

Step 9 requires that the assistance strategy, at least in its initial steps, be quantified, so that it can be planned and budgeted. Doing so requires more-or-less standard application of donor project planning methods, so we do not discuss further.

Step 10—Develop monitoring and assessment procedure

All of the above can only provide an initial starting point. The tricky points about reform processes, however, are that (1) they are relatively unpredictable, and (2) unlike infrastructural projects, "reality pushes back." What is the most logical step at any given point depends on the effect the process has had so far, and this effect is largely unpredictable. Thus, as Step 10, a procedure has to be developed for monitoring and assessing the process, and for constantly restrategizing in terms of all of the above steps. Volume 6 in the ERS series, *Evaluating Education Reform Support*, provides some monitoring and evaluation strategies and methods.

6.3 Completing the Design

After all these steps have been completed, a reasonably solid strategy for starting out with ERS activities should emerge. Two factors combine to produce a good strategy. The first factor is carrying out the above process *thoroughly* and with a good base of knowledge about all of the issues involved. Participants need to thoroughly understand how to use all the tools and techniques (e.g., be able to distinguish between social marketing and policy advocacy), and cast a wide net over the actors and understand the real and rhetorical interests of each. The second factor is doing all this non-mechanically, and with a good deal of sensitivity and strategic "nose." We should note that while both factors are necessary, a wooden, mechanistic approach will yield very bad results even if it is complete and systematic. Thus, simply following steps is not a good idea; a project designer who cannot get into the spirit of the process, and absorb the "theory" of it, probably is not suited for this kind of design or this type of work in general.

Section 7

Conclusion

Systematizing the messy

Policy reform processes are inherently messy. Even so, these processes are understandable, and it is possible to develop serious, systematic strategies for supporting these processes with technical and institutional tools and approaches. Education Reform Support is one such systematic strategy—maybe not the only one possible, but at this point the only one worked out in any detail. It may not be easy, and its implementation may require individuals possessing a rare (thus far) combination of strategic rationality, tactical flexibility, and subject matter knowledge. And it may not conform easily to the standard donor project cycle. Yet the approaches proposed as Education Reform Support offer systematic, implementable means of supporting these messy, politicized reform processes.

In this volume we have described the strategic and tactical approaches, as well as useful tools and techniques, in sufficient detail for readers to be able to judge whether the approach is indeed sufficiently systematic and promising for their needs. Those who are charged with implementing reform support processes may wish to continue reading the remaining volumes in this series, which describe the approaches in much more detail.

Annex A

Some Jargon

One problem with most social science writing, as opposed to writing in the natural sciences, is that the vocabulary used is an everyday vocabulary, but the meanings are not everyday meanings. This problem has two consequences.

First, since most social science papers by their very nature must constantly use and reuse the same few basic words and concepts, in different combinations, the result begins to appear "fluffy" and dizzying. It is hard to keep track of the subtlety of meaning implicit in various combinations and recombinations of the same words, if one is not aware that the meaning of each word is quite rigorous or at least different from the understanding in everyday life.

Second, the problem can lead to serious misunderstandings in general. Sometimes a statement appears to belabor the obvious, and sometimes it appears to be counterintuitive or outrageous, but in both cases this is because the reader has taken the words at their everyday meaning, rather than at their technical meaning. Moreover, the technical meaning is unclear because the words have both an everyday *and* a specific meaning. Thus, for example, "public good" has a very specific meaning in economics and public finance, but it also has an everyday meaning that is much broader. An example would be when we say that the state should engage in the finance but not the provision of most public goods: if it is a *good* and it is *public*, then why should the state not provide it? This kind of confusion is obviously not as likely when we say that "carbohydrates are composed of hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen atoms," since none of these words has an everyday meaning, or their scientific meaning dominates their everyday meaning even when the words are used in everyday life.

For these reasons, in this annex we have supplied some definitions of our own jargon. We do not claim that these are "the" final and only true possible definitions. They are simply the ones that we are using here, and they are the ones that make the whole approach a lot more intelligible. On the whole, the definitions accord with the way economists use these words. We intend for the annex to assist readers with terms used throughout the ERS series.

Atomization. Within the ERS series, *atomization* is used to describe the transition from a situation in which there is a larger entity (e.g., a national curriculum) to a situation in which a number of smaller entities exist (e.g., flexible national curriculum framework that allows for the definition of local curricula).

Collective decision making, decision making about collective or public goods, and democracy. Because the state implements the delivery of public goods either by directly providing or simply by financing them, and because public resources by definition are always limited, it is important to establish a process for determining which public goods will be produced or funded, and how much of which.

This is *decision making with regard to collective goods*, or payment for collective goods. But the decision making for collective goods need not itself be collective or democratic. It may be arbitrary, authoritarian, or traditional. By *democracy* we mean a system whereby the affected citizens get to play a *collective* role in determining what gets produced, taxed, and funded by the state. This meaning is fairly close to the everyday and intuitive understanding of the term, and need not be elaborated much further.

However, there is much confusion surrounding the notion of democracy for development and "good" decision making. In this context we cannot resist a little soapbox hectoring, because it is germane to our whole effort. We find it surprising that at the end of the 20th century, debates about the utility of democracy for development can be taken seriously, sometimes by individuals in charge of foreign assistance to other countries, with the naivete of a college dormitory bull session. There is no question that there is no one-to-one correlation between democracy and "good governance." Democracies can be paralyzed, and can be slow, because the mechanisms for collective decision making are not perfect, and because there are unfortunate and intrinsic limits to how perfectly a political (rather than market) process can aggregate individual preferences. Such paralysis can lead to bickering and fragmentation, and this situation in itself has a tremendous cost. Thus, authoritarian and arbitrary control of the state can, *on occasion*, lead to better results than in a democracy, in the narrow sense that a larger package of collective goods can be provided. Of course, this argument puts aside the fact that many citizens value democracy for itself, and do not see the process as a cost. The catch is the "on occasion" in the previous sentence. It has been well-known for centuries that the problem is that there is never any ex post ante guarantee that arbitrariness and authoritarianism will not lead to a much worse outcome than democracy. That is, there is no way that this can be known *before* the citizens "choose" to put their destinies in the hands of a king or dictator; hence the truth of Lord Acton's famous dictum that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."[1] (Note the oft-forgotten but important difference between the use of the "tends" in the first and not the second part of the sentence.)

Democracy is a relatively efficient mechanism for preventing governance disasters. Because most human beings are risk-averse with regard to big, one-time decisions, it makes sense that most human beings opt for democracy when given a chance. However, democracy itself can only be judged instrumentally, and there have been some situations in human history when citizens have wisely handed over dictatorial powers to their rulers because of the paralysis engendered by democratic governments. It is impossible to come to any ex post ante, generic conclusions, except to say that as a rule democracy is both a source of insurance and a relatively efficient means for a ruler to discover the aggregated preferences of the population. Few democracies have produced governments that would have been as able to "deliver the goods" in the same circumstances as, say, Singapore in the 1960s-1990s under Lee Kwan Yu, Prussia under Frederick the Great, Turkey under Atatürk, or France under Richelieu and then Louis the XIV. But, on the other hand, very few democracies have hit the governance lows of Idi Amin, Mobutu, Bokassa, Trujillo, and thousands upon thousands of others. Statistically, for every relatively wise and enlightened authoritarian dictator (e.g., Lee Kwan Yu and to a much lesser degree Pinochet) there are many times over as many inept, unkind, and unwise despots (Marcos, Galtieri, Trujillo, Somoza, Bokassa, Amin, Mobutu, Traore, Mengistu, etc.— readers who have lived in the Third World have a better-than-90% chance of having lived under such a kleptocratic despot). Because ineptness and cruelty can grow on rulers the more they rule, one cannot decide beforehand who will behave how. (A sad and intermediate case is what might be called regimes based on "inept dictatorial romanticism," or at least those that started out that way, such as those associated with

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[1]Furthermore, as Eric Hoffer noted: "Those in possession of absolute power cannot only prophesy and make their prophecies come true, but they can also lie and make their lies come true."

Nyerere, Kaunda, and to a much lesser degree, Mugabe.) Furthermore, many a Lee Kwan Yu has decided that if he is a good ruler, so will his son be, when his son actually resembles Mobutu much more than he resembles the father. In short, enough nonsense has been talked about democracy. For developed countries to insist on democratization in the developing world will be, on average, a "good" thing, particularly if it is accompanied by technical assistance that tends to ensure that democratization does not result in paralysis and bickering.

This perchant for democracy does not mean that in Africa, for example, one should insist on Western-style democracy by attempting to promote—lock, stock, and barrel—the exact institutions and rules of the game that are practiced in the West. Obviously, multiparty democracy on an explicit Western (or, worse, specifically American[2]) model may or may not be appropriate, particularly given tendencies towards tribalist and ethnic factionalism. However, power-hungry dictators, and their apologists, may well abet tribalism and factionalism as a means to reassure both their people and Western donors that a "strong hand" is needed. It is not obvious, for example, that this is not the situation in Kenya with Daniel Arap Moi. And a "strong hand," since it will almost inevitably take sides and tip balances, may in itself exacerbate tribalism and ethnic hatred. Thus, the direction of causality here is not as simple as many detractors of democratization would propose. It would be wisest to conclude we do not know the ultimate truth of these matters, but that incremental changes toward democratization and participation, and the search for non-Western, but core-democratic, models that are appropriate for Africa cannot but help in the long term, and development is nothing if not a long-term process.

Conditionality. In an attempt to pressure host countries to effect particular reforms, donors have at times required that developing country governments "achieve" certain indicators (e.g., lower pupil-teacher ratios, higher gross enrolment ratios, a 5 percent increase in the primary education budget) as a condition for disbursement of additional donor funds. Conditionality applies to this phenomenon.

Endogenous/exogenous. These terms are common to both economics and anthropology. Within the donor-host country context, we use the term *endogenous* to describe something (in this case, a set of reforms) that derives from within a host country. The term *exogenous* is used to describe something that is derived outside of the host country. Within a host country, an exogenous intervention is one that is imposed on, say, a district by the center. An endogenous solution is one that is formulated by the community itself.

Group think. *Group think* refers to a tendency for closed circles of policy-making elites to reinforce their own ideas internally, using processes within which reality checks are by definition difficult. Policies thus developed then clash with reality. Participatory democracy and accountability are possible antidotes.

Local level. This term refers roughly to that part of an education system that extends from the district level down to the schools and the communities of which those schools are a part.

Magic bullet. Many reformists' mind-set leads them to believe that there is one thing out there that can bring about sustainable reform. For example, some feel that all one has to do is fix the curriculum and

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[2]We say "worse" not because the American model may be particularly inappropriate, but simply because it is so particular. Hence, basing one's reasoning on the American model is more likely to blind one in the search for locally appropriate democratic models.

children will learn more. Others feel that well-trained teachers will get children to learn more. Still others believe that world-class standards will bring about the changes necessary to facilitate more learning among children. These messianic interventions are what we call magic bullets.

Policy. We have a rather rigorous and narrow definition. By *policy* we mean the set of rules and allocation mechanisms that control the relationship between the polis (originally the Greek city-state) and the citizens. That is, policy is the set of procedures, rules, and allocation mechanisms that determine the state's relationship to its citizens. Thus, in a very narrow understanding, matters internal to the state are not policy but public administration, unless they explicitly and directly affect the polis' relation to the citizens. For example, the decision of whether to charge fees in public schools, or what the language of instruction should be, is a policy decision, but the decision as to whether the management information system should be directly attached to the minister's office or should be in the office of the director of planning, or whether the ministry's cafeteria should be on the third or fifth floor, is a matter of (public) administration, not policy. Obviously, around the edges the lines blur, because many administrative decisions do have a *direct* impact on the *polis'* relations with the citizens. Similarly, in our jargon, an individual cannot have a *policy* of buying Toyotas rather than Nissans, nor do private corporations have policies, even though they use the word: again, we use a very narrow and specific definition of this term. Not the only possible one, but the only one that is consistent with everything we say here.

Policy change and policy reform. By *policy change* we mean structural change, change in the rules of allocation and of the relation between the *polis* and the citizens. Thus, raising teacher salaries on one particular occasion is not a policy change. Changing the way salaries are determined, e.g., instituting annual increases based on the Consumer Price Index, or making them entirely market-driven, would be two examples of policy change. Devaluing the national currency is not a policy change. Making the exchange rate market-driven rather than Central Bank-driven is a policy change. Increasing user fees at the university by some arbitrary amount is not a policy change. Instituting fees where previously there were none, or deciding that fees will always increase so as to meet 30% of university costs, is a policy change. *Policy reform* is a set of policy changes that are more or less consistent with each other and more or less simultaneously implemented. It also refers to the process whereby such changes come about. This appears to be a "fuzzy" or "fluffy" distinction, but it is key to understanding the impact of conditionality, the sustainability of donor-created institutions that are supposed to engage in policy reform, etc.

Political economy. There are volumes written about political economy. When used in the ERS series, this term refers to the combined political and economic (i.e., power) relationships that exist among interest groups as they, in turn, relate to particular issues.

Principal-agency problems. Whenever anyone (a principal) hires anyone else (an agent) to do anything there is a control problem, because the motivations of the principal are to get as much out of the agent as possible, and the motivation of the agent is to get paid as much and do as little work as possible. Obviously, there are nuances, such as the fact that if the agent wants a long-term relationship with the principal, then the short-run motivation will be to provide a reasonable service. But, as a generality, the principal (buyer) and the agent (provider) have different motivations. If one adds a third party, the client (the entity for whom the good or service is being provided), the control problem is even more complex. Obviously, there are advantages to hiring agents: their specialization often makes them more efficient. The key to whether agents are hired or the function is internalized, so that the principal and the agent coincide, is an important key to the whole issue of whether the state finances only, or finances and provides. It is the key to much of the privatization debate (see Donahue 1989). The decision should go in favor of internalizing

(or nationalizing) functions for which the economic benefits of specialization and the political/bureaucratic benefits of "indirectness" by means of holding the provision function at arms' length—outweigh the contractual and bureaucratic costs of control and supervision. And this restructuring, in turn, has to do with ease of specification of contracts for the good in question, the measurability and pre-specifiability of the quality and quantity of the thing to be delivered, the existence of multiple providers, etc. Note that this situation *only* applies to true public goods in the sense rigorously defined above. Nationalizing an industry or factory that does not produce public goods is *seldom* a good idea, except for political, populist, or posturing purposes. That is, nationalizing an industry that produces or intermediates essentially private goods (cement, shoes, clothes, food, etc.—most things, in fact) on a principal-agent justification is a good idea only from a private point of view—it benefits the unions, the bureaucrats, and the politicians, at the expense of the nation.

Principle of subsidiarity. Under this principle, the authority to carry out a particular function is delegated to the lowest level of government (e.g., municipal government) that is able to perform that function most effectively.

Production-function model. A production function is a mathematical relationship that maps inputs to output. Widely used in agriculture—where, for example, experiment stations can tell farmers that a certain input mix (e.g., 50 kg/ha nitrogen, 35 kg/ha phosphorous, 20 kg/ha lime, etc.) will yield 2000 kg/ha corn, production functions have been used in education to quantify an optimal input mix for, say, student achievement. However, because children are not corn and education is not quite as straightforward as agriculture, production functions in education are of limited value.

"Providing" vs. "finance." It is possible to argue on one hand that for the enormous majority of public goods, the state has a responsibility to finance the good by using its powers of taxation and subsidization to induce citizen behavior that aligns incentives, or internalizes externalities; but on the other hand that there is little justification for the state to directly provide the good in question in state-owned facilities, or to directly prohibit or regulate the production of public "bads." In these cases, the state's use of the finance mechanisms is sufficient to induce citizen behavior that is "correct" from a public good point of view, and is quite efficient. In any case, whatever one's views on this issue, it is important to distinguish the "finance" function of the state from its "provision" function. The latter means that the state actually implements a function in publicly owned and publicly run facilities, whether this is done with private moneys (like NASA, partially, and the U.S. Postal Service, almost entirely), or with public moneys (the defense, police, and judicial forces). The "finance" function means that the state pays for something, whether it implements or provides the function itself (public education in most cases) or a third party implements (the GI Bill, food stamps, charter schools, much of the implementation of U.S. foreign aid). Finally, note that in cases where the state "finances" but does not "provide," the provider or implementor can be the private sector or another instance of the state. Thus, the central state may finance education provision by municipalities, where the municipalities are then, in effect, acting as agents of the central state. The merits of all these choices ideally should be determined on technical grounds and based on information, rather than being based on history, romanticism, or pressure group politics. The key distinction, or technical-merit criterion, has to do with principal-agency problems.

Public good. This piece of jargon leads to endless and needless confusion. Most often the everyday usage puts the emphasis on "good" rather than "public." Is a university education in accounting a public good? In the sense that it is "good," and that its practice relates persons to each other, of course it is a "public good," and that is how most people think of it. In the sense that it is *truly* "public" as we are about

to define, however, we say no. When concentrating on the "public" aspect, everyday usage assumes that anything that has impact on others is a "public" good. Furthermore, there is usually a moralistic tone to this view. Thus, curative medicine is seen as a public good, because doctors clearly have an impact on others, and it is a "good" impact in most cases (or, at least, one hopes!). But note that in this conception, almost everything is a public good: tailoring services, cobbling, farming, etc. Thus, food, since it increases the capacity of some people to work for others, comes to be seen as a public good. However, a rigorous definition says that a public good is any good whose benefits or costs—at the level at which a pure market mechanism actually does or would provide them—exceed those which private individuals *can or do* charge during the normal operation of private transactions in a market. In cases where the *costs* can be externalized, too much of the good gets produced (pollution); and in cases where the *benefits* are externalized, too little gets produced (education). In a normal market this production inbalance cannot happen. Consumers paying for the last unit of food produced by a farmer just barely cover his cost of production and an average rate of profit, and thus, at this margin, costs and benefits to society are equal. There is no way to improve on this allocation—society is at some kind of optimum. But often this system breaks down, sometimes because the goods in question literally cannot be marketed (how does one market, for example, the increased capacity to engage in collective action that primary education provides, or the drop in the mortality of other people's grandchildren that is achieved by my paying to educate my child?[3]) or because a monopolist controls the market.

A function of the state is to step in and tax the goods with *external costs*, as a way of forcing producers to internalize their costs; and to subsidize the things with *external benefits*, as a way of getting the consumers or producers to realize the true strength of the signals they would be receiving from the market if it were perfect. Thus, neither the study or practice of typical curative medicine, nor good nutrition, is a public good. If I, as a doctor, render someone better fit to work, or live a happier life, that individual earns higher wages or simply achieves greater happiness, and is therefore able and willing to pay me to "fix" him or her. The social benefits can be fully captured through the transactions of private individuals. When this is feasible it is generally preferable to governmental action, because governments can almost never acquire sufficient information to perfectly aggregate individual preferences. Even if they could, they have no method for doing so, even in a democracy. On the other hand, at least under some circumstances, markets *can* aggregate preferences perfectly, and often do come pretty close to doing so even if conditions are not perfect.

But there are many cases where benefits cannot be captured through the transactions of individuals, for a host of reasons, as discussed above. These are true public goods. Doctors devoted to public, preventive health are performing a public good, because it is not feasible, either technically or in terms of human nature, to individually charge each person for the share of their benefits in the prevention of epidemic or contagious disease: everyone would expect everyone else to pay so that they could benefit themselves, and nothing would get done. This truth explains the *nonvoluntary* payment to the state. Studies of primary education are a public good in some ways, because we cannot privately capture all the benefits (e.g., reduction in the mortality of my neighbor's children's children—there is no trade-off) of the education we would buy in a private training market. But most university, technical, and vocational education is a private good, because our training increases our private marketability in very direct ways, and does little to instill in us "generic" behavioral traits that spill over to society in ways we cannot recover. (There are, of course, some spillovers even in university education, for many complex reasons, but in most branches they appear to be smaller, as a proportion of the total benefit, than for basic education.)

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[3]Research shows that there is an indirect correlation between levels of education and child mortality. That is, as average levels of primary educational attainment rise—especially among women—child mortality decreases.

Some people make the mistake of assuming that training that then goes on to serve a public good should itself be treated as a public good. Thus, they believe that training in preventive medicine, or basic nursing, should be a public good and subsidized differently from training in regular, curative medicine. Training in primary teaching should also be subsidized, they believe. There is a grain of truth to this belief, but it is a messy and unwise means to accomplish the goal. It is better that the doctors and teachers be paid wages in their own, publicly provided sectors, that truly reflect their value to society, and then let them pay for their training in the same manner in which everyone else pays for their training. This is the ideal to shoot for, of course. In reality there must often be compromises and second-best solutions, because while we wait to design the ideal system, and get politicians and bureaucrats to understand it, the children may be bleeding in the streets.

Pushing back. We use this term to describe the resistance reforms encounter as they begin to unfold within the larger educational environment. This resistance can come from interest groups that are threatened by the reform, from teachers who don't understand it, or from a bureaucracy that doesn't want to do anything differently. The term is meant to elicit an image of reformers pushing a "block" of reform in one direction and being met by elements within the larger environment who, for whatever reason, push that block in the opposite direction. In this sense, then, pushing back is akin to friction.

Rent seeking. This is an economic term that describes the process by which people compete to obtain government favors that will increase their potential income. An example of rent seeking is competition for monopoly privileges such as an exclusive franchise to run transportation routes, or a telephone service. In the ERS series, it takes on a more limited meaning. Specifically, it describes the situation wherein certain actors use resources that should be spent on educational development to secure their own positions within the larger education reform environment.

Scaling-up/going to scale. The ERS series notes that good educational practice can be found any-where. The irony is that it cannot be found everywhere. Whether it is the result of a maverick teacher, an enlightened principal, or a progressive community, education reform exists in a few isolated pockets. By way of example, we can look at the U.S. school reform movement. After over 15 years of intense school reform activity, less than 3 percent of American schools can be said to be reformed. That education reform cannot seem to move beyond those pockets and become the national norm is what is called the scale-up problem. *Scaling up* and *going to scale* refer to the phenomenon of taking school reform beyond the small pockets in which it currently exists and making it the national norm for any one country.
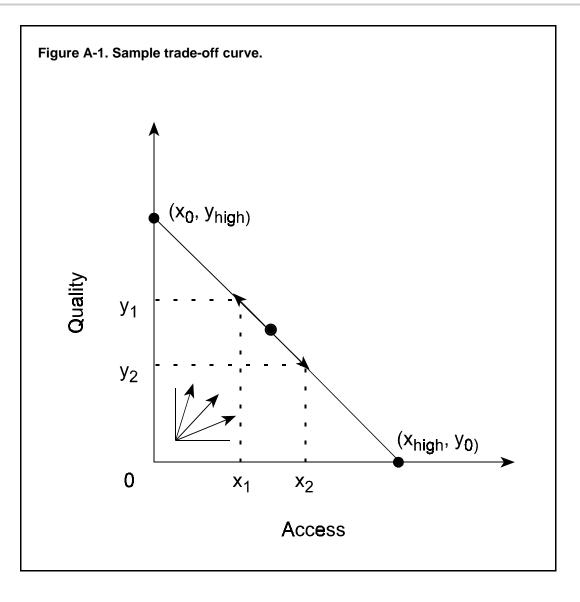
Stakeholder. Throughout the ERS series, *stakeholder* is used to describe all persons who may have a stake in what goes on within the education sector. Accordingly, teachers, parents, students, government officials, the bureaucracy, and the business community, among others, would fall under the rubric of stakeholder.

The state. By *the state* we mean the institutions in a society, i.e., the sets of interlinked social structures and rules, that coordinate matters of collective or public interest via taxation (tribute) *and* have the monopoly on the legitimate, systemic, and relatively unlimited use of violence by strangers on each other. The state is not a voluntary organization. It is the ultimate nonvoluntary organization, in that if you do not render tribute to it via taxes, it can legally deprive you of liberty, and if you carry out certain infractions, in some situations, it can legally deprive you of life. It is the only instance of society empowered, legitimately, to make war on other societies, and thus to legitimately deprive of life, in this pursuit, those

over whom it has control. The state may have regional and local manifestations, but the closer one gets to the local, the less the organization resembles the state and the more it resembles voluntary organizations. One key attribute of the state is that it is the only organization capable of levying taxes, because taxes are, by definition, nonvoluntary, and are paid in most situations only under the implicit threat of violence and privation of liberty on the part of the state. (The more "civilized" the society, the more such a threat is implicit and un-used. But it is the ultimate basis of any system of taxation.) Referring again to volutary organizations, a club with self-governance attributes, to which one can only belong if one pays dues for the collective benefit, has some attributes of the state, but it cannot force individuals to join; whereas citizens have no choice as to whether they will render tribute to the state. Such clubs resemble local or municipal governments, which can also be thought of as extensions of the state. The *state* is not the same thing as the *government*, and this is a common source of confusion, fuzzy thinking, and poor policy. The *government* is the specific set of actors or parties that controls the state at any particular moment. Thus, one can have a strong government in charge of a weak state. One can have government policy but no state policy. We use the term "public sector" more or less interchangeably with the term "the state" but, rigorously, the "public sector" should really correspond more exactly with the executive arm of a state, where such distinctions exist.

Substantive issues/process issues. Within the education sector, a list of substantive issues would include high repetition rates, high unit costs, poor information flows, and low quality. Process issues would include lack of capacity within the ministry of education to effectively deal with high repetition rates, a political economy that safeguards certain high unit costs, and a teaching corps that is ill-suited to facilitate genuine learning within the classroom. Substantive issues and process issues relate to each other in that latter stands in the way of anything being done to deal with the former.

Trade-off frontier/policy frontier. Social scientists commonly use a simple graph to illustrate trade-offs between two factors, such as quality and access. For example, with the *x*-axis denoting access and the *y*-axis denoting quality—and assuming a fixed budget—the trade-off curve is the straight line that connects the points (x_0, y_{high}) and (x_{high}, y_0). Coordinates of various points on the curve demonstrate that raising access lowers quality, and vice versa. Preparing such a diagram allows policy makers to choose an option somewhere along the curve. It also allows them to see where they might be in relation to the curve. In many developing countries, a trade-off need not be made since the contending parties are inside the trade-off curve (the curve is also referred to at times as the trade-off of policy frontier). In this case, all they need to do is move within the 90° angle depicted in the interior of Figure A-1.

Figure A-1. Sample trade-off curve.

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