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Reaching Out, Reaching All –
Sustaining Effective Policy and Practice for Education in Africa

**Session 6: Networks
A Potent Vehicle for Going to Scale**

Networks: A Potent Vehicle for Going to Scale

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preamble

1. The ADEA is a major player in the development of education in Africa, and works with Ministries of Education together with other stakeholders in the quest for Education For All (EFA). Its working groups have been an effective means of in taking education policies at the supranational level. In 1999, the ADEA commissioned an extensive evaluation of its networks, which among other things, it highlighted the need for ADEA to widen its partnership “so as to embrace new partners with similar objectives”.

2. The manner of operation of the (functional) ADEA working groups has necessitated a process by which the WG’s have reached out and involved other stakeholders in their activities in trying to influence policy. The nature and level of cooperation between particular WG’s and the (partner) networks differ according to the nature and functions of the network and the stages of development of each partner.

Purpose and objectives of the study

3. The study was commissioned to provide background information on a variety of educational (partner) networks, with a view to determining what kind of status could be extended to these new partners in order to promote synergy between the activities of these partners and those of the ADEA. A closer understanding of the power and effectiveness of these (partner) networks in taking educational policies to scale was an important starting point to determining the nature of this (emerging) relationship.

4. In order to make a determination of how and why networks succeed in taking educational policies to scale, the study attempted to:

- To demonstrate examples of the manner in which networks function and as well as the effectiveness of collaborative networking to enable all-African educational systems and their partners in the mobilization of the various resources to attain desired educational developments.
- To explore the processes by which these networks have developed and have “gone to scale”.
- Consequent to i.) and ii.) to reflect on the “lessons learned” with regard to how these developments have been achieved and to make recommendations on what kinds of (future) partnerships between ADEA and these networks (that perform complementary functions) would be (effective) in the promotion of greater synergy in their activities.

The determination of lessons learned necessitated compilation of a typology of their activities, as well as a conceptualization of their activities into a “working” framework. Advocacy, capacity building and a quest for long-term sustainability inform and drive the functions and activities of the three networks.

5. At this point the study has only covered anglophone Africa, and is only focusing on education networks, with a policy-orientation. The networks covered are the African Publishers’ Network (APNET), the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). The networks covered in the study deal with a diverse range of issues, and have diverse functions and activities. The APNET deals with issues affecting all aspects of the publishing industry whilst the FAWE is concerned with issues and problems besetting girls in education and in

schooling. Whilst the first two networks deals with issues related to the development of education, the AERC does not fall into this category. It deals with a very specific issue-economics-and the production of well-trained policy analysts and policy makers in order to facilitate sound management of economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The AERC further differs from the other two networks in that whilst their structure relies on cooperation with the national chapters to carry out its mandate, it deals with institutions, individual and teams of researchers to carry out its mandate.

6. Sampling was purposive, in order to target the networks, which deal with educational development and are linked to the ADEA. Coverage was confined do anglophone countries due to the dictates of time, as the report had to be ready for the biennale. The AERC was a n exception in this regard in that it was selected for the lessons that can be learned from the remarkable success it has had, the effective structures it has put in place and the strategies it has adopted to pursue its mandate.

Methodology

The data for this study was collected in the following ways:

- Interviews and discussions with key individuals who work closely with the networks under study.
- E-mail communication and the telephone.
- Review of sociological literature on networks, background literature on the working groups, as well as internal network documentation relating to their functions and activities.
- Attendance of a workshop in Nairobi organized by the Kenya Publishers' Association, which gave some useful insights into the issues affecting the entire book chain.

The framework for determining power and effectiveness is based on indicators such as cost-effectiveness and relevance, policy impact, linkage with members and other partners, capacity-building and long-term sustainability.

Critical lessons learned from the operations of the networks are captured in the table below:

Table 1. Indicators of Efficiency, Power and Effectiveness of Networks

	Efficiency & Cost-Effectiveness	Policy Impact/Influence	Communication/ Dissemination	Capacity-building & Long-term Sustainability
A P N E T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant number trained in various aspects of publishing (determine numbers actually running related business). Higher quality of books produced. Establishment of World Bank-sponsored African Publishing Initiative. World Bank successfully lobbied to relax cumbersome tender procedures Concerned with all aspects of book chain. Research and policy link in problems affecting publishing industry. Strengthening of national chapters through provision of facilities and equipment to improve their efficiency. Greater involvement of indigenous Africans in publishing. Lobbying SADC and ECOWAS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of policies by governments, which facilitate provision of affordable textbook and non-textbook materials to African school children. Withdrawal of some governments from publishing. Establishment of Book Development Councils in some contexts. Direct involvement of National Publishers' Association in discussions with Curriculum Development Departments in some countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of national chapters for greater "connectivity". Information generated at by "hub" and disseminated through newsletter; Day to day communication through e-mail and telephone. Guidance and advice to country chapters on intra-national activities-shares ideas generated from discussions with WGBLM. Connectivity with country chapters through their annual plans, General Council, meetings with representatives. Clearing-house for ideas from commissioned studies and other sources. "Connectivity" with WGBLM. Overall communication capability affected by problems in wider political economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of costs in training program. Plans for training in publishing high quality academic periodicals. Stronger lobbying particularly to have tax burden relaxed and taxes on books removed. <p>Resources required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct access to policy-makers (advocacy at Ministerial level). Ideas exchanged with WGBLM; WGBLM linkage required for effective Ministerial-level advocacy to influence policy and to gain greater recognition. Greater computer web-site capability, and better-trained information technology personnel; financial security.
F A W E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater awareness of gender issues at continental and national levels. Research and policy link to address problems besetting girls in education. Establishment of effective Centers of Excellence. High-level and highly "visible" advocacy role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender sensitive policies adopted in most countries, e.g. a less punitive re-admission policy. Membership includes high-level policy-makers, comprising women Ministers in the first instance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of country chapters to effect change at national level. Information generated on problems besetting girls in education through research communication of research output through reports, booklets, newsletter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for long-term partnerships in emerging areas/issues such as HIV/AIDS (e.g., with UNICEF). Long-term plan for mentor-ship to build capacity of gender-knowledgeable women. Plans for an Endowment Fund; office block to generate income to cut rental costs. Strategic resource training to build capacity at Ministerial level; lobbying governments to integrate gender into their National Action Plans (NAP's); seeking a broadly-based "Re-entry" policy. <p>Resources required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political stability and "Political will" to mobilize resources for improvement of girls' education; greater community involvement. Functional partnership with ADEA.

	Efficiency & Cost-Effectiveness	Policy Impact/Influence	Communication/ Dissemination	Capacity-building & Long-term Sustainability
A E R C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost-effective Masters' training program (costs 3 less than same overseas); Higher quality graduates; - Strong research and policy link; Considerable research output and very strong link between research and policy due to nature and functions of network. Mounts user-identified courses for government and Central banks. Articles based on research outputs featured in high quality journals. Regular evaluation for quality improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of research outputs by governments to draw up development plans. Training directly linked to improvement of SSA economies. Strong involvement of policy-makers through seminars. Executive summaries of research output for policy practitioners. Sounding board for major policy considerations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No national chapters, but effective network of individuals and research teams commensurate with its functions. Dissemination output through Consortium newsletter as well as the Policy Forum; wider dissemination through high quality journals, Senior Policy Seminars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative policy-related training programs. Partnership with FAWE planned to facilitate greater participation of women in the economics profession. Potential for partnership with FAWE in strategic resources planning/allocation training for Ministry officials. Plans for long-term financial sustainability is predicated upon the need for "greater African involvement and ownership of programs"; fund-raising, establishment of Endowment Fund, and introduction of cost-sharing measures in its programs. <p>Resources required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas contributed by stakeholders, particularly policy-makers; financial sustainability.

2. NETWORKS: HELP IN GOING TO SCALE

7. The evaluation of the ADEA Working Groups (WGs) by Damiba et al. (1999) shows that networking can be a valuable advocacy instrument for educational policy changes in Africa. In their decade of activity, Working Groups have had mixed results in working in partnership with existing networks, some of which have been successful, while others have become defunct or inactive for a considerable length of time.

8. ADEA commissioned this study in order to learn more about how the various partner networks of the ADEA Working Groups have developed effective means of influencing education policy. The intent is to understand their strengths and weaknesses and to learn lessons that can be applied in the formulation of plans for future partnerships between networks and the Working Groups.

9. In order to determine how and why networks succeed, the study attempted to

- describe examples of the manner in which networks function and how networking assists African education systems and their partners to attain desired education developments
- explore the processes by which these networks have developed
- reflect on lessons learned and make recommendations on partnerships between ADEA and these networks, which perform complementary functions, to promote greater synergy in their activities.

10. This report describes the functions and effectiveness of selected networks in the development of education in Africa and the strengths and weaknesses of their partnerships with ADEA Working Groups. The study is restricted to networks in Anglophone countries that have a policy orientation and that were accessible for investigation. Hence, this work should be regarded as a partial, initial step in a process that will eventually encompass more networks when the study is expanded to both Anglophone and francophone Africa, following the biennial conference.

11. In this phase of the study, we discuss three networks: the African Publishers' Network (APNET); the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE); and the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). We have also undertaken preliminary research on a fourth network, the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SAQMEC), but that network is not discussed in this report.

12. The study reflects on the sociological literature on networks, but it does not dwell on the theoretical aspects of networking. Although the literature has helped us come up with a working definition of "network" for the purpose of the study, it is not yet comprehensive enough to facilitate a conceptualization a general framework of issues related to networks.

Organization of the paper

13. The paper starts with a theoretical discussion of networks and then describes three networks. It examines how the networks have succeeded in influencing policy and the strategies they have used to enable them to do so. The conclusion is a brief summary of what the networks have in common and how the ADEA Working Groups might strengthen ties with networks.

Analytic framework

14. To draw out the lessons learned from our exploration of the functions and structures of each network and its efforts to influence policy, we have addressed the following questions:

- How does the network define itself?
- How is the network governed?
- What are its programs?
- What resources have been available to network?
- How does it secure funding?
- How does the network communicate with members and with other partners?
- By what means is capacity-building embarked upon?
- What plans does the network have for long-term sustainability?

15. Though we aim to be consistent in our analysis of each network, the information varies from one to the next, depending on what issues are most worthy of discussion.

Methodology

16. The data for this study were collected through in-person, e-mail, and telephone interviews with key individuals who work closely with the networks under study. We reviewed the sociological literature on networks and background documents on the Working Groups, and participated in a workshop in Nairobi organized by the Kenya Publishers' Association.

3. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

17. What is a network? The term “network” is used literally to describe physical configurations. The American Heritage Dictionary (1987) defines a network as “a system of patterns made up of interconnecting parts”. Guralnik (1979, 403, quoted in Dubbeldam, 1996) defines a network as “an arrangement of parallel wires, etc., crossed at intervals by others to leave open spaces”. This definition is expanded to other literal uses of the term, including “a system of interconnected roads, individuals, and a chain of transmitting stations”. Dubbeldam describes a network as “a complex web of one- and two-way streets”. Proceeding from this definition, Dubbeldam expands the definition of a network: “the pattern of social contacts of an individual through which he or she can achieve information, support, credits, power, and other essentials need for survival or improvement of position”.

18. A network does not necessarily comprise a neatly ordered pattern of lines going in any one specified direction. It does, however, require sustained connection with the hub, from where resources such as ideas, funds, training, and information are generated and distributed. Networking is a necessary ingredient to achievement of common aims, and facilitates cooperative utilization of scarce resources, as well as a means of building channels of communication for more effective information generation and dissemination.

19. Networks are an integral part of human relationships and function as a system of creating linkages beneficial to all members (Carton, Lauglo, 1996). Networking is generally acknowledged to be a necessary ingredient for achievement of common aims among members. Others see it as a system that ensures lack of duplication of efforts in the face of resource scarcity, eases information dissemination and sharing, and facilitates the building of effective communication channels. In this regard, exchange of information is crucial to the sustenance and sustainability of a network, the absence of which may spell its demise. Generally the nature of the information shared within and between networks is not value-free, ensuring that networks and the networking arena are ideologically laden. In this regard, the network can become an unsuspecting purveyor of values expressed in the studies that it has commissioned.

20. In these definitions of networks, it is critical to make a distinction between the way the networks define themselves and the way in which others view them. This is because networks, based on their nature, needs, context, and operational conditions, can take on different characteristics and keep changing in structure, size, and type, depending on the mandate governing their activities and the changes that occur in that mandate over time.

21. In networks that include advocacy in their mandate, the hub provides a central point for these activities. It drives the network agenda globally, while the national chapters “act locally”. Hence, the network’s jurisdiction extends to the national level through the national chapters, as they often have more intimate knowledge of the individual country’s conditions and problems, where the impact of the network’s activities needs to be felt. It also acts as a clearinghouse for national chapter activities. This aspect of network structure and activities is critical to its strength and effectiveness.

4. CASE STUDIES

Africa Publishers' Network (APNET)

22. APNET was set up in 1992 with the mandate to strengthen African publishing through building the capacity of indigenous African publishers to produce quality books. APNET's training program has formed the main thrust of the network's mission. The other thrust is the creation of National Publishing Associations (NPAs) to facilitate networking on issues of common concern. Through close partnership with ADEA's Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM), APNET pursues issues that affect publishers and touch on all stages of the book chain.

23. The APNET secretariat is the hub of the network, and the NPAs in each country are its principal members. The secretariat acts as a clearinghouse for information generated from commissioned studies and from deliberations with the WGBLM, which is then relayed to the NPAs. The network brings members together for an annual General Council. At these meetings, NPAs receive guidance and advice on their responsibilities to APNET, and they are asked to account for their activities. APNET is also increasingly requiring NPAs to take more responsibility for driving the agenda at the local level and appropriate accountability to the hub as a basis for continued assistance.

24. The secretariat of APNET is in Harare and houses the offices of the Executive Secretary (Akin Fasemore), Information and Dissemination Officer (Morgan Chirumiko), Training Coordinator (currently vacant), Membership and Trade Promotion Officer (Tainie Mundondo), KAWA Project Officer (Sarah Gumbie), and Documentalist (Michael Maumbe).

25. The main activities of APNET are carried out through the African Publishing Institute, participation in book fairs, and dissemination of information through regular and occasional publications.

The African Publishing Institute

26. The African Publishing Institute was set up following a study that recommended that APNET establish an itinerant "institute," which could help respond to problems identified in the publishing industry in Africa. These problems included a lack of shared knowledge of the book trade and publishing activities continent-wide. Another problem was the domination of the industry by multinational corporations, thereby excluding or marginalizing indigenous African organizations. As the executive secretary of APNET put it, "African publishers tended to work in their own little corners".

27. The institute moves around according to need, offering training to publishers in marketing, book publications, commissioning, manuscript assessment, and printing. It helps individual publishers share titles, and it forges closer links between NPAs. The institute organizes regional workshops, which have generally succeeded in breaking down barriers that have kept publishers apart. It also offers national-level workshops to address issues identified by national chapters. The hub organizes, funds, and supplies personnel to run the workshops.

28. NPAs generate knowledge about publishing within their countries, which they relay to the hub for integration into the network's annual plans. In this way, the network communicates information from the members to the hub and to each other, as well information that originates at the hub.

Book fairs

29. Attendance and displays at book fairs are an important adjunct activity to APNET. The secretariat coordinates attendance at national fairs organized by the NPAs and at international book fairs in Africa and elsewhere. Participation by APNET members in fairs beyond Africa helps publishers showcase books and market publications. It also familiarizes them with problems and solutions that the industry faces in on other continents as well as in Africa.

Information dissemination

30. APNET disseminates information about its activities to members and others through several channels.

- The APNET *Newsletter* (The African Publications Review) is published in French and English; it covers issues of concern to publishers and features serious and reflective articles and information on book fairs.
- Occasional publications emanate from the various programs with which APNET is involved and which are designed to empower African publishers, including Trade Promotions, the Research and Documentation Center, and KAWE.
- Publicity and promotions are usually done through radio, television, and print media, targeting popular journals to feature advertisements. Although the long-range plan is to disseminate information about APNET worldwide, publicity is presently confined largely to the African context.
- CD-ROM versions of publications are to be produced to enhance dissemination efforts and make them available on-line.

Resources and funding

31. APNET's resources include personnel at the secretariat and within country chapters, material resources such as computers and books, funding from external agencies, and ideas exchanged among members and with partners, including the WGBLM. Primary financiers include Sida, NORAD, Ford, Rockefeller, and ADEA. The World Bank is a strategic partner, which, while it does not give funds directly, facilitates the convening of seminars and workshops at which crucial issues are discussed. For example, APNET is invited to participate in meetings organized by the bank.

Achievements

32. APNET has had some notable achievements:

- The training program, which comprises a modular program and has trained about 1,000 individuals.
- Output has included publications on the publishing business, catalogues of African publishing consultants, the KAWE series, and the APN newsletter. The KAWE series, funded jointly by UNESCO and APNET, promotes the use of African culture in science.
- There has been a significant improvement in the quality of books published by indigenous African publishers.
- Working with NPAs in some countries, APNET has helped to form Book Development Councils, to lobby governments to pull out of the publishing industry,

and to engage ministries of education, which are the consumers-and often producers-of large quantities of books, in discussions of issues related to book publications.

- APNET has lobbied the African regional organizations of SADC and ECOWAS to introduce policies more cognizant of the needs of the publishing industry. Consequently, both SADC and ECOWAS have promised to invite network members to make presentations.
- The establishment of an office and recruitment of a publisher at the World Bank has resulted in the introduction by the bank of a Publishers' Initiative, which will significantly empower and enable African publishers to source funds to finance their publishing projects.
- The network has successfully lobbied the World Bank to relax its cumbersome tender procedures in order to facilitate greater participation of Africans in bank-funded activities and to ensure that every national tender provides for quotas for indigenous African publishers.
- The network provides textbook materials and facilitates development of a reading culture, which results in informed and empowered citizens, who are better able to participate in development.
- Better relationships have been forged with the Pan-Africa Booksellers Association (PABA).

Communication

33. APNET has developed various means of intra-network communication, but these are still insufficient. The management meets annually with the WGBLM once a year at partners' meetings and the ADEA biennial meeting. It convenes an annual General Council with members. The network also takes the opportunity at international book fairs to convene a meeting with country representatives of the NPAs to discuss strategies and activities. Conferences and seminars are also used for discussions of problems afflicting the publishing industry.

34. Communication between the secretariat and the APNET Board of Directors and between the network and its members is often problematic, as board members are not always readily available to respond to issues. Many of them do not have frequent access to e-mail or even regular mail, due to electricity shortages and unreliable postal services. Communications with NPAs can also be difficult. APNET is moving to strengthen the capacity of NPAs by providing basic equipment, including computers.

Capacity-building

35. APNET has begun to offer assistance to national chapters to improve their administrative functions, so that they can play a stronger coordinating role within the national contexts. The network provides minimal funding to the NPAs to enable them to set up a secretariat and have basic equipment, including phone, fax, and e-mail facilities to improve outreach and enhance communication with network members and other stakeholders. APNET offers assistance in leadership and management, technical skills, policy analysis and advocacy, networking and alliance building, research, data collection and dissemination, and resource mobilization. The strengthening of NPAs is intended to encourage them to assume greater responsibility for their activities.

36. The activities of the NPAs are regarded as critical to the attainment of the network goals. In this regard, APNET is encouraging NPAs to get registered and attain a legal status, which will strengthen their advocacy capability. Their enhanced status should

also enable them to lobby for formulation and implementation of book policies and education policies that have a bearing on their overall objectives. About two-thirds of the NPAs are registered, and efforts are underway to encourage the remainder to regularize their status.

Long-term sustainability

37. APNET recognizes that secure sources of income other than grants from international donors are required for long-term sustainability and a number of activities. It is currently giving thought to new sources of income. It has already started to sell publications such as the *Manual of Publishing Consultants*, which were previously given out gratis. It may require a financial commitment from members, asking NPAs to pay something towards meeting cost of attendance of training workshops. It is considering raising funds from a variety of organizations to meet costs of specific activities and workshops/conferences or to attend book fairs. Members can be charged an annual subscription of US \$100, which would be graded to ensure that members who do better in terms of volume of business would pay higher subscriptions. The NPAs' responsibility in organizing workshops and determining training needs also constitutes a contribution towards advancement of the network's mandate.

Future Plans

38. Currently, APNET is pursuing its goal of strengthening indigenous publishing through consolidation of previous efforts. Training efforts will continue as envisaged, with capacity building as the most pressing program. The network also plans to move into academic publications and provide the training to ensure a professionalism that is currently lacking in publications of this nature. APNET will urge governments to formulate a book development policy and to include a textbook policy that is made a part and parcel of the general book policy. It will lobby for creation of more conducive conditions for publishing. These include a relaxation of the tax burden on book production, abolition of tariffs for postage of published materials (to encourage literacy and to facilitate their affordability), and phasing out sales tax on published materials (to help reduce the price of books).

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

39. FAWE's overall goal is to increase access, retention, and participation of girls in school and to improve performance of girls at all levels of the education system. Though the mandate of FAWE has not changed over the years, it has incorporated new approaches in line with the goals and progress attained thus far. For example, FAWE's original objective was to put the agenda of girls' education on the table in policy discussions and formulations at ministries of education. The original strategy involved getting African women ministers of education to do this, and FAWE used every available opportunity to push its agenda. This goal has largely been accomplished. Much remains to be done, however, in terms of resource provision and attitude change in some communities that still view the education of girls differently from that of boys.

Governance and management

40. FAWE is governed by its General Assembly and Executive Committee and is managed by the secretariat, based in Nairobi, Kenya. The Executive Director heads the secretariat, which handles professional and administrative functions. The Executive Committee coordinates activities at both the national and the supranational level, and relies on its members to drive its agenda at national levels.

41. FAWE membership is constituted at three levels:

- Core or full membership is accorded to women who are ministers of education or deputies, permanent secretaries or directors, vice-chancellors, and presidents of universities or deputies. The other members in this category are prominent women educationalists, including retired executive directors of FAWE and founding members.
- Associate Membership extends to serving ministers of education who are men, women ministers of ministries other than education, and former women ministers and executive heads of education ministries and universities.
- Affiliate Membership comprises FAWE national chapters and individuals and institutions committed to FAWE's mandate, who are invited at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

The Centers-of-Excellence program

42. FAWE has targeted community participation as a key factor in promotion of girls' education, and it has embarked on a Centers of Excellence (COE) program. The COE strategy is aimed at show-casing best practices in promoting girls' education, with the hope that governments and communities will recognize and implement these on a large scale and a long-term basis. The premise of the COE program is that issues hampering girls' access and participation in education need to be addressed in an effective and demonstrable way, with a special emphasis on community involvement in schooling.

43. Since its inception in 1999, the COE program has grown steadily and currently operates in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda.

Advocacy

44. FAWE envisages a continuing active advocacy role in addition to acting as a watchdog or monitor of girls' education issues. In a sense, FAWE is looking towards a status akin to institutionalization as a long-term strategy of operation. In this regard, as a feature of long-term sustainability FAWE is seeking ways of identifying and engaging potential partners for long-term cooperation in programs with a gender bent, such as HIV/AIDS, which organizations such as UNICEF have placed on top of their list of priorities. This network feature was alluded to by Lauglo when he noted that, although network activities tend to be transitory, others can develop into fully-fledged programs (Dubbeldam, 1996, 16).

45. FAWE has advanced girls' issues in education through national-level ancillary activities such as *Tuseme* in Tanzania, a non-formal education project aimed at equipping girls with basic literacy, income-generating, and self-help skills.

Policy influence

46. As FAWE moves on from advocacy activities to embark on more concrete functions, it sees the need to help governments not only to mainstream gender into national education plans but to allocate resources to the implementation of these plans. Most African education systems have specific policy statements on gender and issues affecting girls in school. However, FAWE realizes that policy statements are inadequate if not complemented by appropriate allocation and mobilization of resources, as well as appropriate gender-sensitive teacher training programs. Another problem that FAWE has noted is that even with the policies in place, the lack of expertise in education ministries

hampers progress on this front. The network is attempting to address this problem through the strategic resources allocation training program.

47. One feature the three networks under study have in common is the close link they attempt to forge between research and policy, and FAWE is no exception. The organization has conducted action-oriented research and documented strategies for addressing specific problems in girls' education. It has used statistical data to properly illustrate the extent of the problems affecting girls' education and mapping strategies for addressing them.

Funding and other resources

48. FAWE has a variety of financiers at the local, regional and international levels. The constitution provides for funds to be sourced from individuals and members as well, although indications are that this strategy of fund-raising, although healthy, has not yet been pursued.

49. Since 1992 FAWE has received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.

50. FAWE's definition of resources extends beyond the conventional definition of financial, human and material resources. FAWE considers resources to include political will, a pre-condition for formulation and implementation of more girl-child friendly educational policies. FAWE views "a supportive and active government as key to successful dialogue policy and interventions to redress the gender imbalance in education".

Strengths and achievements

51. FAWE has succeeded in creating awareness among government officials and others of special problems confronting girls in education. FAWE officials report that the organization has engaged in strong and consistent lobbying and "seized every available opportunity" to put the agenda for girls' education on the table of African governments. However, FAWE maintains that it is not enough to have the agenda on the government's table, because concrete strategies are still a long way from being put in place. Much needs to be done to ensure mobilization of resources in their widest sense in order to remove all hurdles affecting access, participation, and performance of girls in school.

52. FAWE has sought committed membership of government officials, so that governments are part of the solution to the problems of girls' education, which exerts pressure on them to "make a difference" by instituting appropriate policies. Advocacy is still regarded as a necessary tool for ensuring that reasonable progress is made towards the realization of EFA targets by 2015.

Communication

53. As much as possible, FAWE communicates electronically with its national chapters. It uses couriers such as DHL for package deliveries, a method suitable to this network, as its membership is drawn from high-level government officials. Senior staff visits to national chapters are an economical way of keeping in touch. Often these are organized to coincide with conferences or other missions. During such meetings the national chapters are able to share their annual work plans with and seek guidance from the network members.

Long-term sustainability

54. As with the other networks, the bulk of FAWE's funds go towards meeting operational costs. Thus, FAWE has embarked on some corrective strategies for cost cutting and income generation. The Executive Committee is studying a report that was commissioned with a view towards formulating concrete implementation strategies. Because rental costs are high, the organization plans to build its own office block, part of which can be leased out. This will also help to cut costs of hiring out venues. Plans are also underway to establish an Endowment Fund.

55. FAWE engages with other partners in programs with objectives common to both organizations. It works with FEMSA, for example, to improve access, performance, and attainment of girls in school, particularly in science and math. FAWE is also developing relationships with new partners, such as UNICEF, for long-term programs on HIV/AIDS education and others that are within FAWE's mandate.

Challenges

56. FAWE intends to continue to work with governments to ensure that they mainstream gender into their National Action Plans (NAPs) on girls' education. FAWE envisages its future role as a provider of expertise that is lacking in ministries of education in identifying areas of need and strategies for addressing these needs, including the planning and allocation of resources. In this role, FAWE must overcome problems in recruiting new members-currently there are 33 members-and must make a concerted effort to ensure that more countries join the organization.

57. FAWE values its advocacy role in the international arena and wants to acquire a status that would allow it to be full participant at forums such as ADEA biennial meeting rather than merely being called upon to make a presentation. As the Executive Director says, "we would like to be allowed to continue to make noise about girls' education". According to its Executive Director, in order to strengthen its advocacy role, FAWE would require a status within ADEA that would enable it to suggest to Working Groups that they mainstream gender in their activities.

58. FAWE also intends to step up advocacy at the community level in order to encourage community-based solutions to problems of girls' access and participation in schooling. Although FAWE has done extremely well in this area of activity, it needs to pay more attention to strengthening its national chapters in order to augment more effectively its broad strategy. The lack of experience of some of the members of the national executive committees in gender issues negatively impacts on the efficiency and effectiveness of the national chapters.

59. Human resources are regarded as key to the pursuit of FAWE's mandate, though insufficient funds to develop the human resource capacity pose a serious challenge. FAWE has found out that women who are experienced in advocacy for women's issues, who are few to start with, are the same women who tend to get good opportunities for advancement and to move on; they are often difficult to replace. Also, FAWE's reliance on a core membership comprising women ministers of education has suffered a serious setback in recent years, as the number of women ministers has dwindled. FAWE is working on a plan to tackle these problems.

60. FAWE also needs to think about partnerships it can forge with ADEA, particularly the Working Groups.

African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)

61. The principal objective of AERC is to strengthen local capacity for conducting inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa. AERC creates capacity for economic policy analysis and economic management through various programs to support graduate training and research. AERC views itself not as a network but as a consortium. AERC does, however, perform a networking function by bringing together cooperating universities, institutes, and researchers. Unlike the other networks covered in this study, it has no national chapters to further its agenda. It is also the only network under study whose function has no direct bearing on delivery or development of basic education. AERC is important to study, however, because of its notable success and the relevance of its work to improving education in Africa.

62. The mission of AERC has three parts:

- To enhance capacity of locally based researchers in economics
- To promote retention of such capacity
- To encourage application of economic research output to the policy context.

Membership and networking in AERC

63. Membership in AERC is multi-tiered.

- On the first level, membership comprises individual researchers with at least a Masters or doctorate degree in economics.
- The second level of the network comprises universities that participate in its Collaborative Masters Program. The Consortium links individual and teams of researchers and academics at these universities who are involved in training and research coordination activities. Participating universities are placed into either Category A or Category B, depending on their level of participation.
- The membership encompasses a number of bilateral and multilateral agencies, some of which are its financiers as well.

Governance

64. The AERC secretariat in Nairobi operates under the leadership of a Board of Directors and an Executive Director. The board sets policy, provides support, and approves the program of work and budget. AERC's governing bodies include an Advisory Committee and an Academic Board. The Advisory Committee members are scientists drawn from professional academics, African scholars, policy makers, and international resource persons. They set the agenda for training and research activities and review the annual program of work before approval by the board. The Academic Board reviews applications for training programs and makes decisions related to admissions procedures and academic regulations.

Research and training programs

65. AERC's original mandate was confined largely to assisting scholars with costs of doctoral research-support for data collection and writing of theses. A training component was added to incorporate Masters and doctoral-level training. The expanded mandate encompasses both training and research programs.

66. The Training Program features the Anglophone Collaborative Masters Program (except Nigeria) that brings together a network of 20 universities in 15 countries. This collaboration rationalizes the use of limited teaching capacity, attains a critical mass of students, offers a relatively larger menu of electives and jointly enforces high standards for graduate training in economics. Similar initiatives in the francophone countries and in Nigeria originate from AERC studies and are based on the same concept. The universities jointly enforce standards with annual evaluation and assessment by external examiners, develop a common curriculum and teaching materials, and share a joint facility for teaching electives. The Academic Board, with members drawn from the participating universities, is responsible for the substance of the program. Seven of these universities have adequate capacity to offer core courses that meet jointly determined and enforced standards. The rest of the participating universities send their students to these universities (www.aercafrica.org).

67. The Research Program networks individual researchers in the region, supported by resource persons doing research on selected themes designated by AERC's Advisory Committee as most pertinent to policy needs. This alleviates professional isolation, encourages exchange of experiences and creates peer pressure that enhances the quality of research. Grants are made through the Research program for research on four themes: poverty, income distribution, and labor market issues; trade, regional integration, and sectoral policies; macro-economic policy, stabilization and growth; finance, resource mobilization and investment.

Policy relevance

68. AERC uses a range of measures to ensure that its research and training is relevant to policy interests in Africa. Researchers prepare executive summaries that are easily digested. The executive summaries are based on outputs from the research program and are targeted at policymakers in an effort to encourage them to use and incorporate research output into policy and to enhance AERC's policy relevance. The organization also mounts user-identified courses for government departments and central banks. It involves senior policymakers in AERC workshops; these individuals contribute to healthy debates on issues critical to the formulation and implementation of sound economic policies. Their involvement has been underscored by a recent evaluation as being critical for closer alignment of theory and practice (Horton, 1999, 32).

69. AERC has evidence that its products are used by policy makers. Some of the professionals who are members of the network by virtue of their role as researchers have already joined the ranks of the policy makers and policy analysts. Appearance of publications of AERC research output in high quality journals is another indicator of the quality of the program. AERC is also used as a sounding board for major policy considerations by agencies, such as the World Bank.

Cost-effectiveness

70. The cost-effectiveness of AERC is a strong feature that helps to justify its existence and strengthen its accountability to donors and consumers of its products, in both the public and private sectors. Regular use of performance indicators is intended to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the AERC programs. Several evaluations have noted the cost-effectiveness of the Consortium's operations in relation to its functions, particularly the training program. It has been shown for example that the cost of training an economist in North America and Europe is equivalent to training three students through AERC.

Funding and resources

71. Twelve of the 15 members of the Board of Directors are funders of AERC. The Consortium accounts to its financiers through production of annual reports, and five-year strategic plans. The accountability keeps the Consortium on its toes, as continued funding is dependent upon good research output. This practice also safeguards the interest of the financiers. Some of the donors (African Capacity-Building Foundation and the European Union) only disburse funds after a special audit of the use of the funds (AERC Phase V, 49).

72. The facilities and equipment at the disposal of AERC are important resources, as they facilitate the operation of its various programs, particularly its outreach program. Ideas contributed by policy makers involved in the Senior Policy Seminars are also considered an important resource, as they are integrated into the policy-oriented research agenda.

Communication and information dissemination

73. The Consortium's information dissemination strategy is aimed at enhancing the use of economic research for sound economic management on the continent. Thus, dissemination forms a crucial aspect of its overall function and helps to diffuse policy-related research output to members at the supra-national level. AERC disseminates the various types of information it generates in a number of ways.

- *Policy Forum* enhances dissemination of policy-related research output.
- The AERC Newsletter contains useful information on its activities.
- Publications on specially commissioned papers are also put on the organization's website, which has recently been upgraded with the purchase of a new server.
- Executive summaries disseminate information widely in a useable format. "It is one thing to collect and make information available. It is a different thing to dish it out in a way that is useful to decision makers in their everyday practice..." (Cariola, 1996, 155).
- Policy-focused seminars for policy makers and national policy workshops help bring researchers together with policy makers.
- A database of economic researchers and potential users is being built; it will enhance AERC networking and information dissemination efforts.

74. The Consortium's External Liaison Department enhances its dissemination capacity. AERC recognizes the importance of electronic communication and plans to put more resources and effort into enhancement of the use of the website and the Internet.

Future plans

75. AERC plans its activities on the basis of a five-year cycle, which conforms to its term of funding. The long-term plan of action is contained in the recently compiled plan, "Phase AERC into the 21st Century: Responsiveness, Focus, Synergy and Partnership". The emphasis of the plan is a further consolidation of its current activities as well as the addition of new ones. Phase V will be characterized by consolidation of current activities, such as continued support for doctoral training and introduction of new training courses, such as the short-term courses for policy makers and a proposed doctoral program. These are aimed at increasing capacity of professional economists in sub-Saharan Africa as well as the policy relevance of training and research.

Sustainability

76. Establishment of an Endowment Fund is part of the agenda for a Phase V plan for financial sustainability.

77. AERC has embarked on cost-cutting measures, including sharing of expenses for local travel and student allowances and the discontinuation of book allowances. In future AERC may charge a fee for the brokerage services it renders to a variety of stakeholders, to whom it recommends names of potential consultants, as well as acting as guarantor for the work done (Horton, 1999, 24).

5. LINKING WORKING GROUPS AND NETWORKS

78. What are the actual and potential relationships between ADEA, its Working Groups, and these networks? APNET has a strong link with one Working Group-the WG on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM). FAWE, has an historical relationship to the WG on Female Participation. AERC does not have a relationship with any of the Working Groups, though one can imagine benefits arriving from relationships with several of them.

APNET and WGBLM

79. APNET has worked with the WGBLM to help build publishing capacities in Africa. APNET values its partnership with the WGBLM, which it considers an active think-tank. In particular, it appreciates the group's ability to lobby at the ministerial level and sees this as a critical dimension of the partnership. Overall there has been a healthy cooperation with the WGBLM, even though the two organizations overlap in some functions.

AERC and FAWE

80. AERC intends to work with FAWE to map out a strategy to address the issues of low enrolment of women in graduate economics courses and low numbers of women employed as professional economists. This follows a study commissioned by AERC in 1993 which examined enrolment, participation and employment patterns of women as professional economists (AERC Phase V, 2000/1-2004/5, 41). This analysis is to be combined with both advocacy and concrete strategies to increase participation of women in both the labor market and academia.

81. A partnership between AERC and FAWE might also be forged to build capacity within ministries of education for educational planning and strategic allocation of funding for education, particularly for girls' education. Educational policy makers need to have a good grasp of the wider economic implications of the policies they formulate. Yet there is evidence education personnel lack skills in planning, and financial management. The Consortium may have this capability or at least may have ideas on what partnerships can be forged with what institutions. Perhaps this training can be mounted under AERC's envisaged applied economics program.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Common features of the networks studied

82. The three networks we have looked at have a number of features in common. On the positive side, they are positioned to influence policy at high levels, and they advocate for policy changes that can directly benefit the education sector (AERC is an exception, except that effective development-oriented economic changes are likely to have an *indirect* beneficial effect on education). In their advocacy efforts, these networks rely heavily on good research, which they conduct or support to inform their agenda.

83. The success to date of the three networks is also based on common features. Recognizing that information exchange and dissemination is an integral part of its activities, each has made a good use of resources to communicate internally and with partners. The three have committed leadership, representative of their constituents. They have renewable funding for continuing operations, such as newsletters, and have taken concrete steps taken to build capacity for long-term financial sustainability. Each has shown the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

84. The networks also share some common challenges: sustained financing, communications, and regular evaluations.

85. Despite their recognition of the importance of communication, technological lags, which reflect wider economic conditions, pose a challenge to reliable communications capabilities. Communication is *the* essential function of a network. Yet communication in Africa is constrained by insufficient physical capacity. According to Dubbeldam (1996, 15), the size of a network determines the type of communication; smaller networks can operate through personal contacts, which may be less costly to organize than for larger networks with more members. Larger networks must use forms of communication with a greater outreach capability, such as newsletters and mailings. In East Africa, ordinary mail is not a reliable means of communication because of delays and even non-delivery; this leaves courier services such as DHL as the next available option for sending documents—an expensive solution. Telephone, fax, road and air transport, gatherings such as conferences, workshops, and seminars, comprise other alternative communication channels. Lately web-sites and e-mail have become alternative means of communication to a great number of African organizations, although network problems also render this form of communication unreliable at best and inaccessible at worst. In many African contexts, communication tends to be sanctioned by budgetary constraints. The result of this is dependence on donors to meet the costs of providing communications services from the center to the periphery. Another result of this budgetary constraint is that information may not be disseminated promptly or adequately.

86. Sustained financing is another serious challenge. Like many small organizations in Africa, the transition from international financing to self-sustaining income has not been completed. According to Dubbeldam (1996, 16), donor agencies have a problem with extending support to networks, as they are “not concrete” enough...they are too elusive”. Although funds have generally been available to the networks under study, a major part of the funding goes towards the operational costs of maintaining the secretariat, which as someone noted is often problematic because “donors do not want their money to be spent on running the secretariat”. Thus, networks must find a strategy for funding these operational costs that does not depend on donors.

87. Finally, an absence of regular evaluation of activities (the exception here is AERC) may be hampering the quality of some services.

Links between Working Groups and networks

88. Widespread improvements in education in Africa depend on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in defining and implementing innovative activities, broad dissemination of information about programs and practices that work, and serious commitment by government to adopting homegrown innovations and adapting those that have worked under similar conditions. Greater collaboration between ADEA Working Groups and these and other networks would seem to offer mutual benefits. For the Working Groups, the networks offer opportunities to spread information about promising projects and activities, within countries and between countries. For the networks, the Working Groups can provide the support of high-level, committed officials to their programs.

89. This paper has described three strong networks with great potential as partners for Working Groups. ADEA should strengthen existing relationships between Working Groups and networks, such as that between the WGBLM and APNET; improve relationships with networks such as FAWE, which have greater potential for mutual benefits than have been exploited to date; and pursue relationships with networks such as AERC, which offer untapped possibilities for partnership.

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Appendix 1

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