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Beyond Primary Education:
Challenges and Approaches to Expanding Learning Opportunities in Africa

Parallel Session 5C

Non-Formal Education

Transitions from Primary to Post-Primary Education:
Using Non-Formal Learning Opportunities
to Increase Access and Relevance

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INTRODUCTION

The drive to ensure that all of Africa's children receive sufficient basic education is increasing student enrolments in primary schools and swelling the pressure on secondary schools to accommodate primary graduates. Education For All is also raising a number of challenges. These include but are not limited to the number of years and the objectives of a basic education, the actual transition from primary to post-primary education, and the relationship between formal and non-formal education.

Since Jomtien and the declaration of Education for All, SSA governments and international donors have focused their effort on universal primary education. A raft of donors have supported national education systems and also a number of non-formal education programs to reach all children and adolescents of school-going age, including those who are beyond the reach of national education systems for reasons of geography, culture, or poverty. Support has generally focused on two axes: access -- getting all school-age children into and through primary school; and quality -- improving the multiple components of education to make it meaningful and relevant, particularly given the sacrifices that many families must make to have their children educated.

There has been considerable progress in both educational access and quality. The progress is leading, naturally, to concern for post-primary education, its nature, its quality, and its objectives. And yet, many people remain unable to access primary school at all; many children begin a primary education but do not complete it; and many eligible primary graduates do not continue into post-primary education for a wide variety of reasons. In most African countries, universal primary education is not likely to become a reality by 2015.

Non-formal education programs are making a contribution to achieving EFA. Those programs designed to reach hard-to reach populations, over-age children and dropouts do reach them but the pilots are usually small and funded for limited periods of time. As a result, large numbers of children and young people wanting an education still have no access to primary education; in addition, large numbers of adolescents remain unable to access any form of post-primary education.

The question therefore is to what extent and in what ways alternative forms of education and training, including NFE, could help governments to achieve the goals of providing up to 8/9 years of basic education to all? Could the transition from primary to post-primary education be improved and expanded if alternative forms of delivery could help accommodate larger numbers of different types of students in different kinds of programs? What mechanisms need to be put in to place to facilitate this transition and how would these mechanisms relate to the established primary leaving examinations and to the entrance procedures into secondary education? Are there experiences in Africa with the construction of 'lifelong learning' pathways that offer parallel routes all the way to tertiary education for those people who for one reason or another cannot effectively participate in regular formal schooling?

These questions invite an exploration of the potential effects of the current limited government capacity to meet the demand for post-primary on the creation or enhancement of alternative 'formal' routes into and at the level of post-primary education. What are the implications for governance and partnerships and for the management of the education system? What are the implications for the demand and supply of teachers? What are the implications for curriculum

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(general and vocational competences) and student learning assessment? And last but not least, what are the implications for funding?

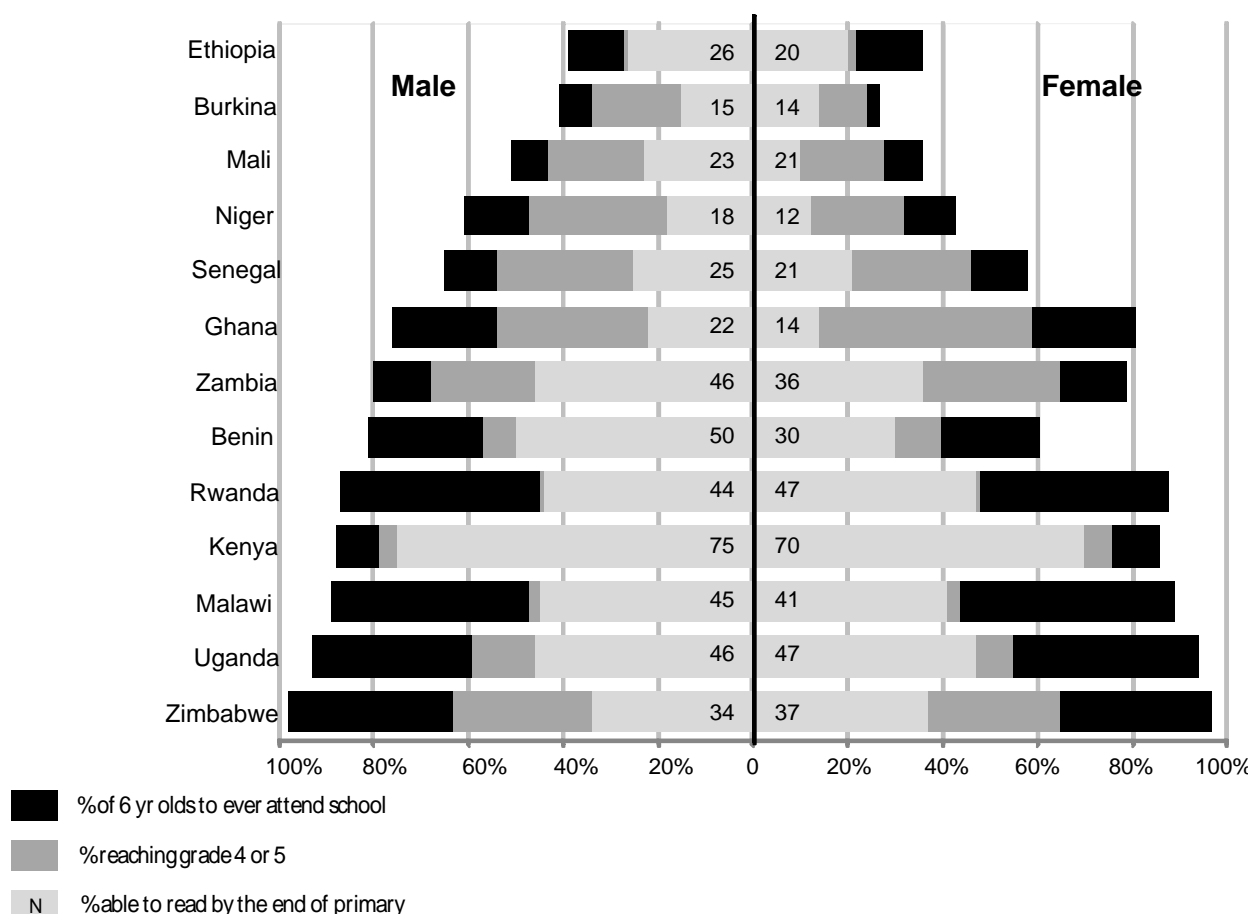## CHAPTER 1. CONSTRAINTS ON EXPANDING POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Current estimates suggest there are about 108 million primary age children in Sub Saharan Africa of whom about 91 million are enrolled. At secondary level there are 92 million children and about 25 million enrolled (UIS 2005 relating to 2002). This means that at a minimum 17 million children of primary school age and 67 million of secondary school age children are out of school. In reality the numbers are much greater.… The average [unweighted average of available data] GER at primary rates for SSA is now about 93% indicating that in many countries there are nearly enough places for universal enrolment if repetition rates and overage enrolment are reduced to low levels. Secondary gross enrolment rates averages about 25% overall and about 40% at lower secondary. Countries…with the lower enrolment rates are characteristically poorer.… (Lewin, 2007).

Inefficiencies in Primary Education
African governments, with international donors, have been focusing on making primary education available to all school-age children in part because of powerful economic arguments linking national development to an educated population (Mulkeen, 2005, SEIA 2001; UNESCO 2001; World Bank 2005, 2006, 2007). The expansion of post-primary education in SSA is constrained by many things, foremost among which are the inefficiencies of primary education systems that graduate, on average, approximately one-half of the students that enter Primary 1.

Primary education is characterized by **insufficient access rates, insufficient numbers of seats high repetition rates, low transition rates and high dropout rates.** It has been estimated

Access, Completion and Learning in Primary School

Legend:

■ %of 6 yr olds to ever attend school

▦ %reaching grade 4 or 5

N %able to read by the end of primary

4

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that two-thirds of the global gap in formal primary completion is due to children dropping out of school. (Ingram, Wils, Carrol and Townsend, 2006:14)   An unacceptably low percentage of children are acquiring basic skills in school such as literacy, which contributes to the low percentage of students making it to formal secondary school. Arguably, the insufficiency of NFE options enabling learners to find their way back into formal education may also considerably constrain the numbers of children getting a post-primary education.

The chart below shows data on access, completion and learning in primary school for thirteen Sub-Saharan African countries (Wils, Carrol and Barrow, 2005: 45). Countries at the bottom of the chart, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi and Kenya, are providing access for the vast majority of six-year old boys and girls. However, in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Malawi, a much lower percentage of six-year olds -- 34 percent of boys in Zimbabwe, 47 percent of girls in Uganda and 45 percent of boys in Malawi -- are making it through to Primary 4 or 5 and learning to read:
In Ethiopia, Burkina, Mali, and Niger, unacceptably low percentages of six-year-olds are gaining access to school, making it through to fourth or fifth grade and learning to read. For example, only 15 percent of boys and 14 percent of girls in Burkina Faso are learning to read by the fourth or fifth grade: for more than 80 percent of the population, formal primary school is not preparing them for further education.
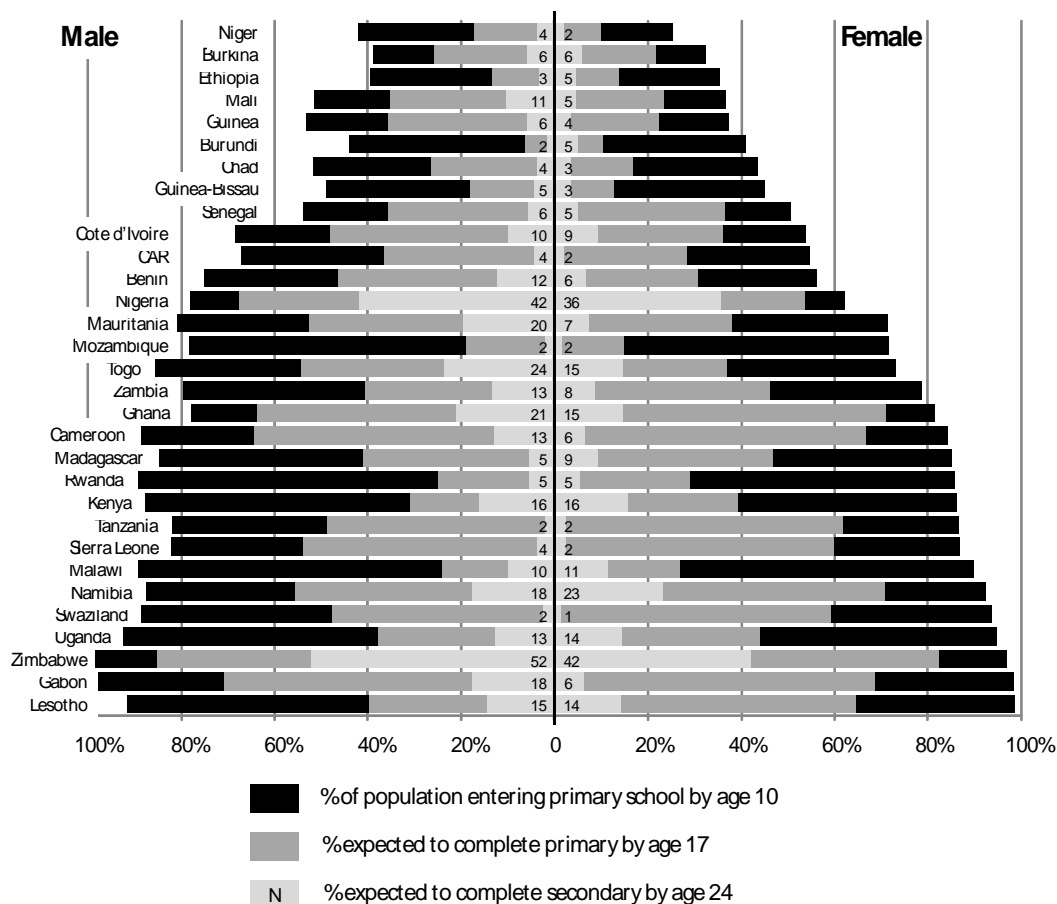
Across the continent, in countries with low and high levels of access, a large percentage of school-age children are still not being reached by the formal education system. On average, 73 percent of six year-old boys can enter school and 67 percent of the six-year old girls. Only 52 percent of the boys make it through to fourth or fifth grade, and only 46 percent of girls. This means that 48 percent of the school-age boys and 54 percent of the school-age girls have to find other ways to continue their education. If they cannot find alternatives, their education ends. If only 36 percent of the boys and 31 percent of the girls are literate by the time they end their primary education, the remaining two-thirds would need some remedial work to help them acquire the skills they would need to succeed were they to move on to secondary schooling (Ingram, Wils, Carrol and Townsend, 2005: 45).

At present, schools are providing very little of this kind of remedial work which is mainly taken care of by private tutors or institutions to the extent there is a market for such compensatory teaching – which is increasingly the case in many urban areas. Learners living in conditions of poverty in rural and peri-urban areas sometimes have access to remedial programs provided through non-formal education offered by NGOs, community organizations, faith-based organizations or (quite rarely) by governments, or through open and distance learning. But only very limited numbers of learners are being reached in these ways and the numbers of programs are nowhere close to what is needed. Moreover, learners must generally still pass the national primary leaving examination in its entirety to qualify for junior secondary education.

Regardless of the delivery mechanisms, the poor performance of education systems as a whole explains why, on average, in Sub-Saharan Africa only 12 percent of young men and 9 percent of young women can be expected to complete secondary education by the time they are 24 years old. The chart below compares, in 31 countries, the percentage of the population entering primary school by age 10, the percentage expected to complete primary by age 17, and the percentage expected to complete secondary by age 24 (Ingram, Wils, Carrol, and Townsend, 2006: 13, 14, 16).

With the exception of Zimbabwe and Nigeria, less than 25 percent of the population in this set of countries can be expected to complete secondary school by age 24. Even in countries with almost universal access to primary education, completion of secondary remains extremely low. For

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Entry to Elementary and Persistence Through to Secondary Education

Country	Male	Female
Niger	4	2
Burkina	6	6
Ethiopia	3	5
Mali	11	5
Guinea	6	4
Burundi	2	5
Chad	4	3
Guinea-Bissau	5	3
Senegal	6	5
Cote d'Ivoire	10	9
CAR	4	2
Benin	12	6
Nigeria	42	36
Mauritania	20	7
Mozambique	2	2
Togo	24	15
Zambia	13	8
Ghana	21	15
Cameroon	13	6
Madagascar	5	9
Rwanda	5	5
Kenya	16	16
Tanzania	2	2
Sierra Leone	4	2
Malawi	10	11
Namibia	18	23
Swaziland	2	1
Uganda	13	14
Zimbabwe	52	42
Gabon	18	6
Lesotho	15	14

Scale: 100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ % of population entering primary school by age 10

▇ % expected to complete primary by age 17

N % expected to complete secondary by age 24

example in Uganda 95 percent of the population enters primary school by age 10, but only 15 percent of women and 13 percent of men can be expected to complete secondary school. In Malawi, 90 percent of boys enter primary secondary school but only 10 percent can be expected to complete secondary.

Availability of Post-primary Places

The number of available post-primary places constitutes another constraint to the expansion of post-primary education in SSA. Many of the children who do make it to the end of the primary cycle fail to enter formal secondary school because there are not enough seats for them. In Uganda and Malawi only 37 and 36 percent respectively of primary school completers make the transition to formal secondary school. In Kenya, Zambia and Senegal, approximately half of primary completers successfully enter secondary school.[1] "*Some simple conclusions are that in the majority of SSA countries there are not yet enough school places to enroll all school age children at primary level, and that many more are excluded from lower secondary than primary. Secondary enrollments in lower income SSA countries are very low though lower secondary is increasingly seen as part of basic education and of EFA.*" (Lewin, 2007).

The number of new secondary places needed depends on a range of policy choices e.g. how fast to expand primary, how quickly to reduce repetition and dropout at primary which determines the numbers completing, how to select pupils into lower and upper secondary school, how to manage

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[1] Primary to secondary transition rates taken from an analysis by the EQUIP2 project of data from ministries of education and development agency sources.

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the primary/secondary transition rates, and not to reduce repetition and overage enrolment at secondary (Lewin, 2007).

Wealth

The private costs of secondary education, even when education is free, constrain access. We know that wealthier, urban boys go to and stay in school longer than rural boys and girls and that more urban and rural girls dropout of school early to tend to chores at home or to be married than urban and rural boys. Rural girls constitute a significant group of under-educated children and adolescents. What happens to them if all routes to education are closed?

Gender, Culture, and Location

These are clearly constraints to greater access to primary and to post-primary education. Demographic constraints are also at work: where growth rates are high and there are too few adults to pay for the education of many children, the choices that are made typically run along gender lines: boys more often than girls are selected to go to school.

Quality

The poor quality of education has been a constraint on expanding access. Poor quality is a result of the cumulative effect of the absence of many of elements that would contributet to students learning well: teacher training and supervision, a pedagogy to engage student minds; a relevant, attractive curriculum of obvious utility; the physical aspects of classrooms and the ratios of teachers to pupils, the pertinence and availability of textbooks and other learning stimuli; the leadership of head teachers to ensure support to teachers and communication with parents; the organization of the daily and annual schedules; the methods used evaluate student learning. In 2003, the results on the TIMSS test yielded an international average math score for eighth graders of 466/800 points. In Botswana, Ghana and South Africa, average scores for eighth graders were 366, 276, and 264 respectively; eighth graders in Singapore averaged 605 (TIMSS, 2003). The quality of the education, measured in this way, bears improvement.

Availability of Trained Teachers

"*The economics of expanded access to schooling are closely related to the costs of salaries for teacher which in most SSA countries account for the bulk of recurrent expenditures.*" (Lewin, 2007). With this in mind, we can better understand the challenge that to achieve the goals of universal primary enrollment requires quadrupling the numbers of teachers to more than 1,361,000 new teachers between 2000 and 2015 (Schwille, 2007).[2] As more countries reach their UPE goals and begin to increase access to secondary education, even more teachers will be needed. This serious constraint to expanding post-primary education could benefit from the experience of shortened, highly supervised NFE teacher training programs, which could be adapted into formal teacher training to help accommodate the soaring projections for primary and secondary teachers (Lewin, 2001).

Current teacher training policy and practice are inadequate for producing the numbers of teachers that will be needed, especially as secondary enrollments continue to grow (Lewin and Caillods 2001; OECD 2002, and 2004; Mulkeen *et al*, 2005). Using demographic and education system data from six African countries -- Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia – we can project teacher demand and show that supply mechanisms and inefficiencies constrain the expansion of post-primary education (Schuh-Moore, DeStefano, Terway, Balwanz 2007). Data from the most recent *Global Monitoring Report*, the Education Policy and Data Center, UIS, and the World Bank,

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[2] World Bank simulations based on UIS.

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among others, on primary completion, transition to secondary, secondary completion, and entry to post-secondary teacher training and/or higher education illustrate how the current formal teacher training systems contribute to the post-primary bottleneck. Not only is the number of potential teacher candidates too small to meet the needs but the teacher training institutes also lack the space and the funding to train significantly more post-primary teachers.

The number of secondary teachers needed to meet the demands in six different countries in SSA can be projected making different assumptions about the numbers of students moving to post-primary and the numbers of teachers that can be trained in teacher training institutes (Schuh-Moore *et a.l*, 2007). A projection model that makes use of a standard cohort projection can show how students move through the primary cycle and on to secondary. The projection can simulate changes in repetition and dropout and in the percent of students successfully transitioning from primary to secondary.

If primary completion and transition to secondary increase by 25 percent, the six countries in the projection will need approximately 321,561 new lower secondary teachers. If student flow and transition to secondary improve by 50%, the countries will need approximately 391,711 new teachers.

Assuming a 25 percent increase in the percentage of students making it though primary and into secondary, each of these six African countries will need to produce teachers at an annual rate that surpasses what they have been producing during the last several years. For example, Kenya will need to produce an additional 119,000 teachers by 2015, 71,000 more than what the current system of teacher training is capable of producing. The annual rate of increase in the number of teachers in Kenya would need to almost triple to meet the projected 25 percent increase in students going onto secondary. Similarly, in Malawi, if there the number of students moving from primary to secondary were to increase by 25 percent, the teacher training system would need to produce additional teachers at an annual rate far higher than what they have historically been able to do. Uganda would need to double its annual increase in teacher supply to meet the same modest target.

Qualified secondary teachers are the most expensive to train and the most difficult to recruit and retain especially in math, science and technology. The shortfall of math, science and technology teachers doubly constrains the expansion of post-primary education because of the numbers of teachers and the quality of education that students will receive (Scott, 2001; Lewin, 2002). Pre-service teacher training in most of SSA has a limited capacity especially when TTIs are residential; the costs are further compounded in some countries where HIV/AIDS is having a serious effect.

Some of the countries for which the EQUIP2 project has done projections will need to more than double their teaching forces in the next eight years to successfully expand secondary education. Two limitations inherent in most education systems have created this looming shortfall of secondary teachers.

First, education systems must produce their own future labor forces. The degree to which the system can efficiently move learners through educational levels determines whether schools will have the necessary future teachers to continue to expand access. Too often, repetition and dropout rates limit the number of potential candidates that continue through the education system, thus limiting the future pool of potential teachers. The case of Zambia is an example of the losses that happen throughout the system. In 2005, approximately 467,000 students entered Primary 1. Of these first graders, approximately 104,000 will complete secondary education in 2016 assuming

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constant repetition and dropout rates. In 2005, of the approximately 43,000 students who completed grade 12, only 4,430 entered the TTCs to become primary teachers and   2,185 more entered TTCs to become secondary teachers. Of the 2,185 who entered TTCs, only 2,100 graduated. If TTC graduates are the only available pool of potential secondary school teachers, then the country will never be able to produce the required number of teachers cost-effectively to meet even modest projections of expanded access to formal secondary education. However, compared to the 2,100 TTC graduates in 2005, there were 43,000 secondary completers, a pool of potential lower secondary teachers that is 19 times greater.

The second limitation is the existing approach to teacher development. Pre-service teacher training as it is currently organized is constrained by limited space in teacher training colleges; by the time required to train teachers, particularly specialized secondary education teachers; the high cost of running TTCs; competition from other labor market options, and the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Formal secondary education can be realistically expected to expand only if alternative approaches to the recruitment, training and support of teachers are envisaged . Non-formal approaches may be particularly instructive in this area.

CHAPTER 2. EMERGENCE OF NON-FORMAL PATHWAYS AS ALTERNATIVE MODES OF BASIC EDUCATION[3]

In the years since Dakar, international policy debates on basic education have evolved with respect to non-formal education. In a context where access and quality continue to be problematic, its value and significant contribution to education have come to be more appreciated. NFE covers a set of complementary approaches designed to improve the chances of achieving EFA. This support has been especially necessary given the socio-economic constraints in the developing world limiting the reach of formal education systems. The policy debates have led to more information about NFE that could assist countries to develop their own visions and approaches to it.   This is particularly important for honing education policies that accommodate NFE and its expansion into post-primary education so that more children access primary education and make the transition into post-primary education.

Governments and international technical and funding agencies are increasingly aware that unless extraordinary efforts are made to combine educational reform with the mobilization of large amounts of additional resources (Bruns *et al*, 2003), few countries will achieve universal primary education by 2015 through conventional formal schooling. It has also become increasingly clear that national development will be severely hampered if the significant populations of out-of-school youth and adults are not educated in some meaningful way.

Donors and governments are thus increasingly aware of the need for a more visible and robust complementarity between formal and non-formal education as part of the strategy to reach all people. The case has been made for NFE as part of a broader national human resources strategy (cf. Manzoor, 1989; Oxenham *et al.*, 2002; Easton *et al.*, 2003).

NFE Diversity and Flexibility
The renewed interest in NFE has led to an effort to examine its myriad forms and potential to meet a range of needs and circumstances of different beneficiary groups. Particular attention is being

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[3] This chapter draws significantly on a background paper for the *Global Monitoring Report* 2008 (Hoppers, 2007a)

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given to the forms of NFE that provide a flexible and relevant equivalent of formal education to young people who either cannot access formal schools or who have prematurely left school for reasons associated with poverty, home conditions, cultural practices, geographical distance, the impact of HIV and AIDS and/or situations of conflict. This group of unreached people includes children beyond the 'regular' school age who are forced to look for alternative ways of getting a basic education. Above all, this group includes girls who for a host of reasons go to school less and for less long than boys.

Many non-formal education programs have sought to redress disadvantages by tailoring programs to the needs and circumstances of the communities. It is also becoming apparent that different kinds of disadvantage have different implications for designing NFE education and training programs (Rogers, 2004; WGNFE, 2005; Hoppers, 2005; UNESCO, 2005; Hoppers, 2007b). NFE is thus particularly important from an equity perspective, as unschooled and undereducated children are overwhelmingly poor, young, rural and female (UIS with UNICEF, 2005).

Complementary Versus Parallel Forms of NFE
A distinction can be made between two types of 'NFE-as-alternative' provisions that play a role here: NFE as a flexible provision of primary education that offers complementary and equivalent routes in basic education, leading to the same essential learning outcomes and opportunities but by different modalities; and NFE as parallel programs that are not directly related to the formal system and offer different approaches to learning with goals and opportunities that are more directly related to the local socio-economic environment.

Complementary programs include those targeting un-reached children as well as well as 'remedial programs' for dropouts and/or over-age youngsters who can then complete their primary education either by resuming regular schooling or by taking the official primary leaving examination[4]. It is currently good practice that in both types of 'NFE as alternative' the curriculum and pedagogy are adapted to the needs of the learners, for example by adding a significant component of life- or even livelihood skills. Both NFE options can and in some countries do play a significant role when circumstances and the poor quality of formal primary education mean that only a small percentage of children complete primary education successfully (Hoppers, 2007b).

In Anglophone African countries, there is a tendency to try and expand complementary forms of NFE in order to enhance equivalent access to formal primary education. In many Francophone countries, the policy preference for assisting the unschooled and dropouts tends to be to develop and expand parallel NFE programs aiming to instill the knowledge and competences to lead productive and meaningful lives in their home communities. These programs tend to orientate the curriculum fully to the local context and the links with the formal education system are generally of lesser importance (WGNFE, 2005). Thus, NFE programs may have similar names (community schools, mobile schools, shepherd schools, market schools, etc.); but they may be inspired by different philosophies and guided by rather different policy and support frameworks.

New NFE programs are often designed for specific groups but may or may not provide the same competencies and curricula as in the formal system. It is common that these lead to 'hybrid' programs whereby components and cognitive education are merged with life skills, vocational

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[4]Terminology tends to be a problem in NFE. Agencies and governments often use 'complementary' when the provision is seen as an addition to what the mainstream provides. Complementary programs also include what are often in English referred to as 'supplementary' activities (i.e. as enrichment, such as remedial programs to enable dropouts to re-enter formal schools). In French 'complémentaire' refers mainly to the latter option.

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training and other support elements, depending on the perceived socio-economic, cultural, or psycho-social needs of the beneficiaries. There are also many small-scale and innovative programs that are piloted to respond to new emergencies such as the displacement of populations because of war or civil strife or the *ad hoc* living conditions of post-conflict reconstruction. Again these may be of the complementary of the parallel type of NFE. Increased variation and flexibility is raising questions about the outcomes that might be reasonably expected and how they be measured (Hoppers, 2006; Pieck, 2006).

Post-primary NFE Opportunities
NFE programs offering primary equivalent learning outcomes often do not offer a complete primary cycle but rather aim to enable learners to enter formal school before the final grade. Evidence, though inconclusive, indicates that these young people face great difficulties when transferring into a 'formal' environment where many of the same conditions that discouraged them from accessing formal schooling continue to affect meaningful participation (distance, poverty, rigid schedules). Many transferees tend to dropout altogether or find ways to benefit from skills training programs, which, however, rarely appear to build systematically on the earlier learning (Hoppers, 2007a and 2007b).

At the same time, there is much evidence for the existence of a wide variety of post-primary learning pathways other than formal general or technical/vocational education. These include skills development programs for young people that may or may not include labor market entry components while private colleges offering a range of skills and competences often in ICT, and training opportunities in the informal economy.

A major challenge to PPE is that many of the opportunities that do exist at this level for adolescents and youth are very small, are not based on prior qualifications and are not the formal system. Currently most of the planning to expand post-primary education focuses on lower secondary education and on formal vocational training, bypassing existing non-formal learning opportunities and thus chances to construct ladders and bridges across different forms of education and training. In so doing, large numbers of adolescents are left with only a very patchy and incomplete basic education that often lacks essential competences necessary for entering adult life.

Governance and Resource Mobilization
As NFE has gained in prominence, other national and international stakeholders have become more involved with planning and implementing basic education programs. These stakeholders are predominantly NGOs, CBOs, district councils and external technical and/or financial agencies who tend to enter the field as partners in policy dialogue, as advocates, implementers or initiators of NFE programs, as (co-) sponsors, or as facilitators of professional services, monitoring and research. Their role reflects their philosophy, their legal remit, resources and degrees of influence on governments or on each other.

In many countries, decentralization has contributed to greater local ownership of non-formal programs, more government involvement in planning and implementation, more effective local partnerships and sometimes enhanced local initiatives in developing and promoting relevant and appropriate basic education responses to local demands and needs. The degree to which local oversight occurs depends on the extent and capacity of local power and administrations and the availability of discretionary resources (Hoppers, 2007b).

Public-private partnerships have contributed to the development of NFE initiatives. Partnerships between NGOs, CBOs and district councils have been beneficial and have occasionally made it

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possible to effectuate a smooth transfer of responsibilities from international NGOs or technical agencies like UNICEF to local CBOs and councils.

Public-private partnerships have also sprung up among governments, agencies and private sector actors and led to arrangements for joint governance of NFE, new policy initiatives for expanding NFE or for mobilizing supplementary resources to develop NFE such as the *faire-faire* strategy in some West African countries that has led to the creation of common funds (Diagne and Sall, 2006). However, the low level of overall resources available for NFE development, especially for young people, and the extreme dependency on foreign donor agencies has raised serious questions regarding sustainability (Balima, 2006).

The decision of some African governments to mainstream selected complementary NFE programs so as to be able to draw on national education budgets deserves serious consideration (Hoppers, 2007b). Access to public funds will depend on the status of NFE provisions. Depending on whether they are treated, legally and administratively, as public programs provided through another type of 'school' or considered to be private schools, their futures may be very different (Hoppers, 2007b).

Systems Integration
The potential contribution of NFE to expanding the provision of primary as well as post-primary education for special categories of children who would otherwise have few possibilities of going to school is related to the nature and degree of integration. The more that specific NFE programs are incorporated within an overall framework of education within which they are recognized as a significant component with their own identity and contribution, the more effectively they can be expanded and improved to the extent necessary, and respond to the educational needs of their clients.

Currently in Africa, two approaches appear to dominate when it comes to integrating formal and non-formal education: a 'unitary one-system' approach and a 'dual (or multiple) system' approach (Hoppers, 2007b). In a 'unitary one-system' approach, selected NFE programs tend to be mainstreamed into the formal education system. The various aspects of NFE – curriculum, pedagogy, training and remuneration of teachers/instructors, access to funding, professional guidance and monitoring -- are largely merged with those of the formal system. While some or many of the essential features of NFE may be lost, integrated programs may get full and equivalent access to government grants. Stakeholders can negotiate the extent to which the core innovations are protected and depending on their influence, can preserve many of them. The unitary approach offers the benefit of promoting equity and articulation with the formal system.

In a 'dual' or 'multiple system' approach, governments can accept an essentially autonomous set of NFE alternatives with their own organizational, administrative, professional and funding arrangements and have the state play a role in policy coordination, registration, funding, teacher development and professional support supervision and quality control. Here, the NFE programs may retain their freedom and internal and external dynamics but their articulation with the formal system may be rather weak, if not in policy then in practice. Moreover, when non-government stakeholders run these programs, the programs have fewer chances of getting equitable funding. Complementary forms of NFE are more likely to be a feature of a unitary system approach to integration, whereas parallel forms are more associated with a multi-system approach.

Both approaches include risks to the further development of NFE programs. The unitary approach includes a strong risk of diluting the innovations of the NFE programs, which, constrained by government regulations and procedures, may not be able to evolve and expand easily to meet

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demand. By contrast, in a dual/multiple systems approach, autonomous parallel systems may be consolidated over time, each with their separate internal dynamics. This separate development may affect the coherence of the overall basic education system and lead to greater segmentation and inequities. In both cases, however, the formal system may well continue to constitute the norm and be a reference point for educational reform.

These two approaches to integration will have different effects on the efforts to widen the transition from primary to post-primary education. Horizontal and vertical articulation between NFE and FE may receive more emphasis in a unitary one-system framework, allowing for alternative pathways to be developed and possibilities of transferring from one to the other all under the umbrella of a national qualifications framework. The major challenge would be to create enough flexibility in the system so that a variety of learning tracks can emerge – in terms of continued general basic education, skills development options and hybrids of both, as related to demand and agreed upon by the stakeholders involved.

CHAPTER 3. RECENT NFE DEVELOPMENTS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES[5]

Non-formal education and training programs have targeted specific groups depending on the period, the politics, the education policy and the populations. In collaboration with many NGOs and foreign technical and funding agencies, programs have been designed and implemented that focused on vocational skills, agricultural training for agrarian youth to become 'super peasants,' health education and training for parents to better care for their infants and better prepare them for primary school; education for women (as a means to control population growth and improve children's health); education programs for refugees fleeing civil unrest, civil war or natural catastrophes; education for HIV/AIDs victims and other vulnerable populations.

NFE has thus targeted different groups and taken many forms running the gamut from community schools that closely resemble formal schools, to vocationalized agriculture-focused hybrid programs, life skills programs serving young people, HIV/AIDs victims and orphans and vulnerable children; to adult literacy and numeracy programs for over-age drop-outs or for people who have never gone to school. NFE students have been over- and under-age in addition to being school age. The education has usually been basic and rarely extended beyond primary level, with some exceptions. In all cases, the actual number of children, adults, mothers, orphans and vulnerable children, girls, refugees or HIV/AIDS affected families is very small, indeed only a fraction of those populations.

The relationship between NFE programs and formal school systems varies. In some countries, the national education policy acknowledges that NFE has a role to play in meeting the country's educational obligations and aspirations. In these cases, the perception of NFE is positive and its purpose is often to complement the education system by widening access, while it tends to be supported and institutionalized to some degree. In other countries, by contrast, NFE programs run parallel to the national education system. In these cases, NFE programs tend to be considered more as compensation to assist marginalized populations. In these countries, NFE programs tend to receive much less institutional support.

The examples that follow are grouped to reflect a range of policy attitudes towards NFE from exclusive/parallel to inclusive/complementary. The first two country examples, Mali and Burkina Faso, fall into the group of countries where NFE is more marginal to the formal school system.

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[5] This chapter draws in part on a background paper for the *Global Monitoring Report* 2008 (Hoppers, 2007a)

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Uganda and Namibia, by contrast, have included NFE in the national policy framework and struggle, each country in its own way, to accommodate the integration. Thailand offers the most striking example of a country that has a full-fledged, integrated education system whereby both formal and non-formal pathways are recognized, in policy and in practice.

Examples and Inspiration

MALI

Policies and Practices

Two major reforms have shaped the education system in Mali for the last two and a half decades: decentralization and a decade-long education reform. The process of decentralization, which began in 1992, redrew the administrative map of the country and sought greater community participation in and responsibility for relevant local development. The decade-long education reform (PRODEC) was launched in September 2001 to improve the quality and the efficiency of the highly centralized education system in order to achieve universal primary education for 7-13 year-olds by 2010.

PRODEC sought to address the fact that the majority of Malians are illiterate (especially women), and that the formal system cannot meet the needs of the population. A non-formal education sub-sector was created to run programs for illiterate adults and unschooled children and drop-outs in which NFE was defined as "*any form of organized education for illiterate adults (men and women) and for children (boys and girls) who are not in school or who have dropped out of school early, outside the classic educational structures.*"[6] (NFE policy document, Law no. 99-046, 28 December 1999).

Functional Literacy Centers, Centers for Women's Learning, and Education Centers for Development (CED) were created   Twenty CEDs were created in 1993 for rural dropouts and children who had never been to school. The three-year curriculum was revised a year later to include four years of accelerated basic education followed by two years of professional training. CEDs were thus set to give rural children a basic education and enough training so that they could find jobs. By 2005, 1068 CEDs had trained nearly 30,000 young people (Kane and Kone, 2007).

During about the same time, community schools were being established in southern Mali. Inspired by the example of BRAC in Bangladesh, the community schools program (*Les Ecoles de Village*) was implemented by Save the Children Federation-US (SCF-US) and funded by private donors and USAID. The program began on a small scale in 1992 and (Glassman *et al*., 2006). The initial three-year program of accelerated learning was geared to rural children and assumed that they would remain in their villages. However, at the urging of the communities, the program shifted quickly to become an adapted version of formal education. The adaptations included accommodating the agrarian calendar, teaching in local languages initially, using a local teacher trained in 'child-centered' pedagogies, free textbooks and learning materials but the curriculum was the national curriculum. By 2003, nearly 800 community schools were serving about one-third of the school-age children in Sikasso District and community school students were taking the national primary leaving exam, which gave them access the right to continue their education in secondary school

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[6] « *Toute forme d'éducation organisée et dispensée aux adultes analphabètes (hommes et femmes) et aux enfants (garçons et filles) non scolarisés ou déscolarisés précoces, en dehors des structures classiques d'enseignement* »

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(Glassman, 2004). Unlike the vocational CEDs which offered no alternatives for post-primary education, the non-formal community schools opened the door to post-primary education.

Stakeholders and Challenges
When USAID and private donor funding for the community schools ended in 2003, the Malian government used HIPC funding to continue to pay the teachers. Once the state started paying teacher salaries, however, community contributions diminished, leaving teachers even more vulnerable as payments were often months late in coming. When it was proposed to the ministry of education to upgrade teachers to integrate them and the community schools, the reaction was one of silence (Personal communication, Glassman). The perception that community schools were inferior was well entrenched and there was considerable apprehension about the significant costs of the integration.

The major strengths of the NFE policy in Mali is that it clearly targets rural children and women, considered to be the most marginalized populations. However, NFE remains a parallel sub-system of the national education system and only reaches relatively small numbers of potential candidates, in part because the local authorities appear not to be sufficiently informed or trained. A main weakness is that NFE policy was not conceived to enable 'graduates' to make a transition to forms of post-primary education. As a result, the different NFE programs have remained rather small, reaching few rural children and adolescents and offering only a limited range of basic education outcomes.

BURKINA FASO
Policies and Practices
The Burkinabe constitution (1991) recognizes education as a fundamental right for each citizen. At the same time Burkina is one of the world's least developed countries. Within this context education, with an emphasis on basic education for all, is regarded as a key to poverty alleviation and the country's development.

The formal education system absorbs about one-third of the primary school-age population, which has spawned great expectations for NFE. A single ministry (MEBA) was created for all basic education and literacy in 1988 and has maintained an integrated vision of basic education in which the formal and non-formal sub-systems were brought together as complementary sub-systems to give each citizen a minimum level of education in accordance with the needs and potentialities of the country. It has been acknowledged that the two systems should interact with one another and eventually coalesce in a common framework for applying what has been learned from education and literacy (Balima, 2006).

The Education Outline Act of 1996 (Burkina Faso, 1996) defined NFE as involving "*all activities of education and training, structured and organized within a non-academic framework. It concerns every person who desires to receive special training in a non-academic context*," This framework has protected and promoted NFE development, so that innovative approaches to curriculum and pedagogy could be adopted. At the same time this approach – unlike the Namibia one, may have made a more equitable treatment of non-formal alternatives by government more difficult. In addition, the separate treatment of the two sub-systems may also inhibit further reflection on a lifelong learning approach for young people, through which unschooled or school dropouts may eventually gain access to formal or non-formal forms of JSE.

In practice, formal and non-formal education and training have evolved as different sub-systems with different philosophies and support mechanisms. There have been only minor efforts to build

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bridges. Given the resource constraints, the emphasis has firmly remained on basic education up to a grade 4 equivalent. In terms of continuing education, technical and vocational skills development (of the non-formal variety) still appears to be regarded as the most suitable form.[7]

NFE and training includes (1) an integrated, functional literacy program, supported by the creation of Permanent Literacy and Training Centers (CPAF); (2) non-formal basic education for non- or partially-schooled adolescents (9-15 years) through programs like the Centers for Basic Non-formal Education (CEBNF) and community schools; and (3) skills training programs through various public or private centers for primary graduates, which are connected to the Ministry of Employment, Labor and Youth.

NFE accelerated primary programs last for 4 years with two years of instruction in national languages followed by 2 years of French instruction. Other innovations like the TIN-TUAs Banmanuara Centers (CBNs) and the Bilingual Schools start with a bilingual approach and prepare learners for the Primary Leaving Examination. These are actually part of the formal system and receive full funding from the state (CBNs are being recognized as 'formal').

NFE total enrolment capacity has remained very small in relation to demand and highly fragmented without effective bridges between the programs. In2004, NFE provisions enrolled approximately 5000 learners in about 100 schools. By comparison formal sector innovations (bilingual and satellite schools) enrolled about 30.000 learners from the 1.5 million out-of-school 9-15 year olds (enrolment in the formal system was about 1.1 m) (MAE/Danida, 2005). Thus there is considerable scope for further enrollment into both formal and non-formal programs.

NFE programs for adolescents, youth and adults focus on knowledge and skills considered relevant for daily life, on environmental concerns, awareness of rights and responsibilities, participation in community development, and livelihood skills but these have not been introduced in the formal education curriculum. MEBA has reportedly adopted bilingual teaching to further improve the formal school system (Balima, 2006).

Stakeholders and Challenges
The state, the donor community and civil society have become the main stakeholders in NFE. However, the partners have not yet been able to address the extreme fragmentation of NFE or to improve linkages with formal education. The problem of coordination among different ministries dealing with education and training still has to be tackled successfully (Burkina Faso, MEBA, 2000). By contrast, NGOs and civil society organizations involved in NFE are better organized, and have their own association, which has established a positive working relation with MEBA and has become a model for the sub-region.

Public-private partnerships (*faire-faire*) have been adopted in NFE governance and management and a common Fund (FONAENF) was created to mobilize more and diverse NFE resources (Tiendrebeogo and Batabe, 2006; Diagne and Sall, 2006). Programs other than literacy (i.e. those for non-formal basic education) are only now beginning to benefit from support. Insufficient resources have seriously affected NFE expansion and quality improvement, jeopardized several programs and reduced monitoring and evaluation (Balima, 2006). It remains unclear whether 'successful' graduation from NFE has an effect on people's lives.

The major strengths of basic education development concern increased coordination among the

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[7] Based on personal information from MEBA and APENF staff in Ouagadougou, Feb. 2007

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NGOs and between NGOs and government, the progress made in designing public-private partnerships and raising supplementary funding for NFE development. The near absence of synergies, collaborations and bridges between formal and non-formal education, and between NFE and PPE remains a major weakness. The successful creation of wider partnership of stakeholders involved across the education and training field may be the key to address the problems of EFA for the entire population.

UGANDA

Policies and Practices
The beginnings of the current policy regime in Uganda lie with the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) of 1987. Its findings and recommendations were later reflected in a government White Paper of 1992, which has served as a basis for promulgating policy ever since. Subsequent policies and plans for basic education have included the Primary Education Reform Program (PERP, 1993), the Uganda Children's Statute (1996), the launch of UPE in 1997, the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP, 1998-2003), the Education Sector Support Program (ESSP, 2004-2015), and the launch of Universal Secondary Education in 2006.

UPE was specifically to benefit all children of 6-13. In the context of equitable access to quality basic education special interventions were considered necessary for the benefit of children who were socially excluded, as caused by disability, geographical location, culture, ethnicity, language, and conflict (Eilor, 2005). NFE initiatives were considered to have special relevance where UPE could not yet be achieved for social, economic and environmental reasons – such as in the case of over-age children, children in pastoral areas and in fishing villages. NFE is presented as providing alternative forms of primary education delivery complementary to the regular school system, but leading to equivalent results.

Here NGOs were to make a special contribution by piloting NFE initiatives (such as COPE, ABEK, CHANCE), responding to the circumstances of these young people (Hoppers, 2007b). Thus, programs were initiated in different parts of the country: such as Adult Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK), Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE) and CHANCE schools. A major role has been played by international NGOs, such as Action-Aid and Save the Children Fund, working closely with local authorities and community-based organizations.

NFE programs tend to be focused on the needs and circumstances of disadvantaged learners in the area. They provide a condensed and adapted curriculum in selected core subjects, using locally recruited teachers in facilities that reflect local conditions. Life skills, health-related and livelihood skills complement the core curriculum, in varying degrees of collaboration with the community. Each program follows its own philosophy and is responsible for providing management and pedagogical support, with some or more involvement of the local education office (Chelimo, 2006). NGOs and international sponsors have seen it as their task to develop alternative but equivalent proposals, pilot these and hand over the programs to the local authorities (responsible for policy implementation) to be administered as integrated parts of the local education provision.

Government has responded by initiating (as from 2001) a process to develop an appropriate policy framework for 'basic education for disadvantaged children', through which the complementary forms of NFE could be mainstreamed. This meant that the programs have been going through procedures for formal recognition, for obtaining equitable access to government funding, and for receiving appropriate administrative and professional support at local level. Among others, this

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process entailed special attention to the appointment and training of instructors, their placement on the national payroll of teachers, and setting up mechanisms for monitoring and inspection (Hoppers, 2007b).

Although the ministry of education has been keen to maintain the integrity of the overall education system, ongoing consultations among all stakeholders concerned have produced a government commitment to maintain the special non-formal features of the programs (flexibility and adapted curriculum and pedagogy) and to ensure equivalence. Government is still working towards the adoption of the new policy and of the adjusted Education Act by Parliament.

At present most complementary NFE programs take their learners up to the equivalent of Primary 5 where they either transfer to a nearly primary school to prepare for the Primary Leaving Examination or proceed to informal skills training or to the labor market. Some initial attention has been given to the possibility of having NFE graduates transition into community polytechnics at secondary level (Hoppers, 2007b). It was envisaged that the polytechnics would be established in all sub-counties for non-selected primary leavers. Between 2000-2002, a lot of work was done to operationalize the concept in preparation for the expected bulge of UPE leavers and it became a key component of the draft policy for Post-Primary Education and Training (Uganda, MoES, 2001; 2002a and 2002b).

In subsequent years, however, the proposals had to be drastically curtailed for financial reasons (in 2002 only 19.3 per cent of the budget was allocated to secondary education and TVET together as against 66.7 per cent to UPE [Uganda, MoES, 2002b: 13]). The launching of universal secondary education (USE) has recently superseded other policy priorities. Presently, 16 government-aided community polytechnics are functioning compared to the 850 that were foreseen (Uganda, MoES, 2003:10).

Stakeholders and Challenges
A major strength in Uganda has been the emerging practice of ongoing consultations among all stakeholders in education, in particular between government, donors and NGOs at policy level, and between ministry of education, district authorities and NGOs (with donors) also at implementation level. This has facilitated extensive reviews of UPE implementation, and joint reflections on policies and practices regarding basic (primary) education for disadvantaged children.

NGOs have had a major contribution to the national policy formation process regarding usage of NFE as alternative delivery of UPE. Moreover, it appears that many district authorities, in spite of major resource and capacity constraints, are able to display valuable initiatives in coordinating policy implementation efforts and in looking for ways and means to enhance the responsiveness of learning provisions to the needs and circumstances of diverse local populations.

Yet, within the current effort at mainstreaming, programs risk remaining *ad hoc* solutions without any clear common identity, common governance structure, or common regulatory and support framework. As a result, NFE provisions are also unlikely to acquire a clear positive face for the public as schools have had for the last century. Thus, the government still faces a major challenge in integrating NFE (and other) alternative education programs into the wider UPE and USE system development efforts, in such a way that the identity of NFE programs can be enhanced while being facilitated to take a specific place within the broader government-supported public education system.

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NAMIBIA

Policies and Practices

In Namibia, a national vision on an integrated approach to basic education has been evolving since independence in 1990. This has benefited from considerable reflection, stimulated through international interactions, in particular CONFINTEA 1997 and Dakar 2000. It resulted in a National Plan of Action for Adult Learning in 1998, the recognition of Namibia as a 'Learning Nation' by the 1999 Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training, and the endorsement of the contribution of adult learning to national development in the Second Plan (2001-05) (Namibia, 2002).

NFE equivalent education is part of the formal system, defined as 'all learning leading to certification'. Parallel tracks exist between the regular school system and the national literacy program, followed by the Adult Upper Primary Education Program, leading to further academic distance education or non-formal skills training and employment preparation programs (Namibia, DABE, 2003). Much NFE for youth and adults consists of formal education through non-formal (i.e. non-conventional) channels, such as literacy and distance learning.

The national literacy program has a basic and a functional literacy stage slanted towards agriculture, health, small business development, etc. and a literacy-in-English stage which are considered to be equivalent to 4 years of primary schooling (Indabawa *et al.,* 2002). About 25.000 learners per year of which 70% were women take this course. The adult upper primary education (AUPE) program provides a Grade 7 equivalent qualification and trains about 6000 adults per year (Namibia, DABE, 2003)

Through NAMCOL distance learning courses exist at both junior and senior secondary level and serve 25-30.000 learners per year (Namibia, 2006). In recent years, the literacy program has begun to include Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment, in addition to Community Learning and Development Centers, and Family Literacy. Community-Based Skills and Development Centers for youth and adults focus on training and employment (Namibia, DABE, 2003). The National Qualifications Scheme makes it possible to create equivalences for NFE so that learners can move between the systems.

Current bottlenecks reportedly concern the low transition rates of young people between the literacy programs and the AUPE option for continuing education, and between the latter and the NAMCOL program at JSE level. This means that for many young people NFE provisions may still function as an involuntary exit route out of education. This apparent problem of vertical articulation in NFE could be an obstacle in a context where skills development is a key strategy for national development. Presently new routes to skills development at PPE level are being pursued in the context of the national investment program for education and training, ETSIP (Namibia, 2006).

Stakeholders and Challenges

NFE resources come from the ministry of education, other government ministries, para-statal and private sectors, NGOs and CBOs, and international agencies. The role of the state in both execution of programs and in the facilitation of civil society and private sector involvement is significant (Oxenham, 2004). The expansion of Community Learning and Development Centers across most regions to inform and offer the wide variety of non-formal or informal learning activities involving different ministries has been an important strategy. The centers are regarded as models for local learning centers that are now established in government buildings, company and church facilities, and education institutions around the country.

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The political commitment of the government to enhance NFE for youth and adults within a clear national vision for socio-economic development has strengthened the literacy program and built opportunities for continued education and training within a frame for lifelong learning. The greater challenge is to improve the throughput in the non-formal channels so that many more young people can move through the system into PPE, benefiting from both further general education and skills training. Effective coordination across government and all civil society and private sector partners still has to be established.

THAILAND
Policies and Practices
Thailand has a long valued NFE as an essential part of its education and training system. NFE plays a major role in increasing access and in extending the minimum required years of schooling for all, lasting for 6 to 9 years, reflecting the Buddhist concept of *Khit-pen*: "*the ideal of a person who is a critical, rational and a problem solver.*" In the 1980s and 90s, NFE came to replace adult education and applied to "*any learning activity outside formal school classrooms that assists the out-of-school populations to acquire knowledge, skills and information essential for the improvement of the quality of everyday life*" (Thailand-ONFEC, 2006a)

The concept moved from 'compensatory education' to exploring NFE and informal education as 'complements to formal education' within the overall holistic, integrated framework of lifelong learning. Specific distinctions are now made between different out-of-school population groups, including those who never attended school, those who completed primary but wish to continue, those in disadvantaged conditions to access any form of education or training, and special groups of people such as ex-pat Thais and street children (Thailand-ONFEC, 2006a:14). By the mid-1990s the country still had about 26% of the 3-17 age-group out of school, of which a majority was working or enrolled in some form of NFE (Thailand-MOE, n.d.).

The 1997 National Education Act integrates different forms of learning within a context of lifelong learning: 9 years of formal or non-formal basic education (including secondary and vocational) and higher education and provides for the flexibility and appropriateness of NFE organization and curriculum and the transferability of credits across different types of education (Thailand-ONEC, 1999). Different population groups can thus opt for different learning routes from primary education to university, depending on their needs and circumstances.

NFE applies to everyone who cannot attend formal schooling (e.g. prison inmates, street children, Thais living abroad). It has now expanded from literacy and primary education to an extensive network of provision reaching to secondary education, vocational training, life skills through distance learning, workplace and community learning centers, and sharing resources with the formal system. Since 2003, five main NFE programs exist: i) literacy promotion (i.e. the national literacy campaign); ii) continuing education (equivalency programs of general and vocational education for further studies or work); iii) education for life skills development (including livelihood skills); iv) vocational development (for those in the same occupation), v) and vocational skills training (short-courses for individuals) (Suwantipak, 2005).

The current strategic plan for NFE (the "Non-formal Education Roadmap") aims to assist the national system to achieve that by 2008 at least 50% of the working-aged population enters secondary education, and to ensure an average of 9.5 years of education for all (Thailand-ONFEC, 2006b).

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NFE activities are implemented through District NFE Centers and Community Learning Centers that have public libraries and exist in most sub-districts around the country, especially in remote rural areas. The communities are largely responsible for managing and coordinating center activities (identifying the learning demand, facilitating access to courses or other learning activities), which enhances local control and sustainability. Regional centers provide specialized support in curriculum development (within a common national guiding framework) and materials design (Thailand-ONFEC, 2006a).

Stakeholders and Challenges

Until 2003 the main driving force behind NFE development was the Department of NFE in the ministry of education, which became the Office of the Non-formal Education Commission under the Office of the Permanent Secretary (Suwantipak, 2005). The move demonstrated the momentum that NFE had acquired within a context of lifelong learning. The ONFEC works through regional NFE centers, provincial centers and community learning centers and special institutions; it works with many other ministries, civil society and private sector organizations and with some international agencies. Quality assurance work is done internally and externally through the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment. NFE only receives 1.3% of the education budget, so supplementary funding from other sources, including community contributions, has remained essential (Thailand-ONFEC, 2006a).

The coordination between NFE and FE tends to depend on the degree to which NFE resembles FE: where NFE resembles FE, as in the case of the community schools, the same national school-leaving examinations validate NFE and FE primary students and gives them access to secondary school. Should NFE students dropout or not pass the end-cycle examination, however, they have few possibilities for accessing a post-primary education that also validates their NFE training. The absence of such a mechanism leaves many children – even those in formalized non-formal schools – with few options of moving into post-primary education. The main challenges are to maintain the momentum, increase resources to NFE, reach all disadvantaged groups, and further improve professional support services (Piromruen and Keoyote, 2001).

CHAPTER IV. POLICY ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has reviewed the problematics of access, quality and relevance of primary education. It has shown that around Africa, many categories of children and young people of school-going age (6-18) have very serious problems in accessing a basic (primary) education of 6-7 years, let alone a basic education lasting 8-9 years that includes a junior secondary or skills training component. Current trends show that for the foreseeable future the majority of children in many African countries will not be able to access PPE as it is presently constituted.

The chapters of this paper have also shown that in quite a few African countries, governments, and especially ministries of education have for various reasons come to pay much more attention to the question of how all children and young people – in such diverse sets of circumstances – can get access to an acceptably long 'basic education. '. The inevitable attention required to expand to junior secondary education (or 'continued' basic education) does not mitigate this challenge; on the contrary, it is likely to make the challenge even more complex and daunting. Yet popular pressure and discourses on human rights, economic growth, and social inclusion force all stakeholders to widen their horizon about to what can and needs to be done.

The paper demonstrates that some African governments, often in collaboration with donor and local partners, have taken action: to examine their own education backyards more carefully to see what

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initiatives have already taken place; to selectively recognize unconventional practices and to try and facilitate coordination and support; to establish their own public or public-private cooperation programs so as to complement traditional formal schooling provision; and/or to initiate more systemic reviews of policy frameworks and strategies in order to accommodate those who for all sorts of reasons cannot enter or complete a meaningful amount of basic education and training.

In this last chapter, we aim to review some of the major issues and challenges that ministries of education, governments and other partners face when trying to think more holistically about widening access, transition and completion of a more extended basic education cycle. Thus, we shall look at the wider policy frameworks, the issue of learning outcomes and articulation, the role of NFE in widening access and participation, and the problematics of widening the channels for making the transition between 'primary' and 'post-primary' basic education. Special attention will be given to the issue of the teachers.

NFE and Education Policy

Alternative forms of primary, junior secondary and/or skills training programs (such as NFE, forms of open learning, distance education, faith-based schools, mobile schools, informal skills training, work-based education and training, etc.) raise many policy questions that ministries often find rather difficult to address.

These include: what are the purposes of such programs? Are they about the same education by different means or about different and unconnected forms of education altogether? What should be the goals and outcomes of such programs? Is this about equity and equal opportunity or only about compensation for those who have lost out? What mechanisms could provide for effective 'ladders and bridges'? If some alternative programs are recognized, does this create different systems or flexible variations within the existing system? Should these be open to everyone on demand or only to selected, recognized categories? How much diversity can be tolerated in learning pathways (general competencies and skills)? What should be the role of government, and who should run these provisions? Should all of this be funded form the public purse? Are such alternative programs permanent or temporary phenomena until UPE or USE are achieved?

This paper shows that governments grappling with these kinds of questions take different approaches. Whereas in some countries NFE alternatives are developed as completely separate wings of basic education with their own philosophies, policy frames, provisions and funding (Mali and Burkina), in others (Uganda and Namibia) government seems keen to retain the integrated system and find ways of constructing parallel tracks with bridges (Namibia) or allow for temporary enclaves of tailor-made but equivalent programs (Uganda). These different viewpoints also find their expression in different definitions of what constitutes non-formal and formal education.

In terms of resources, some countries prefer to establish public-private partnerships with separate governance structures, curricula, teachers and teacher training and separate 'national funds' (Mali and Burkina). Other countries prefer to 'mainstream' such programs with national support structures, funding, supervision, inspection and assessment, even if this may involve public-private partnerships (Uganda, Namibia). Where there are efforts to main a high degree of systems integration, even with different learning pathways, there tends to be more interest in creating national qualification frameworks as an overall umbrella (Namibia).

In actual practice, public support arises more frequently because of the expected impact on economic productivity of students than because of issues of equity and social emancipation. Motivation notwithstanding, public support for selected NFE programs has raised the question of

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the place of NFE in national education policies which have a significant impact on support for NFE as do donor preferences. When the social demand for a certain form of education motivates donors, the results are often greater attention to the specific needs of disadvantaged children and young people and to judicious combinations of different learning programs – for example, combining literacy with livelihood training or vocational training with life skills development (Oxenham *et al.*, 2002 and 2004; Duke and Hinzen, 2006). Here the issue of equivalence and equal learning opportunities is not always playing a role.

Assessing NFE Outcomes
There has been some progress in capturing learning outcomes of major NFE programs, especially in adult literacy. In the late 1990s, World Bank staff did a considerable amount of work in a bid to provide the ground for entering into adult and literacy education (Carr-Hill, 2001; Oxenham *et al.*, 2002; Lauglo, 2002; Lind, 2002; Easton *et al.*, 2003).   There is still little insight however about the actual benefits of acquiring basic skills and learning on poverty and improving the prospects of people's lives, reducing inequality and social marginality (cf. Torres, 2001). It is certainly questionable whether or not this can happen without the presence of several other conditions including a robust labor market (*Norrag News*, 2006; Easton *et al*, 2003).

There has been little systematic assessment of NFE alternatives for out-of-school adolescents and youth. The outcomes, impact and relative value of specific pedagogical processes are not at all clear. Some program-related studies have been undertaken in some African countries but the extent to which people leaving NFE have benefited even with equivalent credits is not clear. Have they had an opportunity to undertake post-primary education? And if so, how much? The fact that sponsoring agencies typically conduct their own monitoring and evaluation complicates the process of securing feedback that could be sufficiently relevant for policy and planning (Hoppers, 2005 and 2007b; Pieck, 2006).   The assessments are important for establishing equivalences between NFE learning and learning in the formal schools so that students can move from one to the other, and from NFE primary to post-primary.

There is, however, evidence that NFE programs often perform no worse than regular schools (Hoppers, 2006 and 2007b). This may imply that fast-track options for older children and adolescents with flexible approaches and multi-media arrangements might be a valuable policy option for un-reached children and over-age children. Such programs can be combined with a variety of other relevant skills, whether mainly associated with life skills or with livelihood or vocational training.

Linking NFE and Formal Basic Education
For students to make the transition from a NFE context into a formal education context requires the creation of equivalences between the learning in the two programs and a mechanism to transfer credit in general education and for vocational skills development. Anglophone African policy-makers have shown more interest in equivalency and transferability of NFE credits than Francophone African policy makers.

The implications of equivalency are far-reaching. They can lead towards similar NFE and formal curricula, each with its 'appropriate' mix of basic cognitive competences, life skills and livelihood training that make it possible for students to transfer from one type of school to another in order to pursue different or more forms of education and training (Duke and Hinzen, 2006; Hoppers, 2006). To establish equivalences requires overcoming the persistent tendency to regard alternative NFE programs (both complementary and parallel) as non-equivalent programs that only serve to help

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maximize what young people have already learned at school (Jones, 1997; Carr-Hill, 2001; Abadzi, 2004).

Several countries have however created equivalencies between formal and non-formal education so that students can validate their non-formal training.

- In Bangladesh, BRAC enables its successful younger learners to re-enter primary school
- In Namibia, completion of the third stage of NLPN (National Literacy Program of Namibia) is officially recognized as equivalent to completing the fourth grade of primary school
- South Africa is in the process of perfecting an alternative system for accrediting education and training received outside the formal system Recognition of Prior Learning).
- In Brazil, *Telecurso* 2000, a condensed version of a basic curriculum for distance education (through videotaped classroom sessions and books) targets young adults who left primary or secondary schools before graduation and prepares them to take examinations to obtain formal school certificates. (Castro, 1999).
- In Thailand, equivalency programs work within a national NFE curriculum frame for basic education, which incorporates basic core subjects, life experiences and a practical component of 'quality of life improvement'. In functional literacy the curriculum has a national, regional and local part. Skills related programs are planned and implemented in collaboration with other sector ministries (Thailand-ONFEC, 2006a).

Framing NFE-FE relations Within Lifelong Learning

In many ways, the systemic contributions of NFE are particularly clear when seen within the wider context of lifelong learning,[8] which in Africa includes all types and forms of education including non-formal basic education and training (Aitchison, 2003). The lifelong learning framework offers a coherence and integration that has become significant for an expanded interpretation of EFA that extends primary education to 8-9 years. A conception of lifelong learning that incorporates formal and NFE and training can help to ensure that young people completing a primary school equivalent in a NFE setting have clearly defined paths to post-primary learning opportunities.

Equal access to basic and continuing basic education (PPE) including training for life skills and basic vocational skills can only be extended to all if there is a *system of lifelong learning … integrating general education and vocational training and re-training, social and cultural learning needs. It calls for more and more systematic ways to continue after literacy classes for youth and adults, for entry points from out of school classes into the formal set-up, and thus a systematic approach to value and credit learning outcomes from the diversity of non-formal education and skills training* (Duke and Hinzen, 2006:138).

The flexibility of non-formal learning and an overarching framework for accrediting learning outcomes would create a recognizable 'non-school' variant of formal education thus "*freeing the participants to learn what they want, when they want, where they want and for as long as they want*" (Rogers, 2004:11). In actual fact, the lifelong learning framework, coupled with an overall system for assessment, validation and certification of learning outcomes provides the *formal* context within which both formal and non-formal education can serve their particular clienteles, giving them the content and pedagogical styles that are appropriate to them (Duke and Hinzen, 2006; Hoppers, 2006).

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[8] To be distinguished from the OECD use of lifelong learning as ongoing training for adults who have to change jobs many times during their careers.

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Post-primary NFE Opportunities

As was noted earlier, many 'post-primary' skills training opportunities exist across the African continent, based in private commercial or vocational colleges, in formal sector firms, in the informal sector ((semi-)apprenticeships), or autonomous work-related programs initiated by local councils, faith-based organizations and NGOs. Many of these remain outside the ambit of education and training systems, although increasingly they are being covered by a qualifications framework that focuses on skills training in the widest sense.

Though it may well be argued that such forms of training should not be formally anchored at a certain exit point in formal education (for example at Primary 7 or Primary 9), within the context of PPE expansion, there is likely to be a strong interest in combining such training with continued general learning at the level of 'continued basic education' (non-formal equivalent of JSE). It might become quite essential that such continued learning be formally recognized as a basis for access to a 'post-basic education' (post-JSE) set of learning opportunities.

Access to continued learning (both general and skills training) is vital for all young people (adolescents) in view of their essential needs for a range of competences increasingly considered to be a right for all adolescents (see EFA goal 3). Arguably, such necessity applies regardless of whether or not the adolescent has officially 'passed' the primary leaving examination and has access to JSE. Effectively this concern implies policy moves to dispense with 'primary leaving examinations' altogether and to replace them with system-wide learning assessments focusing on a range of essential competencies relevant for all young people. This would facilitate continuation of learning by all through a range of pathways up to 9 years of basic education.

A 'systems approach' to lifelong learning may also call for creating opportunities that extend forms of NFE primary education into post-primary education so that primary NFE graduates can continue their basic education in a non-formal JSE equivalent and/or a skills training program both of which would lead to recognized forms of assessment and validation at the upper end of the 8-9 years. Several African countries have already taken steps in this direction.

The construction of parallel, equivalent pathways may ultimately contribute to an education and training architecture that enables larger numbers of young people to continue learning, irrespective of their social, economic, health or cultural situation, and achieve relevant basic education of 9 years.

Resolving Issues of Teacher Supply

What lessons from complementary education teacher training could be draw upon to enlarge the pool of potential post-primary teachers? The two broad approaches taken to recruiting more teachers in developing countries have included accelerated pre-service teacher training and recruiting untrained teachers. In both cases, the quality of teachers and teaching has been called into question (World Bank 2005), but contrary arguments have also been made. Alternative approaches to recruiting and supporting teachers have been essential for staffing complementary primary education programs (DeStefano *et al*, 2006; Terway, 2007)

Lewin (2001) has provided further evidence that school-based in-service training and mentoring of novice teachers was more effective and less costly than traditional pre-service training programs. Research on complementary basic education programs does suggest that less qualified teachers can teach adequately – using students' test results as a criterion -- if the teachers are adequately and appropriately assisted by regular, on-site staff. Local governance and management of schools and

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partnerships with NGOs to provide networks of support staff for teachers to reinforce students' reading, writing and basic math skills has been effective.

The degree of specialization in expanded basic education will determine whether some of the approaches taken by non-formal education programs are appropriate for increasing the pool of potential teachers and speeding their entry into classrooms. Should governments move towards making lower secondary education an extension of primary education, a program to train upper secondary students to become primary teachers could be envisaged. It is even conceivable that the final year of secondary education could include courses in pedagogy, learning theory and slightly advanced numeracy and literacy instruction along with a specialization.

Alternatively, graduates could take an accelerated teacher training program for basic education offered in TTIs and move quickly into classrooms. In both cases, the teachers would need more supervision than regular teachers currently receive, some of which could come from the community or from clustering teachers, or from local NGO staff. In both cases, the teacher training curriculum and the institutionalization of a shorter teacher-training program would have to be decided upon and accepted and the quality of teaching would have to be verified.

One example of a non-formal program -- the *Educatodos* program in Honduras -- provides the equivalent of a lower secondary education primarily to over-age students in centers located in workplaces, churches, and other community buildings. Community members are recruited on a voluntary basis to serve as center facilitators. *Educatodos* also uses radio to broadcast to boost the instructional repertoire of teachers who are less trained than formally certified teachers. Like *Educatodos,* the community schools also developed effective in-service training and support to teachers trained more quickly to teacher to deliver primary education. The community-based complementary programs also provide examples of how to develop learning communities for teachers who come together in clusters to support each other and to share effective teaching practices.

The above demonstrates that formal education can shape as well as be shaped by different types of alternative NFE experiences and development. This underscores the need for the two 'systems' to be conceived and treated as integral parts of one overall and integrated basic education provision in which linkages and synergies can benefit access and quality, and thus the future of all learners.

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