

**Distance Education Programme
on Education Sector Planning**

Module I

Educational Planning: approaches, challenges and international frameworks



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Educational Planning

Table of contents

List of abbreviations.....	2
MODULE OVERVIEW	3
UNIT 1. WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL PLANNING?	7
PART 1. Concepts of Educational Planning.....	9
1.1 Definition of planning.....	9
1.2 A look at traditional planning.....	9
1.3 Strategic planning.....	10
1.4 The main stages of strategic planning today.....	12
PART 2. Education Sector Plan Preparation: Actors and processes.....	14
2.1 How many plans should be prepared?.....	14
2.2 Who prepares the ESP?	14
2.3 Who should lead the plan preparation process?	15
UNIT 2. COMPARATIVE TRENDS AND CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION	
POLICY AND PLANNING	19
PART 1. Educational Development patterns and issues.....	21
1.1 Education for All	21
1.2 Comparing participation in education worldwide.....	21
1.3 Trends by education sub-sector	23
PART 2. Challenges for Educational Policy and Planning.....	26
2.1 Developing specific sub-sectors of education	26
2.2 The quality of education	28
2.3 Educational equity and social cohesion	29
2.4 Linking learning and work: Qualification structures and career guidance	30
2.5 Resources for education.....	30
2.6 Governance and management.....	32
UNIT 3. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS, AID MODALITIES AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING	35
PART 1. Development frameworks and Education.....	37
1.1 Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)	38
1.2 Millennium Development Goals	40
1.3 Education for All	41
1.4 Fast Track Initiative	41
PART 2. Modalities of Development Assistance and Educational Planning	43
2.1 Towards new aid modalities	43
2.2 The budget support approach	44
2.3 Sector-wide approaches	45
2.4 New aid modalities: Implications and challenges for policy making and planning.....	47
GROUP ACTIVITY	51

List of abbreviations

DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
ECCE	Early childhood care and education
EFA	Education for All
ESP	Education Sector Planning
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative
GBS	General Budget Support
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
PD	Paris Declaration
PRS	Poverty-reduction strategies
PRSP	Poverty-reduction strategy paper
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policy
SBS	Sector Budget Support
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TVE	Technical and Vocational Education

Abbreviations for organizations cited in the text:

IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ILO	International Labour Office
WTO	World Trade Organization

Module Overview

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EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: APPROACHES, CHALLENGES, INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Welcome to Module 1 of the ESP programme. This module has two major objectives: (i) To clarify what educational planning is about and (ii) to provide insight into the major challenges that educational planners face, particularly those in developing countries.

Planning can be defined as a practice aimed at preparing the education system to address the future and to achieve the medium and long-term goals set by policy-makers. In order to fulfil this function effectively, educational planners need to have an understanding of the concepts which are defining and shaping their area of work. At the same time, they have to be aware of the context, challenges and constraints that arise when carrying out the operational activities of educational planning.

The three units of this module therefore examine both the concepts and the context of educational planning.



General objective:

Module 1 provides an introduction to educational planning, its concepts, current context and framework for action.



Course content:

- Education sector planning: key concepts, contextual factors and main stages;
- Comparative and international perspectives: major trends in educational development in different parts of the world, the related challenges for forward planning;
- New frameworks for planning: 'new' international commitments (such as Education for All, the Fast Track Initiative, poverty reduction strategies, Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), etc.) and their influence on the approaches, instruments, and processes for the development of educational planning.



Expected learning outcomes:

Upon completion of Module 1 you should be able to:

- Master key concepts, characteristics and main stages of education sector planning;
- Identify the main contextual factors affecting educational planning;
- Discuss the main challenges facing educational planning;
- Compare educational development patterns in different regions;
- Identify the international commitments and frameworks guiding educational planning;
- Discuss the main aid modalities in education.



Timeframe:

- This module will be held from 1 to 26 February 2010.
- The study time required for this module is approximately 8 hours per week.



Need help?

The module instructors are Dramane Oulai and Abrar Hasan. They will contact you through the programme e-learning platform to provide you with information and guidance about the weekly activities you should prepare and the deadlines for submitting your group activities. They will also be in charge of evaluating your answers to the group report as well as your individual examination.

In case you have specific questions or any difficulties in understanding the material or work instructions related to this module, you should first contact your country Group Coordinator who will assist you in addressing them. The IIEP module instructors, named above would be happy to answer any further questions via the Module-1 Discussion Forum within the e-learning platform.



Questions for individual reflection:

- While reading the materials relating to the present module, you will regularly come across 'Questions for individual reflection'. Reflecting on and responding to these questions will help you to clarify whether you have understood certain relevant parts or aspects of the module contents.
- We suggest that you answer each of these questions individually and take short notes of your answers. Then, compare and discuss your answers and possible doubts with your colleagues during the weekly sessions organized by your Group Coordinator.
- The questions for individual reflection will not be marked - you will not have to submit your responses to the IIEP module instructors. The objective of these questions is to improve your understanding of the material. Therefore, it is important that you prepare your answers to these questions and participate in the weekly sessions as sound preparation for future work.



Group Activity :

- At the end of Unit 3, you will find a Group Activity. For the preparation of the group response, we suggest that you start reading the material and responding to the activity individually. Then, compare and discuss your answers and points of view with your colleagues during the group sessions organized by your Group Coordinator. Finally, your group should prepare a *consolidated group response* for this group activity.
- Your Group Coordinator is expected to submit the group response to the IIEP instructors on or before the indicated deadline. The submission of the group response is compulsory and will be also considered as a preparation for the individual examination and the elaboration of your country plan/review document.
- Your group responses to the assignment will be marked by the IIEP instructors. Within one week after your submission, your group will receive an assessment report containing the instructors' comments and remarks on your work as well as a group mark.



Assessment:

- *Assessment of group activity:*

The response to the group assignment will be marked by the module instructors.

- *Assessment of individual achievements:*

At the end of June 2010, you will sit an individual written exam in order to assess the learning achievements relating to this module (together with Modules 2 and 3). The exam will consist of a set of questions requesting short answers. Your individual attendance and participation in the module will be assessed by your Group Coordinator.



Reading:

For this module you are strongly encouraged to read the following documents which are available on the ESP programme e-learning platform:

- Maureen Woodhall. 2004. *Cost-benefit analysis in educational planning*. Fundamentals of educational planning No. 80, Paris: IIEP-UNESCO (Chapters 1, 6, 9, 11 and 12).
- Olivier Bertrand. 2004. *Planning human resources: methods, experiences and practices*. Fundamentals of educational planning No. 41, Paris: IIEP-UNESCO (Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 7).
- *Paris declaration on aid effectiveness: ownership, harmonization, alignment, results and mutual accountability*. 2005. High Level Forum on Aid effectiveness: Paris. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>
- UNESCO. 2008. *Education for all by 2015: will we make it?* EFA Global Monitoring Report, Paris: UNESCO (Executive Summary and Chapter 4).

For further reading you can also consult the following publications:

- Steven McIntosh. 2008. *Education and employment in OECD countries*. Fundamentals of educational planning No. 88, Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.
- Ta-Ngoc Châu. 2003. *Demographic aspects of educational planning*. Fundamentals of educational planning No. 72, Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.
- Christine Inglis. 2008. *Planning for cultural diversity*. Fundamentals of educational planning No. 87, Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.

UNIT 1. WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL PLANNING?¹

..... UNIT 1

There is wide convergence on the fundamental definition of educational planning and the main dimensions or stages that it includes. However, it is important to recognise that over time there have been changes in the prevailing concept of educational planning as well as in the tasks, actors and processes that are shaping its practice.

Unit 1 of this training programme aims to provide you with an introduction to the key definitions, concepts, and approaches of educational planning. Special attention will be given to the currently prevailing 'strategic planning' approach and its main stages or components. These different planning stages or components will be dealt with in some detail in subsequent modules of the ESP programme.

Educational planning is more than a technical exercise. It is also an organised social process involving a variety of actors. The second part of Unit 1 therefore presents and discusses the main features that characterize the educational planning processes currently in practice as well as the process of plan preparation.



Unit objective:

Unit 1 will discuss some of the key concepts, characteristics and main stages of education sector planning.



Unit content:

- traditional vs. strategic planning;
- key stages of strategic planning;
- recent changes in the processes of educational planning.



Expected learning outcomes:

Upon completion of Unit 1 you should be able to:

- master key concepts related to educational planning;
- identify different planning approaches;
- describe the main stages of strategic planning;
- explain the main actors and processes underpinning strategic planning today.

¹ This Unit is a slightly shortened and adapted version of two documents:
IIEP. 2009. Guidelines for the preparation of an Education Sector Plan, IIEP-UNESCO, unpublished manuscript.
IIEP. 2009. Strategic Planning: concept, process and rationale, File 1, IIEP-UNESCO, unpublished manuscript.



Timeframe:

The study time required for this unit is approximately 8 hours per week.



Questions for individual reflection:

- At the end of this unit you will be requested to answer a question for individual reflection. In the group session related to Unit 1 you will discuss your answers with your colleagues and the Group Coordinator.
- If after your group meeting you have open questions regarding the content of the unit, do not hesitate to send them to the IIEP module instructors by writing your message in the Module-1 Discussion Forum within the programme e-learning platform. The answers from the module instructors will also be available in this forum.



Reading:

For this unit you are recommended to read:

- Philip Coombs. 1970. *What is educational planning?* Fundamentals of educational planning No. 1, Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.

PART 1. CONCEPTS OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

1.1 Definition of planning

There are many possible definitions of the term “planning” A widely accepted one is suggested hereafter, in Box 1 :

Box 1. A possible definition of planning

Planning is the intellectual anticipation of possible future situations, the selection of desirable situations to be achieved (objectives) and the determination of relevant actions that need to be taken in order to reach those objectives at a reasonable cost.

In other words, planning implies thinking about the future and trying to assume control over future events by organizing and managing resources so that they cater to the successful completion of the objectives set forth.

1.2 A look at traditional planning

Traditional development planning

According to this definition, planning is nothing exceptional. Human beings have been planning in one way or another since rational thinking emerged. However, as a formalized way of organizing development in complex societies, planning is an invention of the twentieth century. The preparation of directive development plans has been the backbone of socialist states since the communist revolution of 1917.

But, soon after the Second World War, several non-socialist countries in Western Europe (e.g., France and the Netherlands) and elsewhere (Japan) adopted the idea of indicative planning as an instrument for post-war recovery and the development which followed it². Contrary to the socialist directive planning, indicative planning accepts the primacy of private market economies, but it tries to guide investments toward national priority objectives, avoid duplication of efforts and, to the extent possible, reduce cyclical instability.

Traditional educational planning

Over time, various forecasting techniques and simulation models were developed which aimed at orienting the educational investments either according to the needs of the labour market (manpower approach), or to the social demand for education (social demand approach), or to the needs of education sub-sectors with the best rate of return (cost-benefit approach), or to a more-or-less harmonious combination of these three approaches.

At the beginning of the 1960s, educational planning was seen as a ‘must’ for the newly independent countries in order for them to move ahead quickly and systematically with their human resource development. Planning units were set up in ministries of education but were highly dependent on

² Worthy of note were the Central Planning Bureau in the Netherlands, led by Jan Tinbergen, the French Commissariat Général du Plan, inspired by Jean Monnet, and the Japanese Economic Planning Agency.

external expertise. The IIEP was created to train national planning experts at UNESCO headquarters in Paris and in the field. A number of relatively sophisticated educational plans were prepared. However, in many instances the results did not live up to the expectations and disenchantment with the classical planning approach, which was already underway in the 1970s, became more vigorous in the 1980s.

Main criticisms of traditional planning

The main criticisms of the traditional planning approach included the following:

- Too much focus on plan preparation and not enough on plan implementation

It was assumed too quickly that once a good plan had been prepared the implementation would follow almost automatically. Hence very few mechanisms were set up for systematic monitoring of plan implementations.. Furthermore, the fact that many plans were prepared by external technical assistants) did not facilitate national ownership, without which implementation is likely to fail.

- Plans were being prepared in a top-down, technocratic way

Most plans were prepared by the planning units (and their technical assistants) with little or no involvement from the rest of the ministry staff, not to mention staff at decentralized levels of management and civil society partners. The consequence was again a severe lack of identification with (or even knowledge of) the objectives of the plan and priority actions by those responsible for implementing it. Indeed, while a plan can easily be prepared by a handful of technical experts, the responsibility for its implementation involves the entire ministry staff and requires the commitment of all.

- Not enough consideration was given to the changing environment

Plans were being prepared with the implicit assumption that the planners have all the information and techniques needed to develop a complete, correct plan which can be executed from beginning to end. Many plans simply ended up on the bookshelves of the Ministries, however, whenever they were implemented , it was done in a rigid, mechanical way. Not enough flexibility was built in to adapt to changing circumstances. This need for flexibility and continuous adaptation became increasingly more obvious during the second half of the 1970s (after the first oil crisis) and during the 1980s, when the overall economic environment became more unstable and unpredictable.

1.3 Strategic planning

Definition

The strategic planning approach is supposed to rectify the above mentioned shortcomings, and can be defined as shown in Box 2:

Box 2. Strategic Planning

A management tool to help an organization improve its performance by ensuring that the members of the organization are working towards the same goals and by continuously adjusting the direction of the organization to the changing environment on the basis of results obtained.

Strategic planning is not just a cold technical undertaking that spells out future objectives to be reached and actions to be taken. It requires a global sense of purpose and direction capable of guiding implementers in making everyday choices about what actions should be taken in order to produce the expected results.

A summary of differences between traditional and strategic planning

Table 1 below summarises some of the major differences between the traditional planning approach, (which was commonly practiced in the education sector until the late nineties) and the more recent strategic planning approach adopted in an increasing number of countries. In reality, the differences are often less contrasted and many plans that claim to be strategic have kept several characteristics of the traditional planning approach which has been prevailing for so long. Indeed, adopting a strategic planning approach is not just a technical move. It implies a more fundamental challenge of building up a new management culture based on the values of participatory decision-making, accountability and openness for change. This is a process which needs time to produce results, particularly in countries in which some of the most basic conditions for an efficient public service system are simply not fulfilled.

Table 1. Blueprint contrasts between traditional and strategic planning

TRADITIONAL PLANNING	STRATEGIC PLANNING
Input oriented	Result oriented
Technocratic	Participatory
Neutral	Mobilization instrument
Linear planning	Iterative planning
Rigid implementation	Flexible implementation
Routine based	Change oriented
Compliance monitoring	Performance monitoring
Emphasis on the plan document	Emphasis on plan implementation

1.4 The main stages of strategic planning today

Strategic planning, as it is currently being practised in the education sector and other development sectors, is about systematically answering four key questions, where each question corresponds to a set of specific planning activities as illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2. Basic strategic questions, corresponding planning stages and activities

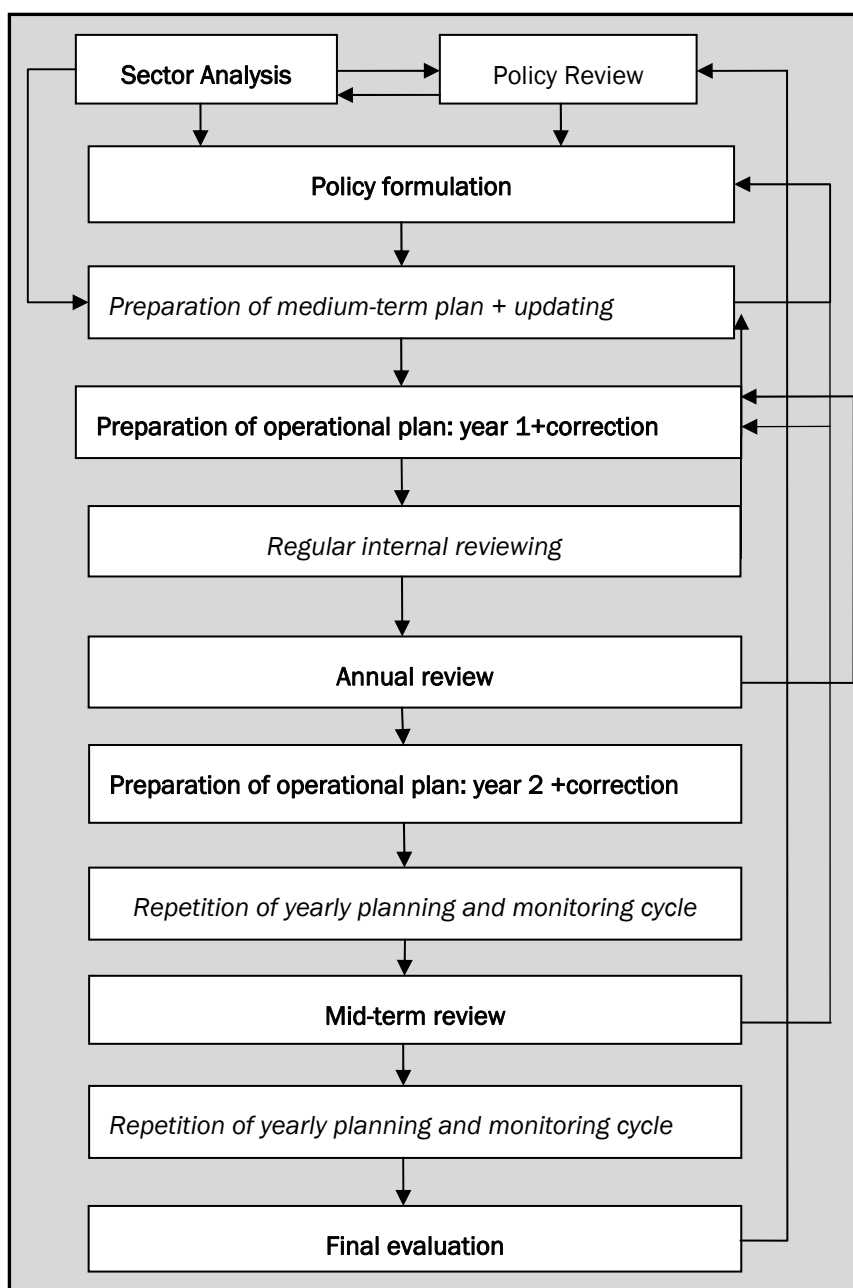
QUESTIONS	PLANNING STAGES AND ACTIVITIES
Where do we stand today?	Diagnosis: analysing the current situation in the sector and its environment
Where would we like to be in the future? Which directions should we adopt?	Policy formulation: choice of goals and strategies
How (at what pace? at what cost? through which specific measures? etc) shall we get there?	Planning targets and plan operationalisation: defining precise objectives and the ways and means of attaining them
Are we moving in the right direction? Which adjustments are needed?	Monitoring: measuring and evaluating progress and taking corrective action

Although there is a logical, sequential order in raising these questions, there is often no clear-cut sequential order in addressing them. The answers to the different questions are interdependent and influence each other, thus, the decision about *where* we would like to be in future might have to be re-examined once we have started examining *how* we can get there and after having encountered major difficulties to reach the initially fixed objectives. In other words, strategic planning has to be looked at as an iterative process that involves going back and forth between the different questions and the corresponding planning activities.

Planning does not stop when plan implementation starts. A medium (or long) term plan is not prepared once-and-for-all but has to be transformed annually into an operational plan and regularly updated.

Figure 1 summarizes the strategic planning process which has been briefly explained above. It highlights the central role of the yearly planning and monitoring cycle which is at the heart of strategic planning. It also illustrates the multiple feedback loops which have to be integrated within the process in order to make it flexible and capable of responding efficiently to changing conditions.

Figure 1. The planning process



PART 2. EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN PREPARATION: ACTORS AND PROCESSES

2.1 How many plans should be prepared?

As mentioned in part 1, education sector plans (ESP's), like development plans, may be of varying duration. In some cases plans can be long-term, medium-term and short-term however there is no standard length for each of these categories. The long-term, or perspective plans, which cover a period of roughly 10-15 years, are less specific and indicate broad directions of development. The medium-term plans (which generally cover a period of around five years) are more specific in their programmes and strategies. Short-term plans, or annual plans, are usually for one year and are linked to the budget cycles. They are also called operational plans. Most education plans are medium-term plans with specific objectives, targets and programmes. These plans may have a long-term perspective. Medium-term plans are translated into annual plans and budgets. The discussion in this document pertains more to medium-term education plans than to annual or long-term plans.

In some countries, one plan – the National Plan – is prepared. In other countries, several regional or provincial plans and one national plan are prepared. In certain instances several regional plans and national strategies to facilitate implementation of regional plans are prepared. The way ESPs are conceived determines the process of plan preparation.

If education sector plans are prepared for each of the regions/provinces of a country, how does one prepare national plans? There may be several options for plan preparation: i) prepare national plans first and the regional plans follow the national plan – a top down approach to ESPs; ii) prepare provincial plans first and then prepare the national plans – a bottom-up approach to plan preparation; iii) initiate the process of plan preparations simultaneously at the provincial and national levels.

It is important to note that policy formulation is done at the national level. Each province will follow a common policy framework that is agreed on and approved at the national level. Hence, the plan priorities, whether at the central or provincial level, follow-through from the policies. Therefore, it is difficult to draw up provincial plans that are consistent with national plans without guidance or guidelines from the central level, even when the planning process is decentralized. Needless to say, the national capacities and planning competencies required to draw up several provincial and national plans are large and varied.

2.2 Who prepares the ESP?

The plan preparation process needs to be done in consultation with various actors to make the plan realistic and allow for its successful implementation. It is essential that the federal Ministry of Education (MOE) be involved to lead the process. In some countries there are more than one MOE – the ministry of basic education, the ministry of higher education, etc. Since ESP by definition is sector-wide, all sub-sectors within education should play an important role in shaping strategies and preparing plans. Ministerial participation, however, should not be confined to MOEs alone. It should involve other ministries and departments aligned with education. For example, ministries of labour, women and child welfare, science and technology, etc., may be important partners dealing with certain specific layers of education.

In large countries, especially those with a federal set-up, the planning structure may be created at various layers of the administration – both at the central and decentralized levels. In some countries, even when they do not have a federal structure, regional/provincial governments are important partners in the plan preparation process. At times, the plans are prepared at the regional level and the

national plans may be prepared based on the regional plans. Even when the structure is not federal, the participatory process requires consultation at the regional level.

Representatives of trade unions, members of civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, teachers, parents and community associations, development partners, etc., need to be part of the plan preparation process.

There are different categories of groups according to their importance and influence in decision-making. All need to be consulted to make the plan all-inclusive. The groups for the consultative process may be divided into four categories. Group 1 includes people of high importance but low influence. Representatives of civil society, women, minorities, youth, etc., may belong to this category. Group 2 consists of people of high importance and influence; for example the office of the prime minister, the ministry of education, national planning committees, and representatives of the main political parties. Group 3 consists of people of low importance and low influence; Stakeholders, religious organizations, universities and educational institutions may belong to this category. Group 4 consists of people of low importance and high influence, such as representatives of minor political parties, private organizations, etc. However, it needs to be noted that the importance and influence of the groups vary from country to country (UNDP, 2009).

2.3 Who should lead the plan preparation process?

At times, the planning units of the MOE take the lead. In some instances the EFA co-ordinator may not be from the planning unit of the MOE. In such a case, the EFA co-ordinator takes the lead. In some countries, the educational divisions/units in the planning committees/commissions take the lead. Sometimes the MOE leads the process and nominates a committee of experts to lead the plan preparation process.

In several instances, ESPs are prepared by national teams constituted by the government and consisting of elected representatives, MOEs and other ministries, experts, Non-Government organisations (NGOs), international development partners, etc. What needs to be ensured is that the plan preparation team works in close alliance with the MOE and facilitates wider participation to ensure ownership and implementation of the plan. This may make the team large and difficult to manage. A large team may be desirable but may not always be helpful to move fast. Therefore, a good system is to have a large team for consultation and guidance, but a small and a viable team for facilitating the process of consultation and drafting of the document.

The plan deals with different sub-sector and several theme/priority areas. One way of dealing with the issue is to establish technical working groups which will help in preparing reports that feed into the plan. These working groups can be constituted either level-wise (for primary, secondary, higher education, etc.) or thematically (financing, management).

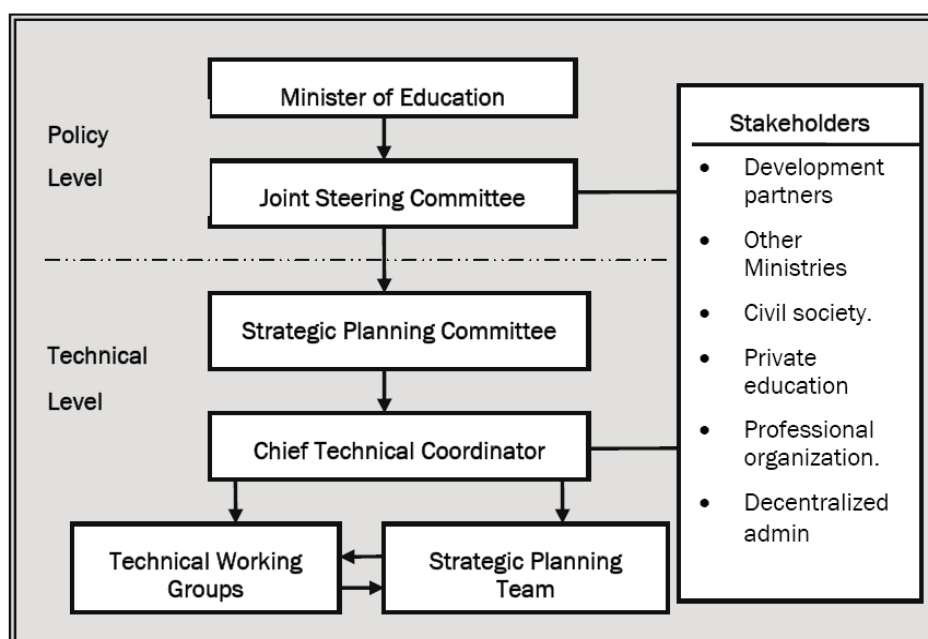
The existence of a large planning committee, a number of working groups and an extended consultation process make the planning process complicated and therefore there is a need to identify a small group of experts to co-ordinate these activities and prepare the plan document. There is no set formula to be adopted in identifying the expert team/core team for ESP. However, the team should include people that are trained and experienced in education planning, statistical analysis, financing and budgeting procedures. They should also be familiar and at ease with the use of computers and the related software.

It is suggested to have: i) a small lead team (core team) headed by the MOE to facilitate the education planning process; ii) a number of working groups in specified areas; iii) a large committee involving representatives from different ministries, civil society, political parties, teachers, etc., to guide the planning process. This may be chaired by the education minister.

The type and the composition of the committees will also depend on whether or not one is moving towards one national plan document or towards several regional plan documents that lead to a national plan. The former involves mostly consultation and representation of decentralized levels in the national planning process. The latter requires plan preparation at the central and decentralized levels. In any case, the planning involves the commitment of technical experts to carry out statistical analyses at various stages in planning, financial analysts to estimate the final financial requirements, and administrators for preparing implementation plans.

There are no clearly defined rules to facilitate the participatory process. The following is an example of the organizational procedure required to prepare an ESP at the national level.

Figure 2. Organization of plan preparation example:



Source: IIEP-UNESCO, 2009.



Questions for individual reflection:

1. What are the main documents in your country in which the current and future development of education are planned? Name the documents and briefly characterise their respective main objectives and time horizon.

2. Which (governmental and non-governmental) actors have been involved in the preparation of the currently valid education sector development plan? Would you consider that the plan preparation process has been of a participatory nature (Explain your viewpoint in 2-3 sentences)?

UNIT 2. COMPARATIVE TRENDS AND CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION POLICY AND PLANNING

..... UNIT 2

One of the main tasks of educational planners is to assist decision-makers with the choice of adequate goals and strategies. Planners therefore need to understand the current challenges facing educational development and be able to evaluate possible policy responses with their respective implications. The purpose of Unit 2 is precisely to help you gain an overview of the principal issues underway in educational development today and the related challenges for policy makers and planners.

Part 1 presents the major worldwide trends that characterise the expansion of education, taking into account the different levels and sub-sectors of education.

Part 2 discusses some of the major challenges that are emerging for educational policy and planning.



Unit objective:

Unit 2 aims to provide an overview of current educational development issues and challenges for sector-wide educational policies and planning in developing countries.



Unit content:

- Major worldwide trends and issues in educational development;
- Key challenges for sector-wide educational policies and planning.



Expected learning outcomes:

Upon completion of Unit 2 you should be able to:

- Understand and identify the main issues for educational development today;
- Discuss the main challenges arising in this context for educational policy and planning .



Timeframe:

- The study time required for this unit is approximately 8 hours per week.



Questions for individual reflection:

1. At the end of this unit you will individually answer a set of questions for reflection and discussion. At the session related to Unit 2, you will discuss your answers with your colleagues and the Group Coordinator.
2. If after your group meeting you have open questions regarding the content of the unit, do not hesitate to send them to the module instructors by writing your message in the forum related to Module 1 of the ESP programme platform. The answers from the module instructors will also be made available in this forum.



Reading:

For this unit you are asked to read:

- UNESCO. 2008. *Education for All by 2015: Will we make it?* EFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris: UNESCO. www.efareport.unesco.org

PART 1. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND ISSUES

This section starts with a brief recapitulation of the main goals for educational development which were adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 by governments, non-governmental organizations and multilateral and national development assistance agencies. The ambitions set forth in the Dakar Framework for Action are then confronted with some major world-wide trends characterising the actual expansion and development of different sub-sectors of education.

1.1 Education for All

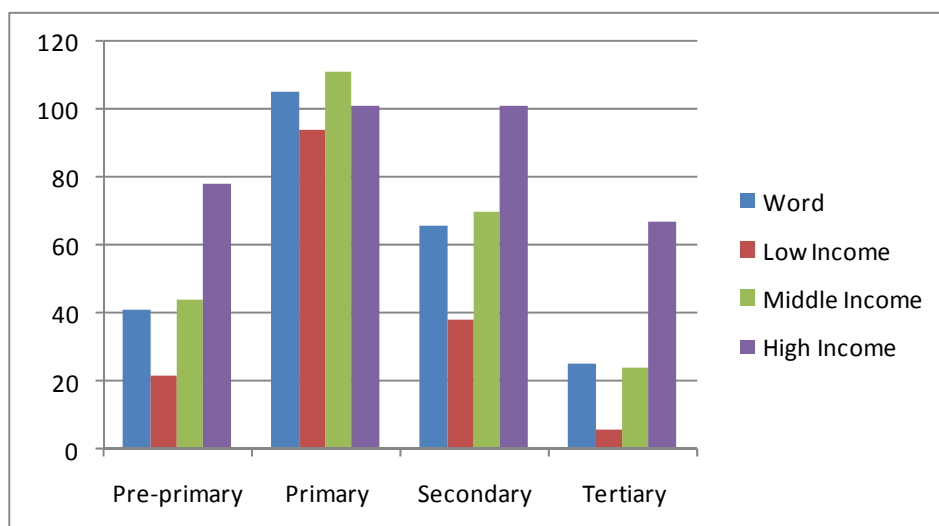
The six Education for All (EFA) *goals* adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, express the major goals for educational development which were agreed upon at the international level. These EFA goals are:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

1.2 Comparing participation in education worldwide

Comparable data for different regions of the world show that gross enrolment rates in low-income countries are significantly below the rates for middle-income and high-income countries, for all levels of formal education except primary education. In the latter category, gross enrolment rates often exceed 100 per cent as children above and below the normal enrolment age are also included. The disparity in enrolment rates between low- and high-income countries is particularly marked for tertiary and pre-primary (early childhood) education. Figure 1 presents the same information in graphical form.

Figure 1. Gross enrolment ratio in formal education, 2007



Source: World Development Indicators 2009, World Bank, 2009.

Table 1 presents information on outcome measures for selected sub-sectors of education. Completion rates are an outcome measure, which is one indicator used for the quality and efficiency of the system. The completion rate often used as an indicator of quality by the World Bank is defined as the ratio of the number of children graduating from primary school each year to the population of official graduating age. Low-income countries perform poorly on this measure as well as on adult literacy rates.

Table 1. Education completion and outcome rates, 2007

Countries by income level	Primary completion rate (% of relevant age group)	Youth literacy rate (% age 15-24)		Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and older)	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
World	85	91	86,6	87	78
Low income	65	79	69	72	55
Middle income	93	94	91	90	80
High income	97	100	100	99	99

Source: World Development Indicators 2009, World Bank, 2009.

1.3 Trends by education sub-sector³

Early childhood care and education (ECCE): patterns and issues

Recent research has shown that early years of life, especially around age 3, are critical for brain development. Research has also shown that quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) can significantly improve the cognitive, social, and emotional development of the child. These benefits have been found to last well into adulthood. In addition to the personal development benefits, the child also derives cognitive and economic benefits as he/she develops into adulthood and participates in higher learning and/or the labour market. The society, too, derives economic and social benefits in the form of better labour supply, higher productivity, reduced costs for remedial educational, health and social programmes, including the costs of fighting crime and anti-social behaviour.

In 2006, 36 per cent of pre-primary children in developing countries received some type of ECCE. Access was the poorest in sub-Saharan Africa (14 per cent) and in Arab States (18 per cent). In contrast, some 79 per cent of children in developed countries had access to ECCE.⁴ One positive element is the rate at which access is expanding in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Primary and secondary education

In most countries, primary and secondary education account for the largest share of education budgets. The sector has three very important roles: to prepare young people for adulthood, working lives, and further learning. Hence the school holds the key for transmitting values for adult life, skills for work life and cognitive readiness to engage in higher levels of learning.

Data on gross and net enrolment ratios show that while much progress has been made in recent years, a significant percentage of primary school-age children still do not have access to education, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Arab States.

The picture is even more dismal for secondary education. Only 25 per cent of secondary school-age children had access to this level of education in sub-Saharan Africa in 2006⁵. The South and West Asian region, with a 45 per cent net enrolment rate, also has a long way to go. Overall, in the developing countries, approximately one out of two children of secondary school age is enrolled in school.

The poor participation rates mean that, in 2006, more than 95 per cent of all out-of-school children at primary level were residing in developing countries, which hardly represents any improvement since 1999. More than 45 per cent of these children are in sub-Saharan Africa.

³ When presenting and discussing hereafter the trends and policy issues in each of the main sub-sectors of education we shall use the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) developed by UNESCO, 1997 ISCED presents standard concepts, definitions and classifications to compare education systems internationally and covers all forms of organized learning opportunities for children, youth and adults Source: http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/doc/iscled_1997.htm (UNESCO).

⁴ Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009, UNESCO.

⁵ Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009, UNESCO.

Compounding the frequently poor quality of primary and secondary education in developing countries are low access rates and high drop-out rates. These are often inequitably distributed across gender, socio-economic, rural or urban and linguistic groups.

Technical and vocational education

The technical and vocational education (TVE) sub-sector is aimed at preparing students for the labour market. Detailed TVE data on enrolments, quality, performance and funding are lacking for most nations. As already noted, in most developing countries a large amount of vocational training takes place in the informal economy, on farms, in small businesses and generally without being accompanied by any theoretical training or recognition in qualification structures.

Tertiary education

Gross enrolment ratios at the tertiary level in developed countries were recorded at 67 per cent in 2006. This is in contrast to the developing countries where South and West Asia and the Arab States are among the lowest at 11 and 22 per cent respectively. Sub-Saharan Africa records extremely lowest enrolment rates with a mere 5 per cent.

In most countries, government resources devoted to primary and secondary education range from 4 to 7 times the resources that go to the tertiary sector. This is despite the fact that per student costs in the tertiary sector are relatively high, often ten times higher than the per capita cost for primary and secondary schooling. The reason, of course, lies in the much larger number of pupils that have to be served by the school sector.

Adult learning

Adult learning comprises a variety of forms and settings for learning. It can range from formal and institutionalized learning dedicated to skills or qualifications upgrading, and languages and life skills learning to informal learning on the job and in other life settings. Both young adults, who may have dropped out of the formal education sector, and other adults are included in adult learning programmes.

Adult learning is important because, potentially, it can compensate for, and complement, the shortcomings of the formal sector, by providing a second chance to those who missed out on schooling. It can also contribute to a number of personal and social objectives such as: personal development; qualification improvement; enhancement of job prospects, productivity and employability; alleviation of poverty; functional effectiveness in society; greater participation in civic life; greater empowerment for marginal groups; and enhancement of democracy. Functioning effectively in the knowledge society requires updating of life and work skills of adults who make up a large part of the population. It can contribute to social cohesion by including the disadvantaged groups in mainstream society.

Because of its very diverse nature, comprehensive and reliable data is lacking on participation in adult learning, its costs, financing, quality and effectiveness. It can be observed that even in a developed country, participation in adult learning programmes is rather limited. Moreover, evidence shows that these opportunities go more to those who already possess good qualifications.

Although data on in developing countries is scarce, it is a known fact that adult learning programmes are inequitably distributed. One indication of the need for adult learning is provided by the data on adult literacy rates by region. It is clear that improving literacy alone presents a formidable challenge in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa (59 per cent literacy rate), South and West Asia (60 per cent) and the Arab States (70 per cent). The rates for women are even lower.

Moreover, it must be noted that existing adult learning programmes often suffer from certain shortcomings such as:

- The coverage of these programmes tends to be far below the needs.
- Participation in such programmes is generally inequitably distributed between the gender, rural-urban divide and between the high and low socio-economic groups.
- Their quality is often questionable and rarely assessed.
- Teachers involved in these programmes tend to be poorly paid and have limited resources to work with.
- The programmes are not well integrated with an overall view of their importance within the education sector.

PART 2. CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING

From the brief overview of the recent world-wide evolution of education provided in Part 1 of this Unit it has become clear that a large number of countries are still far from having attained the EFA goals. Governments aiming to achieve sustainable quantitative and qualitative progress of their education systems will, therefore, have to make careful policy choices. Part 2 of Unit 2 provides an overview of some major challenges that need to be considered when planning and deciding for the future development of the education sector.

2.1 Developing specific sub-sectors of education

Early childhood and primary education

As indicated above, both access to education and the levels of educational attainment in developing countries are far from satisfactory in comparison to high-income countries. Part of the reasons for establishing the EFA goals was to help reduce the sometimes massive gap and help create more equal opportunities for those developing nations most in need. However, the mid-term EFA Global Monitoring Report records only mixed results on these goals (UNESCO, 2007).

Progress in primary school participation and completion does not depend on money alone. The scale of required investment for primary education in developing countries is large. The scale problem is compounded by the demographic patterns of developing nations, which indicate that the school-age cohort will be expanding for many of them for at least another decade to come. There is no simple solution. Early Childhood Care and Education constitutes a key to improved access to primary education and to better pupil learning at all levels of education. ECCE suffers from inadequate investment in most countries. However both the coverage and quality of ECCE programmes is very poor in many developing countries. The ECCE system suffers in particular from low public investment and incoherence of policies and programme delivery. The sector combines policy interest from education, health, social welfare and employment ministries, and it is important to have coherence across these policy domains.

General secondary education

Apart from the challenge of providing larger access to secondary education, policy-makers and planners will also have to find adequate responses to the poor quality that is widely characterising the education provided at this level. While there are some good quality institutions (often in the private sector and serving the richer groups of society) most public sector institutions lack adequate buildings, study material, and suitable curricula and pedagogy. Another major challenge to be addressed relates to secondary teachers who are often characterised by insufficient qualification levels and even more widely by high levels of de-motivation because of low pay and career prospects.

Adult education

The challenge for providing adult learning is also very daunting as it competes with primary and other formal education sectors for limited educational funds. It has a relatively low government priority in almost all countries and most resources for adult learning come from the private and voluntary sectors. There are several reasons for the low priority accorded by governments:

- The learning needs of children, which are seen as a high priority, are themselves unmet by the limited budgets.

- The adult learning sector does not have a voice at the political level, as it is not an important issue for the class that runs governments.
- The potential of adult learning for enhancing productivity, employment and innovation in local settings has not been assessed through substantive analysis.
- The empowerment that adult learning could bring may even be seen as threatening to many governments.

Vocational education and training

The Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) sector has many policy challenges. One issue stems from the fact that much of vocational training in developing countries takes place in the informal economy. The challenges here are to supplement the applied learning with some theoretical learning in order to improve its quality and make it part of a recognized qualification. Another issue is whether there should be early streaming or channelling of students into TVE streams, for example, in the last years of lower secondary education or at upper secondary levels. The experience of developed countries is that early streaming is ineffective, especially if the students do not have the option of being able to cross over to academic streams. Early streaming limits progression routes for students. A particular concern relates to whether this offers a path through tertiary education or whether it is meant only to prepare individuals for the world of work and represents a dead end as far as entry to further learning is concerned.

The TVE sector is also often poorly funded, the teachers are not sufficiently qualified and the programme content is outdated and weakly linked to developments in the industrial sectors for which they prepare students.

Tertiary education

Tertiary or higher education has at least three needs to respond to:

- the “search for knowledge” needs of citizens
- the skill needs of the economy
- the research and innovation needs of society.

The challenges the sector poses for policy-makers come from how well these needs are being met. In most developed and developing countries, there is a general feeling that the tertiary sector is not meeting these needs to a satisfactory degree. As a consequence, there is a movement in many countries to diversify the function of universities. To the traditional missions of universities – teaching and research – many countries are adding a third mission: service to society, which includes things like:

- opening up universities to admit a more diverse group of learners
- better disseminating their research to the wider society
- co-operating more closely with industry
- contributing more effectively to the innovation processes in the country, especially in a regional context
- adjusting their programmes, teaching and learning functions to suit the needs of more diverse categories of learners
- improving accountability in the use of public resources.

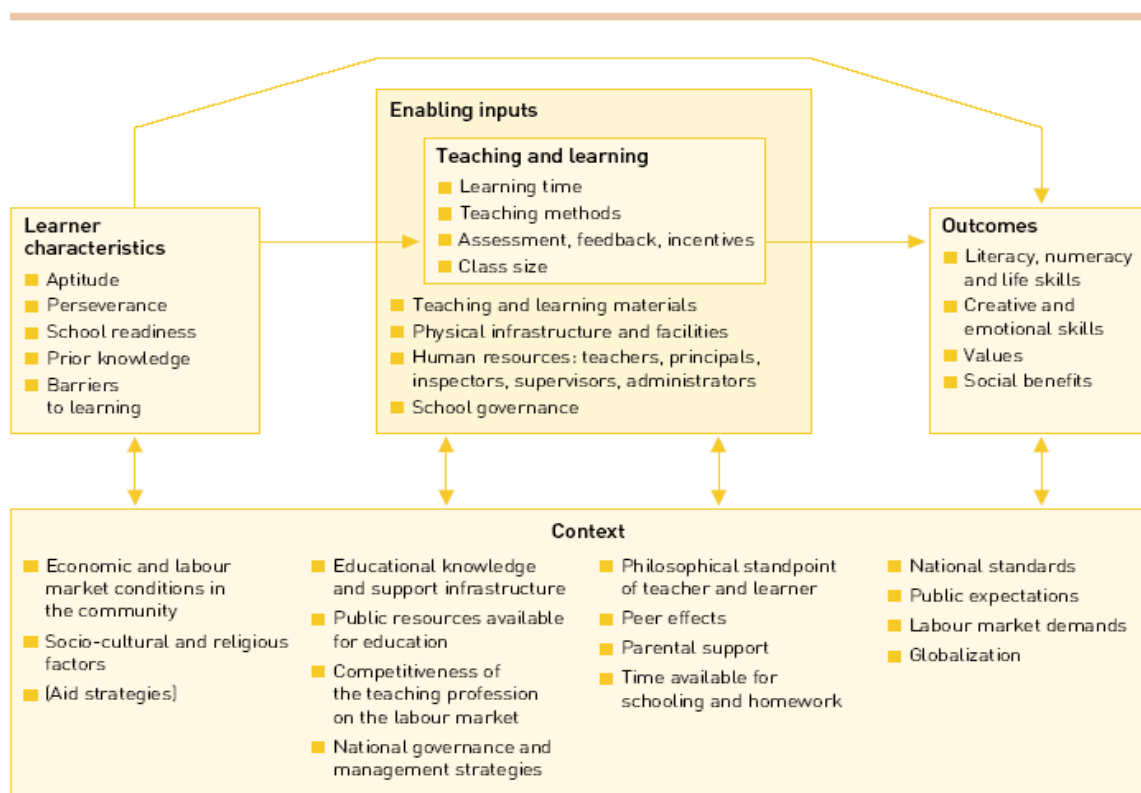
In brief: what used to be a supply-dominated sector, often in its ‘ivory tower’, needs to be more responsive to the demand side, to the needs of ordinary citizens, the economy and society, and should be managed more efficiently.

2.2 The quality of education

“In the many countries that are striving to guarantee all children the right to education, the focus on access often overshadows attention to quality. Yet quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits” (UNESCO, 2004). Most governments recognize that Education for All cannot be achieved without improving quality. Yet, in many parts of the world a significant share of children leave the school system without having acquired a minimum set of cognitive skills.

Defining quality remains a challenge. The easiest approach identifies learners’ cognitive development as the major explicit indicator of education quality. Assessing the capacity of schools to promote values and attitudes is much more challenging. The following chart provides a framework in the context of education quality:

Figure 2. A framework for understanding quality



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005, UNESCO, 2004.

The concern for the quality of education does not only apply to developing countries. Even in the most advanced systems, governments are confronted with the need to better understand what makes a good education in an effort to build a framework to assess and monitor education quality. European countries have agreed upon the following dimensions:

Table 2. Sixteen indicators on the quality of school education

AREA	INDICATOR
Attainment	1. Mathematics 2. Reading 3. Science 4. Information and communication technologies (ICT) 5. Foreign languages 6. Learning to learn 7. Civics
Success and transition	8. Drop out 9. Completion of upper secondary education 10. Participation in tertiary education
Monitoring of school education	11. Evaluation and steering of school education 12. Parental participation
Resources and Structures	13. Education and training of teachers 14. Participation in pre-primary education 15. Number of students per computer 16. Educational expenditure per student

Source: European report on the quality of school education, European Commission, 2000.
<http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/indic/rapinen.pdf>

2.3 Educational equity and social cohesion

The role of education has become greater as its wider social benefits gain recognition. Research has shown that *educational inequity* is an important contributor to *income inequity*. More equitable access to educational opportunities, therefore, can play a role in reducing income inequities and combating poverty. There is now some evidence that greater inequity leads to poorer economic growth rates, while growth rates are positively correlated with greater equity. Thus, education can also contribute indirectly to higher economic growth rates through its impact on reducing inequity of income distribution. Education policies can help bridge the gap between other inequities such as the urban-rural divide, and linguistic and cultural divides. Gender equity is also an important social goal and is also one of the six EFA goals which can be influenced through education. By working through these mechanisms, education can contribute to greater social cohesion.

While education policies can capitalize on these positive effects of education, it is important to remember that the education system does not *automatically* contribute to greater equity: it has to be designed to do so. An education system can, in fact, contribute to re-enforce existing inequities through the various stages of educational provision. There is considerable evidence to suggest that educational performance at the primary and secondary levels is heavily determined by the socio-economic status of students' parents. Educational performance at the secondary level is a key determinant of whether a student will progress to the tertiary level. The income levels of those who proceed to the tertiary level are much higher than income levels of those who do not. Further education and training at a later stage in life is also highly correlated with having good qualifications to begin with. In this way, existing socio-economic inequities can be solidified or even exacerbated by the way the education system is organized. To overcome this vicious circle, and turn it into a virtuous circle, requires careful educational planning that gives due consideration to the aspect of equity.

2.4 Linking learning and work: Qualification structures and career guidance

In both the developed and the developing world the need to engage in learning through the life cycle, through formal and informal settings is currently widely recognized. The Lifelong Learning concept sees educational needs of citizen as spanning the whole life cycle, from early childhood to late in adult life, that is, from birth to death, or from cradle to grave. Educational needs differ in different phases of life. Hence, learning provision needs to meet demand arising from several sources: economic, social and personal developmental requirements. Thus, the framework includes all forms of learning activities taking place in both the formal setting of the schools and universities and the informal settings of home, employment and life situations (Hasan, 1999)

One example of the learning that takes place in the informal economy is the traditional apprenticeships that exist in many developing countries, especially in West Africa. The qualification structures of a country, however, are mostly based on the qualifications earned in the formal sector. Accepting that learning takes place in the informal economy and recognising it in the qualifications system of a country is often a major policy challenge.

Another policy challenge is to ensure that a qualification is not a dead end. It needs to provide incentives for the individual to progress, from lower level qualifications to higher levels, and to continue learning, both formally and informally. To achieve this, qualifications in a country need to be linked through a progression path; there need to be minimum requirements for entry into a system and ways of achieving these minimum requirements. Qualifications must have clear links, with multiple entry routes to other qualifications. Career counselling services can then help individuals to navigate through the qualifications pathways and allow for accumulation of learning. It is clear that the notion of a qualification system is meaningful only across different sub-sectors of education: it is a feature of the system as a whole.

A major challenge of TVE is the low status it has in most countries. It is often seen as a second choice and an option for weaker students, frequently linked to their weaker socio-economic backgrounds. The low status of these programmes is linked to the poor status, wages and working conditions of the jobs for which they prepare people. Another difficulty, especially in developing countries, is the low quality of the TVE programmes.

At the tertiary level, many of the TVE programmes suffer from poor quality and an increase in academic content. These issues are felt even more strongly in the developing world: the tertiary sector is not well integrated with the needs of learners, the economy and society. The teaching and learning programmes are often highly theoretical in content and neglect their relevance to contemporary society. The low priority given to TVE programmes is one manifestation of this problem. The research and development function, likewise, is unrelated to the needs of industry, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises. The agricultural and resource sectors, which still dominate the economy of many developing nations, are not well reflected in academic and research programmes. In some countries, universities continue to produce generalists that look for employment in the government sector or in developed countries. Training of medical doctors is a case in point, which represents a serious drain of resources for developing nations.

2.5 Resources for education

Each country must decide on how much to spend on education compared with other national priorities such as health and national defence. Within the education sector itself, there is a need to decide how much to allocate to what kinds of education and training. A lifelong learning perspective has the advantage of engaging across sub-sectors in terms of allocation issues. Countries differ widely in their priorities, which is partly linked to their level of development but also to the demographic and educational profile and the nature of their employment market. A sector-wide view is essential to understanding the priority a country accords to education. Table 3 gives information on public

expenditure on education for different categories of countries. In general, the middle-income countries spend much lower proportions of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education compared to high-income countries.

Table 3. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, 2006

Countries by income level	Public Expenditure on Education (% of GDP)
World	4.9
Low income	3.5
Lower middle income	5.6
Upper middle income	4.7
High income	5.3

Source: World Development Indicators 2009, World Bank, 2009.

Similar data by geographical regions in Table 4, show that the percentage of GNP devoted to education in South West Asia (3.2%), Arab States (4.5%) and sub-Saharan Africa (5.0%) is below the rate for North America and Western Europe (5.7%). When allocations out of the national budgets are considered, developing regions spend a larger percentage of government budgets (ranging from 14% to 26%) as compared with North America and Western Europe (13%). This is to be expected: developing nations need to spend much more (in terms of budget proportion) to meet basic education needs because they have a low base of educational provision and have to invest more, to meet their development goals. They are also facing increasing demand from a population that is growing much faster, with a larger share of children and youth, than in developed countries.

Table 4. Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP and as % of total government expenditure by region, 2005

	Sub-Saharan Africa	Arab States	Central Asia	East Asia/Pacific	South/West Asia	Latin America/Caribbean	N. America/W. Europe	Centr./East Europe
Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP								
Median	5.0	4.5	3.2	4.7	3.6	5.0	5.7	4.9
Maximum	11.0	7.6	5.4	10.0	7.5	10.8	8.6	6.5
Minimum	1.8	1.6	2.5	1.0	2.4	1.3	4.3	3.4
Variance	5.1	5.3	1.3	7.2	3.6	5.6	1.5	1.0
<i>Number of countries with data/number of countries in region</i>								
	30/45	9/20	6/9	14/33	6/9	23/41	20/26	17/20
Total public expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure								
Median	17.5	25.7	18.0	15.0	14.6	13.4	12.7	12.8
Maximum	29.8	27.6	19.6	25.0	22.8	25.6	17.0	21.1
Minimum	4.0	11.0	13.1	10.7	10.7	7.9	8.5	10.0
Variance	45.1	47.1	11.3	22.4	19.3	17.3	5.3	11.4
<i>Number of countries with data/number of countries in region</i>								
	21/45	8/20	3/9	11/33	6/9	24/41	20/26	14/20

Source: Annex, Statistical Table 11.

Source: EFA, GMR 2008, UNESCO 2007.

In addition to total expenditure on education, countries must also decide on how much to allocate to different sub-sectors within the education sector. Again, countries differ widely in the respective

priorities they accord to components of the education sector such as early childhood education and care, primary schooling, secondary schooling, tertiary education and adult learning.

2.6 Governance and management

Many of the contextual developments discussed above have changed the understanding of the respective roles of governments and the private sector in the education field. On the one hand, the large economic and social benefits of education argue for a greater role of the state in funding the education and training system. Although the role of states in providing school-level education has always been widely recognised, there are new arguments for governments to support early childhood education as well as literacy and training programmes for adults. Empirical evidence also shows that there are large benefits of education for individuals and employers, hence a partnership between the state, employers and individuals is required for funding education and training.

As a reflection of the latter point, increased privatization of educational services is one trend that has been observed internationally. The main reason for this is the recognition that education can be a profitable business for which there is a market, and individuals and businesses are willing to pay for quality services. There is increased private provision of education at all levels in most countries.

However, the increasing expansion of the private sector raises equity issues. The state has to provide for the majority of the population. Restrictions on government budgets, which are faced by all countries, mean that the expansion of government resources devoted to education has been limited. Even though the proportion of GDP devoted to education has increased in nearly all countries, the per-student expenditure in the public sector is generally less than the per-student expenditure by the private sector.

Furthermore, governments are facing increasing pressures to achieve greater efficiency on the use of public sector funds. One response to this is to decentralize public education services, which is a common trend observed in many countries. Decentralization is also linked to objectives of achieving greater accountability on the part of the state in spending public funds.

There is also a trend towards the measurement of student achievements and other educational outcomes as well as evaluations of education service delivery as means for the public sector to assess the quality and effectiveness of what is actually being achieved from its expenditures on education.



Questions for individual reflection:

1. Which sub-sectors of education receive more attention than in the past according to the current education sector plan? Name these sub-sectors and explain in a few sentences (1-2 sentences per sub-sector identified) why they receive increasing attention.

2. Are the policy challenges noted here under items 2.2 to 2.6, similar to those that you consider to be the most important ones for the education sector of your country? Explain your viewpoint in a few (5-6) sentences.

UNIT 3. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS, AID MODALITIES AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

..... UNIT 3

In an increasingly globalized world, educational planning not only responds to domestic factors but also takes into account commitments made at the international level and goals established collectively by a group of countries. Furthermore, for countries in which development remains dependent on donor support, the planning process itself is at least partly shaped by the modalities of external aid and the tools and procedures defined by the donor community.

Part 1 of this unit overviews the historical phases and specific frameworks that have shaped the development of educational planning over the last fifty years.

Part 2 looks at the different aid modalities which have emerged and their influence on policies and policy making.



Unit objective:

Unit 3 discusses the implications of international developmental assistance paradigms and related aid modalities for educational planning.



Unit content:

- The main development frameworks in education since the 1960s;
- Aid modalities and their implications for educational planning.



Expected learning outcomes:

Upon completion of Unit 3 you should be able to:

- identify the implications of development frameworks and aid modalities for educational planning;
- describe the frameworks that have shaped development assistance policies;
- define the major aid modalities and their implications for education sector planning;
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of the aid modalities in contributing to aid effectiveness, particularly as they relate to the education sector.



Timeframe:

The study time required for this unit is approximately 8 hours per week.



Group Activity:

- At the end of this unit you will find instructions for a group activity. This activity will be submitted to and assessed by the IIEP instructors.
- If after your group meeting you have open questions regarding the content of the unit, do not hesitate to send them to the IIEP module instructors by writing your message in the Forum related to Module 1 of the ESP programme e-learning platform. The answers from the module instructors will also be made available in this forum.



Reading:

For this module you are advised to read:

- *Paris declaration on aid effectiveness: ownership, harmonization, alignment, results and mutual accountability*. 2005. High Level Forum on Aid effectiveness: Paris. www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf
- UNESCO. 2008. *Education for all by 2015: will we make it?* EFA Global Monitoring Report, Paris: UNESCO (Executive Summary and Chapter 4).

PART 1. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS AND EDUCATION

Educational planning in developing countries must take into account the volume and nature of international resources available for the education sector. These, among others, depend on the views held by the international development community on the role of education in the development process. In a simplified framework, the post-war period can be divided into three distinct periods or phases which were marked by very different views of economic growth and development and what they implied for the role of education.

The first phase: The first phase dates back to the 1960s when education was discovered as an “engine for economic growth”. Education was not simply a consumption good but an essential investment for economic and social development. In this context, educational planning was born. The OECD and UNESCO spearheaded educational planning in the 1960s and 1970s, working closely together in developing concepts, methodologies and statistics for educational planning. They promoted the concept of education development as an investment in national economic and social development. The OECD prompted education planning that was specifically oriented towards education sector development needs associated with post-war reconstruction and economic integration of OECD Member States. UNESCO focused on education planning needs in developing countries, many of them having gained independence recently and viewing schooling as a route towards upward social mobility, strengthening of cultural identity and economic development.

The second phase: The early 1980s to the mid 1990s was the period of structural adjustment policies in developing countries triggered by the economic and financial crisis. Structural adjustment policies, considered the best approach to achieving economic growth, adopted a narrow concept of development, focusing on savings in the non-productive sectors and on rates of economic growth. Spill-over effects from economic growth were supposed to take care of social development issues. Consequently, they included drastic cuts in social sector budgets and investment programmes, including in education. Structural adjustment programmes had disastrous effects on education systems in many developing countries. The loss of purchasing power and impoverishment of the most vulnerable populations contributed to drive enrolment rates back. The “spill-over effects” from economic growth did not occur as was expected, so this could not compensate drastic cuts in budget and investment programmes in the education sector. Measures referred to as “rationalization” included a systematic search for savings: abolition of financial transfers such as scholarships and social services for students at primary, secondary and higher education levels; in many countries teachers’ salaries were frozen or decreased in nominal terms. These measures had negative effects on enrolment rates and education quality in many developing countries, driving back achievements made in many developing countries since the 1960s.

The third phase: The third development framework, known as the ‘poverty reduction strategy’ (PRS), gained momentum in the mid-1990s. It was based on a broader concept of development that placed poverty reduction and human development at the centre of the development process. Education was given great prominence in this framework, as one of the key elements of human development, in addition to its role as a provider of human capital for economic growth.

The disastrous results of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) led to a sea change in the early 1990s. The UNDP Human Development Report was instrumental in triggering a paradigm change towards a basic human needs (HDI) approach that put new emphasis on sustainable growth and poverty reduction. This development framework gained momentum in the late 1990s when the World Bank turned the fight against poverty into a corporate mission. The Millennium Development Goals (2000) and World Education Forum on Education for All (2000) reflect this basic needs approach and concern for poverty reduction and the equity dimension.

Unit 3 discusses development frameworks that shape educational planning today. These include in particular two important multi-sector frameworks: Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which have been placed at the heart of the global development agenda.

They also include *education-specific* frameworks developed with reference to those multi-dimensional frameworks such as the Education for All (EFA) initiative and EFA Fast-Track Initiative (FTI).

1.1 Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)

Poverty reduction strategies

Poverty reduction strategies (PRS) had their origins in the International Labour Office (ILO). Basic Human Needs Strategy initiated in 1976. The idea was that the priority for development assistance, both bilateral and multilateral, should move from building large-scale industries and infrastructures to guaranteeing poor people adequate conditions to meet their basic needs. These are defined as:

- (i) The minimum requirements of a family for its own consumption, including food, clothing and shelter
- (ii) Essential services provided by and for the community, including drinking water, sanitation, education and health facilities (Streeten *et. al.*, 1981).

This approach meant strong involvement of the state in providing these services. This Basic Human Needs Strategy, however, lost favour in the mid-1980s because it was found difficult to sustain improvements in standards of living without economic growth. At the same time, the Structural Adjustment Policy strategy was gaining ground as the best approach to promoting economic growth. In the late-1990s the SAP strategy itself came under criticism and the idea of poverty reduction as a key objective of development resurfaced⁶. A milestone in development thinking was the focus on human development which pays attention to wider aspects of life, beyond per capita income. This work gave birth to the *Human Development Report*, published annually since 1990 by UNDP. Each year the report analyses various dimensions of human development and ranks countries according to the human development index. In this context, growing attention has been paid to poverty reduction and the international community promoted a new approach formed through poverty reduction papers.

⁶ The human development index (HDI) is based on three dimensions: health (life expectancy index) education (adult literacy index and gross enrollment index and wealth (GDP index).

Rationale for PRSP

The new paradigm arose from the recognition that while market competition the key element of SAP -, was a strong instrument for stimulating growth and efficiency, it failed as an effective instrument for improving equity. There was strong evidence that economic growth achieved under the SAP regime of deregulation failed to improve the economic conditions of the poor. The trickledown effect was weak. Economic growth continued to generate political discontent. The PRS framework, therefore, assumed poverty reduction as an important objective of development itself.

The framework was based on three principles:

- (i) The overarching goal of development assistance is poverty reduction
- (ii) Poverty is more than a lack of purchasing power but includes a range of economic, social, and political deprivations
- (iii) Poverty reduction will not be possible in the absence of viable institutions through which people can participate and take ownership of the development process.

While poverty reduction was also an objective under the SAP framework, it was based on the argument that poverty can be reduced through economic growth, which itself can be best stimulated through reliance on market competition. In contrast, the PRSP framework argues that sole reliance on the market mechanism is not an effective instrument for achieving the poverty reduction goal. Non-market instruments are needed to re-distribute market-produced income in favour of poor people. This is especially true if poverty is defined not only in the sense of current income below a certain standard but as a constraint on human capability (Sen, 1999). This means that social services such as education, health and social safety nets are needed to remove these constraints on human capability. Non-market approaches, provided mainly by the government and NGOs, are needed to deliver these services to the poor, although the private sector itself can play a useful role. The new paradigm recognised that because government corruption can also limit delivery of services to people, there is a need to strengthen the voice and power of people (empowerment) and to maximise the initiative of aid recipient communities (ownership) in the design of development assistance.

The PRS argued for spending more public resources on social services to the poor. However, it was also important not to risk neglecting the sectors from which people living in poverty draw their income. For example, the majority of poor people earn their livelihood from the agricultural sector and the informal economy. It is important to build production capacity of these sectors through supportive measures such as specific vocational education and training.

To pursue the strategy, countries were required to prepare comprehensive PRSPs, outlining their own plans for poverty reduction. These PRSPs then serve as the basis for concessional assistance from both the IMF and the World Bank, including debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative. The developing country government is in charge of preparing the PRSP. This is intended to ensure full participation and ownership of the process by developing nations. The document must include four core elements:

- (i) a description of the country's participatory process
- (ii) a poverty diagnosis
- (iii) targets, indicators, and monitoring systems
- (iv) priority public action over a three-year timeline.

This description makes it clear that the introduction of PRSPs represented a dramatic shift in the concept of development from the one that underlay the SAP framework. The PRS concept of development was a broad one, with human development as its central focus, while SAP was focused on rates of economic growth and did not pay much attention to other aspects of development.

1.2 Millennium Development Goals

MDGs and their relationship with PRSP

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) derive from these earlier international development targets, and were officially established at the Millennium Summit in 2000. The eight MDGs, described below, are expressed as goals and related time-bound targets:

Table 1. Millennium Development Goals

Goal	Targets
Goal 1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – halving between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education – by 2015, children everywhere, both boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of primary education
Goal 3	Promote gender equity and empower women – eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality – reduce by two-thirds the under-5 mortality rate by 2015
Goal 5	Improve maternal health – by 2015, reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases – halt the spread and begin to reverse the incidence of HIV/AIDS and other diseases
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability – build sustainable development policies into country programmes and practices; halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; by 2020 achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development.

It is worthy to note that all these goals are related to the quality of life. Goal 1 is directly related to poverty reduction and education figures as one of the aspects of human development. These goals have by now been adopted by many organizations in the international development assistance community. The World Bank has incorporated the MDGs into the preparation of PRSPs (called MDG+).

1.3 Education for All

Education for All (EFA) had its origins in the Jomtien conference on Education for All, which was held in 1990. Ten years later, it was widely felt that insufficient progress had been made towards achieving EFA objectives. At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, governments, non-governmental organizations and multilateral and national development assistance agencies pledged to commit the necessary resources and effort to achieve a comprehensive and inclusive system of quality education for all. They adopted a Framework for Action focusing on the achievement by 2015 of six EFA goals (see: Unit 2).

EFA and its relationship with PRS and MDGs

The Education for All approach is based on a wider concept of development that underlies the PRS framework. UNESCO, for example, states that efforts should be made to “promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies” (UNESCO 2008, p. 15). Another link with the PRS framework is the emphasis EFA places on the participation in the development process at the grass roots level. Education for All is a key strategy for empowerment and democratic participation. Strategy 3 of EFA advocates efforts to ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development.

EFA is also directly linked to MDGs. The MDG had identified education as a key element of the development process (MDG Goal 2). EFA views education as a human right and goes further than the MDGs in spelling out other goals for the education sector. MDG 3 identifies gender parity in education under its targets, which is also an EFA goal (EFA Goal 5). EFA is essential for achieving several other MDGs, for example the goals on controlling diseases and on achieving environmental sustainability.

1.4 Fast Track Initiative

The Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was established in 2002 as an evolving global partnership of developing and donor countries and agencies to support the core EFA goal of universal primary completion (UPC), for both boys and girls, by 2015. The Monterrey agreement, initiated by 22 bilateral donors, development banks, and international agencies active in supporting education in low income countries, explicitly links increased donor support for primary education to recipient countries’ policy performance and accountability for results.

The five main FTI goals are:

- 1) More efficient aid for primary education
- 2) Sustained increases in aid for primary education
- 3) Sound sector policies in education
- 4) Adequate and sustainable domestic financing for education
- 5) Increased accountability for sector results.

The guiding principles of FTI include:

- Strong emphasis on country-ownership as FTI is a country driven process
- Use of indicative benchmarking to improve primary education outcomes
- Long-term and stable support linked to dedicated commitment shown by countries
- Reduced transaction costs to countries through good donor co-ordination, based on a SWAP approach.

Countries participate in the programme after approval through an FTI review. This approval requires both the PRS and an education sector plan document. In other words, participating countries are required to demonstrate that they have a well developed plan both for poverty reduction and for the education sector. The education sector plan must offer a costed strategy for accelerating UPC that is aligned to sector goals for quality, participation and other priorities.

The review process begins with a submission of a sector plan by the government. The assessment and endorsement process is conducted in-country, led by local donor agency representatives. The FTI Secretariat composed of World Bank and other agency officials provides a co-ordinating function at the international level on behalf of the donor agencies. When the in-country donors are satisfied that key issues have been adequately addressed, the sector plan is endorsed.

The implementation of FTI endorsement in a country is based on agreed principles of accountability, annual monitoring and evaluation, strengthening of statistical and analytical capacity and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).

PART 2. MODALITIES OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

2.1 Towards new aid modalities

Criticisms of aid modalities that prevailed until the 1990's

The aid modalities prevalent before the poverty reduction strategy (PRS) era were clearly dominated by supply-side economics. They had two key characteristics: aid was generally *conditional* – granted if the recipient countries met certain conditions. Furthermore, most aid was project or programme-related. Project-based assistance was the main mode of aid delivery.

Aid evaluations during the 1980s and 1990s had identified several major problems with the project-based approach:

- *High transaction costs*: Recipient countries faced the high cost of managing aid when they had to deal with a large number of projects. Many donors also faced high transaction costs with their own reporting and accounting requirements and schedules.
- *Inefficiencies in spending*: The project based approach made it easier for the donor countries to impose their own priorities and procure their own contractors thus leading to inefficiencies.
- *Unpredictability*: Funding levels were very unpredictable as they depended on the disbursement levels and implementation requirements of many different projects.
- *Ineffective governance systems*: The multiplicity of projects implied that the use of non-government project management systems and staffing structures, in parallel with governments systems, weakened the governance systems of recipient countries.
- *Adverse impact on accountability systems*: The project approach required the use of donor/country accountability mechanisms, which had negative effects on the development of recipient country accountability systems.

This supply-side approach gave way to a demand-oriented approach under the development frameworks that have been proposed since the mid-1990s. The new aid modalities tried to achieve two important shifts:

- (i) from projects towards programmatic forms of aid
- (ii) from policy conditionality towards a more partnership-based approach to development assistance.

Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and its objectives⁷

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was adopted by ministers of developed and developing countries and heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions in March 2005. The Declaration provides a road map for reforming the way aid is to be managed and delivered in the context of the Millennium Development Goals. The objectives of the Declaration were to have greater impact on reducing poverty, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating the achievement of the MDGs.

⁷ Source: Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, OECD, 2005.
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>

Earlier work of the High Level Forum on Aid Harmonisation and Aid Alignment had identified major deficiencies in the management and delivery systems of international development assistance. Addressing these deficiencies provided the main rationale for the Declaration, which proposed reform in five areas:

- *Ownership*: The Declaration deemed it essential that partner countries have ownership and exercise effective leadership over their development policies.
- *Alignment*: Donors should base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures. To achieve this, partner countries must be committed to strengthening their development planning capacity, public financial management capacity, and national procurement systems. Donor countries are expected to support this capacity building and to use the strengthened country systems. Donors also agreed to untie aid.
- *Harmonisation*: Donors agreed to a more harmonised and transparent aid delivery system that is based on common arrangements, avoids duplication through a division of labour among donors, and adopts a harmonised approach to environmental assessment.
- *Managing for results*: Partner and donor countries agreed to manage resources and improve decision making by linking resource allocation closely to national priorities, and by using effective monitoring and assessment systems.
- *Mutual accountability*: Partner and donor countries agreed to strengthen the processes for greater national accountability based on strengthened participatory approaches and transparent accountability systems.

2.2 The budget support approach

Budget Support and its rationale

Direct budget support refers to the channelling of donor funds to a partner government using its own allocation, procurement and accounting systems. The approach was developed to support poverty reduction strategies (PRS), hence the use of such terms as 'poverty reduction budget support' and 'partnership general budget support'. Budget support is linked directly to government's plans for poverty reduction. This is to be achieved through two principal methods:

- (i) by shifting away from project aid to a programmatic form of aid
- (ii) by shifting away from policy conditionality towards a more partnership-based approach.

Within the broad PRS framework, the approach attempts to recognise the recipient government's pre-eminent role in defining government priorities and accounting systems. The absence of conditionality is reflected in the fact that the aid funding to government is not earmarked to specific projects or expenditure items.

Forms of budget support

Budgetary support can take two forms: general and sector budget support.

General Budget Support (GBS) covers financial assistance as a contribution to the overall budget. If there is any conditionality it is linked to policy measures related to overall budgetary priorities. Within this category, funds may be nominally accounted for against certain sectors but there is no formal limitation on where the funds may actually be spent.

Sector Budget Support (SBS) covers financial aid that is earmarked to a specific sector or sectors, without any conditionality. The aid is reported through normal government accounting and recipient

government's disbursement procedures. In this form it is similar to the sector-wide approach funding arrangement, which is discussed below.

Box 1. Budget support

Budget support generally includes

- A basic agreement between the recipient country and its aid partner(s), about the country's aid strategy and objectives, and the general principles of development co-operation. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) often reflects this agreement and sets out arrangements for regular dialogue about general policies and the use of budget support.
- Specific agreements about the amount of budget support to be provided and the conditions for its disbursements. There is usually a general condition that the government will adhere to the broad understandings set out in the MOU, plus specific conditions for the disbursement of budget support funds. The specific conditions usually include a set of agreed policy measures that the government will undertake. Some donors link at least part of their disbursement to the achievement of set performance targets.
- An agreed procedure for monitoring and review of performance. This monitoring and review is integrated into the preparation of subsequent instalments of budget support. Among other things, the budget support donors monitor the country's public expenditures as a whole.
- Budget support is accompanied by programmes to strengthen public finance management. Budget support donors systematically monitor the quality of the country's public finance management systems.
- Budget support is part of broader efforts by donors to align their assistance with the national poverty reduction strategy, to harmonize aid from different agencies, and to make more use of national procedures and systems in the way that aid is provided.
- Budget support is accompanied by technical assistance and support for capacity development, especially designed to strengthen planning, budgeting and financial management.

Source: IDD & Associates Joint evaluation of general budget support 1994-2004 (2007).

2.3 Sector-wide approaches

SWAp and its rationale

The 'Sector Wide' approach (SWAp), as its name implies, is designed to provide development assistance based on the identification of sector priorities. It attempts to manage and deliver assistance on the basis of policy considerations for the whole sector. A sector is defined as a coherent set of activities that can be relevantly distinguished in terms of policies, strategies and programmes (Danida, 1998). Sectors can be economic sectors (such as agriculture and industry), social sectors (such as education and health), and/or thematic sectors (such as the environment).

By focusing on a sector, SWAp moves away from project-based assistance. The reasons for this shift were to redress the difficulties of the project-based approach, which have been described above. Although SWAp developed independently of the Sector Budget Support (SBS) approach, the two are clearly related. SWAp is directly linked to the poverty reduction approach in that the sector priorities are developed on the basis of a PRS. It follows the PRS framework and it represents:

- (i) a move towards a partnership approach in which recipient governments are empowered to develop their own priorities
- (ii) a shift away from project-based assistance.

SWAp is a negotiated process

Proponents of SWAp argue that development assistance in this framework is a unique process between each donor-partner relationship and there is no ideal template to follow or propose. However, as in the SBS approach described above, there are a number of steps in the process that can be identified (SIDA Report, 2001):

Pre-SWAp: Even before the approach can be considered, it is important to conduct a feasibility study to show that the country has an enabling environment in which SWAp can work. This usually means that there is high level political support for SWAp.

SWAp planning and implementation:

- *Sector policy:* A coherent policy for sector development, based on PRS, is the first pre-requisite for implementing SWAp. The existence of such a policy signals that the capacity to develop sector policy exists, that the government has its ownership and that the sector policy has been developed after consultation with stakeholders.
- *Sector strategy:* The sector policy document needs to be supported by a strategy document that identifies how the policy will be implemented. Ideally, the strategy should be medium term; it should identify qualitative and quantitative targets; and identify a mechanism for review.
- *Sector development programme (SDP) and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF):* This should describe a rolling multi-year plan of resources and expenditures, developed in consultation with the ministry of finance, together with the appropriate procurement arrangements. The main objective of an MTEF is to link planning to resource allocation, by providing a longer time horizon. An MTEF can facilitate the implementation of longer-term priorities such as those encapsulated in the MDGs, in poverty reduction strategies and in sector-wide approaches, each of which take a multi-year perspective and have implications for the budget provision that will need to be made in the medium to long-term.
- *Annual plan and budget planning:* The multi-year SDP should be accompanied by an operational annual plan for implementation.
- *Annual plan and budget execution:* The actual implementation plan must make detailed arrangements for cash management, accounting, reporting and procurement procedures.

SWAp Management: SWAp represents a paradigm shift from a donor to a recipient managed approach. This places a high premium on the recipient country's capacity and management of the process for SWAp's success. This capacity must be national in scope but must also represent a decentralised sector level. There should be ownership of SWAp at the core levels of the relevant ministries; and it should include national stakeholders. The details identified in Step 2 necessarily imply a degree of decentralisation. Hence local structures need to be given authority. Local structures become the *modus operandi* for SWAp.

Donor/Government Dialogue: A SWAp process led by the national government includes a parallel dialogue and relationship with the lending agencies. This dialogue is needed at all levels of the steps identified above, especially as the sector development plans are prepared. The dialogue itself goes through a number of steps: establishment of a letter of intent, a code of conduct, a national consultative forum including all funding agencies and non-governmental organizations, and measures for harmonizing donor procedures. A successful SWAp also requires that donor agencies actively coordinate their actions on the basis of the sector development policy document so as to avoid working at cross-purposes. It is particularly important to bring donor agencies to agree to donor nations' approaches.

This detailed description confirms that SWAp is closely linked to the poverty reduction strategy, as an initial report has to be based on PRS. SWAp is also an intensive process that requires a well-developed capacity for planning and implementation.

2.4 New aid modalities: Implications and challenges for policy making and planning

We have reviewed several new aid modalities - SWAp, Budget Support, FTI and the Paris Declaration (PD) – generated by the new development frameworks discussed in Section I. How well have these new modalities performed in improving aid effectiveness?

In responding to this question it should be noted that the Paris Declaration provides a rule-based umbrella framework for aid delivery and management, while the other four modalities, mentioned above, are all nested within the broader framework of the PD. The Paris Declaration has succeeded in providing rule-based guidelines for improving aid effectiveness. It has rightly placed ownership of development policies in the hands of partner countries and provided approaches to reduce transaction costs and increase efficiency and accountability in aligning development assistance to national policies. These are worthy intentions, but, according to two recent studies, the experience so far reveals a gap between the intentions and the outcomes.

This is most apparent on the issue of partner/country ownership of development policies. While its avowed intention is to increase partner/country ownership and to strengthen development partnership, the mechanisms it has put in place may have unwittingly curtailed rather than increased developing countries' control of their policies. Several factors could have contributed to this:

(i) Donor country intrusion into partner country policy-making

The widely accepted ownership is the presence of a good quality and operational national development strategy as determined by the World Bank. The processes for preparing PRSPs now involve donor agencies intensively at all stages of preparation. The reports have to be finally approved by the World Bank if the donor country is to be eligible for assistance. As can be seen from the description of other modalities, this is also true for the process of preparing eligibility reports for SWAp, SBS, GBS and FTI, where donor countries or agencies are the final arbiters for giving approval.

(ii) New forms of conditionality

The intention linked to the Paris Declaration is to reduce conditionality to foster greater partner/country ownership. In practice, it requires compliance through the application of its 12 indicators. This approach can generate new conditionality packages for disbursement of aid under new mechanisms such as direct budget support and sector-wide approaches. The criteria for evaluating recipient countries' governance systems, as part of the new aid system, are all ultimately decided upon by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), in close working relation with the World Bank. Indicators for reviewing compliance with the PD include adherence of developing countries to 'broadly accepted good practices' or implementation of a reform programme to achieve such practices. These 'good practices' in turn are based upon the OECD's indicators which include the opening up of national procurement systems to 'qualified foreign firms'. In addition, Bissio (2008) argues that the Declaration supports the controversial conditionality of liberalizing public procurement system. This can undermine developing countries' right to use national procurement systems as a development tool, and one which goes against the developing countries' demands in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

(iii) Asymmetry of power between the donor and partner countries may have worsened

The mechanisms put in place after the Paris Declaration have strengthened the voice and role of donors as they are now more coordinated. At the country level, this new international governance increases the asymmetry between the aid recipient country and its donors and creditors who form a single group under the new aid modalities. Furthermore, the PD creates a new level of economic governance above the World Bank and the regional development banks run by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). In the DAC and the World Bank, it is the donors and creditors who have exclusive or majority control, with little or no developing country voice or vote. The asymmetry of negotiating power between the donor and recipient countries is inherent in the relationship. However, this is worsened by weak planning and budgeting capacities of developing countries. Case studies from seven low-income countries showed that power imbalances and weak capacity continue to limit developing country governments' ability to negotiate with donors and creditors on the conditions of their financing.

(iv) Asymmetry of responsibilities regarding accountability

The PD calls for mutual accountability, but it does not have mechanisms to hold donors accountable for the quality of their aid to developing countries. Instead, the focus of the Declaration is on recipient government's responsibilities, and it fails to recognise the steps that donors must take to create space for recipient governments to fulfil these responsibilities.

Partner countries are members of the working party supporting the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. They can make greater efforts to promote untied aid that is aligned with national priorities, particularly in the fields of procurement and financial management. In the aid area, partner countries lack the tradition and expertise of their own negotiating groups that they have put together over the years in other international negotiating fora, such as the Group of 77 (G77)⁸ in the UN or other regional groupings in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The longer-term but more sustainable action partner nations can take is to give high priority to developing their capacity for policy strategies, implementation and accountability procedures.

(v) The challenge of linking plans and budgets

A recent development accompanying the new aid modalities is to link sector development plans to a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)⁹. The latter is a device which should facilitate the alignment of the (planned) budget with sector plans and objectives. In very basic terms this means that, by using an appropriate macroeconomic model, the ministry of finance forecasts future government revenues and then proceeds with setting sector budget ceilings for a given number of years on the basis of government priorities and of the sectoral objectives and plans presented by the different line ministries. In that way, and provided the MTEF is politically endorsed, this gives the same line ministries a better idea of the yearly budgets they can expect and thereby allows them to plan in a more realistic way.

In spite of this, a common temptation when preparing an education sector plan is to try to do too many things within the same medium-term period. This inevitably leads to spreading the resources too thin, which in turn leads to poor implementation. Another major challenge lies in ensuring that the ministry/ministries of education be given adequate weight and attention when the ministry of finance sets the sector budget ceilings.

⁸ The Group 77 (G77) is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing states in the United Nations.

⁹ For more information on MTEF check web link:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/EXTPUBLICFINANCE/0..contentMDK:20235448~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:1339564,00.html>

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Group activity:

1. To what extent and in which respects has the Poverty Reduction Strategy adopted in your country influenced the goals and specific targets of the current education sector development plan? Summarize the main arguments in about 2 pages.
 2. Have there been any significant changes in the international aid modalities applied in the education sector of your country over recent years? Describe the main changes and provide comments on their positive as well as their more critical aspects in about 2 pages.
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