



Kenya

Country Context

Education is an important sector in Kenya's socio-economic and cultural development. The provision of quality education and training at all levels has always been prioritised as is evidenced by one of the first policy documents, the Sessional Paper no. 10 of 1965 in which the Kenya Government committed itself to eradicating ignorance, poverty and disease. One of the major priorities of the postcolonial government has been to ensure Universal Primary Education (UPE). To realize this, Education was declared free from Standards 1 to 4 in 1974 as the statutory fees for lower primary were abolished. Free primary education became a reality when fees for the entire primary cycle were abolished in 1978. As a result of the free primary education, gross enrolment rose dramatically to over 100% for both boys and girls.

However with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s/90s, which recommended cost recovery measures and consequently led to a shift of the burden of cost of education to parents, these gains were gradually eroded. (*Task force report on implementation of free education, 2003*). As a result public schools were mainly managed by Parents Teachers Associations, which set standards of the school based on the status quo. The emergence of an unregulated private schools sector in 1980, which fully developed in 1990 eventually gaining government recognition in 1996, further, contributed to the increasing costs of education, creating a clear divide between the poor and the rich elite.

This reversed trend adversely affected access, equity and the quality of basic education in the entire country especially in areas worst hit by poverty such as the urban slums, rural and arid and semi-arid lands regions. As such, primary education has since been characterized by declining enrolments, high internal and external inefficiency (high drop-outs, low completion rates and repetition), and poor transition rates particularly among girls. (*Draft National EFA work-plan, 2002*). An outmoded legal and policy framework has guided Kenya's education sector with various acts guiding different levels of education. Lack of an all inclusive, flexible, gender sensitive and comprehensive education legal and policy framework that ensures inclusion of all categories of children hinders any meaningful progress towards the achievement of EFA. In an effort to address the foregoing problems and attain EFA, the Kenya Government with CSOs, has developed several policies including the PRSP, The MPET (1997 - 2010).

The culmination of these efforts was the announcement by the newly elected government in Kenya on 30th December 2002 of free primary education, with effect from January 2003. Although enrolment figures have increased by an extra one million children, as a result of free education, major challenges have emerged. There is evident commitment and political will to ensure that all

children go to school. There is also greater space for participation of all stakeholders in ensuring that the promise and declaration of UPE becomes a reality before 2005. Civil Society engagement with government, within the current political climate is emerging and needs to be nurtured and strengthened.

Key Achievements

- ❑ Supported CSOs increased credibility, recognition and involvement of the education policy process
- ❑ Provided support for over five (5) studies/research and documentation of critical issues in education.
- ❑ Promoted capacity building and strengthening of institutional capacities of CSOs - Partners.
- ❑ Encouraged sharing and learning between CSO partners in Kenya and from other countries.
- ❑ Supported campaigns initiated by partners leading to better delivery of the free primary education policy.

Breakdown by Criteria

CRITERION 1

CEF partnered national NGOs and networks and in most cases extended previously minimal experience in lobbying and advocacy for EFA. The results of this partnership were broad and substantial. Possible reasons behind the success in terms of similarities and differences with other programmes are as follows. As with most other CEF programmes a strict recruitment process preceded partnership agreements, and often proposals were resubmitted up to 4 or 5 times before acceptance. Perhaps the most significant learning in this respect from the MTR is that all partners interviewed said that whilst the process was tedious and time-consuming, it was satisfying and they benefited from commitment and technical input offered by the CEF team. CEF has been regarded as *"very different"* from other donors, with a feeling that *"we are dealing with a colleague and a partner... interested on the processes on the ground and not just results"*. The level of interaction that has continued from the production of proposals right through the projects led one partner to say *"We feel safe when implementing CEF programme... we have somehow been spoiled by the constant support and follow-up."* The MTR identifies that this capacity building is an effective strategy for strengthening advocacy and lobbying in education, but makes no claim that it is easy. In contrast it highlights the management difficulties encountered when very different partners are brought together. It is perhaps successful management of this mix (not withstanding contextual issues) that has encouraged effective collaboration between the partners and promoted joint ownership of projects - a key to overall success.

Despite this progress, Kenya is not without problems. Like many other CEF programmes, Kenya faces acute challenges including:

- The need for more resources to step up monitoring and evaluation.
- The need for more qualified staff.
- The need to further intensify capacity building of partners with regard to financial management, participatory research and gender mainstreaming and empowerment.
- The need to engage with the private sector to make the programme more financially sustainable.
- The need to engage better with government so CEF activities are recognised as national issues not just one off projects.

CRITERION 2

One of the key factors for success highlighted by the Kenyan MTR is the research, and careful documentation of critical issues. The important factors here appear to be the ownership of research by partner organisations and subsequent sharing between the groups. Most importantly, the documents are concise and well written which means they can be (and are being) utilised for advocacy and lobbying activities. These don't just apply to criterion two but across all CEF work. Budget tracking tools are a good example and considerable training has taken place as a result - around 600 facilitators and school committees in six provinces. Each of the ten partners has focused on partnership building by different methods and at different levels to encourage stakeholders to identify their responsibilities:

- Education forums with parents and community leaders
- Lobbying and advocacy
- Capacity building workshops
- Social clubs for boys and girls

Two of the key learning points from the MTR related to this are:

- Community involvement and participation in management of education is a critical area that has to be nurtured and sustained if EFA objectives are to be achieved.
- Forming and nurturing the necessary partnerships require dedication and patience.

An additional cross cutting issue related to developing financial skills is the strengthening of partner organisations and the CEF's own financial system. This leads to greater credibility and funding from donors. Transparency and accountability are seen as key to building credibility.

CRITERION 3

Several innovative programmes are operational in Kenya to encourage education access to the most vulnerable groups. The projects have effectively publicised and disseminated research findings locally and nationally, they have been able to use research findings for effective policy advocacy and lobbying.

This transfer from research to advocacy to beneficial change is something that many of the MTRs identify as a significant challenge.

Case Study: Cancelling debt through public petition

Cancel Debts for the Child Campaign (CADEC) coordinated by Chambers of Justice has been very active in conducting advocacy and lobbying for cancellation of debts - often turning the same into investment resources in education and health. As a result of targeting an established parliamentary support group, as a vehicle for institutionalising the campaign, the debt relief debate has become truly a national agenda. In addition to evaluating government expenditures and key performance in various sectors, it has produced information briefs and public petitioning chits. There is now a petitioning centre in every province in Kenya. So far, about 500,000 people have signed the petition. The campaign was taken further to Europe and the international community - "international petitioning for the Kenyan child."

The results have been positive and encouraging. For example, by December 2003 Kenya received, for the first time in years, its debt re-scheduling by the Paris Club; by July 2004, Finland and Italy managed to cancel public debt for Kenya worth Kshs. 460 millions. Due to its innovativeness and commitment to the Kenyan child, CADEC won the 2003 Jubilee Award.