

It is generally recognized that there is inadequate educational research in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is also generally recognized that politicians, policy makers and decision makers pay little attention to the research work that has been done. On the other hand, researchers may pay little attention to the real needs or development goals of their communities and societies, paying more attention to the agendas set by international publications. This state of affairs is understandable when the promotion of academics is linked to publication in international journals rather than its effect in the education systems of their own countries.

In addition to the requirement to publish or perish, much research is funded by donors. This again skews the focus as well as the objectives of research. The research agendas may be heavily influenced, and even established, by the donor agencies.

The need to link research to developmental needs and goals on the one hand, and the need for politicians, policy makers and decision makers to commission as well as to utilize research work on the other hand, are of critical importance to development and progress. This is particularly true in the face of the rapid globalization of economies, the more frequent movement of people, and the rapid cultural interchanges taking place today.

Education is recognized as the essential foundation for modern development. However, education cannot play this role unless it is of the highest quality possible, and unless it is relevant to the development path society has decided upon. Qualitative research can play a critically important role in improving the quality and relevance of research on education. Within this context, governments need to invest judiciously in research. Researchers also need to ensure that their work can bring about higher levels of development.

Finally there is need to build bridges between researchers and policy makers by making research work available and accessible to decision makers, by including development goals as equally legitimate goals for researchers, by making more opportunities and resources available to researchers, and by developing platforms for dialogue between research and development. This Newsletter covers a few aspects of educational research and is intended as the beginning of a dialogue aimed at bridging the gulf between educational researchers and educational decision makers.

The State of Educational Research in Sub Saharan Africa

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1. Quantity and Quality

A research culture is just beginning in many African countries. Research output in Africa is lopsided even when compared to other developing countries [ESAURP¹, 1995:21]. The Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Program [ESAURP] has further reported that Africa's research output in terms of publications as gauged by the location of authors in the Scientific Citation Index (SCI) demonstrates a marginal impact. To make things worse, the research scene in Sub Saharan Africa was then dominated by three countries; Nigeria, Kenya and the Sudan where the three account for almost 70 percent of the Region's scientific publications [P.23]. The situation has now changed with the entry of South Africa.

By taking the case of East and South African Studies, Mwiria (1996:1-22) has identified five types of educational research conducted in Africa. These are:

- disciplinary research,
- documentary/bibliographical and statistical,
- evaluative,
- policy research and
- research on research.

The latter which is not as common as the rest has always been the interest of university researchers. According to Mwiria, IDRC had commissioned research on the climate of educational research, types of research, and research dissemination.

Referring to research methodology, Mwiria (1996:9) has asserted that it is dominated by historical, case study and commentary analysis types. "At the level of analysis, only a small proportion of researchers use the quantitative approach in data analysis; and much of the writing on education in Eastern and Southern Africa, consists mainly of broad discursive commentaries", he argued.

Namuddu (1991:53) has strongly contended that much of the research generated in areas of Eastern and Southern Africa is of relatively poor quality. She attributed this poor quality to poor methodological teaching both in the conduct of the research; and in

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¹ *Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Program.*

the poor presentation of the data collected. The major contributing factors in the African education's context are: poor teaching of research methodology courses in the graduate programs; researchers' limited exposure to relevant literature and lack of relevant research methodology. Lack of adequate opportunities for peer reviews of research findings and commercialization of research are also mentioned as additional factors in many but not all African countries.

A case study of educational research in Ethiopia has also shown that most published journal articles are characterized by descriptive studies instead of analytical ones and are dominated by surveys and use of secondary sources of data [Amare , 2000:19-48]. The major reasons were lack of adequate funding and other required resources such as equipment and facilities.

ESAURP [1995] has reviewed the sub-region's state of research and has concluded that educational research was constrained by input factors, such as capacity (scientific personnel and budget), poor social demand of educational research and inadequate structures.

2. Problems of Educational Research

All African countries suffer from a shortage of skilled research personnel. It was estimated in the ESAURP report that each African country (on the average) has less than 10,000 persons with scientific and technical training. This figure suggests that the concentration of Africa's scientific personnel is six times lower than that of other developing countries [ESAURP, 1995:19]. It is also 35 times lower than the concentration of scientific and technical personnel in Europe and 90 times lower than the concentration in North America.

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa's Report [ADEA, 1998] on interfacing educational research with policy in Africa has demonstrated that there is a social distance between researchers and policy makers. This conclusion was reached when the Education Policy Research in Africa Commission was

conducted in 1998 in Cape Town, South Africa sponsored by ADEA², ERNESA³ and ERNWACA⁴.

This Commission was particularly concerned with the interaction of policy with research. Two questions were prominent: "To what extent do policy-makers use information from research?" "Are research results presented in a way that are policy oriented"? The answer to these questions led to a debate by both stakeholders, i.e. policy makers and researchers. While the importance of research to inform education policy was acknowledged by both researchers and policy makers, the following concerns were also expressed [ADEA, 1998]:

- Policy formulation remains a top-down rather than bottom-up process and does not allow for the involvement of researchers and other stakeholders
- Policy research remains scant and policy research capacities weak
- Inhibiting factors--such as researchers' career concerns--may lead to "perverted" research which may fail to thoroughly interrogate the policy environment
- In many countries there is a history of conflict between universities and governments which affects the free flow of policy ideas
- Undemocratic societies and poor organizational structures can frustrate researchers and corrupt their relationship with policy authorities, thereby preventing effective dissemination of research results to policy makers.

Concerning researchers, it was pointed out that:

- Researchers tend to disaggregate problems instead of examining them from a holistic point of view, whereas policy makers tend to view things from a larger socio-political point of view
- Researchers tend to be critical of policy without proposing viable solutions
- Researchers do not base their research on dialogue with policy makers

² Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

³ Eastern and Southern Africa Educational Research Network.

⁴ Western and Central Africa Educational Research Network.

- Recommendations emanating from research are not clearly articulated into appropriate and viable roles for government and other stakeholders
- Research is not followed up by researchers.

Concerning policy makers, participants in the specific panel pointed out that:

- Planning and research units in the ministries lack capacities and resources
- Policy makers are not appreciative of research efforts
- Policy makers often have a crisis approach and call upon researchers when things go wrong
- Policy makers use research for rubber-stamping
- Policy makers are not willing to participate in the management of research
- Policy makers don't read (often long) research reports.

A case study in Kenya has also shown that aside from influencing public opinion much of the educational research in Kenya had little impact on guiding educational decision-making [SERI⁵, 1996:13]

In a Conference conducted by the Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia on the theme, "Current Issues of Educational Research", Habtamu (2000:1-18) and Degarege (2000:19-42) have contended that there is a loose link between educational research and policy or decision making in the country. They attributed this state of affairs to a mutual mistrust of researchers and public officials.

In the same Conference, Amare [2000:44] has asserted that educational researchers in Ethiopia have neglected the political dimension of educational research. They have covered the quality and efficiency aspects of education in research but ignored the equity and access aspects, the major concerns of the Ethiopian Government.

3. Institutional Structures

Educational research structures are important input factors contributing to the quality and quantity of educational research. These structures could be national and regional or sub-regional.

By quoting Namuddu and Tapsoba (1991) and Chinapah (1990), Mwiria (1996:4-5) has identified different types of institutions where research is carried out in Eastern Africa. These are:

- (1) academic institutions including national universities and research departments
- (2) research and evaluation units located in ministries of education (MoE)
- (3) international organizations and non governmental organizations(NGO)
- (4) independent research and private research centers
- (5) consulting firms.

Much educational research in Africa is conducted in academic institutions. This is so because research is one of the missions of universities. In addition, academic institutions have specialized scientific and technical personnel. They also have access to foreign sources of funding, such as research cooperation funded by SIDA/SAREC, NORAD, NUFU, USAID, etc.

The Ministry of Education research and evaluation units include planning units, curriculum design units, and national examination units. They are more concerned with the collection of data that is relevant to their specific activities. The quality of their research is, however, constrained by their limited capacity for scientific research. They may not have specialized researchers.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and international organizations, --such as UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), SIDA, SAREC, IDRC, all commission research mainly on projects with development objectives.

Independent researchers involve individuals who can secure funds on an individual basis or as consultants.

Consulting firms conduct research by contracting projects either from donors or from their respective governments. Such firms are new to the African scene and their internal capacity is limited.

Sibry Tapsoba, formerly the Director of the Regional Office of the International Development Research Center(IDRC) for West and Central Africa and Head of the ADEA Working Group on

⁵ *Southern Educational Research Initiative*

Education Research and Policy Analysis (WGER/PA), has made an analysis of research networks in Africa. He discusses the traditional networks, such as, AUPELF-UREF⁶ which was intended to establish contact between researchers in Francophone countries by organizing conferences and publishing books and newsletters. Another example of the traditional network was NEIDA, the UNESCO Network of Educational Innovation for Development in Africa.

Permanent regional networks, such as, ERNWACA, ERNESA, NOPRAG⁷ and AAU⁸ are mainly responsible for receiving grants to support research and the required management.

Since the World Conference on Higher Education which was conducted in 1998 in Paris, UNESCO/BREDA⁹ has initiated conferences on sub-regional or country basis and recommended the creation of centers of research in higher education. The National Pedagogic Resource Center for Higher Education in Ethiopia [NPRCHE) is one example. This National Center is engaged in the training of higher education instructors (who come from all universities in the country) on androgenic techniques in HE . In addition, it is involved in the conduct of educational research in the area of higher education as a follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education. The major sources of funding are the government, the universities and cooperation funding, such as, NUFU.

The African Network for Innovations in Higher Education (ANIHE) was established by UNESCO BREDA in April 2000 as an affiliate of the Global University Network for Innovations (GUINI). Although this network has a multitude of objectives that involve the follow-up of declarations, cooperation, facilitation of forums, such as, the Framework for Priority Action of the World Conference on Higher Education, its potential role in initiating, promoting and disseminating educational research in Africa can be tremendous.

The International Institute of Capacity Building for Africa (IICBA) which was inaugurated

in 1999 is another African structure with immense potentiality for educational research. This Institute has responsibilities for improving teacher education, mainly through distance education.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Importance of Networks

The permanent networks, such as, ERNESA, ESAURP, ERNWACA, ANIHE, etc, can serve as systems for exchanging and pooling experiences. When their efforts and outputs are communicated through web sites on the Internet, researchers and policy makers can access them and put them to maximum use. Educational research in Africa can take off through the use of ICT if each network creates links to different educational sources and puts it in its web site for easy access by stakeholders of educational research. National networks like that of NPRCH in Ethiopia are also institutions that have considerable potentialities to facilitate educational research on a national basis.

4.2 Priorities in Educational Research

The most important issues of educational research could be quality, equity, efficiency and access. Where conventional quality factors are known by every researcher, the issues of relevance and adaptation of information technology are areas that require more exploration. The issue of access to higher education in the era of knowledge explosion is a burning research issue. In a globalized world, external funding sources have to be explored. North-South and South-South collaborative research can enhance Africa's educational research.

4.3 Research Environment

Brain drain depletes Africa of its high caliber research and scientific personnel. More research must be done to contain the situation and with more effort the brain drain can be converted to brain-gain. It has recently been understood that, one of the reasons for the brain drain are the aspirations for a conducive research environment, --more funding and recognition by society. If African governments appreciate the problem and give value to research, they may reverse the direction of the flow of scientific personnel.

⁶ Association of Universities partly of French-Language--French speaking University Network

⁷ Northern Research Review Advisory Group

⁸ Association of African University

⁹ UNESCO Regional Office in Africa

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Globalization and Educational Research in Africa

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Globalization in the Context of Education

Globalization, which has become these days a fashionable concept, has been conceptualized differently by many people. Some perceive it, rightly or wrongly, as an all-out, exclusively market-based policy. It signifies that the economism championed by liberal philosophy; has invaded almost all sectors of human activity, including education (Ndoye, 1997: 80-81). Based on such a conceptualization of globalization as a market-based policy, one can identify three consequences on endogenous development and education in Africa:

- a) The first is the obstacles encountered by educational policies of the African continent owing to the use of the criteria of competitiveness, performance, output and

profitability imposed by the world market. Under such circumstances, the social, cultural and human goals of education will be subordinate to other criteria of an economic character.

- b) The second is privatization presented as a panacea. In this connection, the goal is to privatize everything including education. In the final analysis the State is stripped of its responsibility for determining curricula and hence for educational goals. Ndoye recognizes such a trend as dangerous for the advancement of African societies since it comes in an environment marked by the hegemony of a cultural model, a hegemony bound up with the media explosion that is

invading all areas of society. Under such circumstances it is a local model that becomes hegemonic and not the globalization of a composite model.

- c) The third is that the globalization of the economy is now creating an even wider gap between the North and the South. In this two-tier world society, it seems that, for Africa, the exclusive priority comes down to basic education. This implies that Africa is not destined to have a hand in producing fundamental knowledge and not expected to invent advanced technologies either.

Carton and Tawil (1997) see globalization in a broader context. For them, it is a set of planetary phenomena that have already affected the lives of numerous generations throughout the world. Globalization may thus be considered to be a component of the universal heritage of mankind. McGinn (1997) shares this view. To him, globalization, seen whether in terms of economic integration or of a complex of processes that link societies together, is not a new phenomenon. He specifically recognizes the creation of national educational systems first in Europe and then in the USA as the first major impact of globalization on education.

However, Carton and Tawil (1997: 20-21) try to differentiate among terms like 'universal', 'worldwide' and 'global' and their corresponding agencies.

Although the term 'universal' clearly implies a whole, it is generally applied to the realm of ideas and values. The term 'worldwide', however, applies more directly to the interconnection between various regions of the world, as in the development of world trade dating back to the sixteenth century. Finally, the term 'global' suggests the idea of an entirety, be it economic or ecological.

Churches often claimed universal messages while states have been making trade relations within an international context. On the other hand, it is argued, associating the terms globalization and corporations helps to clarify the ways in which many firms are evolving today.

Educational Research in Africa

Although some can be fundamental research, most educational research is applied research for it attempts to develop generalizations about teaching-learning processes and instructional materials. In the area of behavioral sciences educational research is usually concerned with the development and testing of theories of how students behave in an educational setting (Best and Kahn, 1999).

Like in any other research fields, educational research requires substantial funding and expertise. When we consider the African case, the primary producers and consumers of educational studies are by far the funding and technical assistance agencies. As Samoff (1997: 251) points out, "externally initiated, commissioned, and supported studies are numerous, wide-ranging, and now constitute a major portion of all research on African education." African education itself is characterized by lack of public funding: under such circumstances, public funding for educational research hardly exists. Looking overseas to fund innovation and development has therefore been the major option in Africa.

The manifestations, consequences, and problems of this conjunction of funding and research are multiple, according to Samoff (1999: 257). However, the most visible and significant of those outcomes are the following:

- insisting on a detached, clinical perspective that devalues the local role
- influencing and constraining the education and development discourse
- entrenching flawed understandings by according them official status
- seeding and fertilizing theoretical and analytical fads
- treating education primarily as technique and administration
- mystifying knowledge and power relations
- promoting orthodoxy at the expense of critical inquiry

African countries in general, African Universities in particular, have been producing a meager research output as compared to the other regions of the world. A survey of 12 Universities in the mid-80s in eastern and southern Africa also showed that, of the researches conducted in various fields, only 6 % were in education (Mohamedbhai, 1994). Among other things, the following are the major factors for the overall poor research output in African countries: brain-drain, lack of national and institutional commitment for funding, inadequate awareness of African researchers about the real development needs of their countries, African educational researchers being guided by publication objectives rather than development needs.

Generally speaking we can find two sectors involved in educational research in African countries: (a) universities and research institute staff engaged in studies that are common throughout the world, and (b) research commissioned by external funding and technical assistance agencies. The two sectors differ in their magnitude, availability of fund and degree of immediate applicability. However, what is worth mentioning is that there is little systematic interaction between the two. Each sector sometimes seems to be little aware of, or visible to, the other sector. In this connection, Samoff (1997: 259) says:

“While in some circumstances multiple studies of a particular subject may be desirable, this disjunction between the two tracks of education research in contemporary Africa is likely to reduce the quality of the resulting sector analysis, limit its national appropriation, and impede capacity-building.”

If we consider a specific case in an African country, Amare (2000), by using content analysis technique, assessed the major characteristics of 123 educational research articles published in the Ethiopian Journal of Education in the period 1967-1999. The study (Amare, 2000: 44-45) has shown that educational research in Ethiopia:

- had more coverage of tertiary and secondary school levels than primary and pre-primary ones
- addressed issues of quality and efficiency rather than of equity and access

- resorted to research techniques that imply less cost, time and effort, descriptive design with secondary sources of data being employed at the expense of experimental ones
- is characterized by enhancement of the Ethiopianization of educational researchers since the 1980s
- is characterized by poor cooperative efforts among educational researchers suggesting the small scale nature of accomplished research.

What can be concluded from the above discussion is that the state of educational research in Africa is in its infancy and is influenced by many interrelated factors.

Globalization and Educational Research in Africa: Concluding Remarks

Although globalization is an elusive term, it is important to note that it has been promoted primarily by economic agents. Economic globalization in turn is characterized by technological innovations and changes in production techniques. The extent to which African countries make an original contribution to the collective construction of a world system is dependent on the degree to which their educational systems provide the foundation for the mobilization of endogenous cultural resources (Carton and Tawil, 1997). This, in turn, is highly dependent on African educational researchers' engagement with original, high caliber and context and African specific research works. Educational researchers should examine innovative endogenous models of education and training.

African Universities, as places where knowledge is elaborated and transmitted or as centers for the development of skills and the promotion of research, should grow into an international forum for scientific meetings, exchanges and cooperation (Niang, 1997). There are a wide range of African-specific educational problems to be fully explored. As pointed out by the Director General of UNESCO in 1991, "the greatest challenge to every African University is to lead the way in exploring its immediate environment, in all its facets" (Mohamedbhai, 1994: 27).

A greater degree of collaboration among educational researchers in higher learning institutions and in donor-sponsored research sectors should be promoted. Such collaboration "promotes wide dissemination, discussion, and critique of findings, and encourages accumulation of knowledge generated by different people in different settings" (Samoff, 1999:259).

Finally, it is important to note that while globalization of the economy offers enormous possibilities, it demands, in return, significant modification in production behavior and in education and training policies. Thus, "individual countries will have to make hard choices to achieve, in a rapidly changing world economy, both international competitiveness and national welfare" (Haddad, 1997: 40).

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Globalisation and service-university research in Africa

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Higher education on a global scale seems to be in a state of rapid transition. The university is no longer alone in the production of knowledge and higher education. External stakeholders have deemed it valuable to encourage other institutions on the tertiary education level (e.g. research institutes and the junior and senior colleges) to take an interest in the same products traditionally produced by the university. More and more organisations are themselves defining their education needs and organising their own learning processes, or they are contracting tailor-made training programs from the institution which offers what is seen as the most relevant product.

Moreover, the university seems to be forced into becoming more product- and cost-conscious, as governments are reluctant to follow the increase in student attendance with financial provisions. Assurance of quality of research and education products has under these conditions, become critical challenges. With the massive increase in attendance at higher education institutions, the greatly increased economic value placed on their output, the increasingly diverse demands made on them, and with important institutional changes conferred to them, there are several academic and pragmatic reasons why a better knowledge and understanding of the actual changes taking place is vital.

Thus, studies of institutional changes at the tertiary level have to take as its point of departure the perceived problems in the environment of the university. Also understanding the character of change of the higher education sector, locally, regionally and nationally which follows, for example, from the re-naming of a number of technical, vocational and commercial colleges in order to give them university status, is crucial for interpreting the relative changes, especially the status, nature and position of the traditional academic disciplines on the one hand, and various technical or professional (vocational) disciplines on the other with respect to the so-called knowledge economy.

Research needs of Africa and African universities

Research on university development may have particular university policy significance. Studies on university development ought to make it possible for African institutions to compare their own development to other institutions in their own and other countries on the following issues:

- The implications for education and training in Africa as a geopolitical and cultural region,
- The African knowledge traditions, including African identity,
- African social, economic and technological development models,
- The positioning of African higher education and research at the international and global scales, and
- The production of an African data bank on the services African universities can offer to public and private users in their regions, nations and the Continent.

These needs could be transformed into the following objectives of an African research programme on higher education:

- To analyse and understand the nature of changing structures of higher education institutions in Africa,
- To assess and understand the potential and actual contribution of higher education to Africa's competence, socially and economically, at both local, regional and international levels,

- To analyse and understand the variety of mechanisms by which higher education contributes to its local and global environments, and
- To analyse the contribution (in terms of money, co-operation and attitudes) of the environment to higher education.

In order to reach these objective, changes in the surroundings (the context) of the university, in terms of changes in the working life's expectations to educational and research services delivered from the university. Further, the effects of changed external expectations on the university's interpretation of its own rationale (mission statement), leading to changes in its production activities and results (services to the public and industry) would need attention. Finally, the university's attempts to change itself as an organisation (strategic development) would need investigation.

Research themes

Five specific research themes are envisaged to supply the information needed to illuminate the context of African universities, and produce new knowledge about how universities react to a changed context in terms of their production, result, profile and attempts at organisational development. Common for the five themes would be to investigate the extent to which the institutions are changing within each theme as well as the direction of the change and, secondly, the variety within and between universities on each theme. The accumulated amount of knowledge gained ought to contribute significantly to a theory about universities' degree of service orientation under globalisation. The five themes are:

1. Quality of teaching and learning in African universities
2. Regional impact of the university's professional expertise
3. Governance, management and financing of the university
4. ICT in learning and organisational restructuring of the university
5. Evaluation and quality assurance in the university

The Foundation and Current State of Environmental Education Research in Africa

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1. Introduction

The first attempt to define environmental education was made in 1970 at the International Workshop on Environmental Education held in the State of Nevada, USA (Filho, 1996). However, the subject gained a special attention following the recommendations of the intergovernmental conference on environmental education convened in 1977 in Tbilisi (Blum, 1988). Since then, environmental education enjoyed a remarkable attention by researchers, politicians and lobbyists mostly in the developed countries.

Several studies have been conducted to examine the place of environmental issues in the curricula for schools and higher education institutions; and to test the awareness, attitude and behaviour of students towards contemporary environmental problems. As mentioned above, most of such studies have been made in highly industrialised parts of the world and thus concentrated mainly on environmental issues of greater concern to these countries. Problems like global warming, air pollution, acid rain, and the depletion of ozone layer were addressed more frequently. This report tries to give a short account on the foundation and current state of environmental education research in Africa.

2. An Important Call

As early as 1961, a strong suggestion was made that African schools be more responsive to their environments (Dyasi, 1980). The Ministers of Education, who participated at the Addis Ababa Conference of States on the "Development of Education in Africa", underlined that educational objectives in Africa had been closely related to those of the colonisers. African interactions with the environment had, consequently, become more exploitative than mutually supportive. The Ministers had, therefore, called upon African

educational authorities to revise and reform the content of education "so as to take account of the African environment, child development, cultural heritage and the demands of technological progress and economic development especially industrialisation" (Dyasi, 1980:25).

3. SEPA and ASSP: Foundations of Environmental Education in Africa

In response to the call, a science education development programme called the African Primary Science Programme (APSP) was initiated in 1961, which, in 1970, became the Science Education Programme for Africa (SEPA). SEPA was meant to play, among others, a leadership role in the generation of ideas, programmes, and educational approaches suited to African needs. The primary objective of SEPA projects was the development of the child's knowledge of and attitudes towards the environment in the context of social values. To expedite the attainment of this objective, teacher's guides, source books, handbooks, children's readers, and monographs had been developed (Dyasi, 1980).

The counterpart of SEPA was the African Social Studies Programme (ASSP), an institution which began operation late 1960s and aimed mainly at Africanisation of the social science curricula (Shöfthaler, 1984). The goal of the ASSP was to create "an awareness and understanding of the evolving social and physical environment as a whole, its natural, man made, cultural and spiritual resources, together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for development" (Adewole, 1979 quoted in Shöfthaler, 1984:34). Enabling students to make sound judgements and decisions about and in their environment was among the major issues advocated by ASSP.

Special consideration was also given by the ASSP to the production of local or national sourcebooks.

Parallel with the successive debates on the role, objectives and content of environmental education at international forums, both SEPA and ASSP have eventually concentrated on environmental education as their leitmotif for developing teaching materials and curricula (Shöfthaler, 1984).

4. Recent Developments

In 1979, a workshop on 'Environmental Education in the School Curriculum' was organised in Lusaka by the African Curriculum Organisation and the United Nations Environmental Programme (Shöfthaler, 1984). The workshop was believed to be instrumental for assessing the progress of environmental education in African countries and problems hindering the attainment of its goals. The country reports indicated that more than half of the participating countries had no formal programme of environmental education but only vague recommendations by central authorities to devote more attention to environmental problems in the classroom.

Another workshop was held in 1992 in Kenya to assess the progress and problems of environmental education in East Africa (Lindhe, 1992). The participating countries of the regional workshop were Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The state of environmental education both at the primary and secondary schools was assessed. The country reports in this case revealed that issues treated were highly similar. Problems related to land degradation were duly emphasised in all the countries. With the exception of Tanzania, all the countries have defined and integrated environmental education at the primary schools. Only two countries (Kenya and Zambia) have integrated environmental education into their secondary school system. It must, however, be underlined that components of environmental education were integrated, in one way or another, at all levels and in all the countries.

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The Management of Quality Assurance in Institutions of Higher Learning: A Case Study from Southern Africa

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In the following presentation, the management of quality assurance along with a review of its international practice is provided. Particular attention is given to administrative agencies or units with responsibility for the management of quality assurance, as well as participation in reviews and quality assurance programmes, the main methodologies used, the focus of quality assurance activities, and the purposes of such activities. As it will be demonstrated, primary concern is with the management of national and institutional quality assurance related to academic activities and not with non-academic or administrative service functions. We shall draw on the works of Grant Harman, "The Management of Quality Assurance: A review of International Practice" (1998:345-346) for a conceptual framework.

Administrative Responsibility

This is one element in Harman's conceptual framework. Worth mentioning is the fact that there

are a number of different models for administrative responsibility for the management of quality assurance at both national and institutional levels. At the national level, the most common pattern is for responsibility to lie with a specialized unit or agency set up by the Government with the mandate to initiate the evaluation process, develop appropriate methods for assessing academic programmes, inspire and guide institutions in quality and evaluations, and compile information on national and international experiences.

In some cases, however, responsibility for quality assurance management rests with a central agency responsible for higher education co-ordination, whether it be a Ministry of Education, or a Ministry of Higher Education. In other cases, a specialized quality assurance agency is a sub-agency of the main higher education body. One example of this is in South Africa where the Higher Education Quality Committee is a sub-agency of the Commission for Higher Education.

In a small number of countries, responsibility for aspects of quality assurance at the national level is under the control of an agency set up by higher education institutions themselves. Such examples are found in the Netherlands, Italy and New Zealand, where major quality assurance programmes are conducted by agencies set up by the peak association of universities. An understanding was developed that, in exchange for a greater degree of financial and managerial autonomy, the institutions would demonstrate that they were offering quality education.

Participation in the Programme

This constitutes a second characteristic feature of the conceptual framework. It needs to be mentioned here that an important variation between quality assurance systems is whether participation is voluntary or compulsory. Many countries began with institutional audits on a voluntary basis. Generally, however, with national reviews of disciplines participation is compulsory and even when participation in institutional reviews is voluntary, often there can be a strong moral and professional pressures operating that lead to a high rate of participation.

Methodologies

The third element in the conceptual framework relates to methodologies to be used. While the methodologies employed in various quality assurance reviews and assessments vary considerably, most depend on one or a combination of a limited number of key methodologies-- the most important of which are self studies or self evaluation, peer review by panels of experts, usually involving at least some 'external' member, the use of relevant statistical information and performance indicators, and surveys of key groups, such as, students, graduates and employers.

The overall process of review or assessment is made less threatening when emphasis is placed on self-evaluation. On the other hand, experience points to the value of combining self study with some element of external peer review, especially to ensure that the self study is taken seriously and to bring in outside perspectives. This brings us to the important characteristic of the conceptual framework which relates to the focus of quality assurance.

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At the national level the most common forms of assessment are 'horizontal' reviews of disciplines and 'vertical' evaluations of institutions. Reviews of disciplines are usually carried out by panels of experts using site visits and analysis of documentary information, much of which is usually produced by the academic units being reviewed. Some disciplinary reviews concentrate on teaching only, some on research only, while others look at both teaching and research. Generally, disciplinary reviews result in reports, with often detailed comments being made on the work within each department or faculty that has been evaluated.

Institutional reviews include academic audits of quality assurance processes and outcomes, and more extensive comprehensive reviews. The international practice of institutional academic audits has been considerably influenced by the methodology developed a decade ago in the United Kingdom. Under the approach, the focus is meta-evaluation of the mechanisms and approaches to quality assurance management, rather than an assessment of the quality achieved.

Closely associated with the focus of quality assurance are the purposes to which it is put. This feature of the conceptual framework is briefly addressed below.

Purposes

Quality assurance programs often aim to serve a variety of purposes but generally their primary purpose is a combination of public accountability, improvement and renewal. In some cases, there is a gap between the stated purposes and what the actual purposes of a programme are and, as a number of writers have pointed out, there is often tension between accountability and improvement purposes (Harman, 1996). While the agency concerned has a number of functions including both enhancing and controlling quality, to date it has given clear priority to supporting and enhancing activities.

Given the foregoing review of international practice in quality assurance (QA), the next section attempts to discuss the research case study in terms of variables addressed in the review itself.

The following discussion on (the requirement of) the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) helps to conceptualize the quality assurance exercise which constitutes the thrust of the case study.

The National Qualification Framework (NQF), the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) and Quality Assurance

Each of these arrangements is compatible with major policy aspects contained in the recent South African White Paper on Higher Education. They endorse the principle of a common framework of qualifications for all categories of the higher education system. A brief discussion of these arrangements provides the highlights of the critical elements: Firstly, a single qualifications framework has been developed for all higher education qualifications, as part of the National Qualification Framework. The framework includes intermediate exit qualification within multiple-year qualifications and consists of a ladder set of qualifications.

The concept of a National Qualification Framework originated from the labor movement and is aimed at improving human resource development, with emphasis often on dealing with inequalities in the workplace, including education and training opportunities. But there are critical views as well. Higher education institutions perceive a possible drift towards vocationalism and undesirable standardization arising from the application of prescriptive framework requirements. There are also fears that rigid frameworks could have negative impact on the necessary diversity of higher education programmes. The characteristics of the proposed frameworks, with an emphasis on outcomes are perceived to be overly reductionist and behaviourist, and generally antithetical to the goals and ethos of universities in particular.

A further key element is the emergence of a model for the country's "qualifications approval system" made possible by the National Qualifications Framework. This has not only sustained the position of universities but also of technikons (technical universities). Through its

[SAQA] recording and registration system, it has been possible to achieve a recording and listing of qualifications by all institutions. Qualifications that appear not to have prior national approval, such as, those of the "ex-homelands" universities have been sorted out on the basis of their "match" with approved counterparts. Non-matching qualifications and qualifications that are found not to have been nationally approved, are referred to the Council on Higher Education for approval as new whole qualifications.

It may be noted in passing that since the Report of the National Council of Higher Education was written, a clearer distinction is being made between qualifications, which will be registered on the National Qualification Framework strictly speaking as "qualification standards", and instructional programmes which are accredited institutional offerings leading to the award of qualifications to learners who meet or exceed the relevant registered qualification standards.

Quality assurance in South African institutions

The South African quality assurance programme has accountability as a major driving requirement but is also deliberately designed to achieve improvement and renewal. In addition, there are some benefits at both institutional and systems levels. This is evident from the discussion of the country's quality assurance below. But first a revisit and an overview of the notion of quality and quality assurance structures.

The notion of quality

The product offered at universities is a learning outcome or qualification. It is designed to satisfy or fit the customer's need, i.e. fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose. Product quality, service quality and quality assurance are addressed in the production of qualification.

Higher education policies and quality assurance

Higher education institutions are required to carry out productive institutional self-evaluation at the programme and institutional levels. The Quality Promotions Unit of the South African Universities Vice Chancellors Association

(SAUVCA), drives the process that will lead to the basis for accreditation of programmes and qualifications in the higher education systems.

The Higher Education Act (1997) provides for the co-ordination of Quality Assurance in higher education through a Higher Education Quality Committee which is established as a permanent committee of the Council for Higher Education. The Higher Education Quality Committee is registered with the South African Qualifications Association (SAQA). Its functions include:

- consultation with higher education institutions;
- the development of a formative notion of quality focused on improvement and development rather than on punitive action; and
- producing a mix of institutional self-evaluation and external independent assessment.

Accreditation

Accreditation or validation of the programme of institution is a well-known mechanism of quality assurance. It often starts with a process of self-review by the institution or unit seeking accreditation, resulting in the development of extensive documentation with details on goals, resources, facilities and internal evaluation mechanisms, as well as an assessment of achievement in relation to goals. Using pre-defined standards on whether or not the institution or the programme meets specified criteria, a visit by a team of external assessors and a final decision on programme accreditation by a state-based or national profession-controlled body often ensues.

Self-evaluation

In addition, quality assurance is undertaken either at the institutional level or programme/discipline level. The ideal process of quality assurance audit is cyclic and is repeated after a predetermined period of time. Self-evaluation for internal purposes is ideally undertaken annually and external reviews on a three to five year cycle. A self-assessment group is formed at the faculty/departmental/ programme level. The group has representatives from the academic staff, students and the administration. The group should be kept fairly small in order to be operational under an appointed chairperson.

Academic audits

An academic audit shares many of the characteristics of its close relative, the financial audit. Its prime purpose is to be found in the derivation of the term 'audit' (from the word "audio: I hear/listen") and gains expressions in a process of consultation and dialogue. The auditor seeks explanations from members of the institution on the conducting of affairs, and attempts to structure these in an orderly, systematic and thorough manner. Inconsistencies are reported and further clarification sought. A 'freeze-frame' picture slicing through the institution's operations at a moment in time is produced.

An academic audit is an intensely human endeavor and suffers from all the imperfections of such activities. Nevertheless, it is successful when it sheds light upon the complex process involved in delivering an academic programme and when it assists in identifying areas where opportunities for improvement exist.

This particular academic audit involves the process of 'triangulation' for what is termed 'illumination evaluation'. In this audit, attempts are made to 'triangulate' information by using three of five sources (statistical records, ideas from senior management, from academic staff, from administrative staff and from students) at any one time. It also seeks to employ three research instruments in the 'triangulation' process (interviews, questionnaires, and observations).

Quality evaluation

The question of quality evaluation is equally important. It entails an element of quality assurance as well as being a variation of quality evaluation. The process of quality evaluation is employed by among others, tertiary providers and qualifications developers who may require government funding, accreditation, etc. by being quality assured through a recognized quality validation process. The latter will be judged to be sufficiently robust by the country's impartial overarching regulatory authority, which is SAQA.

Concluding remarks

So far we have addressed the issue of quality assurance within the context of South Africa's institutions of higher learning.

We now conclude with summative statements on the transformed South African Higher Education System which uses an integrated approach to education and training through the NQF and SAQA policies.

The first statement relates to a new approach to programme design and delivery. Operating within the new NQF-aligned context will require a new model of Higher Education practice. For example, academics will now have to make explicit their learning outcomes and assessment criteria and offer these for public scrutiny. When designing curricula, they will be required to work in programme teams rather than as single individuals. They will also be required to view the curriculum from the learners' (and society's) perspective rather than from their own or from that of their disciplines or even faculties.

The second summative statement is aligned to Outcome-based Assessment. The outcome-based approach to curriculum design also demands that all aspects of the curriculum, e.g. teaching methods, learning process and assessment procedures, are aligned to the learning outcomes.

The third statement is on change in assessment practices--Outcomes-based assessment requires that assessment be primarily criterion-as opposed to norm-referenced, with greater transparency and accountability in the assessment process. A range of formative and summative approaches will be required, which will challenge the traditional pen-and-paper, closed-book,

easy-type examination system. The demand for summative integrated assessment, across specific course outcomes and across modules within a program will be particularly demanding in relation to design and implementation, given traditional territorial and individualistic approaches to teaching, and time-table constraints.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Workshop on "Education for Teacher Educators: A Future Possibility" with UMEA University, 9 - 11 April 2002

A workshop on " Education for Teacher Educators: A Future Possibility" was held in Addis Ababa on 9-11 April 2002. The purpose of the workshop was to explore the recent experiences of Namibia in teacher education, assess the relevance of this experience to other African countries such as Ethiopia and if relevant, discuss how the distance based Master's course developed for Namibia can be adopted for use in other African countries.

The workshop was led by Mr. Lars Dahlstorm, Umea University, Sweden in cooperation with Prof. Almaz Eshete, IICBA, and Dr. Marew Zewdie, Addis Ababa University. Mr. Dahlstrom, was a member of the team experts of the Umea University, which, in collaboration with the Namibian National Institute for Educational Development, designed and helped in the implementation of the post-independence teacher Education Reform project known as "An integrated In-service Staff Development Programme for Sustainable Capacity Building in Teacher Education for Basic Education."

OLSET Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) Regional Meeting 17 - 19 April 2002

The Open Learning Systems Education Trust (OLSET) organized an Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) Regional Meeting from April 17-19, 2002 in Durban, South Africa. The three days meeting was organized with the objectives of providing participants with an understanding of IRI and how it has been successfully implemented in numerous countries around the world; provide an opportunity to explore key policy, planning and management and operational issues in effective IRI provision and to investigate possible collaborative efforts to support the further development of IRI in the region. A field trip to an OLSET classroom to see IRI programme in operation was undertaken.

OLSET is currently providing English as a second language instruction to over 700,000 junior primary school children in South Africa through the

use of IRI. A critical aspect of its documented success is the attention given to teacher empowerment through continuous in-service training, development and support. Since OLSET's inception in 1990, it has increasingly focused on addressing the educational challenges of the historically disadvantaged learners in remote areas.

IMFUNDO Workshop, Holloway College, 7 - 10 April 2002

As IICBA is working in the area of developing educational software for Africa IICBA Director decided to attend the IMFUNDO Workshop. IMFUNDO is a British DFID financed programme which aims to promote and develop the utilization of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for education in Africa. The Workshop enabled IICBA to establish networks with other ICT developers from all over Africa.

Visit to Ministry of Education, Cairo, 15 - 19 April 2002

IICBA Director, Fay Chung, paid a one week visit to Cairo, to look at the ambitious programme embarked upon by the Ministry of Education to enable all primary and secondary schools to have access to information and communication technologies for educational purposes. Egypt has initiated a programme to link all schools to the internet. This has more or less been achieved. It is also working to provide suitable Egyptian based educational software for schools in both Arabic and English. Some 400 educational software development experts have been employed to develop these materials, and a vast library has already been created of varying quality. Of particular interest were the primary education materials in Arabic which were both artistically colourful as well as interactive. These materials could be utilized in Arab speaking countries with a minimal of adaptation. The Egyptian Ministry of Education is willing to allow utilization of these materials in collaboration with UNESCO. It is also willing to share its training and development expertise with other African countries. This is a rich resource which can be shared with many other countries.

OAU Decade of Education Workshop for North Africa, Tripoli, 19 - 21 April 2002

The North African workshop provided an excellent opportunity for education specialists from North Africa to exchange information about the work they are doing and their achievements. Apparently this is one of the few occasions when they have had an opportunity to hold professional discussions. North Africa is one of the most developed regions in terms of achievement of the Decade of Education goals.

OAU Decade of Education Steering Committee Meeting, Tripoli, 25 April 2002.

It was possible to hold the Decade of Education Steering Committee meeting in Tripoli. Ministers/Deputy Ministers representing six member states on the committee were able to attend. These included Cameroon, Kenya, Libya, Mali, South Africa, Zimbabwe and. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of Libya, Mr. Tayeb, who is also the Minister of Education. Areas covered during the meeting included:

- Reports on activities since the last Steering Committee meeting
- Work programme for 2002 - 2003
- The re-structuring of BASE
- The harmonization and coordination of education programmes in Africa
- The education component of NEPAD
- Research, publications, information and communication
- Funding education in Africa
- Establishing a group of eminent personalities for advocacy and sensitization
- Preparation of the next COMEDAF

Kampala Sub-regional Workshop on the Assessment of Minimum Learning Achievement (MLA) Programme, 29 April - 3 May 2002

Dr. Marew Zewdie was able to represent IICBA at this workshop. The MLA Assessment programme, in line with the Dakar Framework of Action, is parallel and complementary to the

IICBA programme on the Assessment of Mathematics and Science learning at upper primary and lower secondary levels. This was the second Regional Capacity Building Workshop in African for English and Portuguese speaking countries following the first one for French and Spanish Speaking countries, held in Morocco in November 2001. The present workshop brought together expertise from 25 African countries.

The overall objective of the workshop was to mobilize national and sub regional expertise for the development of common core and country - specific tests and questionnaires. The tests were aimed at measuring the basic learning competences of Grade 8 students in the area of Mathematics, Science and life skills while the questionnaires were meant to measure the influence of the conditions of teaching and learning at homes, at schools, in the community and in the classroom on the students' learning outcomes.

The outcomes included two tests for measuring Grade 8 students' competences in Mathematics and Science with life skills; two questionnaires meant to measure the influence of the conditions for teaching and learning at homes, at schools, in the community and in the classroom on the students' learning outcomes; the action plan on piloting instruments field-testing and collection of data, data analysis and reporting was approved.

Workshop on the Organization and Classification of School- based Learning Experiences, Geneva, 22-24 May 2002

The International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva has been collecting data on school structure, length of school time, curriculum of countries all over the world for some years. In this particular meeting the intention was to get professional insights on how to organize, classify, standardize and analyse the data gathered on the above issues. The professionals, invited to this working meeting included researchers, curriculum specialists and practitioners from Latin America, USA, Israel, Japan, Africa and from IBE itself. A working paper was developed, and a working conference will be held in Africa some time next year to see how the proposed working paper can be put in use.

UN Joint Inspection Unit, May 2002

The UN Joint Inspection Unit sent Mme. Doris Bertrand to inspect the contribution of the United Nations to the achievement of education for all in Ethiopia. Mme. Bertrand was able to spend some time with IICBA, and to examine some of the work done by IICBA in the areas of teacher education and the provision of basic education for hard to reach communities. IICBA has been running two programmes for hard to reach communities: the multigrade programme which enables multigrade schools to be established for remote rural communities which do not have a school close by; and the education for nomadic populations programme, which is a research and development programme focused on the nomadic populations of six East African communities.

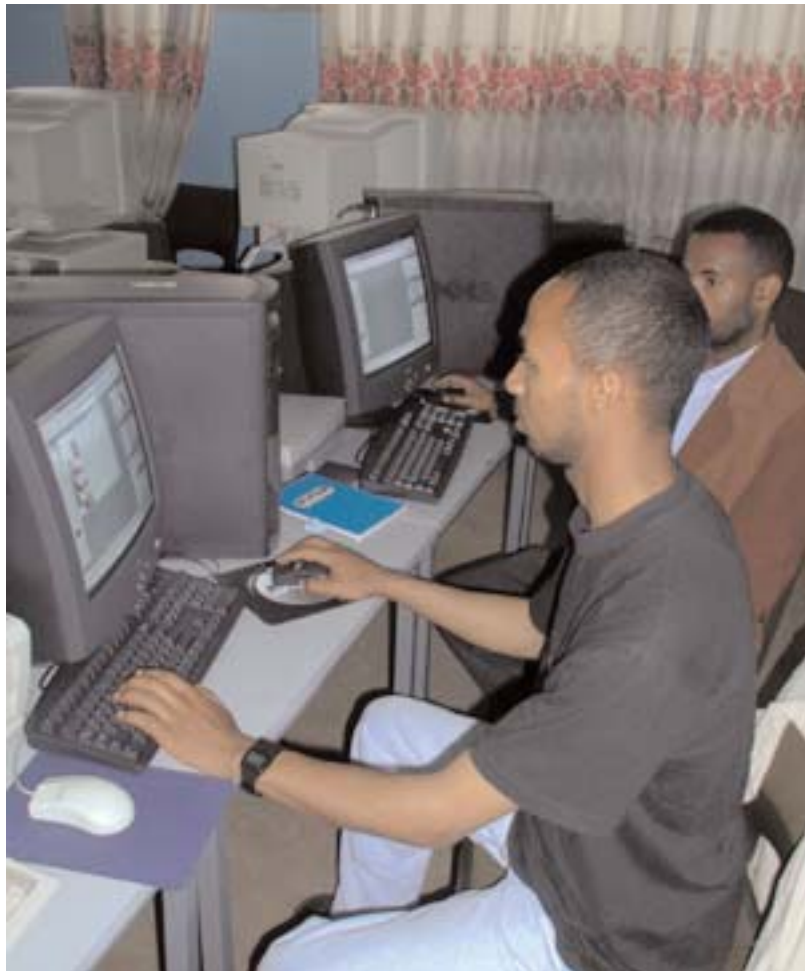
Courses on CD ROM and Website Creation, May - June 2002

Three workshops run by Mr. Thomas Edwards, a Canadian ICT specialist, were held in Jinja, Uganda; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Bamako, Mali. This is part of a series of workshops to enable educators in these countries to create their own CD ROMs and websites. The Ugandan workshop was highly successful from the professional and technical point of view, with very well chosen and computer literate participants. However it was a near disaster administratively. The transfer of funds from Addis Ababa to Kampala proved to be almost insuperable, due mainly to the short time available. Thanks to the help of the Comptroller General's Office of UNESCO Paris, and of the UNDP Office in Kampala, the problems were overcome in time. The lesson learnt is that IICBA cannot hold workshops outside of its home base without adequate administrative support, with money being transferred at least three to four weeks before the workshop begins.

The workshop in Addis Ababa suffered from time tabling conflict with

University examinations, and since most of the participants were University of Addis Ababa staff, this caused some interruption of the training. Despite this problem, the workshop provided a more advanced training to participants who had already done earlier courses.

The Bamako workshop, the third to be held for francophone participants, suffered from the perennial problem of many participants being heads of department with little or no previous experience of the use of computers. The course as planned was therefore too advanced for some of the participants. Basic computer literacy does not require the services of a highly specialized consultant from overseas. Only a limited percentage of the Bamako participants were already computer literate. Careful selection of participants so that only those who are already computer literate and who will use the newly developed skills is of critical importance, but this is difficult for IICBA to achieve in countries where it does not have a close knowledge of the participants, the institutions they come from, and the work they are involved in.



CD ROM and Website Creation Training, Addis Ababa

Regional Workshops on Nomadic Education, Arusha, 3 - 8 June 2002

The successful completion of the studies of education for nomadic populations in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania culminated in two workshops held back to back in Arusha, Tanzania. The first was a policy workshop which included both Government policy decision makers and researchers from the six countries, whilst the second workshop was a training workshop for actual programme implementers. The two workshops were highly successful,

Visit of University of South Africa (UNISA) Professors to Ethiopia, 10 - 14 June 2002

Two professors from UNISA, Prof. O. Kruger in charge of the School Management courses, and Professor D. Wessels in charge of the M. Ed. on the Teaching of Mathematics, paid a visit to IICBA as well as to some of the Universities in Ethiopia which may utilize these programmes. The basic idea is to share training programmes amongst universities in Africa and elsewhere in such a way as to enable high quality programmes to be integrated into universities in different parts of



Regional workshop on Nomadic Education, Arusha, Tanzania

enabling government, research, international and non-governmental representatives to share their experiences. The programme, jointly carried out by IICBA, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and UNICEF East and Southern Africa (UNICEF ESARO), has been funded by the African Development Bank (ADB). It was particularly useful to explore with the ADB the possibilities for further development of work on education for nomadic populations.

Africa. It is expected that both these programmes will kick off in Ethiopia January 2003.

HIV Aids Workshop and Training Manual for Teachers, June 2002

IICBA, in collaboration with the USAID funded BESO programme in Ethiopia, has developed a training manual on HIV AIDs for teachers in Amhaeric. This was developed during a training workshop held in Addis Ababa. 10 000

copies of this manual will be distributed to each of the qualifying teachers this year. IICBA and BESO will follow up with training programmes.

IICBA Board Meeting, Addis Ababa, 17 - 18 June 2002

The IICBA Board meeting was held on 17 - 18 June 2002. Dr. Aline Bory Adams of UNICEF was welcomed as a new member of the Board. The Board was able to review the finalized workplan that was presented in October 2001. The workplan incorporated the inputs made by the Board members at their last meeting. The Board reviewed preparations being made for the Ministers of Education Conference (MINEDAF VIII) to be held in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, in the first week of December 2002. It was emphasized that IICBA should have a prominent role in this Conference. It was also agreed that the Senior Executive Seminar for Ministers of Education and the next IICBA Board meeting would be held back to back with MINEDAF. The Board was also able to interview candidates for the Deputy Director of IICBA post.

Workshop on Educational Planning and Economic Development, Addis Ababa, 17 - 19 June 2002

The second workshop on educational planning and economic development was held in Addis Ababa, back to back to the IICBA Board meeting, as Board members had been desirous of participating in one of the IICBA programmes. The team of educational and economic planning specialists worked on the training modules which would form part of a Masters' degree programme for educational planners on the one hand, and for economists on the other hand. A technical support team was formed to advise IICBA on the programme. It is expected that the training modules will be finalized at the third workshop to be held in Dakar for francophone participants in October 2002.