



INTERVENTION STUDY

Supporting national education reform in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Summary version

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Foreword

For Africa, education is the key to long-term development, poverty reduction and nation building. This is especially true in my own country, Rwanda, where we see our human resources as our most important asset, but where sadly our education system was devastated by the 1994 genocide. Reforming and strengthening our education system has therefore been a very high priority and we have devoted considerable effort and a large part of our domestic budget to achieving this.

As our own resources are limited, support from our partners for our efforts to improve our education system and strengthen our capacity to deliver good quality education is very welcome. But it is not just the quantity of support which matters, but also its quality and appropriateness. We are all conscious that the millions of aid dollars which have been spent on education over the last few decades have not always resulted in sustainable improvements nor strengthened management capacity. The development of new approaches and the serious attempts made to use aid funds more efficiently and effectively have therefore had our full support.

The Rwandan Education Sector Support Programme (RESSP), based in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research, funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by CfBT, was one such innovative programme. Although it was wide-ranging and included a number of projects, its principal task was to provide strategic advice to the Ministry on developing a sector-wide approach to planning, managing and financing education. The outcome has been that we have developed an education policy, strategic plan, financing plan and monitoring and review systems which our aid partners have expressed confidence in and, most significantly, have backed through an expansion of funding to education which will now benefit all Rwanda's children.

As highlighted in the study, the Government of Rwanda made a decision to reopen the primary schools two months after the new government was established in 1994. This resulted in tremendous challenges but the net impact twelve years on, coupled with the education reforms supported by DFID and managed by CfBT, has been major as

some statistics can illustrate: in 1994 the enrolment at primary level was 940 000 but now it is close to 2 million, and the numbers enrolled in secondary and higher education also saw tremendous growth – 50 000 to close to 250 000 and 3600 to 25 000 respectively.

The impact that would have resulted both nationally in Rwanda and regionally if this had not been the case would have been colossal. If the above had not happened then there would have been street children everywhere in Rwanda. The mathematics show that more than 1 million children not in school would have resulted in around 30 000 children out of school in every District of Rwanda.

The positive impact that has instead been felt has significantly contributed to the peace and security experienced in Rwanda and the cleanliness of the cities and rural areas. I would like to thank DFID and the UK Government for their support to education for more than ten years of rebuilding and strengthening the sector in Rwanda, and for the contribution this has made to sustainable peace.

I have long felt that there is an important story to tell about the reform of the education sector in Rwanda and the impact of the sector-wide approach since 2001. I am delighted that CfBT has now done part of this job, by taking some key aspects of what was achieved in Rwanda and looking at lessons learned for education sector reform more broadly in Africa. If this study now enables the work we undertook together in Rwanda to influence positively the strengthening of education systems elsewhere, it will be a very valuable contribution to the development of education in Africa.



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Abbreviations and acronyms

CBO	Community-Based Organisation	RESSP	Rwanda Education Sector Support Programme
DBS	Direct Budget Support		
DFID	Department for International Development	SBS	Sector Budget Support
EFA	Education for All	SFAR	Student Financing Agency of Rwanda
EFA-FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative	SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
ESP	Education Sector Policy	TA	Technical Assistance
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan	UK	United Kingdom
FARG	Fonds d'Appui aux Rescapés du Génocide (Genocide Survivors' Fund)	UPE	Universal Primary Education
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation		
FRw	Rwandan Franc		
GoR	Government of Rwanda		
HEI	Higher Education Institution		
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome		
IMF	International Monetary Fund		
JESS	Joint Education Sector Support		
LIC	Low-Income Country		
LTF	Long-Term Financing Framework		
MDG	Millennium Development Goal		
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research		
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning MoE Ministry of Education		
MoF	Ministry of Finance		
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework		
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education		
NGO	Non-Government Organisation		
NSP	Non-State Provider		
PPP	Public-Private Partnership		
PrHEI	Private Higher Education Institution		
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper		
PuHEI	Public Higher Education Institution		

Exchange rates (early 2006):

\$1 = FRw 580

£1 = FRw 1000

Executive summary

CfBT Education Trust (formerly CfBT) has spent the last decade supporting the reform of education systems in developing countries, middle-income countries and the UK, and one of the largest recent donor-funded programmes that CfBT has managed has been the Rwandan Education Sector Support Programme (RESSP) funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

Chapter 1 sets the objectives of this study in which CfBT Education Trust aims to consolidate and analyse what has been achieved through the RESSP in relation to three key areas: (i) sector-wide policy development and strategic planning; (ii) education sector financing; and (iii) the role of the non-government sector and of public-private partnerships (PPPs). The intention is to then use this analysis and experience to see to what extent it is possible to identify recommendations for a more coherent, evidence-based approach to national education reform in resource-poor contexts.

Chapter 2 provides background information to the education system in Rwanda in the period leading up to the start of the RESSP.

Chapter 3 outlines how donors have recently been moving away from funding projects to supporting a sector-wide approach (SWAp), with a focus on strengthening policy and planning, financing, partnership and capacity building. Six issues and challenges presented by this change are identified: (i) the need for a higher level of dialogue between ministries of education (MoEs) and donors; (ii) the need to address issues of change management, especially ownership of the change; (iii) the difficulty of getting key staff to look at the needs and priorities of the sector as a whole rather than advocating for the sub-sector they are working in; (iv) the remoteness of sector-wide policy and planning from teaching and learning; (v) the use of SWAps as a stepping stone to direct budget support (DBS), the attraction of which to donors sometimes means sufficient time is not taken to build the necessary capacity first; and (vi) the different

sort of expertise now required of consultants working with ministries to make the SWAp a reality. The experience of the RESSP in enabling Rwanda to develop a SWAp brought out a number of lessons to be learned in relation to these six challenges. These include: (i) the need to have a key member of staff of the ministry who champions the SWAp concept; (ii) the effort required to overcome preferential treatment for sub-sectors that have the most influential advocates; (iii) the value of public joint reviews of the education sector at which issues can be openly discussed; and (iv) the need to balance the effort put into strengthening sector-level policy and planning with effort put into strengthening school-level quality improvement planning so that the financial benefits of the SWAp are used efficiently to improve the learning experience of the children. The overall conclusion is that a SWAp will only achieve this if capacity has genuinely been built to make it work.

Chapter 4 asserts that there are seven main challenges related to the financing of education in Africa: (i) insufficient resources; (ii) a lack of predictability of aid flows; (iii) the need for a balanced sub-sectoral allocation of resources; (iv) the introduction of fee-free education; (v) weak public financial management systems; (vi) increasing steps toward greater decentralisation; and (vii) the pressure on absorptive capacity. The chapter considers the pros and cons of the move towards general budget support, concluding that there are some concerns that it does not give those donors particularly interested in education enough power to influence policy at sector level and that sectoral budget support or a portfolio of aid modalities may be more appropriate. Based on lessons learned from Rwanda, the chapter draws these conclusions: (i) where public financial management reforms are slow, line ministries can only go as fast as the speed at which the broader national reforms are taking place; (ii) support to public financial management reforms needs to look at all aspects of the budget process from preparation to execution

to monitoring and evaluation; (iii) following financial flows to the education sector becomes more difficult under decentralisation and deconcentration; (iv) while the introduction of a capitation grant to replace school fees in primary schools has dramatically increased access to primary schools, it has also produced access shock and led to more overcrowded classrooms with fewer quality inputs per pupil; and (v) to successfully make progress in adopting a SWAp, all planners and policymakers in every sub-sector need to be involved from an early stage so that there is ownership of the proposed plans and strategies.

Chapter 5 considers the spectrum of actors involved under the catch-all term 'non-state providers' (NSPs) and the blurring of boundaries between the state and non-state in provision, ownership and financing of education. It looks at the three key components of any partnership – policy, governance and finance – and what the main issues are for partnership under each of these components. It then considers the challenges against the development of PPPs from the perspectives of the public sector, the lending agencies and civil society and the private sector. Based on RESSP inputs in Rwanda, the main lesson learned is that although the NSPs are playing a very significant role, particularly in the provision of post-primary education, they still face considerable constraints. The principal one is that while all private schools receive no direct support from the Government of Rwanda (GoR) for their buildings, staffing and running costs, the reality is that many of the schools are receiving a significant GoR subsidy from money paid to support genocide survivors, or to buy places in private schools. This means that any consideration of abolishing fees needs to consider the current levels of financial assistance provided to private schools, since the GoR fully or partially subsidises a significant number of lower secondary school places. In conclusion, the chapter outlines four possible options for greater partnership, stressing that Africa must consider greater engagement with the non-state sector if the challenges of meeting the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to

be met. This will depend strongly on country context, though in difficult environments such as 'fragile states' where state capacity is often very weak, the NSPs are often the most important channel for the delivery and monitoring of services.

Chapter 6 analyses CfBT experience in Rwanda and then identifies a series of lessons learned that can potentially be applied elsewhere under the original three themes: (i) sector-wide policy development and strategic planning; (ii) education sector financing; and (iii) the role of the non-government sector and of public-private partnerships (PPPs). Making sense of this multitude of challenges and providing possible options is difficult. Eighteen issues were summarised under seven main constraints that the RESSP team faced: (i) technical and managerial skills of public officials; (ii) administrative constraints due to the lack of adequate infrastructure and equipment; (iii) capacity constraints exacerbated by the process of decentralisation; (iv) inadequate and weak public financial management systems; (v) uncoordinated and unharmonised donor interventions; (vi) social and cultural factors; and (vii) deficiencies in institutions and policy processes.

Chapter 7 outlines eight key policy, finance and partnership recommendations that have implications for national education reform in other environments, namely: (i) using the joint review process (or other equivalent meetings) to engage a broad range of stakeholders; (ii) ensuring that capacity building addresses needs at all levels from central government to decentralised government to schools; (iii) ensuring harmony of support across the different sub-sectors by pursuing a SWAp and enabling governments to provide particular technical and financial support for those areas that are traditionally undersupported; (iv) funding research to assess the impact of decentralised management and deconcentrated budgets on education reform and service delivery at the level of the classroom; (v) ensuring that aid intervention is fit for purpose by providing a flexible mix of capacity building for all administrative tiers with financial and technical support to actual

implementation at the institutional level; (vi) using a mix of aid modalities and systems ranging from DBS to discrete project support; (vii) considering a greater role for the NSPs, particularly for delivery of early childhood and post-basic education and training; and (viii) identifying public sector and donor champions to support building the partnership process from the start and to strengthen the capacity of the NSPs to support the expansion of education provision.

1. Context and aim of the study

“ *CfBT Education Trust in this study aims to consolidate and analyse what has been achieved in Rwanda through the RESSP* ”

Over the last decade, CfBT Education Trust (formerly CfBT) has been supporting the reform of education systems in various countries across the world (developing countries, middle-income countries and the UK) from school or sub-sector level through to sector-wide level. This work has occurred at the same time as changes in the way funding agencies operate in the education systems of developing countries, with the move away from the provision of teachers to schools, towards providing support and advisory services directly to ministries of education on areas of national educational reform.

One of the largest recent donor-funded programmes of support for education sector reform has been the Rwandan Education Sector Support Programme (RESSP), funded by the United Kingdom’s (UK) Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by CfBT on behalf of DFID and the Rwandan Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research (MINEDUC). This ran from June 2001 until June 2006, during which CfBT provided strategic advice to the Government of Rwanda (GoR) on the development of the Rwandan education system

Box 1.1: Specific aims of research

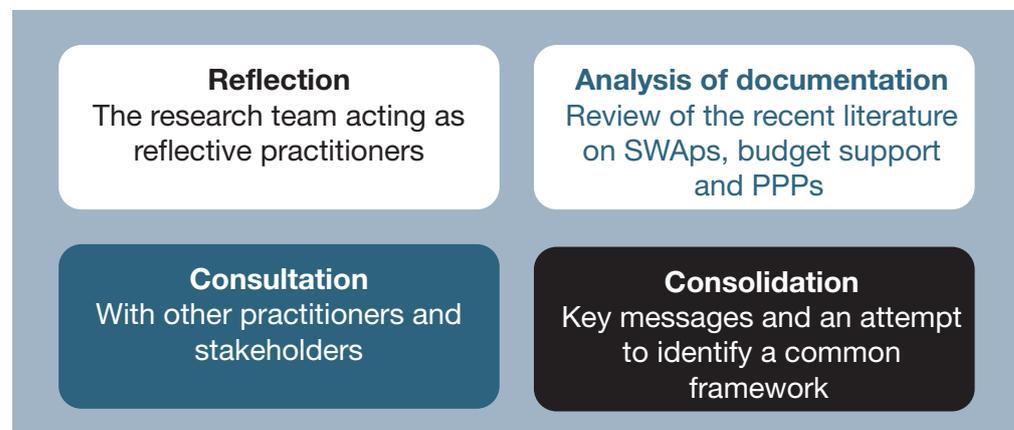
In order to learn in a structured way from its own experience and to disseminate what it has learned more widely to those working in education sector reform, CfBT Education Trust in this study aims to consolidate and analyse what has been achieved in Rwanda through the RESSP, in relation to three key areas:

1. Sector-wide policy development and strategic planning
2. Education sector financing
3. The role of the non-government sector and of public-private partnerships

This analysis and experience from elsewhere is then used to see to what extent it is possible to identify recommendations for a more coherent evidence-based approach to national education reform in resource-poor contexts.

What follows is not the story of the RESSP but uses the RESSP and other experience in an attempt to illuminate some of the processes underlying reform in practice. All of the authors are practitioners who contributed directly to the RESSP as well as to other education sector reform programmes in Africa and elsewhere, and the research methodology has had four elements as outlined in box 1.2 below.

Box 1.2 The four elements to the research



2. The Rwanda context

“ During the three-month period of the genocide in 1994, the country experienced a total collapse of basic services including education. This resulted in a 30% decrease in primary school enrolments when schools reopened (World Bank, 2004); the destruction of many schools and classrooms; the looting of property, including the theft or destruction of teaching and learning materials; the death or migration of many teachers resulting in overcrowded classrooms and underqualified or unqualified teachers teaching; and a lack of trust among many communities about the role of education in the security situation.

2.1 Progress made since the 1994 genocide

Rwanda experienced a period of civil war and unrest from 1990 culminating in the 1994 genocide. During the three-month period of the genocide in 1994, the country experienced a total collapse of basic services including education. This resulted in a 30% decrease in primary school enrolments when schools reopened (World Bank, 2004); the destruction of many schools and classrooms; the looting of property, including the theft or destruction of teaching and learning materials; the death or migration of many teachers resulting in overcrowded classrooms and underqualified or unqualified teachers teaching; and a lack of trust among many communities about the role of education in the security situation.

The newly formed Government was quick to respond, opening schools within a few months of the genocide, and donors came along to give their assistance, as did many non-government organisations (NGOs). Since 1994, the GoR through MINEDUC, has made considerable progress in rebuilding and reshaping the education system in terms of enrolment growth, the training and upgrading of teachers, the opening of new schools and higher education institutions (HEIs), and the development of an updated education sector policy and strategic plan to guide all future interventions in the sector. Despite these mammoth achievements, the quality of education is still low, and in the context of limited resources (financial, capacity, and personnel), maintaining these reforms and spearheading new ones remains the most significant challenge to the ongoing sustainability of what Rwanda has so far achieved.

2.2 Non-state provision of education

Rwanda has a considerable non-state education sector consisting of libre subsidié or government-aided schools (most of which are run by faith-based organisations – FBOs), and fully private schools. This sector has been particularly influential in the rebuilding of the education system over the last decade. By 2005, 71% of all primary schools were libre

subsidié and 3% fully private, with only 26% of all schools fully funded by the GoR. Similar to the primary sub-sector, non-state providers (NSPs) (private and libre subsidié) provided 72% of all secondary places, with a larger proportion at upper secondary than lower secondary, and employed 74% of the teaching force. However, the significant difference between the primary and secondary sub-sectors is that the private unaided sector is much larger at secondary level, owning 39% of all schools and providing 41% of all places compared to a meagre 3% of schools and 2% of places at primary level

2.3 A sector-wide approach

While the early post-conflict years saw a significant rebuilding of the education system in Rwanda with the NSPs playing a very important role, the GoR and MINEDUC took a clear lead, consulting with both external and internal development partners, and thus, while it would not be recognised as such, started out on trying to follow a sector-wide approach (SWAp) from the start of its reforms and reconstruction. As the country moved from the emergency phase towards a phase of more sustainable development, a draft education sector policy (ESP) was drawn up in 1998, outlining the main values and commitments the government held in relation to the education sector. The focus of this document was ‘on how to bring a solution to the real exigencies of the prevailing situation, in order to achieve a significant change in the education system after the terrible events that shattered the country in 1994.’ (GoR, 2002)

In 2000, largely influenced by DFID (the largest bilateral donor in the education sector over the last five years), MINEDUC agreed to start more formally along the path of a SWAp. The process started with workshops for senior staff, who were persuaded of the advantages of taking this route, followed by the programme of technical support, RESSP, running from mid-2001 until mid-2006. During this period a revised sector policy document and an education sector strategic plan (ESSP) have been completed and a series of annual reviews initiated.

“ *The broad purpose of the RESSP was to enable GoR to adopt a sector-wide approach to the development and implementation of education policy and of an education sector plan, designed to support sustainable poverty reduction.* ”

2.4 Donor involvement in education

Rwanda has received major donor support since the 1994 genocide. Between 2000 and 2002 it went through the process of developing its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and is currently working on a new plan known as the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy. The donor community has very much supported this process with large quantities of aid, which have constituted around 70% of the capital works budget (infrastructure, construction and technical assistance – TA) and over 30% of its recurrent budget in recent years (World Bank, 2005). As elsewhere, aid modalities in Rwanda are mixed, with some donors preferring traditional projects, some broader programmes of sectoral support and others direct support to the GoR budget, and in some cases a mixture of all three. This mix is true of the education sector, where the major bilateral donor in the sector, DFID, has provided funds directly for the GoR budget tied to progress in developing the education sector, has funded a sector-wide programme of support (the RESSP), and has funded a number of distinct projects.

2.5 The Rwanda Education Sector Support Programme

Between 2001 and 2004 DFID provided approximately £76 million in budget support and education sector support for the GoR. Of this, £13 million was for the RESSP, consisting of TA to MINEDUC to support the development of a SWAp to policy and planning, capacity building, improved quality, access and equity, and addressing HIV/AIDS through the education system; and financial aid for the procurement of textbooks. The financial aid for textbooks was separate from the TA provided by CfBT, and was provided directly to GoR after procurement had been undertaken by MINEDUC through the National Tender Board.

Box 2.1: Purpose of the RESSP

The broad purpose of the RESSP was to enable GoR to adopt a sector-wide approach to the development and implementation of education policy and of an education sector plan, designed to support sustainable poverty reduction.

The intention was that through this programme, education reform would be geared more closely to poverty reduction, linked to the PRSP, to GoR commitments to the MDGs and to the development of a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) approach for budgetary planning.

The RESSP covered four main areas, within which there were a number of distinct projects:

- support to MINEDUC capacity building, including a project to support the educational response to HIV/AIDS;
- support to sector planning and policy development;
- support to basic education quality, access and equity, including a project to support the Distance Teacher Training Programme at the Kigali Institute of Education;
- gearing education better to market needs, consisting of two capacity building projects at the Kigali Institute of Science, Technology and Management to support information and communication technology technician training and development of rural technologies.

The support was provided through a team of long-term advisers working within MINEDUC and the Kigali Institute of Education (see box 2.2 below), short-term consultancy visits, training and study tours.

Box 2.2: CfBT long-term advisory team



3. Policy and planning

“*The project approach came increasingly to be seen as divisive and it was felt that sector goals could be better achieved through a comprehensive nationally defined policy, strategy and budget framework*”

3.1 Support to the education sector: Changing focus

Until the mid-1990s, most external interventions within the education sector of developing countries focused on directly strengthening teaching and learning, but these interventions tended to leave untouched the capacity of ministries of education (MoEs) to develop policy, undertake realistic longer-term planning and identify the resources needed to result in comprehensive improvements across the sector. This has impacted negatively on sustainability.

In addition, for developing countries relying in part on aid funding, different donors have carved up support to the sector into projects which often compete for attention and resources in a situation of limited financial and human resources. These projects may sometimes overlap and may also leave significant parts of the sector without support.

Box 3.1: Dissatisfaction with projects

The project approach came increasingly to be seen as divisive and it was felt that sector goals could be better achieved through a comprehensive nationally defined policy, strategy and budget framework and the growing dissatisfaction of donors with the impact of education sector outcomes on poverty reduction highlighted the need to address whole-sector policy issues (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999).

As a reaction to such criticisms, since the mid-1990s there has been a move by some donors towards encouraging MoEs to take a SWAp. The defining characteristics of a SWAp have been stated as that ‘all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under Government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on Government procedures to disburse and account for all funds’ (Brown et al., 2001). In order to achieve this, donor support for

SWAps focuses on four dimensions of intervention: (i) policy and planning, (ii) finance and resources, (iii) partnership and coordination, and (iv) capacity and human resource management. These are key competences for moving on towards a stage where donors can be less directly involved.

3.2 Issues to address and challenges faced

3.2.1 Capacity required for a sector-wide approach

Box 3.2: SWAps and capacity

SWAps require not just a high level of understanding of education issues but a higher level of capacity for national education sector decision making linked to poverty reduction than when financing was linked to donor-identified technical projects. SWAps also require a capacity for high level policy dialogue with development partners, who often present conflicting messages and have their own headquarters-driven agendas and deadlines unrelated to the national aspirations of the aid-receiving countries.

Thus, the move to a SWAp may involve a steep learning curve for those involved – which includes donor agency personnel as well as staff of MoEs. A key implication is that the success of the SWAp depends to some extent on capacity that already exists before the SWAp process is started, and not only on the capacity that can be built up through the TA inputs.

3.2.2 Ownership of change

SWAps are an example of managed change and ownership of the change is seen as an essential ingredient. SWAps are considered to be a way of increasing local (rather than donor) ownership of the decision-making process. As strong leadership and political commitment have been seen as the basis for national ownership (UNDP et al., 2003), these

“ *The question is the extent to which effort should be put into adjusting the balance of funding between the sub-sectors given the difficulty of expecting key decision makers within a ministry to take a dispassionate and evidence-based view.* ”

either have to be there already in relation to making major change in the education system or they have to be built as part of the intervention. But SWAps may not always result in the sort of ownership intended since donor agencies still have different procedures and priorities, and host governments still have to please different agencies in different ways, downgrading their own priorities. Performance indicators or targets linked to SWAps are likely to be those seen as significant by donors rather than those the ministry might choose for its own accountability to government or parliament, and may reflect what is easiest to assess rather than genuine local priorities. In addition, the social, political and economic environment in which change is taking place is often turbulent itself, which can have a knock-on negative impact on the effective implementation of change within the education sector.

3.2.3 Focusing on the sector rather than sub-sectors

In a situation where directors responsible for particular sub-sectors of education are fighting for very limited resources, it may be difficult to get them to appreciate the need to look at the sector as a whole (Smith and Yisa, 2005). This has not been helped by a debate among economists and others over which sub-sector contributes most to poverty reduction and should receive greatest attention, with some donors – including DFID and the World Bank in the late 1990s – seeing primary or ‘basic’ education as warranting the bulk of the effort and funding, while at least one other – Germany – insisting on a disproportionate share going to vocational education and training. This has resulted in MoEs receiving conflicting and confusing messages, thus hindering rather than helping progress towards improving the effectiveness of education as a whole within a country’s national context. The question is the extent to which effort should be put into adjusting the balance of funding between the sub-sectors given the difficulty of expecting key decision

makers within a ministry to take a dispassionate and evidence-based view.

3.2.4 Impact on teaching and learning

The real task in education is implementing national reforms that bring about improved quality of teaching and learning through targeted interventions in the local community, creating an appropriate and effective learning environment. SWAps tend to focus at the level of government policy and building high level capacity at central level, but this does not always trickle down to contributing to building capacity at school level where the real driver for quality improvement is likely to be.

Box 3.3: Central versus local capacity

Strengthening the ownership of decision making by parents and civil society will not be greatly affected by SWAps unless central level capacity building leads to informed and relevant interventions at school level. Thus sector-wide planning has not replaced the need for school level planning, and the need for change champions at every level of the sector (Smith, 2005).

3.2.5 SWAps as a stepping stone to direct budget support

In general the introduction of SWAps has been accompanied by a move towards donors providing funding through direct budget support (DBS) and away from projects or TA. This implies that the recipient government’s systems must be sufficiently robust for them to be used for donor funds and that the ministry of finance, as well as sector ministries such as MoEs, have the capacity to ensure that the funds flow to where they are needed. In contexts of low capacity, such as Rwanda, this is a lot to expect. A rush to DBS may mean that the necessary capacity has not been built. It may also give the wrong impression that money is the answer to all development problems. There is therefore a significant dilemma. Through the move to DBS, donors are

“ they must be able to relate education sector development to the development of broader national poverty reduction strategies and to government expenditure planning.

”

requiring an ever greater capacity on the part of poorly resourced MoEs to appreciate the complex relationships between education and poverty reduction, undertake long-term planning, prioritise between competing demands, put in place robust financial systems, and so on. But any move away from providing TA, which can build capacity, to providing cash to central governments, is potentially taking away from decision makers the support needed if capacity to undertake these high level tasks is to be built, and built rapidly.

3.2.6 Changes in expertise demanded of consultants

One consequence of following a SWAp is that managing agents such as CfBT Education Trust have seen a decline in demand for their traditional project management expertise and a greater demand for a more flexible type of resource management, including an increasing demand for short-term expertise. There is also a shift in the type of expertise required of the consultants. First, they must be able to relate education sector development to the development of broader national poverty reduction strategies and to government expenditure planning. Second, their technical skills must be appropriate to working with senior MoE staff on issues of education policy development, strategic planning, sector financing and performance monitoring, and to developing capacity in such areas. Third, they must be comfortable supporting MoE colleagues in an ill-defined – and possibly politically charged – environment for which outputs have not been very clearly predetermined by donors. The success of a SWAp therefore depends not only on the host MoE and coherence of purpose among the donors, but also on the capacity of any managing agent contracted to provide the necessary inputs.

3.3 Specific context and interventions in Rwanda

3.3.1 Capacity for policy and planning

The SWAp process in Rwanda started with workshops organised by DFID in late 2000 and early 2001 for senior MINEDUC staff, and this was followed by a programme of technical support through the RESSP from mid-2001 until mid-2006. During 2000, the GoR finalised the first draft of Vision 2020, followed in 2001–02 by the drafting of the first PRSP and the introduction of an MTEF to try to align budgets more strategically with sector policies and priorities. This work was undertaken largely by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) in consultation with the donors, and although there was a process of consultation with other Rwandan stakeholders, not all the directors within MINEDUC were familiar with the PRSP or the MTEF. Raising awareness of these as key bases for education sector decision making became a task of the RESSP.

Box 3.4: Building capacity in policy and strategy development

By 2001, the original 1998 education sector policy (ESP) document was no longer referred to, and much of the decision making within MINEDUC could be characterised as ad hoc or crisis management. With RESSP support, in 2002 MINEDUC undertook an education sector review as a basis for revising the ESP and shaping the move towards a SWAp. In 2002–03 the revised ESP was drafted. The initial process had been completed, but the major challenge, which took much longer to address and was by no means fully achieved even by the end of the RESSP, was for all MINEDUC staff to see that the policy – and later the strategic plan – was what they were all working towards and to have this reflected in their day-to-day work.

3.3.2 Ownership and ‘donorship’¹

The launch of the RESSP in 2001 made DFID the largest donor in the sector and the RESSP itself was a means of

¹ A term used by Clare Short when International Development Secretary and used in the Oxfam briefing paper *From ‘Donorship’ to Ownership?* (2004), attributed there to John Weeks.

“ At the time of the development of the ESSP, the HEIs were still seen as representing a sub-sector somewhat apart from the rest and one that had not accepted that it had a role in the SWAp.

”

developing capacity within MINEDUC to assume, over time, greater responsibility for coordinating and monitoring the involvement of development partners in the sector.

Box 3.5: Challenges of creating ownership

The SWAp concept was a new approach to MINEDUC but the Director of Planning saw the value of it and was very much the focal point for discussions between the donors and MINEDUC on the development of the sector. However, in the early stages by no means were all of the donors in favour of the move to a SWAp. Despite this, donor agency coordination and alignment with the SWAp concept did progress during the life of the RESSP, helped by the annual joint reviews of the education sector (JRES) initiated in 2003, but even by the end of the RESSP the different procedures required by the development banks, particularly the World Bank, and the bilateral agencies, meant that a harmonised approach would remain a goal rather than a reality.

Strengthening partnership across different ministries and organisations responsible for different parts of the education system and service delivery as well as building understanding of the wider poverty reduction agenda was made more difficult by the environment of civil service reform, linked to decentralisation, which initially started in 2000. Between 2004 and 2006, a significant programme of civil service reform was then undertaken in several stages coupled with fiscal decentralisation and the restructuring of territorial administration. This involved a serious cutback in the number of posts and the structure of the central civil service, with many people either being made redundant or being redeployed in the new decentralised structures. The long period during which staff were waiting to hear whether they were going to retain their posts or indeed have any job at all was extremely demoralising and made

capacity building activities very difficult. Consequently, bringing about change within the sector was also considerably delayed and MINEDUC's reduction to about one fifth of the staff it had when the RESSP started has inevitably reduced the impact of the RESSP.

3.3.3 Sector versus sub-sectors

The revision of the ESP enabled MINEDUC to start work during 2003 on developing its first education sector strategic plan (ESSP). There were, however, a number of influences which detracted from the possibility that this would be a sector-wide prioritisation based on objective, evidence-based assessments of where the effort and the financing should be applied.

Box 3.6: Overcoming the obstacles to adopting a SWAp

Obstacle 1: The EFA agenda

One of the obstacles was the Education for All (EFA) agenda which encouraged MINEDUC to develop its own action plan for basic education following the commitments at the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar. The work on the EFA action plan and on the ESSP was initially not coordinated and there was potential for conflicting priorities. This situation was alleviated when the RESSP was expanded to provide MINEDUC with an EFA adviser, and the two plans were eventually developed in a compatible way.

Obstacle 2: Higher education

A further influence on prioritisation was the HEIs. At the start of the RESSP they were largely independent of MINEDUC and received disproportionately large funding in relation to other sub-sectors. Over the four years of the main phase of the RESSP, a key component on higher education had a significant impact on the integration of the HEIs as stakeholders within the education sector and on rationalising the funding, but this was a slow process and was still not fully accomplished by the end of the RESSP. At the time of the development of the

“ *The civil service reform may have had the effect of reducing MINEDUC’s capacity to spend increased financial resources. If this is the case, this will present a dilemma for the donors, which are to some extent rewarding the Rwandan education sector for its successful adoption of a SWAp, but then may discover that the additional funds cannot be spent because the capacity is no longer there.* ”

ESSP, the HEIs were still seen as representing a sub-sector somewhat apart from the rest and one that had not accepted that it had a role in the SWAp. Conversely, the technical and vocational education sub-sector, which had no influential institutions and no significant donor patronage, was given very low priority within the ESSP. In the circumstances, the ESSP was a reasonably balanced document, but its development reflected a situation in which MINEDUC staff responsible for particular areas of education and donors with particular priorities were undoubtedly able to influence the content in favour of particular sub-sectors, and in reality the HEIs continued to exert an unjustified influence and distorted the intended balance of the SWAp.

3.3.4 Impact on teaching and learning

The RESSP was a highly centralised programme in which the main direct focus was MINEDUC itself. In practice, the implementation of the programme took the impact closer to the classroom than the wording of the project design would suggest, with the distance teacher education project training some 470 formerly unqualified practising teachers. However, while the SWAp process for which the RESSP was developing capacity can be seen as having a major impact on the planning and financing of the sector, it cannot yet be said to be having any significant impact on what goes on in the classroom. Although the improved, more rational, evidence-based planning and the increased, more focused and more efficiently channelled financing are expected to lead to significant improvements in teaching and learning, in educational terms it may be difficult to attribute any changes that do occur in the future directly to the impact of the RESSP and the SWAp.

3.3.5 Moving to budget support

DFID was already providing DBS to Rwanda at the time the RESSP was established, thus a political decision had already been taken at an early stage to

move away from the provision of support through TA and increase the funding going directly into the government budget. The assumption was therefore that the planning, financial, monitoring and control systems would be adequate for this.

In fact the RESSP team found that, given the starting point in 2001, the process of strengthening capacity to address key policy issues and put plans and systems in place was a slow one, which was slowed down further by the evolving civil service reform. Planning within MINEDUC in relation to some policy issues was overtaken by political decisions taken outside MINEDUC, for example government declarations that primary education was to be fee-free before any systems for providing funding to schools to replace the user fees had been planned.

The civil service reform may have had the effect of reducing MINEDUC’s capacity to spend increased financial resources. If this is the case, this will present a dilemma for the donors, which are to some extent rewarding the Rwandan education sector for its successful adoption of a SWAp, but then may discover that the additional funds cannot be spent because the capacity is no longer there.

3.3.6 Role of the managing agent, project management and consultants

Although the move to SWAps was in part a response to a growing disillusionment with projects, the RESSP contained both non-project support to MINEDUC leading towards a SWAp and four projects with their own logical frameworks. Partly because of this hybrid nature of the programme and partly because of the limited resources within MINEDUC at the time the RESSP started, CfBT had to manage the RESSP from an office in Kigali rather than from within MINEDUC, in spite of the inconsistency inherent in the need to manage from outside MINEDUC a programme which intended to build MINEDUC’s ownership.

“ *the success of the RESSP has been not just because of the education expertise CfBT has been able to provide but because of the adaptability, flexibility and broader capacity building skills of the RESSP team provided to MINEDUC.* ”

Box 3.7: Flexibility of capacity-building approach

In late 2000, when DFID originally designed the RESSP, the only posts specified in the logical framework were education advisers (education planning, curriculum development and higher education). As the programme evolved, it became clear that the sort of expertise that was being expected of the team was in institutional development, public administration reform and financial planning that could be applied to the education sector. In general CfBT was able to provide the necessary expertise, but with hindsight the need for institutional development expertise should perhaps have been included in the original programme definition. Similarly, CfBT was fortunately able to provide experts who could cope with the evolving political environment of post-genocide Rwanda and the context of major and often unpredictable civil service reform. In many respects, therefore, the success of the RESSP has been not just because of the education expertise CfBT has been able to provide but because of the adaptability, flexibility and broader capacity building skills of the RESSP team provided to MINEDUC.

3.4 Lessons learned

The Rwanda experience highlights a number of issues which are likely to be generally applicable, of which the following are particularly significant.

1. In order for the SWAp process to get underway and become embedded, it requires a champion as well as broad commitment. In Rwanda the commitment was demonstrated on both the donor and government sides. But without someone to champion the approach, given the limited experience and perspective of some staff, there is a danger of key staff providing only lip service.
2. Treating the sector as a whole can be undermined when there are influential and vocal advocates of a single sub-sector or

even a single institution arguing for special consideration. As with the implementation of any such change, a SWAp is a process in which not all come on board at the same time.

3. Donors do not necessarily present a coherent message, even when nominally signed up to the SWAp concept. For example, some have put pressure on MINEDUC to put more effort into primary education or into technical and vocational education and training. This has lent support to certain staff within MINEDUC who have elevated sub-sectors supported by particular donors, but made it more difficult for MINEDUC itself to go through a reasoned discussion of the issues in terms of the impact of the sector as a whole on national development.
4. Joint reviews of the sector (JRES), which in Rwanda have included representatives of local education authorities, HEIs, schools and NGOs, as well as of the central ministry and donors, are an opportunity for issues around the balance between the sub-sectors to be aired and resolved publicly.
5. A weakness identified in SWAps elsewhere is that they have paid inadequate attention to quality (Foster and Mackintosh-Walker, 2001; Higgins and Rwanyange, 2005) and the Rwanda experience has also been that many of the most significant achievements so far have been in policy development, planning and quantitative issues. While quality has received a lot of attention in discussion, there now needs to be a much greater effort devoted to giving the students a worthwhile learning experience in the schools and colleges, and ensuring that expenditure really is used efficiently. There is a need to treat headteachers and teachers as significant partners in the dialogue from an early stage, to treat them as significant targets for capacity building activities and to include them as key players in accountability for achieving agreed quality indicators.

“
‘There is no point in saying that the government should be in the driving seat if it does not know how to drive. Teach it how to drive first.’

”

3.5 The way forward

Looking at the sector as a whole ensures that broad national goals and poverty reduction and related strategies can be factored into and financed within a comprehensive national education framework, and the focus is on national outcomes irrespective of inputs at the level of each sub-sector.

In a resource-poor context, where the amount of financing available for education is relatively fixed, the funds available should be used to achieve the desired education sector outputs and outcomes efficiently, irrespective of the influence of the proponents of any particular sub-sector. It is the priorities of the sector as a whole, in relation to the developing national, regional or local economy, that should determine how the funds are used.

Although the arguments for moving to SWAps have largely been from a donor perspective, as a reaction against (i) the lack of correlation between education and poverty reduction, and (ii) the disadvantages of a wholesale project approach, the Rwanda experience would support making a case for SWAps in terms of reducing potential internal wrangling between sub-sectors within ministries. Given limited management capacity and possibly limited leadership and commitment to reform in ministries in some countries, a SWAp provides a rationale for decision making, especially in circumstances where donors are not providing a coherent approach themselves.

Box 3.8: Ownership and capacity

While ownership is key to successful implementation of change, to bring about the education quality reforms needed, the experience of the RESSP would suggest that local capacity, however acquired or delivered, will have more impact than local ownership. Resource-poor governments are unlikely to have capacity to do all that is required to meet key development targets. As the Director of Planning in MINEDUC once put it:

‘There is no point in saying that the government should be in the driving seat if it does not know how to drive. Teach it how to drive first.’

4. Education finance

“ Estimates of the global resource gap for achieving the education MDGs range from \$3 billion to \$11 billion annually ”

4.1 Global trends in education financing

4.1.1 The financing gap to achieve the MDGs

Box 4.1: Cost of achieving the education MDGs

Estimates of the global resource gap for achieving the education MDGs range from \$3 billion to \$11 billion annually (Gurria and Gershberg, 2005). This implies that a significant part of this financing gap will need to be met through sustained and long-term increases in aid flows.

Part of this financing gap is being met through the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), which was launched in 2002 as a global partnership between developing countries and donors to ensure progress in achieving the MDG of universal primary education (UPE) by 2015. However, by mid-2006, only 20 countries had been endorsed by the FTI, with a queue of others still waiting for endorsement and hoping to receive additional financing through one of the FTI funding channels, and disbursements on the main financing tool of the FTI, the Catalytic Fund, falling a long way behind commitments.

Despite these challenges, the FTI seems to have had a positive impact on external financing for education in developing countries. Commitments to education jumped from \$4.6 billion to \$8.6 billion between 2001 and 2004, with a greater proportion of the increase going from bilateral donors to low-income countries (LICs), which saw education aid increase from \$2.9 billion to \$6 billion over the same period. Six Development Assistance Committee members were responsible for 63% of the increase in 2002/03, with only 23% of this increase going to Sub-Saharan Africa (FTI Secretariat, 2006b). Since the launching of the FTI, annual Official Development Assistance

commitments to basic education in all developing countries has nearly doubled reaching \$3.4 billion in 2004, almost the minimum estimated level of aid of \$3.7 billion needed annually by the Zedillo report to support UPE. However, disbursements have fallen far behind commitments, with only \$1.3 billion being disbursed in 2004. Despite this, overall disbursement performance has been improving from 62–63% of committed funds to LICs in 2002–03 to 70% by 2004 (FTI Secretariat, 2006c). If budget support to education and TA are included, then the overall aid committed to basic education in LICs over 2003/04 was around US\$2.6 billion, with just over half actually being disbursed on time (FTI Secretariat, 2006b).

4.1.2 Aid modalities and the move towards budget support

There is a variety of aid modalities that donors can choose from in the way they give financial assistance to a country with two main types of support – (i) project support, where the donor defines what the funds are to be used for and how the funds are to be managed, but has a restricted role in policy dialogue with the government; and (ii) budget support, where broad policy agreements are made between government and donors, but where government procedures are used to manage the funds and government decides how money is spent. Between these two end points, there are also various hybrid examples.

For many though not all donors, the new millennium has seen a paradigm shift in the way aid is provided with a move away from traditional projects towards DBS, which is also known as programme support. This new focus is becoming more popular both in general terms, and more specifically in how aid is given to the education sector. The rationale behind DBS, often coupled with SWAs, is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of

“ it is felt that sector goals can be better achieved through a comprehensive nationally defined policy, strategy and budget framework than through a collection of projects which might leave some priority areas underfunded and have a tendency to use donor-imposed disbursement and accounting procedures rather than using the government’s own procedures. ”

aid and place the responsibility for planning and prioritising on the aid-recipient governments, thus strengthening ownership. It also enables donors to distribute larger volumes of aid more quickly than under the project approach.

4.1.3 Project support versus budget support

Box 4.2: Advantages of budget support

Two of the main advantages of budget support over projects are: (i) it avoids creating the multiple parallel systems of projects, thereby reducing transaction costs and strengthening government financial systems; and (ii) it is available to finance recurrent costs such as teachers’ salaries, the area of the budget that is often under high stress and which projects are unable to finance. In addition, it is felt that sector goals can be better achieved through a comprehensive nationally defined policy, strategy and budget framework than through a collection of projects which might leave some priority areas underfunded and have a tendency to use donor-imposed disbursement and accounting procedures rather than using the government’s own procedures.

In Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya, budget support has contributed to the abolition of user fees, resulting in significant increases in primary school enrolment. In addition, budget support in Uganda has also enabled very rapid classroom construction and textbook provision (Foster, 2004). However, there are some concerns that DBS does not give those donors particularly interested in education enough power to influence policy at sector level and that sector budget support (SBS) may be more appropriate in this context, giving stronger incentives for increased education sector spending. Rwanda and Ghana are currently pursuing this approach.

4.2 Issues to address and challenges faced

In reaching the education MDGs in Africa,

there are seven main challenges related to the financing of education in Africa, outlined in Box 4.3 below.

Box 4.3: Seven key challenges to education in Africa

Challenge 1: Insufficient resources for the education sector

Challenge 2: Lack of predictability of aid flows

Challenge 3: Balanced sub-sectoral allocation of resources

Challenge 4: Fee-free education

Challenge 5: Public financial management systems

Challenge 6: Decentralisation

Challenge 7: Absorptive capacity

4.3 Specific context and interventions in Rwanda

After the genocide, the GoR showed a strong commitment to rebuilding and financing the education system. However, there were substantial changes in what the education budget was funding over the post-genocide period, with the higher education budget growing from 14% in 1996 to over 37% in 2000 and 2001, largely due to the opening of three new public HEIs whose aim was to rapidly train graduates needed to replace the skilled manpower lost during the genocide. This had a negative impact on the primary

“ *By 2005, the sub-sector budget allocations were moving towards the best practice budget shares for countries trying to reach EFA to ensure a sustainable expansion of the whole education system, with a strong focus on ensuring that the UPE target is met.* ”

education budget, whose share dropped from a high of 70% of the budget in 1996 to only 45% in 2001. This short-term imbalance had been partially corrected by the end of the RESSP.

Up until 2001, the financial planning of the education system was done on an ad hoc incremental basis, with no medium-term forward budgeting and no clear education strategy on which budgets were based. The development budget was mainly driven by availability of donor funds, and not by actual government needs and priorities. In response to this, the MTEF was introduced in Rwanda from the 2001 budget year to try to resolve these weaknesses and produce radical changes in how budget preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation would take place.

There were five main interventions in relation to education finance that the RESSP supported in Rwanda, outlined below.

4.3.1 Introduction of the MTEF and support to the decentralisation process

TA was provided under the RESSP from 2002 to support the development of the MTEF in the education sector and to provide training to MINEDUC and decentralised education personnel, since at the start of the 2002 financial year, around 40% of total education spending was transferred from MINEDUC to the Provinces under the decentralisation process.

By 2005, the sub-sector budget allocations, which had been very skewed in 2001, were moving towards the best practice budget shares for countries trying to reach EFA to ensure a sustainable expansion of the whole education system, with a strong focus on ensuring that the UPE target is met.

At the beginning of 2006, a major programme of restructuring of the territorial administration was announced by the GoR, leading to the 12 Provinces and 106 Districts being replaced by 30 new Districts and many personnel being transferred from central ministries down to the newly created Districts. It is likely that

yet more funds will be decentralised from MINEDUC to District level (during 2006, MINEDUC still retained oversight for over 50% of the education sector budget). This will mean that MINEDUC will have less of a financial monitoring role in education at decentralised levels as Districts are receiving five different blocks of funding, most of which comes in block grants for the District to prioritise rather than being earmarked for a specific sector. But MINEDUC will need to play a stronger role in ensuring improvements in educational outputs and outcomes.

4.3.2 The higher education sub-sector

Due to the expansion of the higher education sub-sector in the late 1990s, the public budget for the sub-sector tripled between 1997 and 1998, and by 2002, was absorbing nearly 40% of the country's recurrent spending on all education services. With the help of RESSP, three important legal documents were developed and presented before the Cabinet to try and provide a coherent framework for the development of the higher education sub-sector in a fiscally sustainable manner:

- the Higher Education Law, which was approved by Parliament, enacted and gazetted in mid-2005;
- the Student Financing Agency of Rwanda (SFAR) Law, which was approved by Cabinet in April 2005 and then referred to Parliament;
- The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) Law, which is awaiting Parliamentary approval.

In addition to the development of these legal frameworks, significant support was given to HEIs to try to rationalise the budget, as the existing system meant that some institutions were receiving much larger amounts of money per student for the same type of course than others for no justifiable reason, and the very high unit costs in the sub-sector were not sustainable at the same time as GoR wanting to expand access towards UPE. Under RESSP, a specific programme of

“ An analysis undertaken in 2004 to track whether the capitation grant had actually reached schools found that around 90% of the total amount paid by MINEDUC actually arrived in the schools, and this loss of around 10% as well as the delays in some schools receiving funds can currently be blamed on the banking system rather than any corruption in local government. Thus this has been a very successful intervention. ”

training was developed and delivered once to the HEI senior management teams, and once to all the department budget technicians in public HEIs. This was followed by the provision of TA to the HEIs looking at improving efficiency and effectiveness, human resource development and resource diversification. One of the main aims of the training programme was to move towards a formula funding system that would recognise the differences in costs between courses, but allocate a more equitable unit cost per student to each HEI for different categories of courses. Several attempts were made at doing this, but to date no system of formula funding based on unit costs per student has been agreed or adopted by individual institutions, even though this is now the norm in most developed countries and in some African countries (for example Kenya and Ethiopia).

4.3.3 Development of a long-term financing framework for achieving UPE and EFA

In 2003, with assistance from the World Bank, MINEDUC started developing a long-term financing framework (LTFF) for the education sector. The main objective of this was for MINEDUC to define its long-term targets for education, to see whether these targets were realistic, and to then put in place an LTFF outlining the likely cost of moving towards achieving these targets and outlining the financing gap in getting there. At the same time, MINEDUC was developing the ESSP including a costed implementation framework.

4.3.4 Introduction of fee-free primary education

From September 2003, a capitation grant was introduced for primary schools to replace the FRw 300 per pupil that families were paying in school fees. During 2005, this figure was increased from FRw 300 to FRw 1000 per pupil, leading to a big increase in the primary budget between 2003 and 2005. The capitation grant is transferred directly to primary

schools on the basis of attendance figures. An analysis undertaken in 2004 to track whether the capitation grant had actually reached schools (Ndagijimana et al., 2004) found that around 90% of the total amount paid by MINEDUC actually arrived in the schools, and this loss of around 10% as well as the delays in some schools receiving funds can currently be blamed on the banking system rather than any corruption in local government. Thus this has been a very successful intervention.

4.3.5 The move towards sector budget support

As many of the education sector donors have bought in to the idea of a SWAp, there has been a growing realisation among several of the main donors² that traditional projects are no longer the best way of supporting funding to the education sector in Rwanda. This realisation, coupled with the GoR's constraint in providing reliable cashflow in the first half of the year, has led this group of donors to explore the idea of providing SBS to the education sector to enable finances to be made available early in the year to help support the recurrent costs of expanding and running the education system. A new programme of support from these donors is currently being discussed under the title Joint Education Sector Support (JESS), with a pot of money being set aside to support capacity building in addition to the money flowing for service delivery.

Box 4.4: Future success or failure of sector budget support in Rwanda

The success or failure of the JESS programme will depend largely on (i) the capacity within MINEDUC to plan, procure and spend money in a timely manner, showing it has the necessary absorption capacity to spend this additional money; (ii) the ability of the GoR to put in place functional monitoring and evaluation systems showing how this additional money (as well as its own resources) is

² DFID, Sida, the World Bank, and Belgium as existing education sector donors, but also joined by a new donor: the Netherlands.

“ *The introduction of a capitation grant to replace school fees in primary schools has dramatically increased access to primary schools, including the return of many pupils who had formerly dropped out of the system or maybe never even started.* ”

being spent; and (iii) the discipline shown by the higher education sub-sector to control its budget and begin to make efficiency savings and reduce its overall share of the education budget.

4.4 Lessons learned

The main lessons learned under the RESSP regarding education sector financing are outlined here.

1. Progress developing an MTEF and financial systems in a given sector such as education has to go hand in hand with how progress is being made at national level on public finance management reforms. Where these reforms are slow, sector ministries, however great their aspirations, can only go as fast as the speed at which national reforms are taking place. MINEDUC is held up as the lead ministry and sector in terms of policy development, strategic planning and budgeting. However, it can only continue to make progress at the same rate as national progress in public financial management reform.
2. Support to public financial management reforms needs to look at all aspects of the budget process. The MTEF approach looks at the three main parts of the budget cycle: (i) preparation, (ii) execution, and (iii) monitoring and evaluation. In Rwanda, a lot of emphasis has been put on (i); a little on (ii), though this is still constrained by the cash budgeting system and a lack of predictability on the release of budget support; and very little attention has been paid to (iii). This means that the budget looks very good on paper, but there is no real understanding on whether that money is spent in each sector, whether it is spent on what it was planned for, and whether it has achieved a real difference in the sector.
3. Now that a serious programme of decentralisation and deconcentration has occurred under the new Territorial Administration Act, following the financial

flows to the education sector will be more difficult. Thus trying to do long-term financial planning for the education sector in a centralised way is no longer going to be effective so more effort needs to be placed on developing bottom-up locally owned District Education Plans that follow national policy, strategy and targets for the education sector.

4. The introduction of a capitation grant to replace school fees in primary schools has dramatically increased access to primary schools, including the return of many pupils who had formerly dropped out of the system or maybe never even started. However, it has led to more overcrowded classrooms with fewer quality inputs per pupil. The increase in primary capitation grants during 2005 and 2006 will help to address some of the quality issues in terms of getting more money to the school level where service delivery is taking place. However, issues of reducing the pupil–teacher ratio, building more classrooms and providing textbooks still remain critical and will not be covered by the recent increases in the capitation grant.
5. To successfully make progress in adopting a SWAp, all planners and policymakers in every sub-sector need to be involved from an early stage so that there is sector-wide ownership of the proposed plans and strategies. Due to staffing changes in the higher education sub-sector, and the autonomy of the HEIs, this sub-sector never fully owned the reforms being proposed by the rest of MINEDUC, meaning that this has been the one sub-sector that has not aligned its budget and strategy with the rest of the education sector, causing difficulties in budget allocations.

4.5 The way forward

Table 4.5: Key challenges to address and proposed solutions for Rwanda

Challenges	Rwanda context	Proposed solutions
1. Insufficient resources for the education sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education receives 34% of domestic resources (around 5.2% of GDP in 2005 projected under the LTFF to rise to 6.5% of GDP by 2015). • Three factors affect the overall resources that GoR can access: (i) GoR's limited ability to collect additional taxes given the large share of the population dependent on agriculture; (ii) macroeconomic targets for the fiscal deficit in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) programme; and (iii) availability of additional donor resources in grant form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presently the GoR has a relatively small fiscal deficit (inclusive of grants) so if additional aid flows in grant form are secured, this deficit could be increased using this new money to provide extra financing to both the education sector and other sectors.
2. Lack of predictability of aid flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors have provided around 70% of the capital works budget and over 30% of its recurrent budget in recent years (World Bank, 2005, p. 23) meaning that when aid flows are delayed, this has a serious impact on service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address issues for late disbursements of aid ensuring that donors disburse aid on time. This is particularly important given the proposed JESS programme of sector budget support to education currently being planned.
3. Balanced sub-sectoral allocation of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoR is putting more emphasis on primary and lower secondary education, though higher education financing reforms have not been implemented as quickly as planned, leaving the higher education sub-sector inefficient and costly for the small number of students it is serving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medium-term higher education action plan is needed, implemented and monitored on a yearly basis and integrated into the ESSP. This will bring greater budget discipline to the sub-sector, enabling a true sector-wide approach to budget planning.

Challenges	Rwanda context	Proposed solutions
4. Fee-free education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GoR desires to see fees eliminated at lower secondary level but fees are currently quite substantial, mainly due to the issues of boarding and school feeding. The fiscal implications of abolishing fees for all students and replacing them with a capitation grant are enormous, particularly in the medium to long term as more children make the transition from primary to secondary schooling. Over 40% of places are currently provided by the private sector. What will happen to these places if fee-free education is introduced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A study needs to be undertaken to explore the medium- and long-term fiscal impacts of abolishing fees for all students, and proposing alternative scenarios for guaranteeing free access for the poorest and most vulnerable children while ensuring that the GoR can afford to sustain any fee-free policy and looking at the likely effects of this policy on private sector providers.
5. Public financial management systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cash budget system has hampered spending in the first half of the year. Much effort has been put into training staff in budget planning and preparation, with little focus on budget execution and even less focus on monitoring and evaluation of education expenditure. Financial and performance monitoring and evaluation systems have been designed, but are rarely implemented, with the only independent check on education spending coming from the Office of the Auditor General. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If MINECOFIN prepares a regular cashflow plan for each ministry, this would enable ministries to prioritise and plan their spending in line with likely available resources. More focus needs to be placed on monitoring and evaluating education expenditure using the systems developed under the RESSP.

Challenges	Rwanda context	Proposed solutions
6. Decentralisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While personnel and responsibilities for education service delivery have been transferred to the newly created Districts, over 50% of the education budget remains centralised under MINEDUC's control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More of the education budget will need to be deconcentrated so that as well as delegated administrative authority, Districts will have financial authority to spend on their own identified needs and priorities.
7. Absorptive capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GoR struggles to spend recurrent and capital budgets at 100% level each year and it is not clear whether the education sector will be able to absorb significant additional resources and spend them in a timely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The multi-sector capacity building fund, managed via the Human Resource and Institutional Development Agency, is likely to address some of these weaknesses in public financial management.

While Rwanda faces challenges in all seven areas, ensuring that the budget remains balanced across the sub-sectors in the medium to long term (challenge 3); empowering the new districts with capacity and authority to spend education budgets at local level (challenge 6); deciding what to do about fee-free lower secondary education (challenge 4); and putting in place monitoring and evaluation systems for the budget to ensure that money is actually spent (challenge 5) are the four main priorities for Rwanda.

5. Partnership with non-state providers

“ ‘115.4 million of children in the 6–14 age group still remain out of school, 39% of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the percentage rate of throughput into post-secondary and higher education still fails dramatically to meet the respective demands of the populace and the labour market

5.1 The access gap: Creating the context for partnership

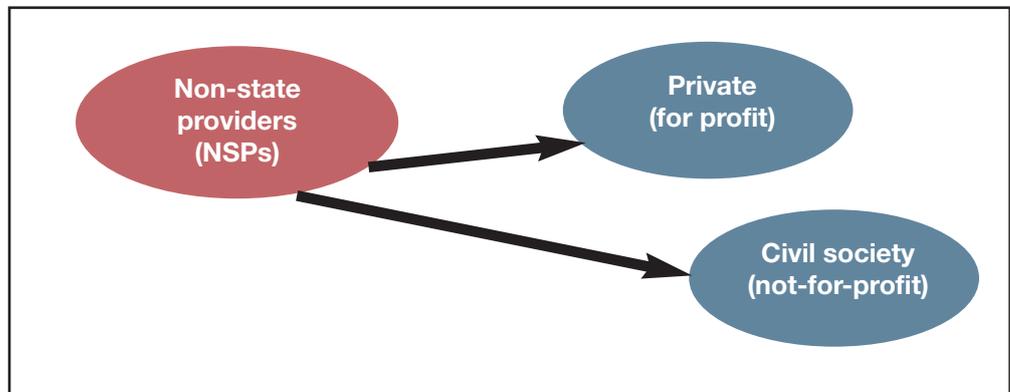
While the education sector in many African countries has made considerable progress in recent years, assisted by significant aid flows, 115.4 million of children in the 6–14 age group still remain out of school, 39% of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the percentage rate of throughput into post-secondary and higher education still fails dramatically to meet the respective demands of the populace and the labour market (UNESCO/UNICEF, 2005).

Governments are the pre-eminent financiers and providers of education. But there are increasing concerns with the efficiency and effectiveness of government funding and its provision of education. Certain failings are common across these large public administrations: they are slow in providing contextual and responsive education and their funding is not always targeted at the most

and concrete evidence on workable options.

The word ‘private’ has negative associations for many people, particularly in the context of the social sector. A more useful, encompassing and less controversial term is ‘non-state provider’ (NSP) which includes two broad categories – civil society and the private sector. In the educational context, the former refers to the wide variety of organisations that are active in education yet not primarily motivated by profit. This includes community groups, parents’ associations and faith-based organisations, just to name a few. Outside of education, it would include human rights and democracy groups, development NGOs, policy institutes, the media and many other community-based organisations. These civil society groups are often viewed as the ‘third leg of the stool’ complementing the private and state ‘legs’.

Box 5.1: Types of non-state provider



deprived so that those that are able to take advantage of government provisioning are not among the poorest.

It is, therefore, an opportune time for the countries in the region to experiment with policy innovations. Increasingly, governments are looking for policy options that can accelerate their progress towards achieving their stated education outcomes by engaging in greater partnership with the non-state sector. To that end, policymakers need to have greater exposure to a range of experiences

However, even these formal delineations between state and non-state or non-state and private sector are often blurred, with many private sector organisations now delivering core services which were formerly the exclusive domain of the public sector and civil society groups, and some NSPs working in both the government and private sectors. Rather than trying to define and categorise each group given this blurring of roles, a more useful way forward is to identify those NSPs with whom we think it is useful to work in a given country, the rationale for this partnership

and the appropriate way forward to make the partnership work.

Thus, given the diversity of NSPs and the aforementioned blurring of boundaries, this raises an important question regarding the capacity, will and understanding of the state to intervene and do things differently. This situation may be a significant determinant of policy since it may lead politicians and officials to keep the present arrangements in place rather than try out a new approach.

5.2 Issues to address and challenges faced

The key issues that emerge when trying to embark upon a public-private partnership (PPP) can be categorised across the three main components of any partnership: (i) policy, (ii) governance, and (iii) finance. Table 5.1 highlights some of the key issues under these three components.

Table 5.1: Key issues in public-private partnerships

Policy	Governance	Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the role of government – what it should do and how it should do it Change any legislation or regulation in relation to this Ensure that this leads to improved performance, and greater opportunities and achievement for the underserved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set standards and teach students to those standards Decide on what curriculum, mode of instruction, capacity development and management structures are necessary to reach minimum standards of achievement Define the role, structure and mandate to regulate decentralised service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on the appropriate level of funding for partnership Ascertain the most appropriate strategy linked to the funding for partnership Determine whether and how to apply subsidies

Challenges against the development of PPPs can be viewed from three perspectives: (i) the public sector, (ii) the lending agencies and (iii) civil society and the private sector.

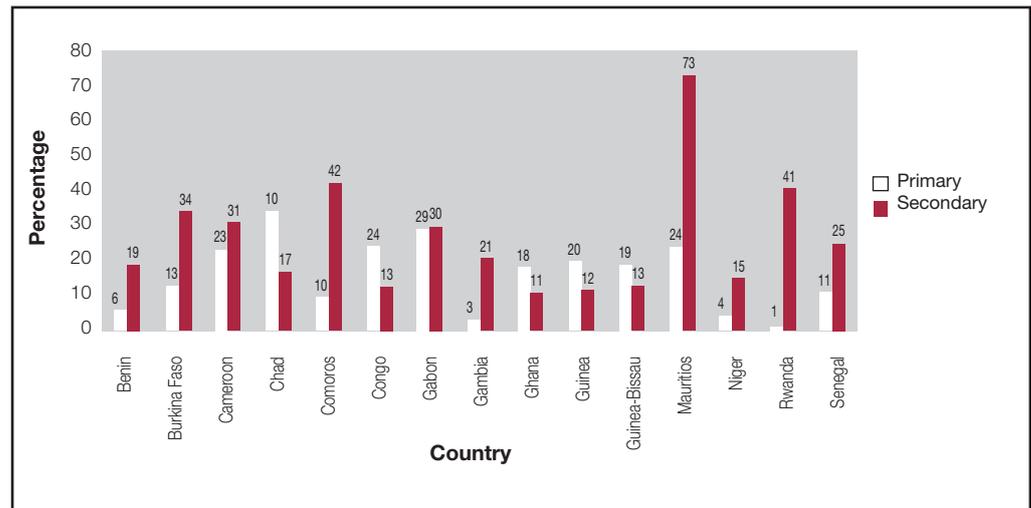
Table 5.1: Key issues in public-private partnerships

Public sector	Lending agencies	Non-state sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political nature of the reforms Low capacity of government to develop and implement partnership Lack of publicly available information on system performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources and knowledge base about partnership Different ideological perspectives Difficulty of managing an innovatory policy loan with on-lending from the lending agency and national government to the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of access to bank credit by social sectors Shortage of skilled professionals Difficulty in accessing land and buildings Inability of many users to pay fees Bureaucracy procedures for formal registration

“ At lower secondary level, the non-state sector provided 68% of all places, 31% in libre subsidié schools and 37% in fully private schools, ”

Despite these challenges, the private sector is very active in the different sub-sectors of many African nations, as outlined in chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Private enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment for selected Sub-Saharan African countries, 2002–03



Source: UNESCO (2005), pp. 380–382

Data for Rwanda refers to the 2005 academic year and includes only fully private schools, not libre subsidié.

5.3 Specific context and interventions in Rwanda

The non-state school sector is well established in Rwanda at all levels. There are four main groups of non-state organisations and individuals directly involved in managing schools or HEIs in the education sector: (i) parents and communities, (ii) NGOs, including community-based organisations (CBOs), (iii) private schools established as not-for-profit organisations and (iv) the FBOs. Those that are government assisted are referred to as libre subsidié, while those that receive no direct government funding of teachers are referred to as fully private. Many of the FBO schools fall into the libre subsidié category.

5.3.1 Basic education

In 2005, a total of 74% of all primary schools were registered as non-state schools: 71% were libre subsidié, mostly operated by FBOs, and 3% fully private. These schools provided 1.32 million or

71% of all school places for primary-aged children. While teachers employed in the libre subsidié schools were paid for by the government, those in fully private schools were paid for without direct government support.

Of a total of just over 550 secondary schools, 369 (67%) were non-state schools. At lower secondary level, the non-state sector provided 68% of all places, 31% in libre subsidié schools and 37% in fully private schools, showing that while the size of the non-state sector is similar in the primary and secondary sub-sectors, the fully private sector is much more significant at secondary level than it is at primary level. At secondary level, girls and the poor were more highly represented in private schools. Significantly, in 2004, at least 33% of lower secondary places in all types of school were partly or fully subsidised with a significant number of these being in fully

private schools (Latham and Ndaruhutse, 2004).

5.3.2 Higher education

In 2004, the private sector had a 47% share of higher education provision in Rwanda. The private sector HEIs (PrHEIs) on average have achieved gender parity in access with a majority of female enrolments in institutes based in Kigali, while the public sector providers remained far behind, enrolling less than 30% female students. In order to meet their staffing needs, the PrHEIs are currently employing large numbers of lecturers employed to lecture in the public HEIs (PuHEIs), indicating that there may well be an insufficient supply of qualified staff to lecture the existing cohorts of students passing through public and private HEIs.

The GoR has accepted that to reach its target of reaching 1% of the population by 2015, it will have to partner with the already active PrHEIs and mix government finance with private delivery and private ownership of a significant proportion of the overall provision of higher education. This will need to include the development of a proactive human development strategy to meet the projected increase in student enrolments that are likely if the GoR is to reach its 2015 target and will require partnership between the PuHEIs and the PrHEIs in developing, planning and financing such a strategy.

The higher education sub-sector is small at present yet the pressure to expand is mounting as more students complete their secondary schooling and as the labour market requires a better trained workforce. Thus management of this sub-sector's expansion in a fiscally sustainable manner across the public and private sector providers is a critically important policy issue for the future.

in supporting the GoR to meet its EFA and MDG targets. Presently, NSPs are playing a very significant role, particularly in the provision of post-primary education. Table 5.3 below outlines some of the key constraints in maintaining and/or expanding partnership in Rwanda.

5.4 Lessons learned

This analysis of the non-state sector in Rwanda has revealed some significant findings with respect to possible options for using greater participation from the non-state sector

Table 5.10: Key constraints to partnership

Area	Constraint
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety in household ability and willingness to pay for education • Variation in effective local initiatives for starting education institutions • Difficulties experienced in accessing finance to provide classroom places
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference in state contributions for supporting inputs to private schools (for example, GoR funding all inputs in public schools, GoR funding teachers' salaries, textbooks and pupil fees in libre subsidie schools, but only school fees in a proportion of private schools) • A large segment of the private sector's catchment comprises pupils who have failed the entry examination into either lower secondary or university • Lack of qualified staff available for hire • Unequal availability of teaching staff across the provinces • Lack of assessment systems to monitor quality of performance by NSPs
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences across regions of the country in the social context and market for private sector schooling • Inequitable distribution of public subsidies across the three types of providers
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small size of institutions (fewer than 400 pupils) militate against taking advantage of economies of scale in service delivery • Wide range of course offerings ensures low enrolments • The cost of delivery of lower secondary education is 3.5 times as high as the corresponding costs at the primary level • Lack of access to credit from the local banking sector for private NSPs • Slow disbursement of subsidies to cover students' fees from funders • Considerable mobility of those students who pay their own fees

Source: Based on findings of Latham and Ndaruhutse (2004, p. 16)

In addition, one other key challenge that remains is the role of NSPs if lower secondary education is made fee-free, given that 37% of total enrolments are in fully private schools. While these schools technically receive no funding from the GoR, the reality in 2004 was that approximately 80% of all of the Genocide Survivor's Fund (FARG) money supporting lower secondary education was paid to

support students in private schools (Latham and Ndaruhutse, 2004) and the GoR additionally directly bought a number of places in private secondary schools to meet excess demand. Thus while all private schools received no direct support from the GoR for their buildings, staffing and running costs, the reality is that many of the schools were receiving a significant GoR subsidy from

“ *There is no one best practice model for a successful PPP, as it will depend strongly on country context.* ”

money paid to support students through the FARG and to buy places in private schools. This means that any consideration of abolishing fees needs to consider the current levels of financial assistance provided by the GoR to private schools, since it fully or partially subsidises a significant number of lower secondary school places.

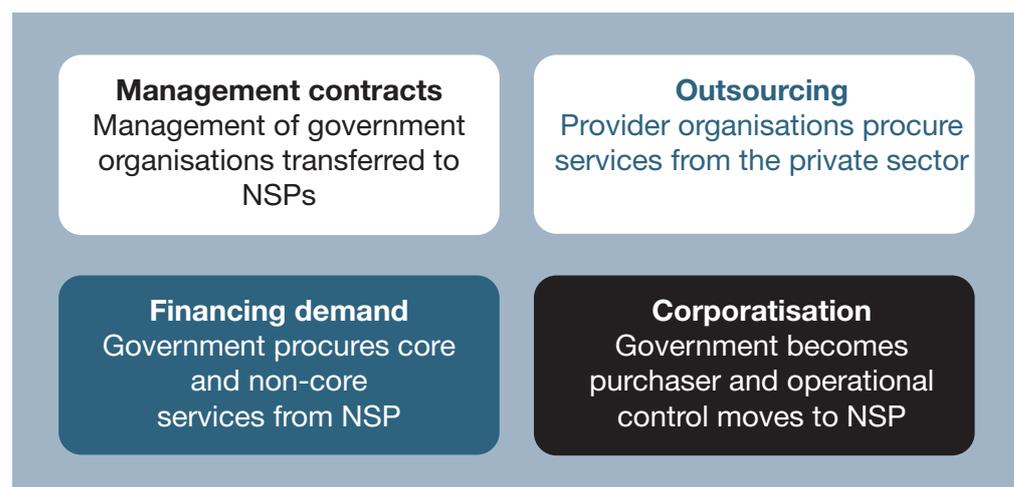
5.5 The way forward

There are four main options for future partnerships.

1. Abolish the idea of partnerships and banish all NSPs.
2. Continue the status quo, recognising the existence of NSPs but having little contact with them.

country context. However, what is clear is that fiscal constraints, the growing cost of providing quality education and the poor performance in educational achievement are propelling the force of the partnership wave. Many developing country governments are realising that they cannot finance their current service provision adequately, let alone afford to expand provision in light of the MDGs, particularly with the growing dissatisfaction about standards in schools. Thus a variety of NSPs are needed to increase PPPs in the education sector. This participation can be manifest through a variety of forms and at different extremes of intervention as shown in box 5 below.

Box 5.2: Four approaches to partnership



3. Consider greater public–private engagement and undertake evidence-based research.
4. Provide financial and knowledge-based support to both the public and the private sectors to work towards a framework for increased partnership.

The last two options support a proactive engagement policy, but this will require the government and/or lending agencies to agree a coherent policy position on PPPs and a way forward for monitoring the NSPs’ contribution in terms of legislation, finance, standards and equity concerns.

There is no one best practice model for a successful PPP, as it will depend strongly on

NSPs, comprising both members of civil society and private sector organisations, have a particularly important role to play in various aspects of pro-poor policy change. First, they can ensure that the voices of different interest groups are brought into wider societal processes; second, they can assist in demanding effective and inclusive government and holding the government to account for protecting and promoting the rights of its citizens; and third, with the main focus of this section, they can assist in the provision of basic services. Increasing the involvement of NSPs in all three of these areas will demand a change in the structure, governance, role, nature and status of many of the providers, who have often only focused on the first two

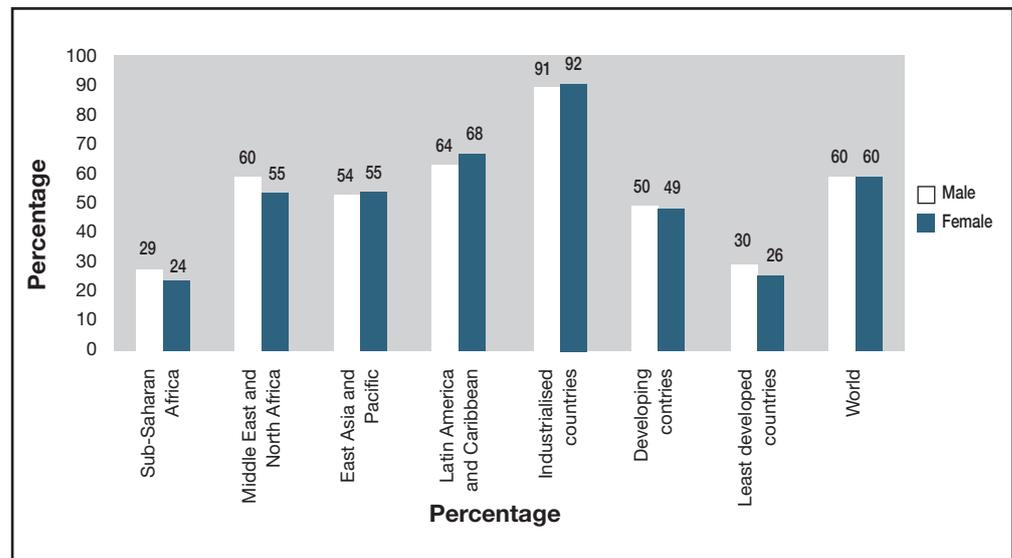
“ *The challenge to attain universal basic education remains largest in Sub-Saharan Africa* ”

aspects and have not seen their role as long-term providers of basic services, believing this to be the sole responsibility of government. However, often NSPs are working in difficult environments where state capacity is so weak that the NSPs are the most important channel for the delivery and monitoring of services. So this role of NSPs as service providers is

programmes indicate that better use of additional resources is as much a challenge as mobilising funding.

The challenge to attain universal basic education remains largest in Sub-Saharan Africa, as can be seen from chart 2 below, outlining secondary school net enrolment rates for different regions of the world.

Chart 2: secondary net enrolment rates by region, 2000–04



Source: Data taken from UNICEF (2005), p. 117

something that needs further consideration among various stakeholders so that long-term provision of basic services can be assured in a sustainable manner.

There is no definitive answer to the role of NSPs, and the debate will continue to rage. However, evidence from Clemens et al. (2005) regarding attainment of the education MDGs provides a robust argument in support of the need for partnership. They state that history clearly indicates that the growth of public schooling proceeds very slowly and inequitably. Based on data from 90 countries, increasing enrolment from 50% to 90% required on average 58 years and there are as yet no recorded examples of countries climbing from 80% to 95% enrolment in 15 years, as would be needed for countries to achieve the EFA goals. Further, the experiences of large-scale sector investment

Exploring the role that PPPs could play in bridging this access gap thus seems critical as one important policy consideration.

6. Key findings and lessons learned

“ While enrolment rates have increased dramatically, it has not been possible to measure whether RESSP or the SWAp have had a direct impact upon children’s levels of numeracy and literacy that are essential for poverty reduction. ”

This section starts by looking at the evidence of the CfBT experience in Rwanda under the RESSP and then moves into identifying some issues and lessons that can possibly be applied elsewhere. The extrapolated evidence and suggested lessons are gathered together under the three themes of policy and planning, education sector finance, and partnership with the non-state sector. Before starting, it is important to reiterate two things: first, that overarching our analysis is the focus on the role that education plays in poverty reduction and economic growth; and second, that there were four factors particular to the Rwanda context, namely: (i) it was in a post-conflict situation; (ii) the education system was being re-established at a tremendous pace; (iii) the donor support was considerable; and (iv) NSPs were already playing a substantial role in provision of schooling.

6.1 Policy and planning

6.1.1 Key findings drawn from the Rwanda education reform process

PRSP and education linkage: Education is a key sector within the Rwandan PRSP, and from an initial situation in which the link between education and poverty reduction was merely treated as a given, there has been improvement resulting in policy development that places a specific focus on equity and pro-poor issues.

However two key lessons were learned under the RESSP: first, that there is a very necessary role for an external team to assist the government in the initial formulation of the ESP; and second, that there is then even more work involved in building the capacity necessary for interpreting and implementing the strategic plan that was then constructed from this original policy document.

Decentralisation, civil service reform and their impact on capacity: Progress nationally on decentralisation has acted as a catalyst in realigning the central government’s mandate to one of having responsibility for policy, national planning,

standards and monitoring rather than one of direct service provision. However, these changes have significantly reduced central MINEDUC personnel to one fifth of the size that it was during RESSP. These reforms also impacted on other sectors, but as MINEDUC was well ahead of other ministries in putting into place its strategic planning and review process it is likely (although evidence would need to be sought to confirm this) that MINEDUC is more likely to have coping strategies to overcome the constraints.

Integration of partners: Since 2000 MINEDUC’s ability to lead the policy dialogue and manage monitoring of sectoral performance has significantly improved to the extent that from 2006 the education sector will be significantly assisted through an SBS mechanism. Yet again, RESSP provided some valuable lessons. At the outset, DFID led the introduction of the SWAp approach but not all donors were in favour of such an approach and throughout different procedures continued to be used by the development banks and bilateral agencies. This variation and the pressure it placed on the GoR capacity was further exacerbated by the fact that the donors were also linking their dialogue with MINEDUC to their agendas regarding poverty reduction and the PRSP and MTEF processes.

Sub-sector equivalence: Although pressure was applied by the development partners throughout the RESSP, not only was financing skewed in favour of the higher education sub-sector but this sub-sector was perhaps perceived as existing outside the purview of MINEDUC. By contrast, the technical and vocational education and training sub-sector was largely unchampioned by any donor partner and received a low priority in the overall ESSP.

Access and quality: While enrolment rates have increased dramatically, it has not

“ GoR has consistently shown its commitment to education with a leap in total spending on education as a share of the domestic budget from 14.5% to 25% between 1996 and 2001 ”

been possible to measure whether RESSP or the SWAp have had a direct impact upon children's levels of numeracy and literacy that are essential for poverty reduction. This is understandable given that RESSP did not have a specific focus on those factors that are most likely to affect learning outcomes, nor did it engage in any extensive analysis of student learning and its local constraints and facilitators.

6.1.2 Lessons learned

A wider partnership: Although the key partnership in the development of an education sector is between the MoE and its development partners, other public sector partnerships also need to be strengthened. These partnerships include relationships that range between the MoE and the other central ministries such as Finance, Planning and Local Government down to the central MoE and the decentralised authorities at the provincial and District levels.

Sector-wide focus: One of the main aims of ESSPs is to give all stakeholders a roadmap of the direction of the education sector and this strategic roadmap will include priorities from all the sub-sectors. However, in many instances given the MDG and EFA targets, development partners are focusing on primary education and this means that the primary sub-sector priorities dominate to the detriment of the post-primary and the early childhood agendas.

Post-primary education: This expansion in the numbers of those completing primary education and the growing awareness of the potential value to the country of an expanding population with a broad range of skills and knowledge beyond what primary education can offer is requiring the development of a broader post-primary strategy, taking into account issues of access and of relevance. Even with the planned expansion of 'academic' secondary education there will not be places for all those who complete primary school. Thus it is critical for ESSPs to consider both a degree of

vocationalisation in general secondary education and a broadening of what is covered in the vocational institutions so that more general upgrading of knowledge and skills is included.

Greater emphasis on learning outcomes: Programmes to improve sector management and governance need to be based on sound politics and institutional analyses that take into account the incentives faced by officials and teachers to improve the quality of instruction and learning outcomes. Further, analytic, assessment and research activities need to be oriented to informing key management and policy issues and those most directly concerned with influencing learning outcomes, headteachers and teachers, seen as partners and as a focus of activities from an early stage.

6.2 Education sector finance

6.2.1 Key findings drawn from the Rwanda education reform process

Different stages of development: The budgetary situation has gone through three very different stages over a brief time period. The first stage involved the situation existing before 2001 in which there was no medium-term forward budgeting but merely a process in which the recurrent budget was increased incrementally each year. Then the MTEF was introduced in which the budget was centrally based on programmatic outputs over three years and RESSP provided training to MINEDUC and its decentralised structures. The current stage is one where 40% of the funding has been devolved from the centre to the Districts, a proportion that is likely to increase yet further as Districts have the mandate for service delivery.

Commitment: GoR has consistently shown its commitment to education with a leap in total spending on education as a share of the domestic budget from 14.5% to 25% between 1996 and 2001 and the present situation in which the recurrent budget has continued growing by 18% and 14% in the past two years

“ Any delay in the aid flows has a concomitant impact on service delivery right down to the school level. ”

respectively. The GoR has also shown tremendous commitment to decentralisation but the further down the system goes to the District level the harder it becomes not only to deconcentrate the budget so that Districts have administrative and financial authority but also for the central ministries to monitor and evaluate education expenditure against learning outcomes.

Budget allocation and capacity: Although it has taken time to reallocate the higher education budget, the GoR budget shares are now closer to the recommended EFA target allocations of pre-primary 0–5%, primary 50%, secondary 20–25%, higher 15–20% and non-formal 0–5%. But even as the budget has become less skewed, the GoR still struggles to disburse the full allocations of its recurrent and capital budgets.

Legal and regulatory reform: The GoR enacted some far-reaching and innovative initiatives in the higher education sub-sector during the period of RESSP, most significantly with the establishment of the SFAR, which is responsible for the disbursement of loans awarded on the basis of specific criteria (including gender, means, performance and subject selection), and the NCHE, which leads on decision making on matters of policy, strategy and funding.

Lack of resources: The GoR is hampered from accessing sufficient resources to support its education reforms on three accounts: first, by the fact that it cannot collect additional tax revenues given the populace's dependence on agriculture; second, by the macroeconomic targets for the fiscal deficit that have been set under the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility; and third, by the unavailability of additional donor resources in grant form.

6.2.2 Lessons learned

Holistic approach: On the macro front, progress on reforming financial systems in the education system cannot be implemented in a vacuum but rather it

must be recognised as a component of public finance management reforms at the national level. Similarly on the sectoral front, all the sub-sectors need to be aligned so that one sub-sector's budget and strategy does not cause misalignment in the overall sectoral budget allocations.

Formula funding: Although RESSP claimed many achievements in the higher education sub-sector, it illustrated how difficult it is to introduce a formula funding system for higher education that can both recognise the differences in costs between courses and allocate a more equitable unit cost per student for different categories of courses.

Predictability of aid flows: Rwanda, with its heavy reliance on donors to support its education system, provides a stark example of the challenge facing such governments as a result of this aid being disbursed in an unpredictable fashion. Any delay in the aid flows has a concomitant impact on service delivery right down to the school level.

Fee-free secondary education: Rwanda has the advantage of a large non-state education sector serving the post-primary catchments, but the problems for the GoR are similar to other developing countries in dealing with the post-primary bulge. If fee-free is introduced in lower secondary education what are the implications for the poor and what will be the impact on the existing non-state sector?

Absorptive capacity: The case study of Rwanda has illustrated how many MoEs struggle to disburse their budgets on account of weak procedures, capacity constraints and the slow pace of reform. In the instance of Rwanda a multi-sector capacity building fund has been established to assist in overcoming some of these financial management constraints.

“ As the pressure of the bulge of students that entered primary school under the EFA initiatives enter into the various post-primary streams, governments are increasingly faced by a paucity of financial and human resources to meet this bulge. ”

6.3 Partnership with the non-state sector

6.3.1 Key findings drawn from the Rwanda education reform process

Large non-state education sector: The non-state sector and households make considerable contributions to education. Approximately 40% of secondary schools are fully private and the GoR subsidises some students to attend these schools while parents contribute to necessities such as textbooks and uniforms as well as their ‘voluntary’ contributions to teacher’s salaries and top-up costs.

Proactive partnership: Compared to many other countries, the GoR has been proactive in recognising and using the services of NSPs for the public good. This partnership is evidenced particularly by the fact that data is collected and analysed for non-state and state providers alike and there is ongoing dialogue between the GoR and the NSPs through the latter’s professional associations; and, within the libre subsidié community, there is a form of self-regulation.

Access, quality, equity and finance: The non-state education sector in Rwanda exemplified issues and challenges across these four dimensions that are common to the debate surrounding PPPs in other countries. From the perspective of access, there is the critical issue of variety in household ability to pay for education. From the quality perspective, there is the pronounced difference in state contributions for supporting inputs to the different types of schools to the lack of assessment systems to monitor the quality of performance by NSPs. From the equity perspective there is the difference across regions in the social context and market for private sector schooling, while from the finance perspective there are challenges such as the small size of institutions, the wide range of course offerings that ensure low enrolments and the lack of access to credit from the local banking sector for many NSPs.

6.3.2 Lessons learned

To partner or not: As the pressure of the

bulge of students that entered primary school under the EFA initiatives enter into the various post-primary streams, governments are increasingly faced by a paucity of financial and human resources to meet this bulge. Possible sources for bridging the gap invariably include the non-state sector that is understood to include the continuum from CBOs, NGOs, and FBOs to workers and the business sector. For a variety of reasons, Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced a considerable growth in its non-state provision, but this expectation poses some issues, most critically the issue as to what the limits of affordability are with regard to NSP participation given the fees they must charge. In other words, is there a cap placed on effectiveness by the NSP due to the fact that many families will be excluded by poverty from participation in full-cost non-state schools?

If partner: If the decision is to involve partnership with the non-state sector on behalf of the public good, then there are a number of initiatives that need to be enacted, including:

1. encouraging the development of NSP associations not for the purpose of lobbying for the ‘haves’ but for using as a consultative process for governance;
2. recognising the NSPs in planning the expansion of the post-primary sector by including their needs and capacity in planning projections;
3. establishing clear legal frameworks for NSPs that assist in eliminating the disconnect between theory and practice in the legal and regulatory framework;
4. introducing incentives for the NSPs that include the provision of accessible registration and licensing procedures and tax exemption status for encouraging non-profit operators;
5. considering the establishment of parastatal agencies that can assist the government in registering and

“
‘There is no point in saying that the government should be in the driving seat if it does not know how to drive. Teach it how to drive first.’”

licensing providers, monitoring standards and directing subsidies.

Success and failure factors: Detailed analysis of the non-state sector carried out under RESSP highlighted both the key factors for successful partnership and the main obstacles. For success, there are two main factors: the need for a senior public sector champion for the partnership arrangement, and the need to agree on shared objectives for the partnership based on meeting the targets of the ESSP and the PRSP. In the case of Rwanda these two factors were probably absent.

Conversely, three obstacles to partnership were present: (i) the political will and public support for greater participation by the NSPs (participation is obviously happening but it is on an ad hoc basis); (ii) the lack of any agreement on key performance targets either for pro-poor access or for measuring impact on educational outcomes; and (iii) the lack of a forum for negotiating and reaching agreement between the state and the NSPs.

7. Conclusion

“*‘There is no point in saying that the government should be in the driving seat if it does not know how to drive. Teach it how to drive first.’*”

Chapter 6 summarised some of the lessons learned from the challenges that CfBT faced during the implementation of the RESSP. The aim of this concluding chapter is to identify what advice can be provided to developing countries and their development partners in approaching future investment in the education sector.

7.1 Summary of the challenges

Table 5 below summarises the challenges that were identified under the three headings.

The conflict in Rwanda had further diminished already limited capacity, destroyed institutions and broken down social and family networks. Essentially, problems and opportunities should drive decisions about which options to pursue rather than starting with the interesting solution and then looking for the problem to apply them to. However, it is perhaps possible to collect these disparate challenges into seven main constraint categories that faced the RESSP team, particularly at the outset and then through differing degrees throughout the project.

Table 7.1: Summary of the challenges

Policy and planning	Finance	Partnership with non-state
Lack of human resource capacity and capability	Insufficient financial resources	Lack of public sector capacity and capability to implement partnership
Difficulty of sharing ownership of the change process	Lack of predictability in aid flows	Inability of donor funding mechanisms to support the non-state sector
Need for a holistic approach across all sub-sectors	Balanced sub-sectoral allocation of financial resources in light of weak public financial management systems	Weak and ineffective legal and regulatory frameworks
Lack of focus on learning outcomes	Impact of decentralisation on budgetary processes (preparation, execution, monitoring and evaluation)	Poverty of households affecting ability to pay fees
Introduction of SWAs and DBS placing pressure on new roles and responsibilities for all actors	Fiscal implications of introducing fee-free education	NSPs' inability to access capital for investment in infrastructure
Changes in the role of project managers	Capacity of the system to absorb increased donor funding	Lack of coordination among the NSPs to respond

Making sense of this multitude of challenges – understanding them better, and how they relate to one another – and providing possible options is no simple matter in any context, but in countries emerging from conflict there are additional factors to take into consideration.

- Technical and managerial skills of public officials
- Administrative constraints due to the lack of adequate infrastructure and equipment
- Capacity constraints exacerbated by the

“ Including representatives from all interest groups within the education sector is likely to widen ownership and increase the probability of future success of the reform process. ”

process of decentralisation

- Inadequate and weak public financial management systems
- Uncoordinated and unharmonised donor interventions
- Social and cultural factors
- Deficiencies in institutions and policy processes

Before offering the concluding recommendations for improvement in other education reform environments by drawing on lessons learned in the context of the Rwandan education system, it is important to stress how much significant progress has and is continuously being made in Rwanda. It is thus critical here to mention some positive initiatives that have been implemented or are being planned by the GoR:

- the strength of the ongoing system-wide commitment to and focus on achieving the goals of the PRSP and the ESSP;
- the mechanisms established to link and track education financial flows and expenditures, despite their technical difficulties;
- the integrated strategic planning and budgeting processes now in place, which represent a well conceived response to the challenge of coordinating policy and budget planning;
- the establishment of mechanisms across central institutions, which is improving coordination;
- the sector review process, which offers a robust vehicle through which government, stakeholders and donors can interact constructively;
- the impressive scope of efforts to harmonise donor budget support and interactions with the GoR.

7.2 Recommendations for future interventions

As has been noted in the discussion of SWAPs, no two SWAPs are alike, and the same is true more generally of national approaches to education reform. While acknowledging that many of the findings in this

study are to a greater or lesser extent context specific, more generalised recommendations for the way forward in any such context emerge. Based on the lessons learned in Rwanda under the RESSP, there are eight key policy, finance and partnership recommendations that have implications for national education reform in other environments.

Recommendation 1: *Use the joint review process (or other equivalent meetings whenever appropriate) to engage a broad range of non-central ministry stakeholders in the education reform process, including the teachers, parents and learners.*

Including representatives from all interest groups within the education sector is likely to widen ownership and increase the probability of future success of the reform process. It should also enable any future reforms to be both more holistic and more effective in their final outcomes as many different viewpoints will be considered and debated during the development of policies and implementation strategies rather than a centralised approach being taken, potentially by policymakers who have little or no recent experience of teaching. Such reviews also provide the opportunity for central strategic and financial planners, whose focus is on the efficient use of the limited funds, to influence and be influenced by those whose principal concern is improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Recommendation 2: *Ensure that capacity building addresses needs at all levels from central government to decentralised government to schools, including provision for school level education managers to track learning outcomes across different income and social groups.*

Much of the recent donor-funded support for capacity building has focused on central level ministries, with very little support to decentralised education offices and practically no support to headteachers, teachers and schools. The latter is critical for successful reforms and sustained change to be seen in the teaching and learning practices taking place in the classroom. This, and only this, will be the key measure of whether or not future

“ A SWAp, where there is strong government ownership, will enable a more holistic development of the education sector and will link this more closely to the needs of national socio-economic development and poverty reduction. ”

reforms in the education sector will be seen to have impacted the quality of learning in the classroom, enabling more children to complete a full cycle of primary education that equips them with relevant life skills for their future.

Recommendation 3: *Ensure harmony of support across the different sub-sectors by pursuing a SWAp and enabling governments to provide particular technical and financial support for those areas that are traditionally undersupported.*

As has been noted, without a SWAp some sub-sectors such as primary education due to donor priority, or higher education due to political connectedness, receive a large amount of technical and financial support, while others areas such as early childhood, non-formal and technical education hardly receive any support. This will inevitably lead to the unbalanced development of the education sector which will not be sustainable in the long run. A SWAp, where there is strong government ownership, will enable a more holistic development of the education sector and will link this more closely to the needs of national socio-economic development and poverty reduction.

Recommendation 4: *Fund research to assess the impact of decentralised management and deconcentrated budgets on education reform and service delivery at the level of the classroom.*

The theoretical advantages of decentralisation and deconcentration are mentioned regularly across Africa. Some research has been undertaken examining whether money is reaching schools, particularly in relation to capitation grants in Uganda and Rwanda. However, this is often just a financial tracking audit looking at whether money has arrived at local level, rather than considering how this money is being spent by districts, headteachers and schools, and whether this is having an impact on both access to education by marginalised groups, and to the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. This needs to happen so that where bottlenecks are identified, appropriate capacity building interventions or system-wide reforms can be rapidly implemented.

Recommendation 5: *Ensure that aid intervention is fit for purpose by providing a flexible mix of capacity building for all educational and administrative tiers with financial and technical support to actual implementation at the institutional level.*

Increased recurrent budget support is needed to help pay for teacher salaries, teacher training and other quality inputs, and capacity building is also critical. However, merely providing additional funding for more teachers and places in teacher training colleges without ensuring that teachers and teacher trainers are better equipped for their job will not guarantee that Africa reaches the UPE target and that children actually complete their schooling without repeating or dropping out. Thus a balance of funding (both national and external, and targeted in an appropriate way towards the different sub-sectors) is needed to provide the necessary resources for recurrent funding as well as resources for building the capacity of teachers and for reforming where necessary the curriculum and approaches used in teacher training colleges and schools. While there is much pressure both internationally and from civil society to increase aid rapidly and target it on recurrent costs (i.e. budget support) it is critical that any aid also supports capacity development. De Renzio (2005, p. 2) rightly concludes that: ‘the key strategy is to combine the urgent response needed in the short-term with capacity-building for the longer term...’

To paraphrase the senior Rwandan official quoted in chapter 3, the car is not much use unless the government knows how to drive it. The cash alone, without the capacity to use it to make a real change in the classroom, will not overcome the enormous challenges ahead if we are to make a quality education available to all African children by 2015.

Recommendation 6: *Use a mix of aid modalities and systems, ranging from budget support to discrete project support, with the appropriate mix based on the local capacity, the state of existing financial systems and the policy environment of the particular country.*

There will never be an ideal one-size-fits-all model that can produce the most efficient and

“ a variety of support should be provided so that donors can see that their aid is in a diverse portfolio, with low risk, higher cost projects and high risk, lower cost budget support. ”

effective form of financing the education sector in all countries. Each country is diverse in terms of its development, policy environment, political and human rights situation, level of achievement toward the MDGs, and obviously in regard to the state of its financial systems. Thus a variety of support should be provided so that donors can see that their aid is in a diverse portfolio, with low risk, higher cost projects and high risk, lower cost budget support. If this aid is split between central government, local government, and non-state sector, then the returns to aid are more likely to be higher in the short term. In the longer term, as different aid modalities are seen to be more or less effective in a given country, then the portfolio can be redistributed so that the most effective aid modalities are those through which the majority of aid is flowing. Decisions as to which modality will be determined on a country-to-country basis based on the national and sectoral policy environment, strength of capacity and dependence on aid.

Recommendation 7: Consider a greater role for the NSPs as service and implementation agents, particularly for delivery of early childhood and post-basic education and training.

Much of the focus in Africa regarding NSPs has been on secondary and higher education level. However, given the low access to early childhood education, and the high costs and low quality of some of the alternative streams to academic secondary schooling (i.e. post-basic vocational and technical training), it is important to consider a prominent role for the NSPs in these early childhood and alternative environments.

Recommendation 8: Identify public sector and donor champions to support building the public-private partnership process from the start and to strengthen the capacity of the NSPs to support the expansion of education provision.

There is still a lot of distrust among both governments and donors in many African countries about the role of the non-state sector, particularly when it involves private sector providers. The non-state sector is thus often left to run on its own with little

government support or intervention even though it is essential to the expansion of education provision and the achievement of the MDGs. Just as this study is promoting following a sector-wide approach, so it is also proposing the importance of a wide range of state and non-state actors working together in partnership to achieve the MDGs for education. For this to be effective, a PPP coordination office is needed within the MoE to develop stronger relations between the government and NSPs, and donors need to be encouraged to support both this office and the work of the private education associations equally in terms of capacity building, policy and strategy development in the area of partnership.

Linked into this recommendation, there is a need for support to be provided directly to NSPs so that partnership can be effective in delivering the provision of quality education services. This may involve government working with the banking sector to help provide credit to the non-state sector for building and startup costs of schools. It will also involve closer collaboration between government and NSPs regarding regulation and inspection services to ensure that non-state provision of education reaches certain minimum standards.

7.3 Concluding remarks

Considerable progress is still required in order to address the myriad challenges to access, quality, equity and finance. In order for the education MDGs to be achieved, a wide range of stakeholders need to be involved in the policy and strategy development process, supported in their efforts by a comprehensive capacity building initiative at all levels of the system from central to district to school level and acknowledging the critical role of the non-state sector in partnering with government to provide services and expand overall provision. In addition, to ensure that a sustainable education system is developed, a SWAp with clear national ownership seems to be the most balanced way forward. Clearly, additional financing is needed to provide all of this support, yet how this funding is provided (which aid modality), what it is provided for (operational costs versus capacity building)

“ *When this collective partnership is dynamic, evolving, flexible, trusting and comprehensive, it is a powerful instrument for successful reform.* ”

and what level of the system it is provided to (central, district or school) will be critical to how effective the overall education reform will be.

A significant, if predictable, outcome of the study is that partnership is key to successful national education reform. What the study has shown, however, is that such partnership needs to be broader, more far reaching, than it has been previously. There needs to be partnership within the education system between the different sub-sectors, partnership between the different administrative levels from the central ministry to the school, partnership between government, the non-state sector and the aid providers, and partnership between organisations such as CfBT Education Trust, which can bring together multi-country education sector reform experience and the expertise to strengthen capacity at all levels, and each of the other players in the education system. When this collective partnership is dynamic, evolving, flexible, trusting and comprehensive, it is a powerful instrument for successful reform.

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